

THE MIRROR LEGACY

Chapter 11: Summer Solstice

Summer solstice rain drizzled over the barren fields, filling the air with an earthy scent.

In the south, where wheat ripened early, the new harvest had been gathered, bundled, and stacked above the fields.

Farmers exchanged greetings along the ridges, preparing to sow oilseeds, turnips, and mustard cabbages for the late fall harvest.

At the Li Residence, Li Tongya, Li Changhu, and several others eagerly anticipated the summer solstice.

As soon as the sky began to dim, they carried out the table made of eucalyptus wood and kneeled together with Li Xiangping in front of it.

A stalk of wheat—an offering from the first harvest of the summer solstice, assorted fruits, and three cups of tea brewed from summer rain were served before the mirror that was supported by the hornless dragon frame.

The three of them exchanged glances before declaring in unison, “As disciples of the Li Family, I, Li Changhu, Li Tongya, and Li Xiangping, respectfully request the Profound Light. I dedicate myself to pursuing the Dao and my destiny rests in your hands. When the time comes, I will remain true to my oath. With this talisman burned, I express my gratitude to Supreme Yin.”

The mirror glowed with colors, flashing white light. Three white pills emerged from the mirror, flying toward them.

The three men swiftly sat cross-legged, guiding the Talisman Seeds as instructed in the “Reception Technique”.

Observing the white pills entering their Niwan Palaces, Li Chejing withdrew his gaze, sat down, and immersed himself in meditation.

He focused on the luminescent moonlight within his Qihai acupoint, contemplating deeply, *Thanks to the help of the mirror, I have refined eighty-one wisps of moonlight qi. With the summer solstice heralding the awakening of nature and dispersing the yin by yang, this is the perfect moment for a breakthrough!*

Emboldened by his youthful courage, Li Chejing began the process by performing hand seals and concentrating. The eighty-one wisps of moonlight spiritual qi swirled in his Qihai point intensely.

“Gather in the Niwan Palace and descend the twelve stories... Take form, like birds in flight. Ascend the twelve stories and the orifice beneath the tongue...” Li Chejing quietly recited the technique for condensing the Profound Scenery Chakra from the “Supreme Yin Breathing Meridian Nourishment Sutra”.

As he did so, the moonlight traversed the twelve stories in his throat, eventually in the Niwan Palace at the top of his head where it condensed into a liquid and flowed into a clear pool in his Qihai acupoint.

“Rise!” he murmured. In the clear pool in his Qihai acupoint, a bright silver arc of light emerged, resembling a beautiful crescent moon.

“Through the twelve stories and into the Qihai. The Profound Scenery Chakra has emerged in the clear pool,” Li Chejing exclaimed in awe, as he beheld the mesmerizing scene. Without hesitation, he focused on the Profound Scenery Chakra, exerting his utmost effort to stabilize its form.

Time passed slowly, and the Profound Scenery Chakra's form remained unstable. The crystal-bright crescent moon floated gently in the pool, its sparkling form wavering as if it could dissipate at any moment.

Li Chejing was already exhausted at this point, struggling to maintain the form of the Profound Scenery Chakra. Large drops of sweat slid down from his handsome face, staining his green-colored robe.

At a critical moment, the clear pool within his Qihai acupoint suddenly receded with a splash, and a white talisman pill suddenly soared upward.

The glowing, round talisman pill settled upon the Profound Scenery Chakra, stabilizing the translucent crescent moon and calming the mana in the clear pool.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Li Chejing gathered his strength to complete the process.

The Profound Scenery Chakra was successfully condensed, transforming the moonlight spiritual qi in his body into moonlight mana.

Li Chejing had now become an immortal cultivator in the Embryonic Breathing realm!

Opening his eyes, he looked toward the mirror, still enshrouded in the moonlight halo, and bowed in gratitude.

“The Li Family would like to express their gratitude for bestowing upon us the immortal technique and aiding in the condensation of moonlight and completion of the Profound Scenery Chakra. We will honor this favor perpetually, ensuring that incense burns year after year and the rituals continue unbroken.”

Li Chejing's youthful yet solemn voice marked his transition from a protected child to a self-reliant teenager.

“Jing’er,” Li Mutian called out softly, standing under the moonlight and gazing gently at his youngest son.

“Father, I have successfully condensed the Profound Scenery Chakra,” Li Chejing announced, standing up with a smile.

He opened his left hand to reveal a swirl of milky-white mana.

“The first realm of cultivation is known as Embryonic Breathing. To reach the peak of the Embryonic Breathing realm, one must condense six chakras— Profound Scenery, Radiant Lure, Celestial Whirl, Azure Essence, Jade Capital, and Nascent Spirit. The Profound Scenery Chakra is the gateway to the Dao,” he explained.

“Good, very good,” Li Mutian responded, a wave of relief washing over him.

Li Chejing waved his hand to disperse the mana, then resumed his seated position, focusing on solidifying his newfound cultivation.

“Such potent technique!” Li Xiangping, the first to open his eyes, exclaimed with a smile.

He stood up, stretched his body before grabbing the teapot from the table, and took a hearty gulp.

“I’ve received the ‘Supreme Yin Breathing Meridian Nourishment Sutra’ and the Water Avoidance Technique.”

Li Tongya soon followed, awakening from his meditation. “I’ve received the Exorcism Art,” he announced, his eyebrows raised in delight.

The two brothers exchanged their experiences for a while before Li Changhu opened his eyes, looking somewhat bemused at his younger siblings’ expectant gazes.

“I got the Purifying Arts,” he shared.

As the three brothers chatted, Li Chejing, unable to contain his excitement any longer, interjected, “I’ve condensed the Profound Scenery Chakra!”

“So quick?” Li Xiangping asked, tilting his head to the side doubtfully.

Li Chejing nodded toward the mirror resting on the table and explained, “It’s all thanks to the power of the mirror. Using it to harness the moonlight’s energy truly halves the effort needed.”

Realization dawned on the others. Li Changhu affectionately ruffled Li Chejing’s hair.

With a smile, he said, “I’ve read that the human body has a spiritual orifice. Once mana permeates our bodies, we’ll be able to locate it. Jing’er, perhaps you could help us find it.”

Unlike his younger brothers, Li Changhu found the process during the reception extremely uncomfortable and began to doubt his own aptitude in cultivation.

Observing his three older brothers, Li Chejing placed his left hand on the shoulder of Li Xiangping, who was standing closest to him, and closed his eyes to search for his spiritual orifice.

“The qi rises and breathes, much like an eager fish…” he silently recited from the Breathing Scripture, guiding his mana through Li Xiangping’s meridians.

After a while, he opened his eyes, visibly shocked, and muttered, “None…”

Disturbed, he quickly checked his other two brothers, only to find the same result.

“No… How can there be none?” Li Chejing’s face turned pale. He sat down, closed his eyes, and focused inward. His mana coursed through his body, but he, too, found no trace of the so-called spiritual orifice in himself.

“The Supreme Yin Breathing Meridian Nourishment Sutra states that the spiritual orifice is foundational to the Great Dao. Without it, no matter the skill or method, it’s futile... T-This...”

“Father!” Li Chejing’s voice trembled as he looked at Li Mutian, who was idly playing with tea leaves.

“You were right. This mirror might indeed spell disaster for our family. If a true cultivator discovers this item, not only our lives but our souls could be at risk. And it won’t just be us—the entire Lijing Village, even all the villages in Guli Road, could be destroyed.

“I’ve condensed the Profound Scenery Chakra, and mana flows through me. Unless I forsake my cultivation, no qi cultivators will be able to detect my spiritual orifices through their mana.”

Li Chejing stood up, his expression grave. “For the disciples of the Li Family, after receiving the Profound Pearl Talisman Seed, we must not flaunt it before condensing the Profound Scenery Chakra!”

“Indeed.” Li Mutian sipped his tea, then looked at his children with a serious expression.

“When Jing’er began to cultivate, I thought he was simply gifted. Han Wenxu once said that spiritual orifices are one in a thousand. Perhaps Jing’er was that one.”

He smiled wryly. “It appears now that this mirror is indeed an extraordinary immortal artifact capable of transforming the ordinary into the miraculous. With this talisman seed, even us mortals get a peek into the immortal Dao.”

The group was both elated and apprehensive, looking at their father in silence.

“Go and cultivate. I’ll check on the fields,” Li Mutian finally said after a long pause.

“Yes, Father,” they replied, each heading back to their rooms to practice.

Li Mutian respectfully put the mirror away, cleared the table, and walked toward the fields with his hands clasped behind his back.