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Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 34: A Mighty Divine Ability

Seatopple was an extremely famous figure of the Three Realms. He was a Diremonster who had trained all the way to the Empyrean God level. Generally speaking, others would refer to him as 'Empyrean God' or 'Great Sage' when being respectful to him...but in reality, since Empyrean God Seatopple was something of an unruly, lawless individual who was also quite savage and tyrannical, others would often secretly refer to him as the 'Demon King'.

The sloppy, chubby youth had indeed been badly frightened. After all, Seatopple's savage aura...was utterly terrifying within the main hall of the Skylight Palace. Even the Celestial Immortals were shocked by it, to say nothing of the Wanxiang Adepts.

"I, I am..." The Sloppy Daoist rose to his feet.

"Oh?" Seatopple turned to look at him, then nodded in satisfaction as he revealed a smile. "You really are pretty sloppy-looking."

As he spoke, he walked over, then grabbed the Sloppy Daoist by the arm, pulling him over as he walked towards the Grand Xia Emperor. A new table had already been prepared, covered with Immortal nectar and fruit.

The Sloppy Daoist was slightly panicking now. Still...this Empyrean God, Seatopple, was far too powerful. After having his arm grabbed, the Sloppy Daoist was completely unable to resist.

"What in the world is going on? Why has this savage-looking man with a dark-green Flood Dragon armor sought me out upon entering the Skylight Palace? Even the Grand Xia Emperor is polite to him, but I have never met such a formidable figure before." The Sloppy Daoist was panicking, but could do nothing but just go with the flow.

At the same time...the Sloppy Daoist that the gazes of those nearly thousand Celestial Immortals who were looking at him were filled...with envy! In fact, some of these Celestial Immortals smiled in a friendly manner towards him.

"I was eliminated...but these Celestial Immortal Patriarchs are still this polite towards me? And they are envious of me?" The Sloppy Daoist's mind began to be filled with many thoughts.

"Junior apprentice-brother, come and sit." Seatopple first sat down, then pulled the Sloppy Daoist to sit next to him.

"Junior apprentice-brother?" The Sloppy Daoist was completely bewildered now.

"Seatopple, it seems your junior apprentice-brother doesn't understand the situation yet," the Xia Emperor laughed.

Seatopple turned his head to look at the rather confused Sloppy Daoist. He said in a very straight manner, "Junior apprentice-brother, Master ordered me to come to the Grand Xia world, one of the three thousand major worlds, in order to take you back!"

“Senior, are you...sure you aren’t mistaken?” The Sloppy Daoist was feeling rather unnerved. He had no idea who this person was.

“Little Sloppy,” Lu Dongbin laughed, “This person before you is a disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu, Emphyrean God Seatopple! He’s not just an Emphyrean God; he’s also reached the Pure Yang True Immortal as a Ki Refiner as well. In the Three Realms...he is extremely well-known. Not too long ago, he actually wrecked the Celestial Court.”

“Emphyrean God? Pure Yang True Immortal? Wrecked the Celestial Court?” The Sloppy Daoist stared at this savage-looking man, completely shocked.

“Hahaha...” Seatopple began to laugh loudly. Slapping the Sloppy Daoist on the shoulder, he said, “Junior apprentice-brother, I have come on Master’s orders to receive you. Master said that you took part in this Conclave, and said that you come from the Black-White College, that your name is Zhang Qi, the Sloppy Daoist. There shouldn’t be a second person in this entire Conclave who comes from the Black-White College and who is known as the Sloppy Daoist Zhang Qi, right?”

The Sloppy Daoist nodded. In this competition, the Black-White College only sent a total of three participants. There was naturally only one called the Sloppy Daoist.

“Little Sloppy,” the Xia Emperor laughed as well, “Don’t question it. Earlier, the divine ability which you displayed is called the ‘Grand Black Tortoise’ divine ability. Did you know that?”

“I did.” The Sloppy Daoist nodded.

“The Grand Black Tortoise divine ability was created by Grand Emperor Xuanwu. Without his permission, there’s no way you could’ve learned this divine ability,” the Xia Emperor laughed. “Perhaps you don’t realize this, but Grand Emperor Xuanwu has long ago viewed you as his disciple. He is a major power of the Three Realms, on the same level as my own master. He is a Daofather! When you put your divine ability on display earlier during this Conclave, all of us already guessed that you are the disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu.”

The Sloppy Daoist began to think back to the strange encounter he had so long ago...

“So...he was Grand Emperor Xuanwu...” The Sloppy Daoist was stunned.

So...there had been no need at all for him to fight so crazily in order to become Daofather Crimsonbright’s disciple. He had long ago been chosen as a disciple by Grand Emperor Xuanwu. However...this Conclave had been extremely beneficial to him. His insights into the Dao, especially into the ‘wavefolding’ secret art, had reached a very high level.

“Junior apprentice-brother, you’ve learned the Grand Black Tortoise divine ability? Then there’s no mistake about it; without Master’s permission, there’s no way you could’ve learned this.” Seatopple knew quite well that someone who had been accepted by his master at the Wanxiang Adept level or perhaps even earlier was someone who his master clearly viewed with tremendous favor. Thus, it would be best if he made friends with this Sloppy Daoist.

Seatopple himself usually caused quite a bit of trouble. In the future, once this junior apprentice-brother became powerful, he’d be able to give Seatopple a hand.

As the saying went, every hero should have at least three helpers by his side. The more powerful figures by his side, the better. That would naturally give him more confidence in roaming the Three Realms!

“Greetings, senior apprentice-brother,” the Sloppy Daoist immediately said while saluting him.

“Hahaha, don’t be so courteous.” Seatopple was extremely happy. “A while ago, I wrecked the Celestial Court and was confined by Master to my quarters. It’s rare for me to be allowed out. And today, I’ve even run into Eastflower, this old fogey from the Northlands, and all of these others as well. I’m just going to drink some wine first; in a bit, I’ll take you back to meet Master.”

“I’ll listen to your arrangements, senior apprentice-brother.” The Sloppy Daoist naturally was willing to follow his lead.

Seatopple patted the Sloppy Daoist on the shoulder. “Junior apprentice-brother, you have quite a good temper.”

“Eastflower, this Grand Xia world is holding a Conclave...why have all of you come as well?” Seatopple’s gaze swept forward as he asked this question. He felt quite puzzled. Pure Yang True Immortals were considered experts of the Three Realms. For nine of them to be gathered in one place was indeed fairly rare.

“This Conclave is quite special. One of the top three of this Conclave shall be chosen by Daofather Crimsonbright as a disciple,” Lu Dongbin said with a laugh. “Including little Sloppy, this Conclave actually includes two Daofather disciples.”

“What? Daofather Crimsonbright is taking on a disciple?” Seatopple looked towards the Xia Emperor.

“Who is he choosing? Let me take a look.”

“The top three of this Conclave consist of Ji Ning, Blackstone, and Woodpass,” the Xia Emperor said. “As for who Master shall choose...my Primaltwin is heading towards Master’s estate right now. After a little bit more time, I imagine we’ll know the results.”

Seatopple immediately nodded, his eyes gleaming. Daofather Crimsonbright was taking on a disciple? This was quite an interesting affair. He had been confined to his quarters for years now, and had been incredibly stifled.

“Come, let’s drink while chatting. Xiamang, you are of the Primordial Imperial Clan...you need to prepare more wine.” Seatopple immediately guzzled down all the wine on his table, causing the corners of the Xia Emperor’s eyes to begin twitching. The others were drinking in a fairly graceful way, but this Great Sage Who Topples the Seas was a Flood Dragon; it was a minor matter for him to swallow all the water of a river with a single gulp. In drinking Immortal wine, he was similarly savage beyond all compare.

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The imperial treasury of the Grand Xia was located on the sixth floor of the main hall of the Skylight Palace.

“This place holds the abridged versions of all of the books held by the Dao Repository of our imperial Xia clan,” King Qi said with a laugh as he pointed towards countless bookshelves that were filled with books. “You can choose a divine ability at will, or a secret art or technique. But only one!”

Ji Ning, Adept Blackstone, and Adept Woodpass all nodded.

Although their minds were still occupied with the matter of becoming Daofather Crimsonbright's disciple, for now they put that matter aside. The three began to search through this Dao Repository.

Soon, they saw a black jade table that was the most eye-catching of all.

This enormous black jade table was filled with abridged versions of divine abilities! On another table, a white jade table, there were abridged versions of precious secret arts.

[Moving Mountains, Overturning Seas] [Qiankun Arrow] [Myriad Hibernating Venoms] [Formless Illusions]

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Ning and the other two hurriedly grabbed one divine ability book after another, flipping through them. These books all had had some prerequisites listed on the front; for example, some required a person to have reached a certain level in order to train in it. These requirements, however, were all meant for the clansmen of the imperial Xia clan. Ning and the other two could choose as they pleased.

They read for a long period of time.

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They flipped through all the secret arts as well. In the end, as if by tacit agreement, all three of them chose the same divine ability – [Torch Dragon's Eye]!

"Are you certain you are going to choose the [Torch Dragon's Eye]?" King Qi asked.

"Yes." Ji Ning, Adept Woodpass, and Adept Blackstone all nodded in unison.

"Fine." King Qi revealed a smile. "Come with me, then." King Qi was actually fairly happy that all three had chosen the [Torch Dragon's Eye], because this technique was still fairly widespread amongst the various major powers of the Three Realms.

However, this [Torch Dragon's Eye] really was the most powerful divine ability within the imperial treasury of the Grand Xia! Although this was only the first part to the whole technique...this was still a technique that ranked in the top hundred of the Three Realms.

Rumble...a stone door was pushed open. King Qi led Ji Ning and the others into the stone room. In the center of the stone room, there were bamboo books that was hovering in midair, emanating a dreamy light and covered with restrictive spells.

"This is the [Torch Dragon's Eye]." King Qi pointed towards a bamboo book. "The restrictive spells covering them have been unsealed. The other ones remain sealed; there's no way for you to touch them."

"All you need to do is touch the bamboo with your hands. The large amounts of information contained within the bamboo will instantly be transmitted into your soul," King Qi said. "Fortunately, this is merely the first part of the [Torch Dragon's Eye], and so it won't take too much time to accept the transmission. For each person, it will at most take as much time as needed to brew a pot of tea."

Ning understood. This divine ability was one of those that increased dramatically in difficulty at the higher levels. Most likely, the part meant for Empyrean Gods was thousands of times more difficult than the part meant for Void-level cultivators. In addition, the part meant for True Gods would be thousands of times more complex than the part meant for Empyrean Gods.

Ning had accepted the complete transmission of the [Starseizing Hand], which was why it had taken him months to do so.

“Ji Ning, you come first,” King Qi said. Ning nodded, stretching out his hand and pressing it against the hovering bamboo book.

As soon as he touched it!

Boom! Instantly, a large amount of information began pouring into his soul. Although the transmission wasn't as efficient and fast as when he had received the [Starseizing Hand] transmission, Ning's soul was far more powerful than it had been back then, and the speed at which he accepted the data was faster as well. In just a short while, the complete first part of the [Torch Dragon's Eye] had been transmitted into Ning's soul.

“So that's how it is.” Ning was secretly startled and delighted. The [Torch Dragon's Eye]...this was a divine ability developed by the Torch Dragon, one of the major powers of the Three Realms. This divine ability was extremely famous! The legends often mentioned abilities like the [Torch Dragon's Eye] or [Houyi Shooting the Sun]. Now, upon seeing the real method to activate this technique and its real power, Ning was secretly startled as well.

The [Torch Dragon's Eye], in short, relied on harvesting the light of the Nine Heavens and focusing it in the eye, and then cultivating a so-called 'innate torch-light'.

“Although this is just the first part, which any Fiendgods up to the Void-level can train in...it's enough. After all, beyond that is the tribulation that results in Empyrean Gods. Upon becoming an Empyrean God, I'd be someone on the level of the Xia Emperor. I can just rely on my own powers to search for the second part to the [Torch Dragon's Eye].” Ning was extraordinarily excited.

Aside from the [Starseizing Hand]...he had finally acquired yet another truly powerful divine ability.

Ning, Adept Woodpass, and Adept Blackstone all meditated on the contents of the [Torch Dragon's Eye]. Each of them felt delighted in their hearts; after all, this was a technique comparable to the [Grand Black Tortoise] technique. If it hadn't been for the fact that the Torch Dragon had perished, how could they have had a chance to learn this?

“Alright,” King Qi suddenly said. Ning, Adept Woodpass, and Adept Blackstone all raised their heads to look at him.

“His Imperial Majesty has sent word to me that Daofather Crimsonbright has chosen a disciple. The three of you need to hurry back with me to meet his Imperial Majesty at the main hall,” King Qi said.

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Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 35: Daofather's Disciple

Ji Ning, Adept Woodpass, and Adept Blackstone all felt their hearts clench. The joy they felt upon acquiring the [Torch Dragon's Eye] instantly fled to the back of their minds. All three of them had the same question in their heart: "Who did the Daofather choose? Was it me?"

"Let's go," King Qi said.

"Right." Ning and the other two obediently followed behind him, but in their hearts, they felt their emotions surge like the waves of the ocean.

The main hall of the Skylight Palace. The Xia Emperor's face changed as he revealed a look of surprise.

"What is it, Xiamang?" Lu Dongbin, Seatopple, and the rest of the nine all looked towards the Xia Emperor.

"Xiamang, can it be that the Daofather has already chosen a disciple?" Lu Dongbin chortled as he spoke. These Pure Yang True Immortals were all clever fellows; a simple change in expression by the Xia Emperor instantly drew their attention and caused them to be able to guess at what had happened. After all, given the Xia Emperor's status, why would he suddenly appear surprised for no reason at all?

"Hahaha..." The Xia Emperor laughed and nodded. "I really can't hide anything from you all. Indeed, my Primaltwin has visited Master, and Master just made his choice."

"Who?"

"Who did the Daofather choose?"

These Pure Yang True Immortals from the Celestial Court, the Buddhist Sangha, and the Daoist Path were all filled with curiosity as they asked the Xia Emperor.

"No rush, no rush. I've already sent for King Qi to bring those three little fellows back," the Xia Emperor laughed. "After those three little fellows return, I'll make the announcement."

"Show-off!" Seatopple pursed his lips, then glanced at the Sloppy Daoist. "Junior apprentice-brother, this Conclave you participated in the world of the Grand Xia really is quite special. You are a disciple of Master, while Daofather Crimsonbright is going to accept a disciple as well...the news that there were two disciples of a Daofather in a single Conclave is most likely going to soon spread throughout the Three Realms."

The Sloppy Daoist just smiled. In front of these True Immortals and Empyrean Gods, he rarely said anything.

"Who will the Daofather choose?" The Sloppy Daoist felt puzzlement in his heart as well. "Will it be junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning?" In his heart, he hoped that his own junior apprentice-brother would be the one to be apprenticed to the Daofather. If that were to happen, then things really would be perfect for the Black-White College this time.

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Moments later. King Qi led Ning and the other two back into the main hall. Instantly, the gazes of the nearly thousand Celestial Immortals present swung towards them.

“Why have the three of them returned?”

“Can it be that the Daofather has already made his choice?”

The Celestial Immortals instantly guessed at the reason, and they all felt nervousness in their hearts.

“Your Imperial Majesty, the three have come,” King Qi said respectfully. Ji Ning, Adept Woodpass, and Adept Blackstone stood obediently behind him.

“Mm.” The Xia Emperor nodded slightly.

King Qi retreated to one side, sitting down in the lotus position in the seat he had been in previously. Ning and the other two were now the focal point for the entire main hall of the Skylight Palace. They found it difficult to hide the restlessness and nervousness in their eyes. Although all three of them were monstrous geniuses, they were still extremely nervous right now!

The Xia Emperor, seated above them atop his throne, revealed a rare smile. He said in a clear voice: “Master has already chosen a disciple amongst you three. The disciple shall be...”

When these words came out, everyone held their breaths.

“Gotta be Ji Ning. Gotta be Ji Ning.” Yuchi Xiyue was tightly clenching Yu Wei’s hands.

“Ji Ning. Ji Ning.”

Ninelotus raised her head to watch as well.

“Don’t let it be Ji Ning. Don’t let it be him!” Patriarch Arcanum’s narrow eyes were filled with frantic worry. If Ji Ning became the Daofather’s disciple, then in the future, he would most likely prove to become a true disaster for the Youngflame clan!

Many people were waiting silently. Some hoped it would be Ning; others hoped it would be Adept Woodpass; still others hoped it would be Adept Blackstone. They each had their own supporters and detractors.

For the world of the Grand Xia to give birth to a new disciple of a Daofather was something that would completely, fundamentally change the balance of power in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty.

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The Xia Emperor’s gaze swept downwards, pausing to intentionally prolong the tension. Only upon seeing Seatopple glare angrily at him and Lu Dongbin rub his nose did the Xia Emperor declare, “The Daofather’s chosen disciple is...Adept Woodpass!”

“Adept Woodpass!”

The Xia Emperor’s voice echoed within the entire main hall. For a moment, the entire main hall was completely silent.

“Adept Woodpass!”

“The Daofather’s disciple...Adept Woodpass!”

“Adept Woodpass!”

In perfect unison, all of the Celestial Immortals and eliminated Wanxiang Adepts within the main hall all turned their gazes towards the simple, honest-looking youth, Adept Woodpass. For a time, all of the Celestial Immortals found it difficult to mask the envy and desire they felt. They knew very well that this honest-looking youth’s status had just soared into the heavens!

The Daofather’s disciple! Adept Woodpass!

In this instant, Adept Woodpass had become the most dazzling figure in the entire Skylight Palace!

“It was actually Adept Woodpass!” Yuchi Xiyue, Yu Wei, the Sloppy Daoist, and some others all turned to look at Ji Ning. They felt unhappy on Ning’s behalf.

Ning had already tried his best. He was the youngest of the three, and was number one in this Conclave. Why hadn’t he been chosen?

However, they didn’t argue against this decision, because the decision was Daofather Crimsonbright’s! Only the person who the Daofather took a favoring to would be chosen...and that person didn’t necessarily have to be number one.

“The Daofather’s chosen disciple is...Adept Woodpass!” The voice rang out in Ning’s ears. He felt dazed.

For an extremely brief moment, Ning’s entire mind went blank. However, he quickly came back to consciousness. Although he was clear-headed now, in his heart, he still felt countless emotions.

“Why would it be him? Why did the Daofather choose him?” Ning’s heart was filled with urgency, resentment, rage...and helplessness!

He was helpless. Truly helpless. The choice of a disciple was up to the Daofather; no matter how dazzling Ning had proven himself to be, if the Daofather didn’t like him, it was all for nothing.

“If I had completely exposed my [Starseizing Hand], then perhaps Daofather Crimsonbright would have chosen me.” This thought suddenly came to Ning’s mind...but it was nothing more than a disgruntled thought. Ning knew very well that given how many people were watching this Conclave, as soon as his [Starseizing Hand] was revealed, the after-effects would be completely unpredictable!

The Three Realms were currently filled with turbulent undercurrents that were simply too mysterious. Daoist Threelives’ status was unknown. Ning didn’t dare take this risk.

“Congratulations, brother Woodpass.” Ning immediately turned to the nearby Adept Woodpass, expressing his congratulations.

On his other side was Adept Blackstone, who had an extremely complicated look in his eyes. Upon hearing Ning’s words, he immediately came to his own senses. In his heart, he secretly felt ashamed; in the face of this mental blow, he had actually taken longer to recover than Ji Ning, who had trained for just thirty or so years. But no matter what...he hadn’t been chosen. It was guaranteed that two of them would be eliminated.

“Congratulations, brother Woodpass,” Adept Blackstone said as well.

Adept Woodpass's eyes were filled with joy. He immediately said, "Brother Ji Ning, brother Blackstone, I was just lucky. Neither of you are inferior to me."

The Xia Emperor, seated on his throne, nodded slightly upon seeing this.

Ji Ning and Blackstone's Dao-hearts were fairly formidable. The chance of becoming the Daofather's disciple had suddenly disappeared; this was a tremendous blow that would cause some people's Dao-hearts to completely crumble, and perhaps even cause them to go insane. For Ji Ning and Adept Blackstone to be able to quickly recover from this blow and regain their faculties...they did indeed live up to being top of the top three contestants in this Conclave.

"Ji Ning, Blackstone," the Xia Emperor said. "The two of you don't need to be depressed. I told you that the two of you will both be able to apprentice yourselves to a Pure Yang True Immortal! I will help you select a suitable master...and if others do not take you in, then I, Xiamang Xun, will personally take you on as my disciples. However, I do not travel on the Dao of the Sword, nor do I travel on the Dao of Formations. I'm not necessarily the best suited master for you two. Go and spend three days in the imperial capital first. Within three days, I'll send someone to meet you two."

"Thank you, your Imperial Majesty." Ning and Adept Blackstone both responded respectfully.

"The two of you can leave now," the Xia Emperor said. He was quite favorably disposed towards both Ji Ning and Adept Blackstone. The attack on the Six Paths of Reincarnation and its collapse...the fact that this Conclave gave birth to two Daofather's disciples...the Xia Emperor felt increasingly certain that this Conclave was going to give birth to future heroes of the Three Realms. Ji Ning and Adept Blackstone both had this potential!

"Junior apprentice-brother Woodpass, go ahead and seat yourself next to junior apprentice-brother Sovereign Hao," the Xia Emperor said.

Adept Woodpass couldn't breathe. 'Junior apprentice-brother'? The Xia Emperor had just referred to him as junior apprentice-brother? Adept Woodpass now truly understood...that from today onwards, his destiny had indeed been completely changed. He truly was about to soar into the heavens.

"Yes." Adept Woodpass obediently walked forward. Sovereign Hao grabbed him and pulled him over to sit next to him.

"Eh?" Only now did Adept Woodpass see Empyrean God Seatopple, as well as the Sloppy Daoist who was beside him. "Why is the Sloppy Daoist sitting here as well?"

This place was a place where the True Immortals and Empyrean Gods were seated; not even the Celestial Immortals were permitted to come close. Why was the Sloppy Daoist here? And who was this man dressed in deep green Flood Dragon armor?

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Ning was seated back before King Yan once more. King Yan consoled him, "Ji Ning, don't feel dispirited. After all, you shall still become the disciple of a Pure Yang True Immortal. Even if there are no suitable ones...you will at least become his Imperial Majesty's personal disciple. For him to become your master means that in the future, you will have no troubles at all within the world of the Grand Xia Dynasty. You will no longer need to fear the Youngflame clan."

Ning nodded lightly. Since he couldn't become the Daofather's disciple, then all he could do was lower his expectations for now. Pure Yang True Immortals were truly formidable figures of the Three Realms as well. Perhaps they might know about whether Daoist Threelives was alive or not. In addition, with a Pure Yang True Immortal as his master, he would have a powerful backer in the future!

"Ji Ning." Yuchi Xiyue looked towards Ning with concern.

"Ji Ning." Yu Wei looked towards him as well.

Both of them were worried about him.

Ning, after sitting down, smiled gently. "There's no way I can change the Daofather's decision on whether or not to choose me! No matter what, I've already done all I can."

"Right." Both Yu Wei and Xiyue let out sighs of relief. Ning's Dao-heart was even more firm and strong than they had expected.

Ning then looked towards the place where the True Immortals and Empyrean Gods were gathered. He immediately whispered, "Why is eldest apprentice-brother seated over there? Who is that fellow dressed in the dark green Flood Dragon armor in front of him?"

Yu Wei and Xiyue exchanged a glance. Xiyue spoke out, "When you went to choose a divine ability, that Empyrean God known as Seatopple arrived. He is the disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu, and he has come to this Conclave for the express purpose of bringing back the Sloppy Daoist."

"He's taking him away?" Ning was puzzled.

Yu Wei said, "You didn't see it, Ji Ning. Everyone in the main hall was talking about it earlier. The divine ability which eldest apprentice-brother uses is known as the 'Grand Black Tortoise' divine ability, which was created by Grand Emperor Xuanwu, one of the major powers of the Three Realms. In reality...he had been chosen by Grand Emperor Xuanwu long ago to be his disciple. After this Conclave, he is going to be taken before Grand Emperor Xuanwu and truly taught the Dao."

"What?!" Ning was stunned. Woodpass was a major power's disciple, and now the Sloppy Daoist was becoming one as well?

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Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 36: Lu Dongbin Accepts a Disciple

Ji Ning, Adept Blackstone, and Adept Woodpass quickly came to understand the situation. It wasn't so bad for Adept Woodpass, but Ji Ning and Adept Blackstone found it hard to refrain from feeling envy.

Becoming a Daofather's disciple! Aside from personal effort, luck was another part of it!

"Xiamang," Seatopple said, puzzled. "I heard you say earlier that it seems as though of the three, Ji Ning is the youngest. In addition, he also became number one in this Conclave. In turn, Blackstone is a grandmaster in formations. Why would the Daofather end up choosing Adept Woodpass?"

"How should I know?" The Xia Emperor shook his head. However, in his heart, the Xia Emperor thought back to his Primaltwin's visit with Daofather Crimsonbright.

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Beyond the Three Realms, within the infinite void. There was a mountain that was hovering within the void. The mountain was a million kilometers in size, and it was filled with palaces. This was the place where Daofather Crimsonbright, a major power of the Three Realms, resided.

“Master, here are the recordings of the top three youths who participated in this Conclave of Immortal Destiny.” The white-robed Xia Emperor stood there respectfully while handing over a scroll.

Off in the distance, there was an elder with long azure hair seated in the lotus position atop a stone. The void around the place where he was seated seemed to be incomparably stable and steady.

The azure-haired elder nodded gently. The scroll instantly unfurled, its surface flashing through the images of those three duels.

Whoosh...the scene of the first battle suddenly turned dramatic and exciting. Instantly, the battle between Ji Ning and Adept Blackstone began to proceed.

“Mm.” The azure-haired elder revealed a hint of a smile as he nodded lightly. “This young fellow who uses formations truly is quite remarkable in this respect. If he were to focus on it, in the future, he would most likely become a true grandmaster of the Dao of Formations! By relying on the Dao of Formations, he has a chance of overcome the Celestial Tribulation and becoming a Celestial Immortal. He is worth nurturing!”

“The young fellow who uses the sword isn’t bad either. His sword-intent is quite formidable; he should be an excellent potential Sword Immortal,” the azure-haired elder said in praise.

The white-robed Xia Emperor said respectfully, “Master, of the final three in this Conclave, the number one victor is the sword-wielding one. His name is Ji Ning, and he has only trained for thirty years. This formations wielder is known as Blackstone; he ranked number three, and has spent a hundred years in his training. As for the last one, his name was Adept Woodpass. He ranked number two in this Conclave, and has trained for more than three hundred years!”

“Thirty years?” Daofather Crimsonbright was surprised. He nodded lightly, a look of delight appearing in his eyes. “It seems his talent in the Dao of the Sword is quite astonishing. He’s worth nurturing as well.”

The white-robed Xia Emperor nodded lightly as well. That went without saying. Even Lu Dongbin had grown intrigued, and he was someone who was quite skilled at guiding disciples, and who had exceptional judgment. He had taken a liking to Ji Ning...and had long ago praised him as being a genius in the Dao of the Sword.

Whoosh. Daofather Crimsonbright flicked through to the second battle. This was between Adept Woodpass and Adept Blackstone.

Upon seeing seeing this battle, Daofather Crimsonbright’s eyes lit up. He immediately flicked through to the third battle, the one between Ji Ning and Adept Woodpass.

“Good, good, good.” Daofather Crimsonbright said the word ‘good’ three times in a row.

The white-robed Xia Emperor was immediately surprised and perplexed. Who was Daofather Crimsonbright praising? Was it Ji Ning?

“Master, there was someone else in this Conclave known as the Sloppy Daoist. He is the disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu, and has trained for a hundred years. The Sloppy Daoist was actually himself kept in the dark, and had no idea that he was the Grand Emperor’s disciple. In the end, Seatopple personally came to receive him back to meet with Grand Emperor Xuanwu,” the white-robed Xia Emperor added.

“The Turtle-Snake’s disciple?” Daofather Crimsonbright was curious. “Do you have a scryer recording?”

“I do.” Since the white-robed Xia Emperor had mentioned the Sloppy Daoist, he naturally had come prepared. He immediately offered yet another scroll, this one with multiple battles recorded, including that between Adept Woodpass and the Sloppy Daoist, where the Sloppy Daoist had been defeated in the end.

After viewing that battle, Daofather Crimsonbright couldn’t help but laugh. “Hahaha, that old Turtle-Snake’s temperament is very similar to mine, and his judgment is the same. This Sloppy Daoist that he chose...he is quite low-key and quite reliable, with a solid, deep foundation that has no flaws. Although in his youth he may have seemed to be slow in training, as time passes...his deep, solid foundation will allow his Immortal path to be a long and stable one.”

“Woodpass and this Sloppy have almost identical Immortal cultivation paths,” Daofather Crimsonbright nodded with a sigh. “Both have incomparably perfect and stable foundations, and both have extremely strong Dao-hearts.”

The white-robed Xia Emperor was startled. Judging from these words...it seemed as though his master favored Adept Woodpass.

“Daofather, can it be that you are going to choose Adept Woodpass?” The white-robed Xia Emperor couldn’t help but speak out. He had spent the most time training out of the top three.

“Remember,” Daofather Crimsonbright said with a calm laugh, “Don’t just judge a person just by his temporary prominence. The path of Immortal cultivation is an incomparably long and limitless one...and these three have just embarked on it a short while ago. In choosing a disciple, one must see through the present and into the infinite future.”

“Thirty years? A hundred years? Three hundred years? In the fact of the long Immortal path, these timeframes are nothing,” Daofather Crimsonbright said. “The Sloppy Daoist and Adept Woodpath are both unrushed and stable, with calm, leisurely dispositions! Just by looking at their combat styles, I can tell that they didn’t waste any of their attention on small tricks and benefits.”

The white-robed Xia Emperor nodded. Indeed, the Sloppy Daoist and Adept Woodpass were quite similar.

“This sort of temperament is the best sort of mentality and heart for an Immortal cultivator,” Daofather Crimsonbright said with a laugh. “Or at least, it’s the sort that I and the old Turtle-Snake favor.”

Daofather Crimsonbright was an extremely good-natured person; everyone knew this. As the saying goes, when a turtle sees a pea, he would like it for its color! Daofather Crimsonbright favored Woodpass for his heart and mind. He knew very well that although the Immortal path required a certain degree of

comprehension ability and talent, towards the later parts of the path, it required even more regarding one's mind and Dao-heart!

"It'll be Woodpass," Daofather Crimsonbright nodded. "As for the other two, they are moldable talents as well. Go and seek out your fellow disciples and see which of them are willing to accept these two as disciples. The Three Realms are in a state of upheaval; perhaps my gaze has gone astray and either Ji Ning or Adept Blackstone shall become formidable in the future as well. Thus, we should still bring them into my Crimsonbright League!"

"Yes," the white-robed Xia Emperor nodded. "Ji Ning is a Sword Immortal. I shall go seek out junior apprentice-brother Evergreen! Junior apprentice-brother Evergreen is a Sword Immortal as well. As for this Blackstone...it seems as though none of us are truly peerless with regards to the Dao of Formations."

"If you can't find anyone suitable, then you can accept this Blackstone yourself. Although your talent in formations isn't amongst the top within the Three Realms, it is more than enough to teach this Blackstone," Daofather Crimsonbright said.

The white-robed Xia Emperor nodded in acknowledgment.

Back within the main hall of the Skylight Palace.

Amongst the True Immortals and Empyrean Gods, Lu Dongbin was the strongest. He was ranked at the very top amongst the Pure Yang True Immortals of the Three Realms, and was a peerless Sword Immortal who had an extremely good chance of becoming a Daofather of the Great Firmament.

As for the Daofathers supporting him...they were Lieges of the Daoist Path.

He was viewed with great favor by those two Daofathers, and had even produced a disciple who became a Pure Yang True Immortal. Lu Dongbin's vision was particularly astute! Long before the others had realized how special Ji Ning was, Lu Dongbin had been able to somewhat sense it.

"Xiamang," Lu Dongbin said with a laugh, "Since Daofather Crimsonbright has not accepted Ji Ning as his disciple, then I'll shamelessly raise this topic again; Ji Ning truly has exceptional potential as a Sword Immortal, and I like him very much. I wonder, Xiamang, if you would be willing to give me some face and let me take Ji Ning. I truly do want to take on this disciple."

"Lu Dongbin..." The Xia Emperor shook his head. "Although Master didn't choose Ji Ning, he still praised him multiple times. So...please don't make things hard for me, Lu Dongbin."

"Xiamang, it is just a Wanxiang Adept." Empyrean God Seatopple pursed his lips. "Since Eastflower has asked this of you...can it be that Eastflower's face is worth less than a young Wanxiang Adept? In addition, your Crimsonbright League only has a single Pure Yang Sword Immortal, Immortal Evergreen, right? Immortal Evergreen isn't a good teacher; it's been so many years, but I've never heard of him producing a single Celestial Immortal."

The corners of the Xia Emperor's eyes twitched.

"Since Eastflower has made the request, just give him some face, Xiamang," the Immortal Elder of the Northlands spoke out as well.

At the beginning, Lu Dongbin had mentioned this in a joking way, but had been refused. But this time...he was being extremely serious.

Lu Dongbin had many good friends. He was very influential, and his backers were very powerful. All of the True Immortals and Empyrean Gods present aside from Sovereign Hao, who was also Daofather Crimsonbright's disciple, were speaking out on his behalf.

"Xiamang, you know what sort of a temperament I have. I've always been a blunt, straight-talker. I truly am intrigued by this Ji Ning, and I want to take him on as my disciple. Xiamang, help me out here. I'll owe you a favor and I won't forget it. What do you say?" Lu Dongbin spoke out earnestly.

The Xia Emperor was startled. A favor from Lu Dongbin? That was quite valuable indeed.

But...Daofather's Crimsonbright's words remained within his mind. Although the Daofather hadn't chosen Ji Ning and Blackstone, he still had a very good impression of them. He had said that perhaps Ji Ning and Blackstone would also be quite astonishing in the future...and that they had to be brought into the Crimsonbright League.

"Lu Dongbin, it's not that I won't allow it, it is that Master has given his orders." The Xia Emperor shook his head. "There's nothing I can do."

Lu Dongbin frowned.

The Xia Emperor could tell that Lu Dongbin was unhappy...but there was nothing he could do about it. He had to make this refusal.

Lu Dongbin shook his head and sighed. It seemed as though he truly was not destined to become Ji Ning's master! He didn't dare to actually kidnap and forcibly take away Ji Ning...after all, that would be the equivalent of slapping Daofather Crimsonbright directly in the face! A Daofather who had emerged from the primordial chaos and had survived into the present era...he absolutely would not offend such a person for no good reason.

"Then Ji Ning's Dao-companion, Yu Wei. I rather like this little lady as well. If I take her as my disciple, you won't stop me, will you Xiamang?" Lu Dongbin said.

"Haha, that's a small matter. Lu Dongbin, you can pick anyone you want from outside the top ninety-six. Even if you choose them all, it'd be fine." The Xia Emperor spoke out in a very magnanimous way. He knew that he had caused Lu Dongbin to feel unhappy, and so he naturally now spoke out in a way to make him feel better.

Lu Dongbin nodded, then turned his gaze towards King Yan's side, towards Yu Wei. She was currently holding hands with Ji Ning and whispering with him.

"Little girl, come over here," Lu Dongbin smiled towards Yu Wei. His voice rang out directly within her ears.

"Eh?" Yu Wei was startled. Raising her head to look over, she immediately saw that the Xia Emperor and the others were all looking towards her.

"Yu Wei, come here," the Xia Emperor said as well.

Only now did Yu Wei, rather puzzled and lost, rise to her feet. She began to walk towards them...and in doing so, caused quite a few of the Celestial Immortals and Wanxiang Adepts present to pay attention to her.

“Little girl,” Lu Dongbin said with a laugh as he looked at Yu Wei, “I, Lu Dongbin, wish to take you on as a disciple. Are you willing?”

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Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 37: Sword Immortal Evergreen

Lu Dongbin didn't mask his voice at all. It echoed throughout the entire main hall of the Skylight Palace, and all of the nearly thousand Celestial Immortals as well as the various Wanxiang Adepts were all incomparably surprised.

“Exalted Immortal Eastflower is taking on that little girl of the Black-White College?”

“Why is Lu Dongbin taking on this little girl?”

“Lu Dongbin's judgment is exceptional. Even I would like to take him on as a master, but he wouldn't even look at me! But why is it that today...”

Many of the Celestial Immortals present were rather jealous. Becoming the disciple of a Daofather was a stroke of tremendous karmic fortune! They didn't even dare to dream of such a thing, and so most of them actually hoped for becoming a disciple of a Pure Yang True Immortal.

Lu Dongbin was one of the very top True Immortals or Emyrean Gods, and his background was incredible as well. He was also superb at teaching his students! He was a passionate man, and whenever he took on a disciple, he would use all his heart in training them. Compared to him, many of the other True Immortals or Emyrean Gods were focusing on training in the Dao, and didn't care as much about their disciples.

“Lu Dongbin?”

“The legendary Lu Dongbin?” The Wanxiang Adepts, such as Adept Ninedeaths, Cangwu Jiu, Xiangtian Xiao, Youngflame Zhan, and the others all turned red-eyed with jealousy. They had fought into the top ninety-six, and some had even fought into the top twelve or top six!

Lu Dongbin's fame was such that even many ordinary mortals and commoners had heard of it. This was because figures such as Houyi, Father Kua, and the Eight Immortals of the High Caves were simply too famous and too well-known in the legends. As for Lu Dongbin...he was the leader of the Eight Immortals of the High Caves!

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Although they were red-eyed with jealousy, the Celestial Immortals all knew that this was the type of person Lu Dongbin was.

“Are you willing?” Lu Dongbin asked once again.

Yu Wei was stunned. This sudden, unexpected surprise had made her somewhat speechless. Of course she was willing! Who wouldn't be willing to be an apprentice to Lu Dongbin? This was something that was second to only becoming a Daofather's disciple!

But she had just become Dao-companions with Ji Ning...were they going to be separated just like this?

Yu Wei turned her head to look towards the distant Ning. Ning understood what she was feeling. Although he couldn't bear to let her go, he knew that Yu Wei was also a person whose heart was focused on the Dao. He nodded gently.

"Don't feel too much regret for your little lover." Lu Dongbin saw Yu Wei turn her head towards Ji Ning. He explained, "Your little lover is definitely going to become an apprentice to a True Immortal or Empyrean God as well; he's definitely going to spend some time by their side. And so, regardless of whether or not you accept me as your master, in a short period of time, Ji Ning himself will depart from the world of the Grand Xia."

Yu Wei now understood. She gave the distant Ning another glance. Ning himself repeatedly gestured with his eyes at her while nodding.

"Can I ask how long it will be?" Yu Wei asked nervously.

"At least a few decades, at most a century," Lu Dongbin said with a laugh. "Don't worry; once I hear that Ji Ning has returned to the world of the Grand Xia, I will soon let you come back and reunite with your little lover."

Yu Wei said with desire, "Then can Ji Ning take you on as his master as well?" She knew that Lu Dongbin was a Sword Immortal; he was quite suited to teach Ning.

"I want that too," Lu Dongbin said, shaking his head and sighing. "But unfortunately, this Grand Xia Emperor of yours won't allow it no matter what." As he spoke, he gave the Xia Emperor a glance.

The Xia Emperor just sat there smiling, not saying a single word. Clearly...there was no room for discussion on this at all!

Yu Wei nodded. She no longer hesitated at all. Falling to her knees, she called out respectfully, "Your disciple greets you, Master."

"Hahaha..." Lu Dongbin began to laugh loudly. "Good, good, good. To be able to take on a good disciple such as you...this trip of mine to this Conclave was worth it. Yu Wei, go spend some more time with your little lover; in a short while, when the Conclave concludes, we shall leave this world of the Grand Xia."

"Yes, Master." Yu Wei once more headed right back to Ning's side.

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"Yu Wei, congratulations." Yuchi Xiyue was very happy for Yu Wei. Her cousin's Dao-companion had become Lu Dongbin's apprentice; this was a joyous matter indeed.

"Ji Ning, after this Conclave concludes, the True Immortals and Empyrean Gods will leave. Master will take me away from this world of the Grand Xia as well." Yu Wei had a look of longing in her eyes.

Ning gently took Yu Wei's hand in his own. "Both of our hearts are focused on the Dao. An opportunity like this is rare; how can we let it pass by? In addition, I'm going to be apprenticed to a True Immortal or Emphyrean God as well. By then, I'll be stayed permanently by Master's side...and I too shall leave this world of the Grand Xia."

Although he wasn't going to be able to become a Daofather's apprentice...by becoming a True Immortal or Emphyrean God's apprentice, he would still have a powerful backer! He would also learn more about the various powers within the Three Realms! Ning had already decided to spend some time alongside the True Immortal or Emphyrean God and focus on training with him or her.

Yu Wei nodded. "Master said the same thing. He will probably take me away for a few decades, no more than a century. Once you come back, Ji Ning...Master will know and will quickly release me as well."

"We'll both work hard," Ning said softly. "We are both going to overcome the Celestial Tribulation and become Celestial Immortals. We truly be together for eternity."

"Together for eternity." Yu Wei nodded as well, her eyes slightly red. To be by the side of her lover for all eternity...how beautiful that would be.

"But can I truly be together for eternity with Ji Ning?" Yu Wei once more thought back to her past life, and her heart began to be filled with a surge of terror. "...no matter what, I will rather let my soul be destroyed than harm Ji Ning in the slightest. At least before I die...everything will be perfect."

Within one of the trillion minor worlds of the Three Realms.

This was a beautiful world with fragrant flowers and chirping birds. The people were simple folk. Although the world was separated into three nations, they usually just engaged in shouting matches against each other. Occasionally, some Immortal cultivators would compete against each other in order to win some advantages for their respective nations, but actual large-scale wars were very rare.

Whoosh. A tear in space appeared.

The white-robed Xia Emperor strode out from the void. Upon arriving within this minor world, he soon headed towards a mountain. Atop the mountain, there was a Daoist monastery, known as the Evergreen Monastery. Evergreen Monastery was extremely ordinary, and in this minor world very few knew of it. It was only known in the nearby counties and towns.

How could the people of this minor world have any idea that within this Evergreen Monastery, there was a truly exalted and peerless Sword Immortal.

"Junior apprentice-brother Evergreen, so all you do is train in the Dao alongside your four or five novices within this crappy monastery?" The white-robed Xia Emperor went to the back of the monastery, where several farm plots were located. A young man was next to a pool of water.

"You can manage your major world. As for myself, I have nothing holding me back. Why should I trouble myself with various things?" The young man said calmly.

"What about your disciples?" The white-robed Xia Emperor shook his head. "If you are going to stay in this monastery, why don't you bring those disciples of yours over and give them some good tutelage."

“Teachers can show you the way, but cultivation relies on one’s own abilities. I guided them for ten years and taught everything which I should’ve taught. It is enough. As for what they will end up like, and as for whether or not they will become Celestial Immortals...there’s nothing more I can do.” The young man sat down casually, scooping up a ladle of water from the water bucket in front of him and drinking it. He sighed to himself, “Such sweet water.”

The white-robed Xia Emperor felt resigned. Anyone capable of becoming a True Immortal or an Empyrean God was an expert of the Three Realms; even the Celestial Court would have to treat them with courtesy. Every person had a different personality. He was unable to persuade this junior apprentice-brother of his.

“I’ve come on Master’s orders,” the white-robed Xia Emperor said.

“Master?” The young man immediately became serious.

The white-robed Xia Emperor said. “You know that three or so decades ago, the Six Realms of Reincarnation suffered an attack and collapsed. The Three Realms are filled with hidden, dangerous undercurrents. A major storm is most likely coming, and it is unavoidable. And...the more chaotic an era, the more heroes will emerge from it into the Three Realms.”

The young man nodded.

“My Grand Xia world is blessed by karmic luck. During this Conclave of Immortal Destiny, even Master choose one of the top three to be his disciple, a man named Adept Woodpass. Even a disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu appeared in this Conclave,” the white-robed Xia Emperor said.

“Oh?” The white-robed man said in surprise, “One Conclave, two Daofather disciples?”

“According to Master’s instructions, all three of the top three in this Conclave are to be brought into our Crimsonbright League. Master himself chose Adept Woodpass, while the other two are known as Adept Blackstone and Ji Ning. Ji Ning is a potential peerless Sword Immortal; he’s only trained for thirty years, and even Lu Dongbin wanted to take him as a disciple. I didn’t let that happen, though. In addition...he was born shortly after the Six Paths of Reincarnation were destroyed. Perhaps he truly is blessed by tremendous luck,” the white-robed Xia Emperor said in a persuasive manner.

“No need to try and sway me.” The young man shook his head. “Whether or not Lu Dongbin takes on a disciple has nothing to do with me. That personality of his...he can even take on ordinary mortals as disciples. As for the fact that this Ji Ning has trained for just thirty years, and was born shortly after the collapse of the Six Paths of Reincarnation...that’s an utter joke!”

“The reason why heroes emerge from periods of chaos in the Three Realms is because those periods are periods of constant battle. Many experts will die, and their luck will dissipate from them and gather around others...” The young man continued, “With each storm in the Three Realms, old experts fall and new experts rise. Even some Daofathers fall, while new Daofathers emerge. The total number of experts in the Three Realms has remained constant.”

“Whether or not one will become an expert depends entirely on whether or not one can seize the right opportunity during periods of chaos in the Three Realms!”

“As for the time of their birth? Hmph, try that line on someone else.”

The young man wasn't swayed in the slightest.

The white-robed Xia Emperor could only laugh.

Even Daofathers could re-establish the cycle of reincarnation! Everyone knew what the secrets of reincarnation were. A person's destiny, however, wasn't determined by their birth; what mattered was what happened to them after it! Nobody was guaranteed to be a Daofather upon birth! There was no such thing. At most, one might be born into a good family, thanks to good karma stored up from a past life.

"And, senior apprentice-brother...it's not that I want to criticize you," the young man said, "But so what if a storm is coming to the Three Realms? Whether or not one takes on a disciple doesn't matter at all. What matters is one's personal power!"

"The only ones we can trust, that we can control, are ourselves!"

"Disciples can turn traitor. Subordinates can turn traitor. Even friends can stab you in the back...only by increasing your own power can you fundamentally grow strong," the young man said. "As far as I am concerned, this period of chaos in the Three Realms is a chance for me, Evergreen, to break through to become a Daofather of the Great Firmament. As for taking on disciples? Even if my disciple trained to become a Daofather, it wouldn't mean a damn thing for me!"

The white-robed Xia Emperor no longer said anything. He and Sword Immortal Evergreen were on two completely different paths; he himself was born from the lineage of the Primordial Imperial Clan, and so his way of thinking was naturally different. He immediately took out a scroll. "Take a look. These are the scenes of Ji Ning's duels."

The scroll unfurled. One scene of battle appeared after another.

"A Sword Immortal?" The young man nodded. He gave the white-robed Xia Emperor a small azure sword. "This kid truly is quite talented. Since Master has ordered it, then I shall take on this Ji Ning as my apprentice. This is my talisman; arrange for someone to give it to him. If he is willing to take me on as Master, then let him crush it within ten days, and I will go find him. After ten days, the talisman will automatically dissipate."

Even if a master was willing to accept an apprentice, the apprentice also had to be willing to take on this master.

Lu Dongbin had needed to ask Yu Wei for her agreement. The same was true for Sword Immortal Evergreen. If Ji Ning wasn't willing...then given his arrogance as a Pure Yang True Immortal, he naturally wouldn't run over to beg Ning to accept him.

"Alright." The white-robed Xia Emperor accepted the little azure sword, then said with a laugh, "Then junior apprentice-brother, I won't disturb your leisurely life in your monastery any more." After speaking, he vanished into thin air.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 38: A Friend Comes From Afar

The Conclave of Immortal Destiny had concluded.

The Skylight Palace. The various Celestial Immortals were all beginning to leave.

"It's rare that I'm allowed out, but I have to go back now." Empyrean God Seatopple opened his mouth, and all of the platters of delicacies on his table flew into his mouth. He then rubbed his belly, then said in satisfaction, "Xiamang, Eastflower, everyone, I'm going to take my junior apprentice-brother back now."

And then, he pulled the Sloppy Daoist by the arm. Whoosh! He flew onto a cloud and disappeared deep into the depths of the sky.

"Time to go, apprentice," Lu Dongbin said as he looked towards Yu Wei, who was next to Ji Ning in the distance.

Yu Wei and Ning were speaking to each other. Upon hearing Lu Dongbin urge her to leave, she couldn't help but feel even more reluctant to part from Ning. She gave him a tight hug, and Ning held her in his arms.

He could sense Yu Wei's heart. This was a woman with a cold exterior but a scorchingly hot heart. Upon becoming Dao-companions with her, he could sense the warmth of her heart.

"Wait for me," Yu Wei said softly.

Ning pressed his face against Yu Wei's, feeling the warmth of her skin. He whispered back gently, "Gotta. I swear it."

"No need for oaths." Yu Wei released Ning, tears appearing in her eyes. "I believe you." And then, she turned and ran to Lu Dongbin's side.

"Sorry for making you wait so long, Master," Yu Wei said hurriedly.

"Silly child, silly child." Lu Dongbin shook his head and sighed. A cloud appeared beneath their feet, and they too quickly flew into the skies and disappeared.

Ning raised his head to watch.

Atop the cloud, Yu Wei lowered her head to look at him.

Their gazes met...but soon afterwards, the cloud completely disappeared.

After this departure...they had no idea how long it would be before they met again.

"Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei and Ji Ning...they are very suited to each other." Ninelotus looked at Ning and Yu Wei, at the looks in their eyes as they parted. Their gazes were filled with longing and a reluctance to part. "The feelings between them are deeper than the feelings between myself and Ji Ning had been. My heart and Ji Ning's heart...they were never so close."

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"Let's go."

"We should leave as well."

Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta, the Immortal Elder of the Northlands, and the others all flew away gracefully as well.

“Junior apprentice-brother Woodpass, come with me to meet Master.” The Xia Emperor left alongside Adept Woodpass.

Instantly, the nearly thousand Celestial Immortals present all began to depart as well. Ji Ning and Yuchi Xiyue departed alongside King Yan, while Ninelotus left alongside the Dongyan Forefather.

Per King Qi’s command, the delegations from the 3600 commanderies and Four Seas began to leave in an orderly fashion. As for Ji Ning, he flew back to return to the Stillwater Commandery’s delegation.

“Ji Ning.”

“Ji Ning! The champion of the Conclave!”

“Adept Darknorth!” The delegates of Stillwater Commandery saw Ji Ning fly down from the skies. Instantly, they began to call out in celebration.

They didn’t know about the matter of the Daofather accepting a disciple. All they knew was that Ji Ning was the champion of this entire Conclave! This was an incomparable glory, a proud moment for the entire Stillwater Commandery.

“Master.” Little Qing transformed into a streak of light that flew towards Ning, then wrapped herself around Ning’s arm.

“Ning, child.” The Whitewater Hound flew to Ning’s side as well.

“Little Qing. Uncle White.” Ji Ning was feeling rather miserable due to Yu Wei’s temporary departure. He immediately felt much better; at least Little Qing and Uncle White would continue to accompany him.

“Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you are too awesome.” Mu Northson called out excitedly, “The champion of the Conclave. The champion! The entire world of the Grand Xia has 3600 commanderies, as well as countless islands in the Four Seas. You’ve only trained for thirty years, but you actually seized the championship. You are too awesome. The person I admire most in the world is you, senior apprentice-brother!”

“Congratulations, junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning,” Adept Vastriver said as he and others came over as well.

“Ji Ning.” Northmont Baiwei walked over as well, delight on his face. He pounded Ji Ning on the chest.

“What a fellow. When you first said you were participating in the Conclave, I actually tried to stop you. It seems I underestimated you! You are so formidable that you actually were able to become the champion of this Conclave. You are now a truly major figure in our Stillwater Commandery; in fact, your name will be ringing throughout the entire Grand Xia Dynasty.”

Ning could only laugh.

If this Conclave of Immortal Destiny had only been an ordinary one, then he would indeed feel quite delighted. But the most important part of this Conclave had been the Daofather’s choice of a disciple. As

for the empty title of 'champion', it wasn't that important. Sadly...he wasn't able to be apprenticed to the Daofather.

"Ji Ning, our Black-White College has really gained a lot of face this time," Immortal Fivecraze said in a gratified manner. "Both you and little Sloppy entered the top six, and you even became champion. Haha...our Black-White College has to memorialize this occasion. Even after a million years, even after a hundred million years...so long as our Black-White College still exists, we'll make sure that those who come after us know of this matter. This is the pride of our Black-White College!"

"Where is eldest apprentice-brother?"

"Where is senior apprentice-brother Sloppy?"

"And senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei, where is senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei?" One question after another.

Ning sent mentally to Immortal Fivecraze, "Eldest apprentice-brother was accepted as a disciple by a Daofather, Grand Emperor Xuanwu, while Yu Wei was accepted as a disciple by a Pure Yang True Immortal, Lu Dongbin. They have all been taken away from this major world."

"What..." Immortal Fivecraze was greatly shocked.

Grand Emperor Xuanwu?

Lu Dongbin?

Fivecraze was the longest living Loose Immortal the Black-White College currently had. He had met Celestial Immortals before, and had a vague understanding of the Three Realms. He knew what it meant for a person to become a Daofather's disciple. Lu Dongbin accepting Yu Wei as a disciple was also an earth-shaking matter for the Black-White College.

"Understood. Don't let anyone learn of this," Immortal Fivecraze said.

"Right." Ning nodded.

"And you?" Immortal Fivecraze sent mentally.

"I should be arranged to be apprenticed to a Pure Yang True Immortal," Ning sent. "The Xia Emperor told me to spend three days in the imperial capital to await word."

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Upon the conclusion of this Conclave, the various Celestial Immortals all departed. A long time later.

Whoooosh. In the air above the imperial capital. Deep within the void. A tunnel was ripped in space.

A white-robed youth with long, unbound hair leisurely strolled out from this corridor. He stared downwards, his gaze passing through space and seeing the vast imperial capital of the Grand Xia before him.

"Grand Xia?" The white-robed youth nodded gently. He quickly moved through the void, descending into the imperial capital.

He walked forward in a very relaxed manner. A short time later, he arrived outside King Yan's Estate.

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"Junior apprentice-brother." Outside King Yan's Estate, Ning gave Northson a hug, then separated. "Both myself and your senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei will be apprenticed to a Pure Yang True Immortal. Once the Xia Emperor's notification comes, I trust that I will soon follow the True Immortal to leave this major world of the Grand Xia. After this departure, it may be decades or a century before I return. It will be many years before we two brothers shall meet again."

Of his fellow disciples, Ning had the closest relationship with Northson. They were true, lifelong brothers.

"Senior apprentice-brother, you are following a Pure Yang True Immortal in order to overcome the Celestial Tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal. This is a good thing." Northson's eyes were turning slightly red. "However...I really can't bear to part from you, senior apprentice-brother."

"Hahaha, we two brothers will still meet again," Ning said.

"Although you will be following a Pure Yang True Immortal, don't get too cocky. I, Mu Northson, will also train hard. If you get lazy, upon your return, our big Champion of the Conclave might end up be weaker than me, Mu Northson. Ahaha, that would be a huge joke," Northson laughed.

Ning laughed as well.

"Alright, no need to send me off! When you return to the world of the Grand Xia, come find me," Northson said.

"Definitely. I'll definitely seek you out." Ning nodded.

"Right." Northson turned and left, riding an azure dragon and soaring into the skies. The other disciples had bid farewell to Ning long ago, after they left the imperial citadel. Only Northson, who was closest to Ning, had escorted Ning all the way to King Yan's Estate.

Ning watched him fly away atop the azure dragon. He watched for a long moment, then turned and led Little Qing and the Whitewater Hound into King Yan's Estate.

"Hm!" The white-robed youth who had been quietly watching from afar shook his head. "It seems this Ji Ning is a fellow who cares quite a bit about relationships. Not bad, no bad." As he spoke, he leisurely sauntered towards King Yan's Estate.

King Yan's Estate had many guards watching the gate, but when the white-robed youth leisurely sauntered through it, none of them seemed to notice a thing.

"The restrictive spells covering King Yan's Estate have a bit of power behind them. This new Celestial Immortal, King Yan...he's not too shabby." As the white-robed youth walked forward, he encountered quite a few maids and soldiers on his path. None of them, however, noticed a thing. It was as though he was invisible, as though he didn't exist.

The royal estate was very tightly guarded, and it was protected by restrictive spells. It was no weaker than any major sect. Logically speaking, as soon as someone entered, the master of this royal estate, King Yan, would have immediately noticed.

But the white-robed youth walked in without a single person noticing him!

Rustle...

By the side of a creek, there was an Immortal estate. This was the place where Ning was living.

“Ji Ning is just a Wanxiang Adept, but he’s not doing too bad for himself.” The white-robed youth walked to the door of the Immortal estate, then entered it. Not a single one of the spells covering the Immortal estate activated.

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Within the Immortal estate. Ning, who had just returned to the estate, quietly sat down within a pavilion. Yu Wei had already left along with her master, Lu Dongbin. This caused Ning to feel a melancholy feeling in his heart.

“Ji Ning, someone entered. Someone entered your Immortal estate.” The giant yellow bear’s voice rang out in Ning’s mind.

“Entered my Immortal estate? I’m the master of this Immortal estate; how could I not have noticed?” Ning’s face changed.

“He’s very powerful. Even I can only vaguely sense him; I don’t dare to really go test him,” the giant yellow bear said urgently. “This person is very powerful; he should be on the level of a True Immortal or an Empyrean God. Your Immortal estate is merely an ordinary residence-type magic treasure, and the door to your estate was open. How could you possibly notice someone like him?”

Ning was shocked. A True Immortal or an Empyrean God? This was someone comparable to the Grand Xia Emperor. They were quite rare in the Three Realms, and were very powerful.

“You became the champion of the Conclave, but not only do you not celebrate with friends, you actually sit here by yourself, drinking wine unhappily? Strange, quite strange.” An airy voice rang out, and a white-robed, long-haired youth strolled forward into the spacious courtyard.

Within the courtyard, Ning hurriedly rose to his feet.

“A friend has come from afar; is this not a wonderful affair?” The white-robed youth said with a smile, “Young friend Ji Ning, I’ve made quite a long and arduous journey to come to your place. Aren’t you going to at least invite me to have a cup of wine?”

“Senior, please do!”

Ning waved his arm, and the table before him became filled with Immortal nectar and spirit-fruit.

“Although the wine and the fruit are a bit lacking, I suppose they are edible.” The white-robed youth took a step forward and sat down in front of Ning. Picking up a gourd of wine, he took two sips.

“Senior, might I ask why you have come to see me?” Ning asked nervously.

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Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 39: The Most Mysterious Daofather

The white-robed youth laughed as he spoke. “Young friend Ji Ning, you are a bit too nervous. You don’t even know who I am, but you are asking me what I’m doing here. Aren’t you being a bit too impatient?”

Ning muttered to himself. Nervous? A Pure Yang True Immortal had just sat down in front of him. How could he not be nervous? After this Conclave, Ning had come to understand quite well that unless a True Immortal or an Emyrean God had taken a fancy to you, they wouldn’t pay you any heed, even if you were a so-called genius. After all, there were far too many ‘geniuses’, but how many would be able to overcome the Celestial Tribulation to become a Celestial Immortal? Much less become a Pure Yang True Immortal.

“Dare I ask who you are, senior?” Ning asked.

“A carefree figure of the Three Realms, born in the era of the ancient Primordial World, where I gained my Dao. I am Lord Jiang.” The white-robed youth said with a sigh, “I rarely roam the outside world, and even when I do I rarely use my own name. Thus, there are very, very few people who know of me.”

He then winked towards Ning. “I just told you my real name.”

Ning relaxed a little bit. It seemed as though this person bore him no ill-will.

“Also, don’t address me as senior this and senior that. You can just address me as brother Jiang,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said.

Ning was startled. Brother Jiang? For a Pure Yang True Immortal to tell him to refer to him as just ‘brother’...Ning was no fool. He naturally understood the meaning hidden within these words.

“But it seems if I don’t spell things out, you won’t be able to calm down.” The white-robed Lord Jiang glanced sideways at Little Qing and the Whitewater Hound. “Have your two spirit-beasts step back for now.”

“Alright,” Ning immediately said. He had Uncle White and Little Qing temporarily leave. A Pure Yang True Immortal could crush him to death; Ning was naturally going to listen to his instructions with obedience.

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Within the courtyard, only Ji Ning and Lord Jiang were present. They were seated facing each other.

“I imagine that you have already guessed that I have come today per the orders of my master to receive you,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said with a smile. “In other words, my master wishes to take you on as a disciple, and you shall become my junior apprentice-brother.”

Ning could barely breathe. He couldn’t help but ask, “Then brother Jiang, your master is...?”

“He is naturally one of the most supreme major powers of the Three Realms, a Daofather-level figure,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said.

Ning's eyes lit up. It was as he had thought. When this person had instructed him to refer to himself as 'brother Jiang', Ning had already been able to guess at what this was about. But upon hearing the full explanation, he still couldn't help but feel that this was inconceivable.

A Daofather!

He had fought and clawed to become the champion of this Conclave, but in the end, Daofather Crimsonbright still did not choose him to be his disciple. The Sloppy Daoist, in turn, was chosen as a disciple by Grand Emperor Xuanwu. There was nothing Ning could do about these things, and he had already resigned himself to becoming the disciple of a lower-ranked Pure Yang True Immortal. But now, a Pure Yang True Immortal named Lord Jiang had appeared, saying that he represented his master!

"Ji Ning." The giant yellow bear's voice suddenly rang out in Ning's mind. "Lord Jiang said that he was born in the Primordial Era, and gained his Dao in that era as well! But...I've never even heard of him. And he says his master is a Daofather...you need to figure out exactly which Daofather it is. Some of the Daofathers of the Three Realms were good friends of my master, Daoist Threelives...but some of them were his mortal enemies! Don't end up becoming an apprentice to one of his mortal enemies. Given a Daofather's vision, if you learn the Dao from him, he will sooner or later see hints of the truth and discover that there is a relationship between you and Daoist Threelives. If you become apprenticed to one of his mortal enemies, then you'll be throwing yourself up for capture."

Ning instantly came to his senses. He felt as though someone had just poured a bucket of ice water over him!

"Dare I ask which Daofather it is?" Ning asked.

Lord Jiang's eyes had a look of reverence in them as he spoke.

"Master was born from the primordial chaos, and was good friends with Pangu and Nuwa."

"He became famous in the Primordial Era, and has killed many Fiendgod Daofathers."

"His name is known throughout the Three Realms, but very few have ever seen him."

"The Buddhist Sangha, the Daoist Path; he is a master of both. With but a dream, he knows of all the affairs of the Three Realms."

"He has many disciples, but very few know this."

"In terms of who is the most mysterious figure in the Three Realms...it is my master!"

The white-robed Lord Jiang nodded as he spoke.

Ning, hearing this, was stunned. "Who on earth is he?"

"Mount Innerheart 1, the Tristar Crescent Abode...Patriarch Subhuti!" 2 The white-robed Lord Jiang's eyes lit up, and he smiled as he looked at Ning.

"It's him. It's him! The Tristar Crescent Abode...the most mysterious Daofather...the most secretive Daofather! Ji Ning, you've hit the jackpot. I...ahahaha...you really hit the jackpot! Patriarch Subhuti

actually knows about you. He actually knows about your existence. How in the world does he know?!” The voice of the giant yellow bear rang out within Ning’s mind. Clearly, he was incomparably excited.

“...is it really necessary for you to be so worked up?” Ning asked mentally.

“Of course! You have no idea how mighty he is! Ji Ning, let me put it to you this way...in terms of teaching disciples, Patriarch Subhuti is definitely one of the absolute most peerless figures of the Three Realms. What this Lord Jiang said earlier was absolutely correct; Patriarch Subhuti truly has produced many formidable disciples. However, Patriarch Subhuti has a rule; whenever the disciples he has taught leaves his side, unless he gives permission, they are forbidden from telling others that he is their master. Thus, even back in the Primordial Era, there were already many powerful and seemingly unaffiliated wandering Immortals who were actually under the command of Patriarch Subhuti!” 3

“Ordinary people don’t know about this, but my master, Daofather Threelives, did. He knew exactly how formidable Patriarch Subhuti is.” The giant yellow bear was extremely excited right now.

“Oh.” Ning asked, “Why is he the most mysterious, then?”

“Right, he really is the most mysterious Daofather!” The giant yellow bear said with absolute certainty, “In the Three Realms, not even Pangu or Nuwa were as mysterious as him! In fact, to this very day, no one even knows where his estate is located. Without his permission, no one can even find his estate.”

“The estates of the other major powers of the Three Realms are all findable; after all, major powers often interact with other figures of the world, and they will often invite their good friends into their estate.”

“Patriarch Subhuti has taken in many disciples, and also invites his friends over to his estate. But be it disciples or friends...upon leaving his estate, they’ll never be able to find it again. You must understand that all of his friends are also at the True God level. After having entered the estate once, how is it that they cannot locate it again? Isn’t this completely bizarre? Isn’t this very mysterious?”

“He’s that mysterious?” Ning was amazed.

Daofathers were major powers of the Three Realms who controlled a Heavenly Dao. For a Daofather to visit a place, then be unable to find it again afterwards? How bizarre!

“No one knows where his estate is. Even his disciples who have trained within the estate for many years are still unable to find it upon leaving. Unless Patriarch Subhuti nods and permits it, none of them can return.” The giant yellow bear sighed emotionally. “In the past, my master Daoist Threelives once said...in the entire Primordial World, of all the major powers, Maiden Nuwa would be ranked number one in terms of survival abilities, but right after her was the legendarily mysterious Patriarch Subhuti.”

“Patriarch Subhuti. He’s so secretive that other major powers can’t even find his estate. You tell me; how formidable are his survival skills?” The giant yellow bear sighed, “If Master had Patriarch Subhuti’s survival skills, he would definitely still be alive to this very day.”

Ning was speechless as he heard these things. This was an absolute bizarro amongst the major powers of the Three Realms. No one could even find his estate, and his survival abilities were second only to Maiden Nuwa.

“Patriarch Subhuti trains in both Buddhism and Daoism. 4 With a single dream, he learns of all the matters of the Three Realms. His power is simply unfathomable. This Lord Jiang said earlier that Patriarch Subhuti has slaughtered many Fiendgod Daofathers. Although I don’t know much about this, it should be true. There should have been Daofathers and True Gods who had fallen to him, and not just one,” the giant yellow bear said.

“What a formidable figure.” Ji Ning felt stunned.

“Most importantly of all, your master Daoist Threelives and Patriarch Subhuti were true lifelong friends who went through life and death together!” The giant yellow bear was extremely excited. “They were true lifelong friends! The relationship between Master and him was even closer than the relationship Master had with Daofather Crimsonbright. When Master forged this underwater estate, he even asked Patriarch Subhuti to come help out!”

“Ah?!” Ning now understood exactly how close the relationship between Daoist Threelives and Patriarch Subhuti was.

“Given Patriarch Subhuti’s status, he definitely won’t harm you at all,” the giant yellow bear said.

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Ji Ning was mentally speaking with the giant yellow bear. Gradually, traces of unbearable excitement and astonishment appeared on his face.

The white-robed Lord Jiang laughed as he watched. “My master learns of the matters of the Three Realms in a single dream. In his dream, he saw the Conclave in your world of the Grand Xia. It was as though he watched in person. During this Conclave, Master took no interest in anyone else; just you.”

“He watched personally?” Ning instantly understood. Perhaps True Immortals and Empyrean Gods would find it hard to discover his [Starseizing Hand], but greater powers could, especially one who was such an incredibly good friend with Daoist Threelives.

“In addition, Master instructed me to deliver a message. He told me to say: ‘Little yellow-furred bear, how have you been?’” Lord Jiang continued, “He said that after I delivered this message, you would agree to leave with me.”

Ning’s pulse began to speed up. Little yellow-furred bear? He was speaking of the spirit of the underwater estate!

“Ji Ning, Patriarch Subhuti must have discovered your [Starseizing Hand] through his ‘Dream of the Three Realms’. He must have guessed that you are Master’s heir. That’s why he personally ordered someone to receive you.” The giant yellow bear’s voice was filled with excitement. “Hurry, hurry and go! So long as you go to Patriarch Subhuti, we can learn about what has happened to Master.”

The spirit of the underwater estate...he truly wanted to know if his master was alive or dead.

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As Ning and the white-robed Lord Jiang were chatting, King Qi had arrived at King Yan’s estate.

“This Conclave of Immortal Destiny has concluded. Why have you come to my place?” King Yan said with a laugh.

“Because of Ji Ning, of course,” King Qi laughed as well. “His Imperial Majesty personally went to visit uncle-master Evergreen. You know what sort of a temper he has; he doesn’t like to teach students, and is an extremely solitary person. Still...since this was the Daofather’s order, uncle-master Evergreen nodded and agreed to accept Ji Ning as his disciple.”

“Oh. Uncle-master Evergreen is a Sword Immortal, while Ning was born to be a Sword Immortal. He is quite suited for teaching Ji Ning. However, I’m just worried that uncle-master Evergreen...” King Yan was rather worried.

“That’s not for you to worry about.” King Qi shook his head. “I’m here on his Imperial Majesty’s orders to give uncle-master Evergreen’s talisman to Ji Ning.”

“It seems as though Ji Ning really is going to become uncle-master Evergreen’s disciple,” King Yan said.

Because of his granddaughter, King Yan had actually been hoping for Ji Ning to be apprenticed to a better teacher. However...of the Pure Yang True Immortals under Daofather Crimsonbright’s command, the only Sword Immortal was Sword Immortal Evergreen.

The two chatted and laughed as they walked to Ning’s Immortal estate.

“Ji Ning,” King Yan called out.

1. In Chinese, this was ‘fangcun’, which literally means a square inch, but metaphorically refers to the workings of a person’s inner heart.
2. Subhuti is not only a famous disciple of Gautama Buddha in real history, he is also extremely famous as being the teacher of Sun Wukong, the person who taught Sun Wukong Daoist magic and his legendary 72 Transformations.
3. This is a play off what happened in Journey to the West. When Sun Wukong left Subhuti’s tutelage, Subhuti ordered him not to tell anyone that he had been Sun Wukong’s master; he knew how unruly this monkey was and was afraid he would lose face/be implicated if others realized that he was the one who had taught Sun Wukong.
4. This historical Subhuti was a Buddhist figure. Because he taught Sun Wukong Daoist magic in Journey to the West, he is often conflated as both a Buddhist and Daoist figure.

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Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 40: A Swift Departure

At the entrance to Ning’s Immortal estate.

Ning came out to the entrance to greet them. Upon seeing the two, he immediately said with respect, “Greetings, King Yan, King Qi.”

“Ji Ning, good news has arrived,” King Yan said with a laugh.

“Oh?” Ning was startled. Good news? Could it be that the Grand Xia Emperor had found a Pure Yang True Immortal to be his master?

The nearby King Qi said with a laugh, “His Imperial Majesty has sought out his junior apprentice-brother, Sword Immortal Evergreen. Sword Immortal Evergreen is a Pure Yang True Immortal. He is very powerful, and has thoroughly mastered the Grand Dao of the Sword. He is quite a famous Sword Immortal in the Three Realms...he is quite suited for teaching you.”

Ning nodded gently. Sword Immortal Evergreen?

“Ji Ning,” King Yan said in a lowered voice, “This Sword Immortal Evergreen is rather arrogant and aloof. You need to be careful around him and be very respectful.”

Ning’s heart twitched. To respect one’s master was only proper; that didn’t need to be said. But for King Yan, as a Celestial Immortal, to describe a Pure Yang True Immortal like Sword Immortal Evergreen as arrogant and aloof, then tell him to be very respectful...Ning thought to himself, “I imagine this Sword Immortal Evergreen isn’t merely ‘aloof’ and ‘arrogant’. Luckily, I don’t need to take him on as my master at all.”

“Don’t say so many things,” the nearby King Qi frowned.

King Yan laughed, saying nothing else.

“Ji Ning.” King Qi waved his hand, and a little azure sword appeared within it. “This is Sword Immortal Evergreen’s talisman. I’ll hand it to you now. All you need to do is crush it, and Sword Immortal Evergreen will come find you and take you away! Remember – you have to crush it within ten days. After ten days, the talisman will automatically disintegrate. By then, given Sword Immortal Evergreen’s temper, he probably won’t take you on as a disciple.”

Ning immediately accepted the talisman. “I understand.”

“The talisman is in your hands now. I’m going to leave now.” King Qi smiled towards Ning, then turned and left.

King Yan whispered softly, “Sword Immortal Evergreen has a rather bad temper. You have to remember this. Also, before you leave with your master, let Xiyue know. You don’t need to inform me of it. I’ll pray that when you leave, you’ll be able to learn some real abilities, and that you shall overcome your Celestial Tribulation in the future and become a carefree and unbound Immortal.”

Ning could feel King Yan’s caring towards him. “Thank you, King Yan. Ji Ning will remember it.”

“Good.” King Yan immediately left.

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Just moments later.

Yuchi Xiyue arrived at Ning’s estate.

“Cousin.” Ning didn’t want to part with her either. He truly was about to leave, but it wasn’t with Sword Immortal Evergreen; rather, it would be to meet the most mysterious major power of the Three Realms,

Patriarch Subhuti. After this departure, it would probably be decades or a century before he could return.

“Little brother.” Xiyue sat down, then took Ning by the hand. Her eyes were filled with tears...but they were tears of joy. “The two of us were together for two or three years, but it is now time to part. However...don’t feel unhappy. This is your chance, your chance to soar into the heavens. Although you weren’t able to become a Daofather’s disciple, it’s still quite good for you to become a Pure Yang True Immortal’s disciple.”

Ning truly wanted to tell his cousin that he was taking on Patriarch Subhuti as master.

However...

When he had gone to greet King Yan and King Qi, Lord Jiang had instructed him, “Remember, no matter what you cannot tell them of this. Upon Xiamang Xun learning of this, he will move to obstruct it. He might even pull in Daofather Crimsonbright, who stands behind him. That will make things troublesome.”

“Cousin, after I leave the world of the Grand Xia, you need to take good care of yourself,” Ning said. “Don’t let yourself suffer because of your hatred for the Youngflame clan. In the future, I will overcome my tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal. By then, dealing with the Youngflame clan will be much easier.”

“Right, right.” Xiyue nodded. “I get it. I get it.”

The two chatted for a long period of time. Xiyue only left when the sky was completely dark.

Within the Immortal estate.

“Brother Jiang, what should I do with this talisman of Sword Immortal Evergreen?” Ning pulled out the little azure sword. “If I crush it, Sword Immortal Evergreen will come take me away. If I don’t crush it, it will dissipate naturally.”

“Give it to me,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said with a laugh. He stretched his hand out, and the little azure sword flew into it.

“This world of the Grand Xia is part of the territory of Daofather Crimsonbright, after all.” Lord Jiang said with a laugh, “We can’t be too brash here. Fortunately...when a Pure Yang True Immortal takes on a disciple, the disciple has to be willing. If you don’t crush it within ten days, then Sword Immortal Evergreen will assume that you weren’t willing to accept him as your master...and they will have no idea that you’ve actually taken on Patriarch Subhuti as your master. They will probably think that you are adventuring in the outside world. Even if you reveal hints of it upon returning once you are powerful, causing someone to learn that you are Patriarch Subhuti’s disciple, so what? In the Three Realms, my master has quite a bit of face.”

Ning nodded. “Then my two spirit-beasts?”

“You can bring your spirit-beasts into the Tristar Crescent Abode,” the white-robed Lord Jun said. “However, they cannot take on Master as their teacher.”

“As long as I can bring them.” Ning nodded repeatedly in delight.

“If there’s nothing else, we can head out right now,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said.

“Right.” Ning nodded, then immediately called out, “Uncle White, Little Qing.”

The distant Little Qing flew over with a swoosh, wrapping herself around Ning’s arm. Uncle White arrived by Ning’s side as well.

“Uncle White, Little Qing, we are preparing to leave the world of the Grand Xia,” Ning said.

“Leave the world of the Grand Xia?” The two of them were both amazed. Leave this world? “To where?” Little Qing asked.

Ning turned to ask, “Brother Jiang, where is the Tristar Crescent Abode?”

“The Tristar Crescent Abode...it consists of a crescent hook and three stars. Tell me, what character is this?” The white-robed Lord Jiang said with a smile.

“A crescent hook and three stars? The character for heart ‘心’?” Ning instantly understood.

“Right. The character ‘heart’. The Tristar Crescent Abode is Master’s estate. The Three Realms is vast, but no one can find the location of Master’s estate. This place is a place where one can only go through the heart, a place you find with your heart,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said.

Ning instantly felt that this was incomparably mysterious. A crescent hook and three stars? This was indeed the character ‘heart’ 心. This name which Patriarch Subhuti gave his cavern estate was quite interesting.

“Patriarch Subhuti, the Tristar Crescent Abode...” Ning began to think back to one of the mythological fantasy novels he had read in his world, [Journey to the West]. [Journey to the West] was a novel written by ancient individuals, and it included Pangu, Nuwa, Patriarch Subhuti, and others. However, there was no mention of the three thousand major worlds or trillion minor worlds.

Ning had gone to the Netherworld Kingdom and been reincarnated before learning a few things about the Three Realms.

Ning now understood that every single world shared some legends, especially those regarding formidable figures such as Pangu, Nuwa, Houyi, and Kuafu, were discussed by countless people of the Three Realms. Novels like [Journey to the West] were influenced by even more ancient legends; for example, the legends of Pangu establishing the heavens or Nuwa creating humanity didn’t come from [Journey to the West].

Actually, in the world of the Grand Xia as well, there were some novels and literature regarding various Gods and Immortals; these novels even recorded down tales involving divine abilities such as [Heavenly Transformations] or the [Torch Dragon’s Eye], which compiled into various stories. Some of these stories were real while others were false. Some even got the names wrong!

Perhaps in the ancient days on Earth, there were actual Immortal cultivators. In fact, some humans on Earth might have been reincarnated Immortals who had awoken their previous memories, and so had left behind certain legends to the world.

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“The Three Realms have countless legends, and many of them have been compiled into novels. However...the true secrets of the Three Realms remain unclear to me, even though I have slaughtered Loose Immortals and received the legacy of Daoist Threelives.” Ning sighed to himself, “Why was the previous Primordial World destroyed and transformed into the three thousand major worlds and trillion minor worlds? Who on earth attacked the Six Paths of Reincarnation?”

These were mysteries!

“The Tristar Crescent Abode is an estate of one of the major powers of the Three Realms, and the most mysterious one at that. Although I’ve always remained within the Tristar Crescent Abode, I don’t actually know where it is. I have to have Master guide me into it in order to return.” The white-robed Lord Jiang said with a sigh, “Let’s go. Pick up your Immortal estate.”

“Right.” Ning willed it. Instantly, the Immortal estate was collected. Ning stood there on the grass next to the river, Little Qing around his arm and the Whitewater Hound by his side. The white-robed Lord Jiang said, “This journey will last decades or even longer. Is there anything you need to do?”

Ning shook his head gently. There was nothing.

The reason he had left Stillwater Commandery was because of the Youngflame clan’s pursuit. He had told Autumn Leaf and the leaders of the Ji clan that he would be leaving for a very long period of time! Yu Wei had already been taken away by Lu Dongbin to train in the Dao, while he had already told his cousin, Yuchi Xiyue, of his departure. He had also bade farewell to his fellow disciples of the Black-White College.”

“Then let us go.” The white-robed Lord Jiang willed a cloud to appear beneath their feet. The cloud floated upwards, carrying Lord Jiang, Ji Ning, and the Whitewater Hound to quickly soar into the skies, completely bypassing the restrictive spells as they flew deep into the void.

Soon, they reached the very highest parts of the sky.

Riiiiip. Lord Jiang waved his hands. The dim, twisting void above them was instantly torn apart, and a corridor emerged. Within the corridor, one could vaguely see twisted, distorted rainbow light.

“Let’s go.” The white-robed lord Jiang gave the little azure sword a toss, and it fell down many tens of thousands of kilometers towards the ground. He then led Ji Ning, Little Qing, and the Whitewater Hound into the spatial tunnel.

Whoosh.

The spatial tunnel quickly closed. Everything was back to normal.

Within the world of the Grand Xia...there was no longer a Ji Ning to be found.

Twelve days passed after the conclusion of the Conclave of Immortal Destiny.

The Xia Emperor was within a side hall of the Skylight Palace, seated in the lotus position with eyes closed.

“Eh?” The Xia Emperor suddenly opened his eyes, revealing a confused look. “Why has junior apprentice-brother Evergreen come?”

Soon, a young man walked into the side hall. The servants and guards present didn't seem to see him at all.

"Senior apprentice-brother," Sword Immortal Evergreen said.

"Junior apprentice-brother, why have you come to my place?" The Xia Emperor asked, puzzled.

"This is the twelfth day. The talisman I gave you has long since dissipated." Sword Immortal Evergreen shook his head. "Normally, I couldn't be bothered to come; after all, Ji Ning didn't crush the talisman, and so I couldn't be bothered to take him as my disciple. But since this was Master's instruction...I came to make a trip to this world of the Grand Xia. If Ji Ning is willing, I'll give him another chance to be my disciple."

"What did you say?!" The Xia Emperor was shocked. "Ji Ning didn't crush the talisman?"

"Right. He didn't crush it." Sword Immortal Evergreen shook his head.

"But Ji Ning left King Yan's estate long ago. I thought that you had taken him away. I thought that because of how arrogant and aloof you are, you simply didn't inform me." The Xia Emperor was flabbergasted. "I even did an investigation; he's no longer in the imperial capital of the Grand Xia. Lu Dongbin, Mahasthamaprapta...they wouldn't go so far as to offend the Daofather for the sake of this little fellow, right? Can it be that Ji Ning is just too young? He became the champion of the Conclave, but wasn't able to become the Daofather's apprentice, and so in his anger he decided not to accept a Pure Yang True Immortal as his master and instead left by himself?"

Sword Immortal Evergreen snorted coldly. "Oh? You say he left the imperial capital long ago? If that's the case, then senior apprentice-brother, I've already done all I can. This matter no longer has anything to do with me."

After speaking, Sword Immortal Evergreen turned and departed, quickly leaving this major world.

He really didn't care about Ji Ning at all. He had only made a trip here because of his master's instructions.

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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 1: The Senior Apprentice of the Daofather

Whooooosh.

Distorted rainbow light could be seen coming from within the torn-open void corridor. The white-robed Lord Jiang led Ji Ning, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing in moving through this void corridor.

"Eh?" Ning suddenly revealed a look of surprise, and the nearby Whitewater Hound and Little Qing stared in shock as well. This was because this void corridor's colors were fluctuating from fiery red that made it look like a tunnel of fire to a watery blue that made it seem as though they were moving through a tunnel of water...and despite flying through this corridor for enough time to boil a kettle of tea, they were still flying.

"Brother Jiang," Ning immediately asked, "Why have we been flying through this void corridor for so long? Can it be that it normally takes this long to fly through a torn open void tunnel?"

“No.” The white-robed Lord Jiang shook his head. “Normally, to leave a major world, after you rip open the fabric of space you can easily leave the world and enter the infinite void, then use a Greater Teleport and easily arrive at your destination. But the place we are headed to is Master’s Tristar Crescent Abode, the most mysterious place in the entire Three Realms. Ordinary techniques are completely useless in going to Master’s place.”

“Oh.” Ning nodded slightly.

“I’m not the person controlling this void tunnel right now; it is Master who is guiding us in,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said. “Through this void tunnel, we can directly access the Tristar Crescent Abode.”

“How much longer?” Ning look at the void tunnel surrounding him; it had just turned into a completely pitch-black color. The pitch-black tunnel was twisted and distorted as it spiraled forward, causing Ning to feel a vague sense of fear.

He felt as though if he were to be wrapped up into the distorted space, he would be ground to death.

“Soon, soon,” Lord Jiang said with a laugh. Just as his words came out...

Whoosh! A misty world suddenly appeared in front of the void tunnel. The white-robed Lord Jiang, Ji Ning, and the others flew out into the world.

“Here we are!” Lord Jiang stood there in midair, a look of delight on his face. He smiled as he swept the misty world with his gaze.

“This...this is the Tristar Crescent Abode?” Ji Ning stared downwards. What he saw was an infinitely vast world with many cities. He could tell just by looking downwards how vast this world was.

Lord Jiang said, “This is the world which Master established. In terms of size, it’s comparable to the world of the Grand Xia.”

“Comparable to the Grand Xia?” Ning, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing all nodded to themselves.

Ning asked, “So the Patriarch personally established this world? According to the legends, formidable figures of the Three Realms are able to establish some smaller worlds of a few tens of thousands of kilometers...but it’s actually possible to establish a world comparable to the world of the Grand Xia in size as well?”

“Haha...the world of the Primordial Era was established by Pangu. Compared to the various ‘major worlds’, it was unfathomably larger,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said, shaking his head and laughing.

“Although Master cannot do as Pangu did, he’s still able to establish an estate-world that is comparable to the Grand Xia in size.”

“This estate-world is completely separate from the outside world. It has its own cycle of reincarnation, and a miniature Netherworld Kingdom. After dying, the souls of the world will be reborn into this world anew,” Lord Jiang said with a laugh. “This estate world is actually a miniature version of the Primordial World of Pangu; it is completely outside the structure of the Three Realms. Thus, not even other major powers can enter it.”

Ning, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing were all secretly stunned. Completely outside the structure of the Three Realms...a completely stand-alone cycle of reincarnation...

Major powers truly were incredible!

“Mount Innerheart is at the very center of this estate-world.” Lord Jiang pointed towards the distance. “Right over there.”

Ning, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing all raised their heads to look. Indeed, they could vaguely make out the outlines of a mountain that was hovering in the skies.

“Let’s go.” The white-robed Lord Jiang led Ning and the others to fly out. The hovering mountains grew closer and closer, and one could even make out the fairy cranes and running beasts around it.

Whoosh. Lord Jiang, Ji Ning, and the others flew to the very top of the mountain, landing atop a mountain path. “If we follow this path to the very top, we shall reach the place where Master trains in the Dao and teaches his disciples,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said. Ning and the others followed him upwards.

The mountain path wended up the mountain, but fortunately there were stone steps to walk on.

After walking a short while, the white-robed Lord Jiang turned and moved onto a well-trodden pathway that led into a mountain forest. “Ji Ning, come with me to meet our eldest apprentice-brother.”

“Eldest apprentice-brother?” Ning felt slightly puzzled, but he followed the white-robed Lord Jiang deep into the forest.

“He was the very first to follow Master. You absolutely must not be disrespectful to him,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said.

“Right.” Ning nodded. As he walked forward, he could just barely make out a voice speaking out.

“A one, a two, a three and a four. A five and a six, a seven and an eight, a nine and a ten...now fall down!” As the bright voice rang out, a ‘crunch’ sound could be heard, followed by a rumble...

The white-robed Lord Jiang and Ning moved quite quickly. As they moved closer to the sound of the voice, they saw an enormous tree fall down. Through the other trees, Ning could just barely make out the figure of a woodcutter dressed in grass shoes and a grass hat. The woodcutter’s skin was swarthy and dark, but he was dressed quite simply.

The white-robed Lord Jiang walked over. “Eldest-apprentice brother.”

“Eldest apprentice-brother?” Ning was flabbergasted. This woodcutter? He was their eldest apprentice-brother?

The woodcutter in front of him appeared very ordinary and was dressed in a very ordinary manner as well. Ning’s judgment was quite astute by now, but no matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t see anything special about the tattered grass shoes or raggedy clothes; they seemed to be ordinary clothes, not magic treasures.

And...no matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t sense any presence or aura stemming from this woodcutter at all. In fact, Ning didn’t even feel the slightest hint of danger emanating from him. No matter from what angle Ning inspected him, this woodcutter seemed like an ordinary mortal!

“Whew.” The woodcutter rested his hatchet over his shoulder, straightened his waist, then turned and said with a laugh, “Haha, so it’s Lord Jiang. Why have you come to my place?”

“Per Master’s orders, I went to the world of the Grand Xia to bring our junior apprentice-brother. I’m back now, and I thought I’d bring him over to see you, senior apprentice-brother,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said.

“Junior apprentice-brother?” The woodcutter looked at Ning, looked at him quite carefully. His gaze, however, seemed quite ordinary. It didn’t seem to be the slightest bit penetrating.

“He’s our junior apprentice-brother. His name is Ji Ning, and he is currently just a Wanxiang Adept,” the white-robed Lord Jiang said. “Ji Ning, hurry up and pay your respects to our eldest apprentice-brother.”

“Greetings, eldest apprentice-brother,” Ning said while bowing.

The woodcutter laughed. “I’m just a chopper of firewood. Still, for you to be accepted by Master at such a young age means that Master must value you highly. Master is very good-natured, but you still need to work hard and not disappoint him.”

“Right.” Ning nodded.

“Alright, you can go now, Lord Jiang. Take this Ji Ning to meet Master,” the woodcutter said.

“Alright.” The white-robed Lord Jiang immediately led Ning away.

Back on the main mountain road.

Ning said, puzzled, “Eldest apprentice-brother...he isn’t a mortal, is he?”

When he saw the likes of Lu Dongbin and the Xia Emperor, he could clearly tell how incredible they were. But of course, it was also possible that this was because Lu Dongbin and the others hadn’t retracted their auras! But this woodcutter...no matter how hard Ning tried, he couldn’t sense even the slightest hint of cultivation about him. In fact, the woodcutter even had calluses on his hands, and there was some white hair on his head.

“Of course not,” Lord Jiang said. “From the Primordial Era to the present day, Master has taken in many disciples, and there are even quite a few True Immortals and Empyrean Gods. But in terms of power, eldest apprentice-brother is the undisputed number one! He’s far more powerful than the rest of us.”

“The undisputed number one?” Ning was stunned.

“Right. Only, ever since the destruction of the Primordial World, eldest apprentice-brother has never left this world of the Tristar Crescent Abode,” Lord Jiang said. “This is why there are very, very few people in the Three Realms who know of him.”

Ning couldn’t help but feel stunned. It was only after the destruction of the Primordial World that the three thousand major worlds and the trillion minor worlds were born. An unfathomably long period of time had passed since the creation of the three thousand major worlds, but this eldest apprentice-brother actually had the patience and temperament to never roam the Three Realms? Generally speaking, powerful experts would like to stroll about many of the places of the Three Realms. After all, each of the trillion minor worlds had their own unique aspects, and were quite exciting.

Lu Dongbin, for example, liked to play around in the mortal world. He had left behind his legacy in countless worlds.

The names of many formidable figures had been spread throughout the Three Realms. But eldest apprentice-brother had never left after the destruction of the Primordial World?

“What is his name?” Ning asked.

“Woodcutter,” Lord Jiang said.

“I meant his real name. Or his Daoist title,” Ning said.

“Real name, Daoist title...all I know is that eldest apprentice-brother is referred to as the woodcutter.” Lord Jiang shook his head. “I don’t know anything else. When you are training in the Dao on the mountain, you can come to this mountain forest to train. Perhaps he will see you and be willing to guide you.”

Ning nodded. So the senior disciple under Patriarch Subhuti’s tutelage was actually such a mysterious figure. Ning was quite curious as well.

Soon, Lord Jiang brought Ning to the entrance to the cavern. The entrance had a large stone in front of it, which had three words on it: Tristar Crescent Abode!

By each side of the entrance, there were two azure-robed Dao novitiates. For these two to be assigned to Mount Innerheart meant that they were monstrously talented figures themselves. However, here at Mount Innerheart, they were only viewed as ordinary figures. They were already quite delighted to be chosen as entrance guards.

“Patriarch.”

“Patriarch.”

The two novices respectfully bowed towards Lord Jiang. Lord Jiang was a Pure Yang True Immortal. His rank was extremely high!

“Mm.” Lord Jiang nodded, then brought Ning, the Whitewater Hound, and Little Qing through the entrance. The two novices naturally did not bar his way.

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They continued to walk forward into the cavern.

The insides of this Tristar Crescent Abode was quite beautiful and graceful. It had all sorts of fairy cranes and animals. Their auras were all retracted and hidden, but despite that Ning could still sense a tremendous degree of threat and power emanating from them.

The aura of the Tristar Crescent Abode itself was quite calm and peaceful. The various beasts and Diremonsters didn’t have even a hint of a baleful, savage aura at all. They seemed extraordinary docile.

“When the Patriarch takes on disciples, he doesn’t care about their birth or lineage. Thus, aside from humans, even many monsters and Fiendgods have come to learn the Dao from him,” Lord Jiang said with a laugh. “The Patriarch has a particular rule; anyone who comes to Mount Innerheart is forbidden

from fighting with the other disciples. If any disciple dares to assault another, the Patriarch will immediately intervene to suppress the fight and shatter his soul!”

“No matter who! Even I am not permitted to act against those various younger generation disciples. If I do, then Master will kill me as well,” Lord Jiang said. “This is an iron rule that no one can violate.”

Ning nodded. No wonder the aura here was so peaceful. So all types of battle were completely forbidden. The Patriarch himself was at the top of the mountain. Who would dare act wildly?

They continued to walk forward. On the path upwards, they heard various greetings, such as ‘Patriarch’, ‘uncle-master’, ‘uncle-master’, ‘Patriarch’, and more. Clearly, Lord Jiang’s status was very high.

“Master is inside.” Lord Jiang pointed to an ordinary-looking Daoist monastery up ahead. There were two more Dao novitiates standing in front of the monastery.

“Uncle-master, the Patriarch instructed us long ago that Ji Ning can be brought straight to him. There’s no need for any report to be made,” one of the novitiates said with a smile.

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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 2: The Status of Daoist Threelives

“The two spirit-beasts should wait here for now,” the Dao novice instructed.

Ning nodded. Little Qing and Uncle White both obediently stood to one side, waiting silently. Both of them knew quite well that the person within this Daoist monastery was an awe-inspiringly famous supreme power of the Three Realms, Patriarch Subhuti.

“Let’s go.” The white-robed Lord Jiang led Ning directly into the monastery.

“Uncle White, Master is going to go meet a Daofather. I feel like I’m dreaming.” Little Qing’s eyes were filled with excitement.

The Whitewater Hound nodded gently as well. He, too, was still in a state of shock. That little child who had trained in the sword and in archery by his side...he was actually about to become an apprentice to a major power, Patriarch Subhuti. “A person’s fate truly is unfathomable.”

Within the monastery.

There was an empty region filled with many prayer mats. In front of this empty region, there was an elevated platform, atop which there was another prayer mat. On this elevated prayer mat, there was a skinny, white-bearded elder. This skinny elder was dressed in loose robes. He was seated in the lotus position, and he emanated an aura that caused others to feel at peace in their heart.

“He is Patriarch Subhuti?” Upon seeing this white-bearded elder, Ning couldn’t help but secretly feel nervous. This was a truly major power, a power that had even killed other Fiendgod Daofathers, a power that was acclaimed as the most mysterious Daofather of the Three Realms!

How could Ning not feel nervous in front of such a person?

“Master, I’ve brought Ji Ning over,” Lord Jiang said with great respect.

“I bow in respect to you, Daofather,” Ning said with great respect as well.

Patriarch Subhuti opened his eyes, looking at Ning. A hint of a smile appeared on his face as he nodded gently. He then instructed Lord Jiang, "You can leave for now. Ji Ning can stay by himself."

"Yes." The white-robed Lord Jiang respectfully departed, leaving behind only Ning and Patriarch Subhuti.

Patriarch Subhuti said with a calm smile, "No need to be nervous. Pick any prayer mat and sit down first."

"Yes." Ning chose a prayer mat, then sat down in the lotus position.

"I watched the Conclave of Immortal Destiny of the world of the Grand Xia. Of the participants, you, Woodpass, and the Sloppy Daoist were the most outstanding," Patriarch Subhuti evaluated.

"Crimsonbright ended up choosing Woodpass...and this was as I expected. In choosing disciples, Crimsonbright cares about mindset and temperament the most. The temperament of that Woodpass truly is most suited to him."

Ning couldn't help but sigh in secret. The spirit of the underwater estate had said that Patriarch Subhuti was very good at teaching students. Comparatively speaking, Daofather Crimsonbright and Grand Emperor Xuanwu's teaching abilities were significantly lower. For even Patriarch Subhuti to praise both Woodpass and Sloppy as excellent meant that they truly did have potential.

"But in my eyes, you have even more potential than the other two," Patriarch Subhuti said.

Ning felt a surge of joy in his heart. This was the very first time someone had said that he had more potential than Sloppy and Woodpass...and the speaker was Patriarch Subhuti!

"The path of Immortal cultivation is filled with many dangers and obstacles. Thus, with each step, you need to leave a firm footprint as you walk forward in a stable manner. Your heart must be stable as well. This is indeed true," Patriarch Subhuti said. "From this perspective, Woodpass and Sloppy are both excellent disciples. Their foundations were the most stable amongst the contestants in the Conclave, and their hearts were also the most stable and calm as well."

"However...everything in this world is divided into yin and yang," Patriarch Subhuti said. "Although it is important to be stable and solid, it is also important to be sharp."

"You need to be stable, but you also need sharpness."

"Stability is yin, while sharpness is yang! When yin and yang support each other, one can walk farther on one's path." Patriarch Subhuti laughed. "Ji Ning, you are far 'sharper' than the other two, and your foundation is quite solid as well. Only...a disciple like you is harder to guide and teach. It is very easy to teach disciples like Sloppy and Woodpass. So long as you let them slowly train and slowly adventure, they will slowly rise in power."

"As for you...your rate of improvement will be faster, but things will also be more risky. Your future potential might be higher than theirs, but you might also perish midway." Patriarch Subhuti looked at Ning. "Today, I shall impart a few words to you. You need to memorize them."

"The path of Immortal cultivation... your goals should be distant and grand, with Pangu and Nuwa as your models."

“The path of Immortal cultivation...it requires you to lower your head and watch the road, for you to remember to maintain a solid foundation. Do not merely think about soaring into the skies; when a bird soars too far, its eggs might be stolen and destroyed. It will perish, its Dao gone.”

“The path of Immortal cultivation...it requires caution. It is a boat that will sail for ten thousand years that you must control with care.”

“The path of Immortal cultivation...it requires sharpness. Only with a heart that is filled with a desire to charge into the heavens can you walk even farther on this path.”

Patriarch Subhuti’s words were simple, but they struck at the very foundation of an Immortal cultivator’s heart and mind.

Everyone summoned before Patriarch Subhuti as a student had superb talent and comprehensive abilities. What determined one’s accomplishments after that...was the heart!

“Ji Ning shall firmly memorize these words,” Ning said seriously.

“How to make your goals grand but not too high...how to be cautious and yet have the desire to charge into the heavens...you will need to handle this yourself. The world is divided into yin and yang, and between yin and yang lies the heart,” Patriarch Subhuti said.

Ning nodded.

As soon as the Patriarch had met him, he had imparted these words. Ning understood how important these words were, and also the principles which the Patriarch spoke of. However...some things were easy to ‘understand’ but hard to ‘carry out’. On the path of Immortal cultivation, one would need to constantly remind one’s self, so as to prevent one’s self from embarking on a wrong path. These four things the Patriarch had advised him regarding was like four signposts on the Immortal path that would constantly remind him.

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Patriarch Subhuti continued to speak. “I watched the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. You should have learned the divine ability, [Starseizing Hand].”

“Yes.” Ning admitted it. Since the Patriarch himself had said the words [Starseizing Hand], how could he even think about hiding it?

“My fellow Daoist Threelives...he finally has a true successor. His divine ability has once more reappeared in the Three Realms!” Patriarch Subhuti let out an emotional sigh. “Little bear, why haven’t you come out yet?”

Whoosh. A figure suddenly appeared out of nowhere next to Ning. It was the giant yellow bear.

“Eh?!” Ning realized to his astonishment that the giant yellow bear next to him was quite solid and seemingly real, as though he were a living creature. He didn’t seem as illusory and dreamlike as he did when he was the spirit within the underwater estate.

“This little bear pays his respects to the Daofather.” The giant yellow bear fell to his knees, pressing his forehead against the ground.

“So indeed, Ji Ning, you managed to enter the Starseizing Manor and learned the divine ability within it.” Patriarch Subhuti nodded.

Ning revealed a surprised look. “Patriarch, the Starseizing Manor...?”

The nearby giant yellow bear explained, “The ‘Starseizing Manor’ is the true, original name of this underwater estate. Although the estate was left behind by Master for his successors, it was also the estate which Master lived in. In the past, Master would often receive his guests within the Starseizing Manor, and even invite some Fiendgods to listen to him expound upon the Dao.”

Ning instantly thought back to the many giant prayer mats in the middle of the underwater estate. Indeed, many people must have come to listen to lectures on the Dao.

Patriarch Subhuti said, “The relationship between Threelives and the Starseizing Manor was similar to the relationship between myself and the Tristar Crescent Abode. In the past, when Threelives knew that the upcoming tribulation would be a hard one to overcome, he made careful preparations, adding a vast quantity of treasures into his estate. He even melted down and extracted the essence of multiple Protocosmic spirit-treasures and invited multiple major powers over in order to forge it. Afterwards, he gave it up and had this little bear search for a successor for him.”

“I ask for your guidance, Daofather.” The giant yellow bear pressed his head repeatedly against the ground, his eyes brimming with tears. “Tell this little bear...where is Master? Is he alive or is he dead?”

The sound of his kowtowing rang out as he pressed his head against the ground repeatedly. Clearly, he desperately wanted to know this answer. He had waited countless ages for this day.

Thud. Thud. Thud.

Upon hearing this, a complicated look appeared on Patriarch Subhuti’s face. He was silent for a moment, then said, “Threelives was my very best friend...my lifelong bosom friend! We met each other in the primordial chaos and adventured together. I was a bit more reserved, whereas brother Threelives had a sharpness that couldn’t be hidden! I enjoyed comprehending the cosmos and the various mysteries of the Heavenly Daos; I didn’t involve myself in the various power struggles of the Primordial Era. Brother Threelives, however, desired to do battle against the heavens and the earth. He loved combat, and he had many Fiendgods who followed his command. He carved out an enormous territory within the Primordial World for himself, and was referred to within it as the Godking.”

“Because very early on in his training, his arm had been severed, he trained painstakingly until he finally developed the utterly astonishing divine ability, the [Starseizing Hand]!”

“True Gods of Primordial Chaos are innately predisposed to enjoy battle. Even many Ki Refining Daofathers are unwilling to engage in life-and-death battles against True Gods of Primordial Chaos. After brother Threelives developed his [Starseizing Hand] divine ability, especially the Sixth Cycle of it, he reached an unfathomable level of power. He was extremely famous for his power even in the Primordial Era, and was ranked as one of the top True Gods.”

Patriarch Subhuti’s gaze was rather dreamy as he slowly spoke. “However...he was unable to comprehend a Heavenly Dao, and so his danger sense was comparatively weaker. That great tribulation that came...it was the greatest tribulation which had occurred ever since Pangu had established the

universe. Threelives insisted on participating in it. I tried to stop him, but he was filled with a desire to fight; he wasn't willing to shrink back. He knew that it would be incredibly dangerous...but his hot-blooded nature made him decide on going. Before leaving, he wanted to ensure that his [Starseizing Hand] wouldn't be lost with him, and so he asked many friends to help him out. With their help, with his original estate as a raw material, and with many melted down treasures, he managed to create this new Starseizing Manor, meant to pass down his legacy."

"After he created the new Starseizing Manor, the tribulation came...and without any hesitation, he went to welcome the battle."

"That battle...I shrank back from it." Patriarch Subhuti's gaze was misty.

Ning, hearing this, couldn't help but feel his heart shake. Patriarch Subhuti had shrank back? The greatest tribulation to occur ever since Pangu had created the universe?

"That tribulation, the greatest tribulation since Pangu had created the universe...the very first parts of it caused the Primordial World to shatter. Countless experts and Fiendgods fell. Figures that were even more powerful than Threelives fell as well." Patriarch Subhuti sighed and shook his head. "Miserable. It was miserable. Threelives loved battle, and so of course he took part. His divine ability, the [Starseizing Hand], truly was one of the most supreme of grand divine abilities; even Nuwa herself praised its power. Threelives fought like a man possessed, and multiple Fiendgod Daofathers perished by his hand. As for myself, I relied on the [Dream of the Three Realms] to watch the battle; I didn't participate."

"This divine ability was forged from Threelives' innate love for battle, as well as some guidance from both Pangu and Nuwa. Only then was this divine ability developed. The creation of a divine ability requires talent. Although I have created far more divine abilities than Threelives, I've never been able to create one that was comparable to the [Starseizing Hand]." Patriarch Subhuti looked towards Ning. "For such a divine ability to have passed down to you...no matter what, you cannot let it sink into the dust and disappear."

Ning nodded repeatedly.

So Daoist Threelives had relied on the [Starseizing Hand] to kill multiple Fiendgod Daofathers. From what Patriarch Subhuti was saying, this divine ability truly was incredibly terrifying.

The giant yellow bear, however, felt his heart shake upon hearing these words. "Daofather, my master, he..."

Ning looked towards Patriarch Subhuti as well. Was Daoist Threelives alive or dead? This was a question that he had wanted to know for a long time as well.

"Little bear..." Patriarch Subhuti looked at the giant yellow bear. He let out a soft sigh.

The giant yellow bear's heart instantly trembled. His face changed, and he repeatedly pressed his head against the ground, kowtowing so hard that deep thudding sounds could be heard. "Please inform me, Daofather. Is Master dead or is he alive?"

"Little bear...actually, in your heart, you've known the answer all along. Why must you ask?" Patriarch Subhuti shook his head.

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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 3: The Patriarch Accepts a Disciple

"I..." The giant yellow bear looked at the Patriarch.

"He died. He died long ago. He died within that tribulation." The Patriarch shook his head. "Given Threelives' temperament, if he was still alive, how could he not come back for you? How could he have let you drift through countless ages by yourself? Little bear, you clearly knew the truth...you just weren't willing to believe it."

Drip! Drip!

One teardrop after another fell onto the ground. The giant yellow bear's kneeling body was shaking. He let out an agonized moan. "Nnnrragh..."

The agonized cry caused Ning's own heart to feel sour as well.

"Master...master...master..." The giant yellow bear raised his head, howling madly. Daoist Threelives was like his father. Only a long time later did the kneeling bear say, "Forgive this little bear for his earlier outburst."

"Alright," the Patriarch said, "You can go back to the Starseizing Manor. You cannot break away from the Starseizing Manor for now."

"Yes." The giant yellow bear responded respectfully, then disappeared, having once more returned to the underwater estate.

Although Ning felt moved by the depths of the feelings the spirit of the underwater estate had for Daoist Threelives, he had noticed a few puzzling points. Since the giant yellow bear was the spirit of the estate...why did he seem like he was a living creature? He even shed tears? And the Patriarch had even said that he couldn't break away from the Starseizing Manor yet? Could it be that he could in the future?

However, given that the spirit of the estate had already been within it for countless years without breaking free, it probably would take it a very, very long time before succeeding.

"Ji Ning." The Patriarch looked at Ning. "Threelives is dead. I will teach you the Dao in his place. Are you willing to take me as your teacher?"

Ning immediately fell to his knees. "Your disciple greets you, Master!"

"Mm." The Patriarch revealed a hint of a smile. "From today onwards, you shall be one of the honorary disciples of my school. Once you become a Celestial Immortal after your tribulation, you shall become my personal disciple."

"Yes," Ning said respectfully.

"There aren't too many rules in my school. Just two."

"One: You must not be disobedient and unfilial."

"Two: Without my permission, in the outside world you cannot say that I am your master," the Patriarch said. "If you violate these rules...for a lesser infraction, I will kill you, wipe your memory, and return you

to the cycle of reincarnation. For a severe infraction, I will destroy your soul. For an extremely severe infraction...I will make your soul suffer an eternity of pain through truefire.”

Ning said respectfully, “Your disciple understands. Then...when can I say that I am your disciple?”

“When the time comes, you shall naturally be permitted,” the Patriarch said with a laugh. “Alternately, if you can reach your eldest apprentice-brother’s level of power, you can also tell whoever you please.”

Ning was secretly speechless. Eldest apprentice-brother? He was the number one expert amongst the many disciples. Even the white-robed Lord Jiang sighed at his own inferiority. How could it possibly be easy for him to reach such a level of power?

“As for whether or not you act virtuously or evilly in the future, I won’t interfere. I only ask that you act in accordance with your true nature,” the Patriarch said.

“Yes,” Ning said.

“Step forward. Come to stand in front of me,” the Patriarch instructed. Ning was startled, but he moved forward, moving up the steps and walking to the Patriarch’s side.

Suddenly...

The Patriarch stretched a finger out, tapping Ning on the center of his forehead. This was a simple tap, but it caught Ning completely off-guard. The tap landed directly on his forehead.

Rumble...

Ning’s entire body turned soft. He sat down on the ground, then shut his eyes. He just sat there.

The Patriarch smiled as he looked at Ning. He then closed his own eyes as well, no longer paying any attention.

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A lonely corridor. The two sides of the corridor were covered with paintings of various sword-art techniques. The sword-arts in the paintings were even moving, displaying the profound mysteries within.

Ning walked forward through the corridor, staring at the endless sword-arts lining the two sides.

“These sword-arts are fairly ordinary; they aren’t even comparable to the first level of the [Three-Foot Sword].” Ning walked forward.

He forgot why he had come here.

He forgot about the past.

All he knew was that he was walking deeper and deeper through this corridor.

The sword-arts on the two sides continuously moved about. They even managed to separate from the walls, swirling around Ning and allowing him to understand the mysteries within them.

“This place...has reached the power of the second stance of the [Three-Foot Sword].”

Ning continued to walk forward. After walking for a short period of time, the sword-arts lining the halls began to demonstrate themselves in front of Ning, as though displaying the Dao of the Sword in fine detail. Ning had originally thought that he had a high level of comprehension of the Dao of the Sword, but he now realized that his insights were insufficiently detailed!

Evil...dominating...arrogant...lonely...savage...all sorts of sword-arts were being displayed before him.

“This place...has reached the level of the third stance of the [Three-Foot Sword].”

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He had no idea how long he had been walking for.

“This place...has already reached the level of the seventh stance of the [Three-Foot Sword].” Ning continued to walk forward, constantly interacting with large amounts of marvelous sword-arts. Ning’s foundation became increasingly solid and stable. Although he had long ago reached the level of the seventh stance, his insights into the Dao of the Sword were now significantly greater than before.

.....

After yet another long period of time.

“This is now at the level of the eighth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword].” Ning felt that walking forward was becoming increasingly difficult. The countless sword-arts around him were constantly transmitting all sorts of profound mysteries to Ning. Ning was constantly being buffeted by them. This made his walking pace through the corridor to grow slower.

.....

“The level of the ninth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword].” The sword-arts became increasingly unfathomable. Every single sword-art surrounding him was comparable to the ninth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], and countless sword-arts were on display. Although Ning couldn’t comprehend them, the fundamental mysteries of these sword-arts were firmly imprinted onto Ning’s soul.

.....

As he walked forward, the techniques vastly surpassed the [Three-Foot Sword].

If there were more stances to the [Three-Foot Sword], then the later sword-arts were comparable to the tenth and the eleventh stance...

.....

Ning was completely submerged in the sea of swords. As he walked through the corridor, his heart and soul was completely filled with all sorts of sword-arts, and the increasingly unfathomable sword-arts brushed past his heart. Although he didn’t understand them, this baptism by countless sword-arts caused Ning to become extremely familiar with the profound mysteries.

A long, long time passed.

It felt as though thousands of years had passed. Ning finally saw the end of this corridor. The end was an enormous, glowing streak of sword-light.

Ning didn't know why he was walking towards it. He didn't know whether or not he should stop. And so, just like that...he walked to the end of the corridor. His body became submerged into that giant sword-light.

Rumble...

A vast flood of mysteries flooded his soul.

The vastness of the Dao of the Sword...all of its mysteries...Ning was touching it all right now. The countless sword-arts he had interacted with earlier in the corridor also flashed through Ning's mind, causing his heart to become even closer to the Dao of the Sword.

"Eh?"

Ning suddenly opened his eyes.

He was still seated on the dais. Before him, seated on a prayer mat, was the loose-robed Patriarch. The Patriarch opened his eyes, smiling as he looked at Ning.

"I...this..." Ning stared at his surroundings. Everything felt so fake and illusory.

Only after a long period of time did his three decades of memories completely recover. The marvelous sword-arts that he had seen were now suppressed and hidden deep in Ning's soul.

"Master, I, I..." Ning nervously looked at the Patriarch. He felt as though thousands of years had passed. It had taken him so long to recover his decades of memories.

"What's wrong? Didn't you just doze off?" The Patriarch laughed.

"Master, how long did I sleep for?" Ning asked.

"Not too long. The amount of time for a stick of incense to burn down," the Patriarch said.

"But I...I feel as though thousands of years passed," Ning said.

The Patriarch said, "All I did was apply the [Thousand Year Dream] technique to let you truly experience the complete Dao of the Sword for once. From the very start of the Dao of the Sword...to the very end, the completion of the Dao of the Sword.

Right. The [Thousand Year Dream]. It truly did feel as though he had been in a dream. He had lost almost all of his cognitive abilities; all he could do was walk forward along the corridor in a daze.

"All I did was let you sense the complete Dao of the Sword for once. Your own Dao of the Sword hasn't risen in level that much," the Patriarch said. Ning, however, knew very well that this [Thousand Year Dream] had been tremendously beneficial to him.

Although he was still only able to execute the seventh stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], his understanding of the sword was now far more stable and solid than it had been before. And as he continued to move forward on the Dao of the Sword...he would feel a vague sense of recognition of what to do next. In fact, he would even have a vague sense of what it felt like to completely master the Dao of the Sword.

The path of Immortal cultivation was akin to a blind man using his sense of touch to search for rocks which would allow him to ford a river. Now that he had vague understanding of the path forward...he would be able to move through it much more quickly.

“Thank you, Master.” Ning immediately fell to his knees.

“I just gave you a single helping hand. How much you can make of it is up to you.” The Patriarch pointed gently, and a streak of light flew directly into Ning’s mind.

Ning could sense a large amount of information pouring into his brain. Only after a long period of time did he become clear-minded again.

“The [Darknorth Sutra]? The four scrolls of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]?” Ning could sense the cultivation techniques that were now within his soul.

The first scroll of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] was divided into the Houtian, Xiantian, and Zifu levels.

The second scroll of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] was divided into the Wanxiang, Primal, and Void levels.

The third scroll was the Empyrean God scroll!

The fourth scroll was the True God scroll!

“The [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] was created by Crimsonbright. Even Nuwa praised this technique, and it truly is an exquisite specimen that allows you to train all the way to the True God level,” the Patriarch said. “As for the [Darknorth Sutra], it is a water-element Ki Refining method that was created by Daofather Carefree; it will allow you to train all the way to the level of Daofathers of the Great Firmament.”

“One is Body Refining, the other is Ki Refining. In the future, they shall serve as your foundation,” the Patriarch said.

“Yes.” Ning was absolutely delighted. [Darknorth Sutra]? Something which Daofather Carefree had created? Just from this alone, he could tell that this was one of the most supreme Ki Refining techniques of the Three Realms.

“In the Three Realms, Ki Refining Techniques and Body Refining Techniques aren’t that valuable,” the Patriarch said calmly. “Divine abilities and secret arts are much more valuable.”

However, not even the Grand Xia Emperor possessed techniques like the [Darknorth Sutra]. Only someone on Patriarch Subhuti’s level would dare describe it as ‘not that valuable’.

“My Mount Innerheart has two Dao-Palaces which contain all things within them. Formation techniques, construct techniques, the Dao of the Sword, the Dao of the Saber, Taiji, lightning arts, lotus arts...it includes all types of techniques, as well as many divine abilities and secret arts. It will be up to you to acquire them, if you can,” the Patriarch said calmly. “The Dao cannot be casually transmitted. If you wish to learn, then you must show the ability to learn.”

“Your disciple understands,” Ning said respectfully.

“Go, then. Calmly focus on studying the Dao, here in my Mount Innerheart. Only when your power is sufficient shall you be permitted to leave the mountain and return to your world of the Grand Xia,” the Daofather said. “And when you leave my tutelage and leave the mountain, I shall give you two great gifts.”

“Master...at what level will my power be ‘enough’?” Ning asked.

“When you reach it, I will tell you,” the Patriarch said.

Ning was instantly speechless. He was being told to study the Dao...but he didn’t even know when he would be allowed to leave his master’s tutelage.

“Go now,” the Patriarch said, calmly closing his eyes. “Without my permission, you are not to come here and disturb me.”

“Understood.” Ning immediately left obediently.

Only after Ning left did the Patriarch open his eyes again. He gently shook his head. “How long has it been? This is the first time I’ve ever been so talkative in front of a disciple. When I thought of Threelives, of that tremendous calamity we faced...my heart ended up being disturbed.”