

Grasping 971

Chapter 971: The Demon Sits Beneath the Pine, Becoming a Youth

Mu Weiliang's Buddha Talisman is quite peculiar.

In the eyes of Wu Laoba and Monk Songguo, the talisman is just an ordinary pine tree, and they can't see the little girl beneath it. Among everyone present, only Ning Fan can see that little girl!

"Can you see Siyue?" Mu Weiliang's expression was initially very stern, but upon noticing Ning Fan's intense gaze at the talisman, his eyes showed a hint of surprise.

"Siyue? Do you mean the little girl inside the talisman?" Ning Fan nodded.

"Yes, Siyue is her childhood name. I watched her grow up. Back then, I planted a pine tree body double on a cultivation star outside the galaxies of Mu Island, hoping to comprehend the Wooden Control Position through it... I clearly planted the body double in the deep mountains, yet this little girl sensed my presence among thousands of pine trees at a glance..."

Mu Weiliang seemed to have opened a floodgate of memories, and with a nudge from his divine skills, scenes from those years unfolded like images in Ning Fan's mind.

The first scene was Mu Song the Daoist passing on his teachings to Mu Weiliang.

Initially, Mu Weiliang wasn't called Mu Weiliang but Mu Yi, the tree spirit with the highest cultivation among the Seven Pines.

The sequence of Seven Pines was ranked by cultivation, and Mu Weiliang was once highly regarded by Mu Song the Daoist because of his supreme cultivation.

On that day, Mu Song the Daoist ended his hundred-thousand-year seclusion and emerged.

The first thing he did was erect the second and third steles on Mu Island—the Avoiding World and Sealing World Two Steles were originally erected simultaneously.

The second thing he did was find Mu Weiliang and share the insights from his extended seclusion with him.

"Since I closed my eyes and broke through to Second-Grade Quasi-Saint, a total of twelve million years have passed, and the little Senluo fellow has been in the Heavenly Prison for eleven million years. That little ghost once said that if I can complete three steles and perfectly integrate my life's path, my cultivation could advance further. Now, I've finally erected the second and third steles, yet the Third Order Quasi-Saint is still far out of reach. Ha, apparently, three steles weren't enough. As for the fourth stele, I don't know how to proceed..."

"Senior Brother (Mu Weiliang was still Mu Yi at that time), during this seclusion, I reached a whole new realm. With my eyes closed, I finally saw the real Dreamland Realm as if my eyes were open. In fact, twelve million years ago, I could barely glimpse the world's reality, but only now have I truly achieved that... The real Dreamland Realm is even more desolate and lonely than I imagined... According to Buddhism, all appearances in this world are illusionary—now, I slightly comprehend the true meaning..."

"The method of Control Position is rare and hard to come by. Most people only know that to become a Control Position Immortal Emperor, they must rely on the Palm Position Dao Fruit's power... Therefore, there are many elders who want to cultivate the Palm Position Dao Fruit, yet few know the correct path to becoming a Control Position Great Emperor, which is to open their eyes and create their own Palatial Void in the real world."

"However, wanting to open your eyes to see the true world is easier said than done. Across the Four Heavens and including the ten great secret clans, there are no more than twenty people who can do this... In the Eastern Celestial Lands, aside from the secret clans, in nearly a billion years, only three Control Position Immortal Emperors exist other than myself. One is Lightning Emperor Tai Su, who has been dead for years, so I won't mention him. The remaining two are the Slaughter Hall's Slaughter Emperor of this era and Hou Tu Elder of the Houtu Sect... But as far as I know, these two didn't use the eye-opening method to achieve Control Position... Their path relied on the Palm Position Dao Fruit's power, which falls short of the ideal..."

"The eye-opening method is an absolute secret of this world. My Cang Song disciple, although gifted, has gradually made a name in the Eastern Heavens as the Green Emperor. Unfortunately... he also doesn't have the talent to open his eyes and is unaware of this matter... Xiang Mingzi once had the potential to open his eyes, but sacrificed his sight for the little Senluo ghost and ultimately didn't reach the wondrous realm of eye-opening... His Senluo disciple, whose talent even exceeds Xiang Old Head, once opened his eyes in my Golden Sky Black Earth Painting! This disciple's talent is the greatest I've

seen in my life. Yet, he lost the opportunity to become an emperor due to a woman, forever becoming an Immortal King. He remains imprisoned in the Divine Void Pavilion's Heavenly Prison. Hence, it's improbable for him to achieve Control Position Immortal Emperor..."

"My next words might sound harsh, but I mean no harm. I hope Senior Brother can be accommodating. With Senior Brother's talent, it's likely you cannot open your eyes. To achieve Control Position, you may need to find another path. In this seclusion, I comprehended the second method of Control Position from the real world... Would you be willing to learn it?"

"The normal path to Control Position requires extremely high comprehension; opening one's eyes is too difficult. The Palm Position Dao Fruit is a less optimal method... What I have comprehended this time, like the eye-opening method, is much simpler. I've named it the Heartless Method. The Great Way is Heartless; this heartlessness is not being emotionless, but rather seeing through all obsessions and gradually breaking free. Senior Brother might experience the mundane world firsthand. If you can completely comprehend the profound meaning of heartlessness, making your heart die, given your unique Grass and Wood Body, you might have some insights..."

...

Ning Fan's gaze slightly focused as he witnessed the scene of Mu Song the Daoist passing on teachings to Mu Weiliang!

To become a true Control Position Immortal Emperor is incredibly difficult! By relying on the profoundness of the Chaos Ring Decision Twenty-Seven Yin and Yang, he found an alternative path and can use Palm Position Power, but hasn't cultivated the Palatial Void and can't be considered a true Control Position.

For the first time in this scene, Ning Fan heard the correct method of becoming a Control Position Immortal Emperor—not by consuming the Palm Position Dao Fruit, but by... opening one's eyes!

What does it mean?

Opening one's eyes... what does that refer to?

The real world after opening one's eyes... what does that indicate?

At this moment, Ning Fan only felt like he was having an epiphany, as if this simple scene contained unimaginable Great Ways, yet he couldn't comprehend it...

Without time for more reflection, the second scene appeared again in Ning Fan's mind.

The location was a deep mountain forest filled with countless old pine trees. The pine tree body double that Mu Weiliang planted was merely one among them.

His intent was to quietly plant the body double here and observe all mundane life on this cultivation star, thus comprehending the heartlessness that Mu Song spoke of...

He initially thought he'd have a long period of solitary life in the mountain, but unexpectedly, a tiny little girl easily stepped into his life, disrupting his journey of enlightenment...

It was the second day Mu Weiliang came to this cultivation star, when adults and their children from a nearby mountain village entered the deep woods to hunt.

How profound is Mu Weiliang's cultivation? His pine tree body double, even a True Immortal might not see through this illusion.

The mundane hunters passed by him, naturally seeing nothing special about the tree, but a little girl with braided hair in a red jacket noticed something extraordinary about Mu Weiliang.

"Grandpa, grandpa, look, look, this pine tree is peeking at me. Is it a monster? How can it see me? It doesn't have eyes." The seven-year-old Little Siyue curiously asked.

Since her birth, she could see things invisible to others, and villagers said this little girl was strange, thus rarely anyone wanted to get close to her...

"Hush! My dear ancestor, these words must never be spoken again. If they offend some immortal elder, be careful of your little life!"

The elderly hunter called grandpa turned pale upon hearing Little Siyue's nonsense again, hastily bowing to Mu Weiliang's pine trunk and constantly muttering, "God Buddha bless" and "don't mind," as he pulled Little Siyue away in a hurry...

The others also quickly bowed to the pine tree before fleeing as if they'd seen a ghost, with expressions of fear, not daring to hunt near Mu Weiliang anymore...

It seemed everyone believed Little Siyue's words and regarded Mu Weiliang as a dryad, avoiding him...

This left Mu Weiliang feeling speechless; his intention was to meditate quietly in the mountain forest without interacting with anyone, but on the second day of arriving on this cultivation star, he was discovered by a group of mortals...

Was his method of concealing his aura too clumsy?

Or... were the braided little girl's eyes too sharp...

"This mere mortal girl can see what even True Immortals cannot..." Mu Weiliang was deeply moved.

What made him even more helpless was on the third day, that braided little girl came to the deep mountain alone and stood before him.

This seven-year-old mortal girl, isn't she afraid of being eaten by the tigers and wolves in the mountains? Her courage is too great!

Oh, so that's it... This little girl has a cultivation artifact hanging around her neck, it can drive away tigers and wolves... No wonder she dares to enter the mountain alone...

The artifact is not of high quality, it seems to be something made by some Vein Opening first or second level junior...

"Tree uncle, are you looking at my amulet? Do you want my amulet? Do you think it is pretty? Do you want it? But I can't give it to you. Grandpa said when I was young, I could see ghosts, and he spent two whole taels of silver to beg the Daoist grandpa from Mount Mao for this amulet, I can't give it to you..."

Mu Weiliang frowned slightly but did not answer. This little girl seems very chatty...

"My name is Siyue, what's your name, tree uncle? Are you silent because you can't speak, or because you don't have a name? I know, you're a dryad, you must be able to speak, are you not answering because you don't have a name? Do you want me to help you choose a name, grandpa praised me for being the best at naming, grandma raised seven pigs, I named each one, do you want to hear..."

Mu Weiliang twitched his mouth but still didn't answer. This little girl is indeed very chatty.

"Tree uncle, maybe you don't like talking, so just listen, I'll tell you. Let's first talk about Second Brother Lin's big yellow dog next door..."

With the topic of the big yellow dog, the little girl talked for a quarter of an hour.

"...let's then talk about the village head's big white goose..."

Another quarter of an hour...

"...Yesterday morning I ate half a cake, and at noon I ate half a bun..."

Yet another quarter of an hour...

"...The day before yesterday..."

"...The day before the day before yesterday..."

"...I..."

Mu Weiliang, after all, is a powerful old monster. Despite being annoyed by the little girl's chatter, he listened from start to finish without interrupting.

In the end, the little girl left very disappointed; she really wanted to talk with Tree Uncle. The villagers all feared her, saying she was uncanny, and no one was willing to talk to her much, even grandpa and grandma often avoided her, never letting her sit at the table for meals...

Could it be that even the dryad uncle is afraid of her? Otherwise, why wouldn't he respond...

"Grass and wood are heartless... the realm Brother Mu Song mentioned, could it be like this..."

After the little girl left, Mu Weiliang started to ponder. His disdain for paying attention to a mortal doll, is this also a form of heartlessness...

Because he is a lofty Immortal, he views the humble mortals as insects.

How bored must a person be to converse with ants, to care for their life and death?

Of course, he wouldn't respond to Little Siyue, just as he wouldn't talk to ants. Is this the true meaning of the Great Way is Heartless...

On the fourth day, Little Siyue ran to Mu Weiliang again, chattering away.

The fifth day, the sixth day, the seventh day...

One month, two months, three months...

Except during rainy and snowy weather, Little Siyue almost came to the mountain every day to chat with Mu Weiliang.

Though Mu Weiliang never spoke to Little Siyue, she was still happy.

At least someone was willing to listen to her talk, which was quite rare, wasn't it...

With the passing seasons, listening to the little girl's chatter gradually became a daily habit for Mu Weiliang.

Whenever the little girl was bullied in the village, she would always cry in front of him, never shedding tears in front of outsiders.

Occasionally, when a villager talked to her or paid her some attention, she would be happy for an entire day and would share her joy with Mu Weiliang...

Day by day, the little girl grew up, blossoming gracefully, she became sensible, no longer talking about spirits in front of outsiders. As a result, the villagers looked at her more normally, among her peers, there were also quite a few young lads, who admired her beauty.

She was no longer lonely, nor was she talkative, she finally matured, yet she still occasionally went to the mountains to chat with her tree uncle.

Mu Weiliang still wouldn't respond to her, even if the little ant grows up, it's still an ant, how could anyone be bored enough to chat with ants?

The little girl didn't mind Mu Weiliang's indifference, she started carefully building a fence around Mu Weiliang, saying it was to prevent any beasts from running under the tree for defecation...

What a joke! With Mu Weiliang's cultivation, if he didn't want to, which unperceptive beast would dare to defecate under his tree!

On days with little rain, she would laboriously fetch mountain spring water to water Tree Uncle...

Mu Weiliang was helpless, he was an Immortal Tree, having long foregone nourishment, he wouldn't die without water... Well, it was after all the little girl's filial piety, he wouldn't blame her...

The little girl was indulgent, every time a young lad gifted her some snacks, she'd bring them to the mountain, giving half to Tree Uncle, only eating half herself.

Mu Weiliang never ate those mortal snacks in front of the little girl, yet after she left, he would sigh and store them away...

Later, the little girl even built a wooden house deep in the mountains, saying she wanted to live next to Mu Weiliang's tree, to spend a lifetime together.

She even said if Mu Song didn't mind, marrying Mu Song would be okay too. She wanted to be a tree, she disliked wearing a mask to live in the village, preferring to be her true self in front of Mu Song.

"Tree Uncle, if I marry you, would you take me! Why are you still not speaking, are you despising me, annoying, I'm not talking to you anymore!"

Little Siyue didn't know, upon hearing this, Mu Song's heart, cultivated in Buddhism for years, rippled for a moment.

Originally, I wanted to cultivate the Heartless Method, but unexpectedly, this little girl entered my life.

From some unknown point in time, Mu Weiliang's gaze upon this little girl was no longer as if observing an ant...

It was not a matter of romantic feelings but was also impossible to ignore...

During this period, Daoist Wood Pine visited once, shook his head repeatedly at the sight.

"Among the Seven Pines, your aptitude is the best, and since you were born of grass and wood, I thought you could easily grasp the true intent of the Great Way is Heartless, but unexpectedly, you lost your mindset because of an ordinary child... All beings are illusions, you still don't understand... Well, my Taoist power has been increasing day by day. If I pay some price, I can show you the real world. The world you will see, others cannot!"

Daoist Wood Pine raised a hand to point out a purple gleam and sent it into Mu Weiliang's body. Instantly, the scenery before Mu Weiliang's eyes transformed...

...

Ning Fan did not know what kind of world Mu Weiliang saw from Daoist Wood Pine.

Since then, Mu Weiliang regained his former cold hardness, seeing that little girl as if she were air.

Little Siyue, perceptive as she was, immediately noticed Mu Weiliang's change.

Previously, although Mu Weiliang also ignored her, he wouldn't disregard her. His gaze would always quietly linger on her, she could feel it.

But now, the way Mu Weiliang looked at her was as cold and hard as looking at grass and stone, leaving her stunned and flustered.

"Tree Uncle, why don't you pay attention to me anymore? Why don't you look at me? Did I do something wrong?"

"... Tree Uncle, can I help you catch bugs today..."

The little girl was anxious, she said so much, yet Mu Weiliang did not glance at her directly!

That gaze was not ignoring, but rather... not caring!

"... Tree Uncle, I argued with grandpa. He said I've grown up and wants to force me to marry, but I refuse... I want to stay in the mountain for a while, would you accompany me..."

Still, it was cold as air, ignoring her.

Since she was seven until now at seventeen, for ten years, his gaze was never brief, today, it moved away from her...

"Tree Uncle..."

"Tree Uncle..."

"Tree Uncle..."

That night, Little Siyue stayed in the mountain cabin as rain poured heavily.

Previously, when she quarreled with her grandpa, she would also run to stay in that cabin. The mountain nights were cold, but she never needed thick clothes or blankets because Mu Weiliang would silently dispel the chill, she knew...

But tonight, she was really cold because Mu Weiliang had changed. He would no longer listen to her heart nor dispel the chill of the mountain night...

Clearly having done nothing wrong, why... would Tree Uncle not pay attention to her...

The next day, she had a high fever, her whole body felt weak, yet she stubbornly remained under the tree, chattering nonstop.

She knew Mu Weiliang didn't listen, but she stubbornly wanted to speak, to make him listen!

Mu Weiliang frowned. As an Immortal Cultivator, he certainly knew how fragile mortal bodies were. In the little girl's condition, without timely treatment, it was very dangerous.

"Go back!" Mu Weiliang almost had the impulse to speak to the little girl for the first time, but ultimately he did not open his mouth.

He remembered the world Daoist Wood Pine showed him, in that real world, Little Siyue did not exist...

She never existed; it was false. He must sever all mortal foolish thoughts to comprehend the Heartless Great Way and attain the Control Position power...

Finally, regardless of how the little girl spoke, Mu Weiliang did not spare her another glance.

On the third day, the little girl stubbornly refused to leave but no longer spoke, merely sitting silently under the tree, touching the pine tree in a daze.

On the fourth day, she fainted, unable to hold on anymore, tears glistening in the corners of her eyes...

In the end, Tree Uncle didn't pay attention to her either.

Tree Uncle didn't want her anymore...

Mu Weiliang knew, if he left the little girl to lie there until she died from illness, he could truly become a heartless person, comprehending the Heartless Great Way and significantly improve his understanding.

However, it was a painful choice, requiring a girl's life in exchange for an opportunity for comprehension...

Such instances were too common in the cultivation world, many old monsters deliberately nurtured a Cauldron Furnace, lavishing deep affection upon them, and after countless years together, slaughtered them to grasp the true meaning of heartlessness...

Would he follow Daoist Wood Pine's method, gaining Control Position power, or... save her...

...

The scene ended here without providing a result.

However, it did not hinder Ning Fan from speculating.

With the current Mu Weiliang possessing the Control Position power in the Buddha Talisman, does it indicate that at that time, Mu Weiliang chose not to save the little girl, thereby gaining the chance to achieve Control Position...

Ning Fan furrowed his brow. He had no relation to Little Siyue and didn't care about her life or death, but Mu Si's actions made it hard for him to agree.

If this was the Way of Heartlessness in Grass and Wood that Mu Si spoke of, he would rather not comprehend it!

Without further plans to ponder on the Fourth Pine, Ning Fan actually turned around and left directly.

"Is it because you disapprove of my Buddha Talisman comprehension, young friend?"

"The Dao has no distinction of high or low, there is no disapproval, just disagreement," Ning Fan paused and replied indifferently.

"Is it disagreement... Even if you disagree, you are powerless to change it, this is the reality of the world. Have you seen the world in its true form? Do you know... that kind of loneliness..."

It is a world that only those of the Control Position can see. What I see from my junior brother is only a part of it.

My junior brother said that when he opened his eyes to see a complete world, it was desolate, and that little girl who talks under my tree daily is just an illusion...

My junior brother said that being obsessed with those illusions that have never existed is wrong... That being moved by illusions is a grave mistake...

My junior brother said she never existed in this world; what exists is just a phantom in my heart. Cutting off the obsession gives hope to see the world as he does...

Following my junior brother's method, I gradually ignored her life or death...

I regarded everything as an illusion, and thus touched the power of Control Position...

However, do you know that kind of heartache!

One day, she nearly died in front of my eyes. If I ignored her life or death, I could have completely gained the Control Position power per my junior brother's method...

In the end, I couldn't harden my heart to see her die. Instead, I used my Divine Skills to send her home safely and protect her from dying...

Her illness eventually got better... She never knew I saved her and never returned to the deep mountains to say a word to me... Later, I watched her return to the mortal world, watched her marry and have children, watched her live in peace and joy. I turned my earlier heart's movement into a shadow, preserved forever in the Buddha Talisman... This shadow is an obstacle in my cultivation, unable to sever it, creating a bottleneck in my cultivation that I cannot advance.

I used to be the first among the Seven Pines in cultivation, but now I've fallen to fourth and might decline to fifth, sixth, seventh in the future...

If I cut off this shadow, I could achieve the Dao, but I am unwilling...

If I embrace this shadow, I will no longer suffer like this, but I dare not...

My cultivation is of Buddhism. If I embrace obsession, all previous cultivation would turn into void in the tribulation of Karmic Fire... Buddha cannot have attachment. You are not an ancient Buddha. You are very fortunate...

Even if you retain obsessions, you won't face the tribulation of Karmic Fire... You can act recklessly, but I cannot...

If I lose all cultivation, then I am no longer me, just an old pine tree without spirit awareness...

What I fear is not the pain of losing cultivation, but losing my spirit awareness, becoming truly heartless like grass and wood and forgetting that little girl...

I don't wish to forget everything in the Karmic Fire tribulation!

After millions of years, that little girl will have long returned to dust, and the dead won't have emotions anymore, right...

But I am different. In my heart, there will always be a shadow that cannot be cut, embraced, ignored, or forgotten...

A Buddha Talisman filled with such ambivalence, you naturally disregard it, and there's no need to comprehend it...

You are an Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor. I am an ancient Buddha. You are not me and ultimately cannot understand my feelings. But I cannot allow you to belittle my Buddha Talisman, simply because this talisman contains her shadow..."

After Mu Si finished speaking, as if he had poured out the bitterness of millions of years, he felt significantly relieved.

It turns out he has unwittingly been influenced by her, turning into such a chatterbox...

Back then, she talked so much, maybe it was also because she was filled with unspeakable discomfort with nowhere to vent...

Ning Fan turned around, silent, and re-examined the girl within Mu Si's Buddha Talisman.

He had misunderstood a bit. Mu Si perhaps did something wrong, but the emotions embedded in the Buddha Talisman were not false.

Mu Si was wrong about one thing. Not understanding his actions was unrelated to whether Ning Fan was an Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor!

"If I were you, I would choose to save people as you did, but I wouldn't feel as lost as you do. I cannot empathize with your feelings, and it has nothing to do with whether I am an Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor, but because our paths differ!"

"If I were you, if I were you..."

At this moment, Ning Fan inexplicably recalled his decision back then not to slash away the affection and sentiment.

He didn't want to slash away the affection and didn't want to forget the paper crane, even for the purpose of Core Formation, it wasn't possible!

It was not because he was an Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor that he dared to act recklessly, but because he didn't want to forget, that he stepped into the path of a true devil cultivator!

With his right index finger, he began drawing stroke by stroke, creating his own Symbol of Devil Raising right in front of Mu Si.

Stroke by stroke, the Symbol of Devil Raising contained thoughts that changed!

Originally, the image of the Moluo Giant stood side by side with the old pine tree, but this time, Ning Fan drew the Moluo Giant beneath the tree.

This scene looked as if a demonically spirited youth was pondering under the tree.

"No, no... If this youth were me, then this tree should not be a pine..."

Ning Fan's eyes were momentarily confused.

Memories of hundreds of years surged at this moment, seemingly wanting to be drawn into the depiction by Ning Fan...

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The memories surged continuously, gradually enlightening Ning Fan, who looked contemplatively at the ancient pine within the magic symbol.

He recalled the snow in Seven Apricot City, the plum blossoms blooming amidst the snow, carrying the warmth of home, deeply imprinted into his very bones like a brand...

He remembered the Ming Luo Ancient Tree within the Dark Sparrow's Grave of the Sinister Sparrow Sect, recalled the bamboo sea in the Tree World, wherein there was also a profound affection...

He thought of the Undying Tree within the ruins of the Heavenly Court; this tree was born because he ignited his wings, yet wilted because he saved someone... beneath the Undying Tree, he fought in past lives and battled in this life. That day, sacrificing himself to demons, alone against many, he fought valiantly without hesitation...

He remembered the willow tree within the Blood Realm of Slaughter Hall; that was planted by the young Killing Emperor Jumen. Under it, he meditated for ten thousand years, sighing at the time when his enlightenment came, saying 'wood remains thus, but how can one endure'...

This pine, no, it's not right...

Throughout his life, he has had too many memories connected to trees, yet none related to pine trees...

The ancient pine within the magic symbol indeed contained profound insights into wood, but these insights were all from others.

With his extraordinary comprehension, Ning Fan could borrow others' insights incorporating them into his magic symbol, yet he could not capture the emotions that moved others and fuse them in.

Just as he could imitate Mu Weiliang and draw the shadow of Little Siyue into his magic symbol, but he couldn't depict Mu Weiliang's deep-seated emotions for Little Siyue...

Why could Mu Weiliang's Buddha Talisman evoke a trace of palm position power, yet other tree spirits couldn't achieve this?

Is it because within this Buddha Talisman, there resides Mu Weiliang's deepest heart movement...

Heart movement... heart movement...

Ning Fan frowned; his magic symbol lacked that heart movement...

"The method of palm position taught to Mu Weiliang by Daoist Wood Pine is called the Heartless Method... The first step requires merging the deepest heart movement with Dao insights and drawing them together into the Buddha Talisman. The second step seems to require completely erasing that heart movement from the heart, thus reaching a void state where heart movement turns into heart extinction... These are roughly the steps; I haven't used this method, I can only speculate vaguely..."

"Mu Weiliang achieved heart movement, but could not achieve heart extinction... He could evoke a trace of palm position power, yet could not have his own palatial void... If I were him, I could probably draw heart movement into the magic symbol, but I wouldn't be able to achieve heart extinction either..."

"People are not plants, who can be heartless? If truly reached the heartless realm, then one would not count as human anymore... Daoist Wood Pine's method might assist me to palm position step by step, but ultimately this method isn't suitable for me... Moreover, I have always felt this method has flaws, yet can't precisely identify them at the moment..."

"If I were Mu Weiliang, I would retain that heart movement within the magic symbol, yet absolutely wouldn't erase that initial heart movement..."

Ning Fan's gaze gradually became clear, and with a lift of his hand, he gradually corrected the patterns within the magic symbol.

The pine was erased by him, replaced by a tree carrying his cultivation memories.

It was a plum blossom standing solitary and proud in the cold!

Replacing pine with plum didn't change the strokes of the magic symbol, yet the feeling it evoked was different, that plum seemed to harbor deep emotions, enough to resonate with the observer...

"Plum carries the warm memories of my cultivation place; having plum means having home. No matter how long one wanders, one isn't alone..."

Wu Laoba and the others were stunned, feeling Ning Fan's newly drawn plum tree possessed indescribable mystery. Specifically why, they couldn't say...

Adding strokes is merely a quantitative change; changing from pine to plum represents a qualitative change.

Mu Weiliang gazed at Ning Fan's magic symbol with the plum tree, and only he could discern some of the mystery. That plum tree contained Ning Fan's emotions, yet those emotions lacked sadness...

Only warmth...

Amidst that warmth, perhaps there were bitter memories, like the old monster, like his parents, like Ning Gu...

Yet reflecting on the past, Ning Fan found no sadness in his heart. This point, was something Mu Weiliang at present could not achieve regardless.

Replacing pine with plum, the strokes of the magic symbol remained 178 strokes, yet compared to the previous magic symbol, the contained Dao principle of wood power increased significantly, vaguely spreading a trace of palm position power.

According to Daoist Wood Pine's method, merging heart movement into the magic symbol can cultivate a trace of palm position power; if heart extinction is attained, a palatial void can be thoroughly cultivated...

Heart movement, Ning Fan can easily achieve.

Heart extinction, Ning Fan recognized the difficulties inherent, not something achievable overnight, nor did he wish to pursue it.

That plum harbors his deepest emotions; erasing this emotion and thought would go against his Dao heart. Without this emotion and thought, perhaps he could achieve great Dao, yet he wouldn't be himself anymore.

Heart extinction or not, he doesn't care; what he wants now is to integrate that heart movement with insights, finely merging them into the magic symbol.

The Great Dao of Wood before him became increasingly clear, and following the path he came on, he seemed... to have seen his own Great Dao of Wood...

"What is wood? Wood is the root of Five Elements. Without roots, trees cannot survive; without roots, people have no home..."

Ning Fan gazed at the plum tree within the magic symbol, finding his roots within it.

His roots in the Rain Immortal World, in Yue Country, in Seven Apricot City, amidst those countless windy, snowy days...

His Great Dao of Wood is also a root, without roots, there is no him...

Wu Laoba felt bewildered; he seemed to see memories of his youthful home within Ning Fan's drawn plum tree.

He recalled the adobe house of his homeland, remembered the giant mulberry tree in the courtyard, remembered the year he was just a mountain village boy without cultivation, without having killed, without being full of scheming, without having the notorious name shaking the Four Heavens, yet having... home...

In countless dusky evenings, he sat under the mulberry tree outside the earthen house, waiting for his parents to drive the donkey cart back from the city, waiting for his father to lift him high up, waiting for his mother to wash her hands and cook... The faces of his parents were already blurred in his memory, hard to discern. Yet some things were etched into his bones, never forgotten no matter how many years passed...

"Little Tiger, are you hungry?"

"The weather's gotten cold. Is my boy chilly?"

"...Once Mom saves a little more money, I'll make you a new coat..."

Wu Laoba's eyes welled with hot tears. Three and four tens of millions of years of lonely cultivation journey had been too, too long, so long that he had forgotten he once had a home. As fierce and cunning as he was, there was still a soft spot in his heart that no one was allowed to bully or touch.

Monk Songguo was also lost in thought, looking at the apricot blossom pattern. He too thought of the trees in his hometown, remembered his home before cultivating, remembered his mother staying up late by the oil lamp, sewing him new shoes, remembered those reminders...

"My son has prospered, once the year passes, he will go to the city to study... Don't be frugal with silver when you're out, don't worry about things at home, listen to your master..."

And then what happened later...

Later, he went to the city school, studied diligently for four years like a day, and later, caught up in war chaos, later, his mother passed, and so did his home...

His heart was ashen, he turned to become a monk, by chance stepping onto the cultivation path, step by step reaching the Immortal Venerable Realm. In today's Eastern Sky cultivation world, if he stomped the ground, the heavens would tremble three times. He held high position and power, yet he had long forgotten where his mother's desolate grave was buried...

As a monastic, there was guilt in his heart, and... sorrow...

As a tree has roots, does he too...

One by one, members of the Mu Island Sect revealed a bewildered expression, recalling the trees in their hometown, recalling old memories with faces both yellowed and vivid...

"What is it that this child comprehends! Such tremendous power that can draw so many cultivators into it!"

Mu Si was somewhat startled.

A thousand people comprehending the Great Dao of Wood would have a thousand different ways, like how Mu Qi saw pine needles, Mu Liu heard the sound of pine, Mu Wu saw pine patterns...

And what did Ning Fan see!

No one knew!

The Dao has no hierarchy, but there are differences in strength!

It was apparent that the Great Dao of Wood that Ning Fan grasped had already taken shape, and was extremely close to the origin of the Great Dao of Wood, otherwise, it couldn't have generated such powerful force to resonate with all the cultivators!

After the astonishment came deep sadness.

In a trance, Mu Si seemed to see that wise and charming little girl, step by step walking toward him, talking to him incessantly.

He was a spirit born of grass and trees, without parents, without family, never having experienced warmth. Only Little Siyue had once brought him the warmth of being human...

Facing Little Siyue, he did not dare to have feelings, yet couldn't be heartless either...

He had almost forgotten the warmth Little Siyue gave him, but Ning Fan's Symbol of Devil Raising reawakened all those memories...

With her, there was home to rely on, without her, nowhere to return...

People are not grass and trees, who can be void of emotions... He couldn't extinguish his heart, couldn't...

"Wood is the Great Dao, using wood as the root can derive the Dao of Pine, Dao of Apricot, Dao of Bamboo... All the trees in the world belong to this Dao... To comprehend such a Great Dao, one must find a point, using this as a breakthrough..."

"Seven Apricot is my root. Extending along this root, I saw more trees like shadows lining up behind me... These trees carry the memories of my journey, and only by integrating these memories into the comprehension can this apricot tree be considered complete..."

Ning Fan continued to raise his hand, adding a few strokes to the Symbol of Devil Raising, sketching the shadow of the Mingluo Ancient Tree, and next to the Mingluo Tree, he sketched the vague image of a sea of bamboo.

Hollow bamboo, with a residing soul, the soul takes root at the heart of bamboo. The root of the soul, the heart of the bamboo, inseparable...

Ning Fan recalled the Dark Sparrow's Grave, remembered Bright Sparrow, remembered Loose Demon Mu Luo, remembered his rampage through the Tree World...

The brushstrokes on the Symbol of Devil Raising continued to increase.

strokes, 180 strokes, 181 strokes... 198 strokes!

He used 20 strokes to depict the shadow of the Mingluo Ancient Tree and the Bamboo Sovereign. The image on the Symbol of Devil Raising turned into a devil sitting under the apricot tree, the background being the Mingluo Tree and an endless sea of bamboo.

Ning Fan's hand did not stop. On the background of the Symbol of Devil Raising, he added the shadow of the Heavenly Court's Undying Tree, within this shadow his unwavering obsession from two lifetimes was embedded.

strokes, 200 strokes...

When the brushstrokes on the Symbol of Devil Raising exceeded 200, Ning Fan's eyes suddenly focused, for the 201st stroke, he found himself unable to draw further no matter what...

Whether it was the Symbol of Devil Raising or the Buddha Talisman, beyond a hundred strokes, it became an ancestral talisman, but even among the nine great devil ancestors of the Ancient Demon Abyss, few could enhance the Symbol of Devil Raising beyond 200 strokes... Beyond 200 strokes, increasing brushstrokes required not only comprehension but also smearing the talisman with ancestral blood...

Ning Fan did not know this, yet there was an instinct urging him that he must do so.

"After 200 strokes, there seems to be a barrier between me and this Symbol of Devil Raising... The demon blood in my body seems to burn, giving me an ancient demon instinct, wanting to dye the Symbol of Devil Raising with my own blood... As if only by doing so could I continue to draw the Symbol of Devil Raising..."

It seemed there was a voice from his bloodline, constantly urging Ning Fan to stain the Symbol of Devil Raising with ancestral blood.

Ning Fan hesitated only for a moment before bowing to this ancient demon instinct. He raised his hand, biting his fingertip, and painted the 201st stroke with blood on the Symbol of Devil Raising!

"This is... the power of the Ancestral Blood!"

Wu Laoba and the others gradually awoke from their memories and noticed Ning Fan's act of infusing the ancestral blood into the demonic symbol, causing a stir among them.

Since the Nine Ancestors, there had been no other ancestor with demonic blood. If word spread that Ning Fan possessed ancestral blood, it would undoubtedly create a sensation in the Ancient Demon Abyss!

With the might of the ancestral blood, Ning Fan acted like lightning, drawing nine strokes on the demonic symbol and sketching the shadow of half of the Undying Tree.

At the 210th stroke, Ning Fan paused briefly and did not immediately continue drawing. The previous nine strokes had consumed an entire drop of Moluo Ancestral Blood!

With the ancestral blood used up, it could no longer be used for blood ignition. However, the ancestral demonic pressure on Ning Fan did not diminish in the slightest; rather, it became richer than before. That ancestral blood power had already merged into his demonic symbol, giving Ning Fan an illusion, as if only by blending the blood into the symbol had he truly become an ancestral demon! Only then did he have the right to cultivate the ancient demon to its peak!

"Infusing ancestral blood into the symbol seems inevitable... perhaps in the future ancestral demon blood will also need to be integrated into the spirit wheels? And ancestral divine blood into the spiritual orifice?"

"I have four drops of Moluo Ancestral Blood; the prestige of one drop is enough for me to add nine strokes to the ancestral symbol... If I want to add more strokes, I need to use the remaining ancestral blood..."

Without hesitation, Ning Fan stained the blood again and drew the ancestral blood into the demonic symbol.

With the second drop of ancestral blood used up, Ning Fan completed the drawing of the Undying Tree.

With the third drop exhausted, Ning Fan drew half of the Giant Willow planted by Killing Emperor Jumen.

With the fourth drop exhausted, Ning Fan drew the complete shadow of the Giant Willow, but with no more ancestral blood available, he couldn't add more strokes to the demonic symbol.

The strokes of the demonic symbol finally settled at 236 strokes!

Unfortunately, there wasn't enough ancestral blood... Otherwise, he could have drawn more trees in the demonic symbol, embedding more emotions.

Perhaps, in the future, when he cultivates more ancestral blood, he can continue to stain the ancestral symbol with demon blood, adding more strokes...

"A demonic symbol with 236 strokes! The master's talent for cultivation is truly terrifying! If he continues to grow, at the very least he will be at the level of the Nine Great Devil Ancestors! If he enters the Ancient Demon Nine Abyss, by the power of the demonic symbol, he could recruit a large number of fervent demon cultivators as footmen!"

Wu Laoba felt immensely satisfied with his vanity. His master was mighty, and he would gain more prestige too, wouldn't he? Serving Ning Fan felt far from disgraceful. To be a henchman for someone at the level of the Nine Great Devil Ancestors was not shameful at all! In the Ancient Demon Abyss, who knew how many people would envy him!

Mu Si's sorrow had faded away, replaced by a bitter smile.

"I don't know what Dao this person comprehends, but I can see that he has immersed immense emotions into past events. Among those emotions, there may not be a shortage of sorrowful past events, but in retrospect, he isn't sad, only... warm..."

"If I could also let go of the sadness in my heart, perhaps..."

Unknowingly, the moment this thought arose in Mu Si's heart, a bottleneck that had stymied him for many years slightly loosened!

Mu Si was initially stunned, then he sighed deeply, closing his eyes.

It seemed... he had found the path he should take in the future...

It wasn't sentimentality, nor its absence, but indifference...

Venerated Indifference...

In fact, every stage of cultivation in the True Immortal Realm leads practitioners toward the path of Venerated Indifference. However, the number of cultivators who can truly achieve Venerated Indifference is very few, often only one or two in ten thousand immortals. Some cultivators might achieve Venerated Indifference in the Shedding Void Realm, like Yuan Yao; others, like Senluo, might attain the Immortal King stage without achieving this state.

Mu Si could not attain this before, but from now on, he would strive to achieve it.

It wasn't about forgetting Little Siyue, but about burying that affection in his heart. Forgetting only the sadness but keeping the affection eternally in the Buddha Talisman.

Is this perhaps... what the junior brother referred to as the heartless nature of plants and trees...

It's neither about affection nor emotional extinction, but... emotional forgetting...

"May I ask what kind of Great Dao of Wood this young friend comprehends?" Mu Si suddenly let go with a smile, as if he finally untangled some of his long-standing emotional knots.

"It's about the root..." Ning Fan was slightly amazed. It seemed Mu Si gained some insight; otherwise, he wouldn't be so relieved.

"The root?" Mu Si was momentarily moved, slightly dazed, and murmured, "Yes... she is my root..."

"..."

Ning Fan was speechless.

This conversation could not continue, as Mu Si was wholly consumed by the depths of his own emotions, diverting every topic back to his Little Siyue...

But it seemed this person no longer had confusion in his eyes... Perhaps he had figured out how to deal with his inner demons...

"A token of appreciation, for unraveling the knots in my heart, dear friend."

Mu Si handed all of his Jianmu's Essence over to Ning Fan.

Ning Fan knew that his actions had somehow inspired Mu Si, so he did not refuse this gift of gratitude. He accepted all of Jianmu's Essence, said his farewells to Mu Si, and along with the others, proceeded to the Third Forbidden Ground.

The Ancient Pine in the Third Forbidden Ground was even more imposing than in the Fourth Forbidden Ground, and the spiritual cultivation of Tree Spirit Mu San was much deeper than that of Mu Si.

Upon hearing Monk Songguo mention that Ning Fan possessed a demonic symbol with 236 strokes, Mu San was greatly moved, declaring that he would willingly offer the essence of Jianmu, just for a glimpse of Ning Fan's demonic symbol.

A demonic or Buddha Talisman with over 200 strokes was extremely rare. In the Western Heaven, very few ancient Buddhas had forged a Buddha Talisman with more than 200 strokes; in the Ancient Demon Abyss, since the suppression by the Nine Ancestors, it was even less likely to encounter someone with a demonic symbol over 200 strokes.

Mu San asked for nothing but to take a look at Ning Fan's Symbol of Devil Raising, confident he could gain insight from it.

Mu San also displayed his Buddha Talisman to Ning Fan, who only cast a cursory glance, not taking it seriously.

Ning Fan already had his own understanding of the Great Dao of Wood, and further reference to others' insights was of little significance. Furthermore, his demonic ancestral blood was exhausted, and he temporarily couldn't add more strokes to the rune pens. If Mu San hoped to see him adding strokes, he might be disappointed.

After observing Mu Si's Buddha Talisman, Ning Fan found Mu San's Buddha Talisman somewhat unimpressive.

Mu Si's Buddha Talisman incorporated deep emotions and sense, whereas Mu San's lacked that, even if its strokes exceeded Mu Si's, it didn't appeal to Ning Fan.

"Mu Si has already loosened the knots in his heart, perhaps one day he can reclaim Mu Yi's status..."

After showing Mu San the Symbol of Devil Raising, Ning Fan collected the essence and departed, proceeding to the second and first forbidden areas, likewise only displaying the symbol before leaving with the gifts.

After passing through the seven forbidden areas, Ning Fan bid farewell to the people like Songguo and returned alone to the Zen courtyard.

Wu Laoba stuck to Ning Fan annoyingly like glue, seeking guidance on the Great Dao of Wood, only to be turned away by Ning Fan.

Apologies, but Ning Fan had no time to bother with Wu Laoba; he had just created his own Symbol of Devil Raising, incorporating four drops of ancestral blood within, and it was a moment of profound realization that shouldn't be disrupted.

Back in his Zen room, Ning Fan immediately entered the Xuan Yin Realm. With a wave of his hand, hundreds of blue clumps of light ascended into the sky, coalescing into a drop of emerald green spiritual liquid.

This drop of spiritual liquid was the true essence of Jianmu!

Moved by the vast energy contained within the Jianmu's essence, Ning Fan could not claim indifference. The energy in this drop rivaled a complete Heavenly Grade Fierce Origin Crystal!

In other words, just by refining this drop of Jianmu's essence, Ning Fan could fully cultivate the Wood Yin-Yang!

The only trouble was the lack of a profound wood-attributed cultivation technique needed for this refinement...

On Mu Island, there were several Nine-Star wood attribute techniques available, yet all of them were Buddhist techniques unsuitable for Ning Fan as an ancient demon.

Within the Scripture Tower given by the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor, there were no suitable techniques either, prompting Ning Fan to consider other possibilities.

His desire was to create a technique that encapsulated all his insights about the Wood Dao!

In ancient times, even lower-ranked Immortal Emperors could create Nine-Star techniques, and with Ning Fan's current cultivation plus the comprehension from the Second Realm of Tianren, he was more than capable of self-creating techniques.

The Symbol of Devil Raising had already fused with the power of the Wood Dao principle. If he were to create a technique, Ning Fan would aim for a wood-based demonic art. Among the nine major Yin-Yang elements, Ning Fan had mastered three—rain, battle, darkness—it was now time to master one of the demonic Yin-Yang!

"With my lifelong understanding, initiate an ancient scripture..."

Facing the direction of the Xuan Yin Realm Scripture Tower, Ning Fan reached out, and instantly, numerous volumes of Primordial Divine Demon Technique flew out, piling like a mountain in the clouds.

Ning Fan then waved his sleeve, gathering the mountainous collection of techniques, and sped into a Millennium Age Tower.

If self-creating techniques, these countless techniques could serve as references...

...

The ten days agreed upon with Daoist Mu Song quickly passed.

Within the Zen courtyard, two figures emerged seemingly from endless void space—Daoist Mu Song and Xiang Mingzi.

The two had barely appeared when they saw Ning Fan waiting beneath an ancient pine in the courtyard.

Though only ten days had passed, Ning Fan now gave Mu Song and Xiang Mingzi a sense of unity with nature.

It seemed standing before them was not Ning Fan, but a tree, a tree rooted deeply on Mu Island, connected to nature. Even just by breathing, he gave off a sense of vitality.

Undoubtedly, this was evidence of achievement in the Wood Dao!

"Oh? It seems during these ten days, young friend's cultivations have advanced considerably..."

Mu Song smiled but felt truly amazed inside.

If he wasn't mistaken, Ning Fan, the inheritor of Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor, had cultivated the fourth type of Yin-Yang in those ten days!

More unexpectedly for Mu Song, the flow direction of Ning Fan's Wood Dao principle seemed incredibly peculiar, unlike any wood technique he knew...

"This disciple, could it be he's cultivating some lost demonic art...It looks unfamiliar, never heard of this technique before..."

Curiously enough, Mu Song casually asked, "Could young friend reveal the name of the technique you're cultivating?"

"The first volume of the Dao Scripture."

Ning Fan quite casually disclosed the name of his self-created technique to Mu Song.

It was called Dao Scripture, not Moksha, because Ning Fan not only wrote the Wood Yin-Yang into the scripture, but also revised and incorporated the techniques of rain, battle, and darkness Yin-Yang from his cultivation.

Rather than piecing together and cultivating twenty-seven techniques, Ning Fan preferred to create a more complete technique covering the twenty-seven types of Yin-Yang he cultivated.

The task was challenging, but not impossible for him, a master from the Second Realm of Tianren.

Chapter 973: Realm Within Paintings

"Dao Scripture Volume One?"

Daoist Mu Song was slightly taken aback, and Xiang Mingzi was equally stunned.

Then, the two shared a laugh and shook their heads.

Haha, this cultivation technique dares to use the name "Dao Scripture," the creator of this scripture must be unbelievably arrogant. Does he think this scripture can encompass all the great Daos under heaven? Does he think... he is the legendary Fourth Step Immortal Emperor?

It's known that even legendary Saints do not dare to name their cultivation techniques Dao Scriptures. In this world, every cultivation method can only capture a part of the Dao's path, like the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor's Yin Yang Transformation and Chaos Ring Decision, or the Immortal Emperor's Unbeaten Scripture, or the Ink Rain Scripture and Dark Luster Scripture that Ning Fan has studied...

Ancient scrolls record that only figures at the Fourth Step Immortal Emperor level are qualified to create their own Dao Scriptures. A Dao Scripture is a supreme classic that can truly encompass the world's Daos, a treasure able to suppress eons of reincarnation upon its emergence.

Moreover, each Dao Scripture is a unique existence; except for the Immortal Emperor who created it, no one else can cultivate it.

In Daoist Mu Song and Xiang Mingzi's view, the technique Ning Fan practices, although named Dao Scripture, is naturally not a true Dao Scripture.

A true Dao Scripture cannot be taught to others; it can't be learned, only self-created.

Then came the question: Could Ning Fan create a Dao Scripture himself...

No matter how highly Daoist Mu Song and Xiang Mingzi thought of Ning Fan, they didn't believe Ning Fan could self-create a Dao Scripture.

Only a Fourth Step Immortal Emperor can create a Dao Scripture, no exceptions!

Seeing Daoist Mu Song and Xiang Mingzi laugh, Ning Fan was bewildered, casually asking, only to feel tongue-tied and both laughing and crying.

During his time in the Millennium Age Tower, Ning Fan used millennia to comprehend and create his own technique from the Ink Rain, Unbeaten, and Dark Luster Scriptures, incorporating wood comprehension, allowing the technique to encompass four attributes of rain, battle, darkness, and wood. The technique's name was tentatively decided as Dao Scripture.

Because he planned to gradually incorporate other Yin-Yang cultivation methods in the future, he only created the first volume for now, planning to continue with the second and third volumes. Ning Fan planned for each Dao Scripture volume to include nine types of Yin-Yang, summing up to twenty-seven when combined.

Later, Ning Fan entered the second Millennium Age Tower, spending another thousand years to refine Jianmu's Essence using the techniques from Dao Scripture Volume One, cultivating the first Magic Yin-Yang—Wood Yin-Yang, causing an explosive growth in Ancient Demon bloodline cultivation, advancing from the Seventh Nirvana of the Heavenly Demon all the way to the Eighth!

Afterwards, Ning Fan entered the third Millennium Age Tower, spending a thousand years to reorganize the powers of rain, battle, and darkness within his body using the Dao Scripture's first volume techniques.

After reorganization, all four kinds of Yin-Yang were operated by the same technique, reducing barriers between them, making their combined use much more powerful.

The only unexpected thing was, the name Dao Scripture could not be used casually...

Before, Ning Fan truly did not know that Dao Scripture was exclusive to Fourth Step Immortal Emperors; he only casually named it Dao Scripture because he was lazy...

Forget it, let it be arrogant if it wishes; anyway, he was too lazy to come up with a new name... Naming was never his strength.

Besides, he might not be without opportunity to reach the Fourth Step in his lifetime. If that day ever comes, this technique can become a true Reversed Saint Dao Scripture, living up to its name!

Regarding the topic of Dao Scripture, Daoist Mu Song did not elaborate. Since Ning Fan was already waiting here, he didn't waste words with Ning Fan and directly flicked his sleeve, sending out a myriad of azure lights.

The azure lights swept over, and the three of them instantly disappeared from that place, entering a dazzling azure light world.

"This is... the Palatial Void!" Ning Fan's gaze instantly focused.

"Indeed, this place is my Wood Palm Space Void; within this void, I am the sovereign of the Great Dao of Wood. With your newly cultivated Wood Yin-Yang, you should be able to sense this... Can you tell how many layers of Void World my Wood Palm Space Void possesses?" Daoist Mu Song asked with a smile.

He seemed very familiar with the Ultimate Study of Ancient Chaos, able to readily recognize the name of Wood Yin-Yang.

"Void World? What is that?" Ning Fan asked in puzzlement.

"Oh? You don't know, young friend? Every Palatial Void is composed of multiple layers of Void World. The more layers of Void World it has, the stronger the Palatial Void becomes. In today's Era of Decline, it's rare to encounter Immortal Emperors of the same Palatial rank. It's said that in the Immemorial era, the same ranked Immortal Emperors could easily suppress others based on the number of Void World layers..." Xiang Mingzi patiently explained.

As they spoke, Daoist Mu Song and Xiang Mingzi guided Ning Fan, flying swiftly in a chosen direction.

Ning Fan heard about the knowledge of the Palatial Void for the first time, so he listened very attentively.

He had just recently cultivated Wood Yin-Yang and could exert a slight amount of Palm Position Power, yet he was not truly a Wood Palm Immortal Emperor. After entering this place, Ning Fan felt tremendous suppression, as if with a single thought, Daoist Wood Pine could revoke his right to utilize the Dao Principle of Wood here...

Is this the power of the Palatial Void...

A flicker of azure gleam shone in Ning Fan's eyes as he gazed at the boundless void. The Nine Days Grand Dao appeared before him, exceptionally clear, layer by layer, revealing itself.

The Grand Dao of the Palatial Void is arranged in layers, each layer is a Void World...

Ning Fan counted carefully, then answered, "There are a total of 309 Void Worlds here."

"Hiss... Young friend, what sharp vision, I'm impressed!"

Mu Song and Xiang Mingzi were both greatly surprised, clicking their tongues in praise.

It should be known that even someone like Xiang Mingzi, a First Order Quasi-Saint, found it difficult to count the exact number of Void Worlds here, only able to make a rough estimate, often with some discrepancy.

Yet, Ning Fan could accurately state the number of Void Worlds, rendering the two men speechless.

Especially Mu Song, his attention towards Ning Fan rose to unprecedented heights.

"Within the Eastern Heavens, only three monsters could see through the number of Void Worlds accurately; none are less than Second Rank Quasi-Saints. Yet this boy can achieve this..."

The three traveled swiftly, gradually, the azure light in the void began to weaken. Moving forward, waves of golden light transmitted from afar.

The center of the golden light was a scroll as tall as the heavens, hanging in the endless void, imposing and regal, giving an extremely solemn and respectful feeling.

The paper of the scroll was already yellowing, as if existing for countless ages, the blank canvas of the paper showed hardly any drawings, just two koi fish, one black, one white, extremely lively, surprisingly able to swim within the painting.

Black fish with white eyes, white fish with black eyes...

Upon seeing the giant painting, the Yin Yang Locket within Ning Fan's body began to gently tremble, seeming to resonate with the giant painting.

"Yin-Yang Fish... this giant painting contains immense Yin-Yang power, resonating with the Yin Yang Locket, could it be the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting from ancient times..."

Ning Fan guessed correctly, this giant painting was indeed inherited from the Southern Heavenly Gold Talisman Palace's ancient second chart, after much passing down, ended in Daoist Wood Pine's possession.

This Golden Sky Black Earth Painting was incredibly peculiar, the Yin-Yang Fish in the painting swam harmoniously and peacefully, peaceful as if in dead silence, in the dead silence gave Ning Fan an unprecedented sense of crisis.

As if once the Yin-Yang Fish escapes from the painting, it would become a terrifying weapon, enough to threaten his life...

The surroundings of the giant painting seemed sealed by an invisible four-sided formation array, within the seal's domain, both Mu Song and Xiang Mingzi, despite their high cultivation, exercised extreme caution, evidently wary of the ancient second chart. Ning Fan was thoughtful, it seemed his sense of danger wasn't an illusion, perhaps this painting truly was dangerous...

Beneath the giant painting floated over a hundred cushions, each cushion seated a skeleton, judging from the color of the bones, these skeletons before death were of no less than Thought-Shattering Cultivation, and some, were even Immortal Emperors!

"Why are there so many master skeletons here..." Ning Fan asked gravely.

"These were all cultivators who once sought my help, attempting to comprehend the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting, in hopes of me owing them a karmic debt... Sadly, the majority died within the painting... The Golden Sky Black Earth Painting, being an ancient second chart, is known to contain the Yin-Yang Grand Dao, aiding breakthroughs beyond the Immortal Emperor, yet its other usages are unknown... So far, only one person succeeded in extracting something from the painting, and delivered it to me. That person was Senluo. Consequently, I owed Senluo a karmic debt, ultimately opening my eyes to help him settle the Dark Clan affair... Besides Senluo, no other has taken anything from the painting. Even fewer survived... There were even First Order Quasi-Saint monsters like Xiang Mingzi seeking to observe the painting, yet they too, couldn't retrieve any items and could only barely survive within the painting..."

"Even Senior Xiang Mingzi could only barely survive within the painting?" Ning Fan frowned, the painting seemed even more dangerous than he imagined.

"Don't worry, you are the inheritor of the Ancient Chaos, and have mastered the Ancient Chaos's Ultimate Five-Sword Study, capable of severing Dao Sources, if you enter the painting, it will be like a fish in water, as long as you exercise caution, it won't pose too much danger. Even if there truly is danger, I, Xiang Mingzi, will do my utmost to forcefully pull you out of the painting..." Xiang Mingzi reassured.

Daoist Wood Pine added, "This Golden Sky Black Earth Painting contains a Realm Within Paintings. Within the realm, lies something I need, if you can retrieve it, I'll assist you in countering the Dark Clan. If you cannot accomplish this task, I won't help, even considering Xiang Mingzi's favor."

Ning Fan paused for a moment, then asked, "May I know what Senior requires from the Realm Within Paintings?"

"Eyes."

"Eyes? What kind of eyes?" Ning Fan was startled, somewhat confused.

"Haha, no need to ask further. Once you enter the realm within the painting, you'll understand the eyes that I want."

Afterwards, Daoist Mu Song explained to Ning Fan the two methods to enter the realm within the painting in detail.

The first method involves separating the spirit from the body, entering the world of the painting solely with the spirit. This method cannot carry magical treasures and is relatively dangerous.

The second method is to directly enter the realm within the painting with the talisman pen from the Gold Talisman Palace.

This ancient second picture was drawn by the founder of the Gold Talisman Palace, so the disciples of the palace have privileges when entering the picture.

The talisman pen is a symbol of the Gold Talisman Palace disciples. Holding the talisman pen allows one to enter the realm with their physical body and magical treasures. The only drawback is that a talisman pen can only be used once before it is destroyed and cannot be used again...

"Unfortunately, the Gold Talisman Palace was destroyed a long time ago. The talisman pens left in the world are already scarce. Nowadays, there are barely any talisman pens circulating. I've collected the last talisman pen and used it up, so this second method is unavailable to you. You can only use the first method of spirit separation to enter the realm within the painting..." Daoist Mu Song said helplessly.

Ning Fan's eyes flashed subtly.

The talisman pen from the Gold Talisman Palace, he seemed... to have accidentally acquired one...

Without the talisman pen, he would have to separate his spirit to enter the realm within the painting and could not carry magical treasures like the God-Extinguishing Shield and Yin Yang Locket, making it very dangerous.

Fortunately, he just happens to have a talisman pen, so he doesn't need to worry.

"I have a talisman pen..."

Ning Fan turned his hand and took out the talisman pen from the Gold Talisman Palace that had been idle for years. This was a trophy he won when battling Bone Emperor during his run in the Rain Immortal World...

Bone Emperor... was once a formidable enemy in his youth, but recalling it now, was merely a Void Fragmentation junior...

"Oh? You have a talisman pen from the Gold Talisman Palace?" Mu Song was slightly surprised, but didn't ask much about the origin of Ning Fan's talisman pen, and directly informed him of the method to use the pen.

The talisman pen from the Gold Talisman Palace must be activated with Sky Frost Chilling Energy and Earth Vein Demonic Flame.

For the Nine Worlds cultivators, Sky Frost Chilling Energy and Earth Vein Demonic Flame are supreme treasures, but for the Four Heavens Immortals, they are not particularly rare items.

Ning Fan himself possessed Sky Frost Chilling Energy and Earth Vein Demonic Flame and directly activated the talisman pen. He approached step by step towards the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting and pointed it at the colossal painting towering high into the sky.

Instantly, the paper canvas of the giant painting began to ripple like water waves. The Yin Yang Fish that once moved freely gradually faded away, and the yellowed canvas changed color, gradually brightening up like a mirror, reflecting the entire world in that mirror.

That was the world within the painting of the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting!

"Gold Talisman Palace treasury deacon... Zhuo Jie... Talisman pen verified... Allowed entry..." A voice with no tone emitted from the giant painting.

"Go ahead. If you can bring out the eyes that Old Mu needs, then do so. If not, give up and escape the realm within the painting. If you encounter danger beyond your control, the old man will exert all his effort to pull you out from the realm within the painting and won't let you die in there..." Xiang Mingzi patted Ning Fan's shoulder, encouraging him.

Ning Fan nodded and stepped into the world within the painting.

Xiang Mingzi was doing his utmost to obtain aid against the Dark Clan, and Ning Fan certainly wouldn't let Xiang Mingzi's goodwill go to waste.

Upon entering the realm within the painting, the talisman pen in Ning Fan's hand disintegrated into ashes. Surrounding him was dense white mist, obscuring all vision, and an invisible force weighed heavily on him, making it exceedingly difficult to stay afloat.

Descending unsure for how long, the white mist around him suddenly vanished, the gravity suppressing him suddenly lightened.

Ning Fan slowly landed on the ground, and unexpectedly found himself standing in a very familiar city.

He... had ended up in Hai Ning's Ning Clan!

There was no mistake. Every brick and tile here was incredibly familiar, he had walked its long streets countless times; this was the hometown where he and his brother Ning Gu grew up...

"I clearly stepped into the realm within the painting, so why am I here... are these scenes all illusions..."

Ning Fan's eyes flashed with azure as he tried to see through the world's illusion, but peculiarly, he couldn't see a trace of falsehood in the land.

"I can't see through the illusion here?"

Ning Fan frowned and walked on the familiar yet foreign streets.

The corner soy milk stall emitted steam, but neither the vendor nor customers were seen...

Under the old tree, a stone table displayed an unfinished game of chess, but neither player was present...

Some courtyards had laundry hanging unfinished... And some houses emitted cooking smoke...

Yet the city was eerily empty, not a person in sight...

This was an empty city, there were no people, nor even insects, fish, or birds...

He stopped walking through the city and instead spread out his spirit sense. In an instant, his vast spirit sense spread out from Hai Ning, covering all of Wu Country, and then expanding toward the entire Rain Immortal World.

Vacant, the entire Rain Immortal World showed no sign of a living person...

"I wonder where Senior Mu Song's desired eyes are... The Rain Immortal World doesn't have them, will they be in the other eight lower worlds..."

Ning Fan's figure blurred, transforming into a ray of golden light, instantly vanishing as he crossed from the Rain Immortal World into other realms.

The Sword World, Tree World, Mountain World... Ning Fan traversed one lower realm after another, yet not a single living person was seen, nor was Senior Mu Song's mentioned eyes found.

"Not in the nine worlds, might they be in the Four Heavens?"

With this thought, the scenery around Ning Fan changed instantaneously, and in a heartbeat, he appeared within the Eastern Heaven Immortal World at the Millennium Sect on Chaos Demon Star.

The entire Nefarious Demon Star Domain was just as lifeless, Ning Fan confirmed it was all illusion, so felt no surprise.

He performed the Ice Rain Technique, causing his spirit sense to spread throughout the entire Eastern Heaven without exception, revealing that every Cultivation Star was empty of people...

Suddenly, Ning Fan sensed a living aura from a certain direction and without hesitation, utilized Vertical Golden Light to swiftly rush towards it.

In the starry sky, a youth with disheveled hair was slowly treading through the void, moving towards Ning Fan. His steps were slow, his body seemed cold and stiff, and if not for the faint aura of life within him, he'd be mistaken for a zombie.

The disheveled hair obscured his face, and Ning Fan rushed towards him without catching a glimpse of his features all along.

Closer, closer...

Ning Fan flew forward and stopped a hundred yards from the person, warily observing him.

Sensing Ning Fan's presence, the person also stopped moving, slowly raising his head, speaking in a stiff tone.

"Not... Brother Zhuo Jie... Intruder... Kill..."

As the aura of murderous intent arose, turbulent winds grew among the heavens, blowing aside his dishevelled hair, revealing a blood-smearred face, a ferocious expression, and a pair of empty sockets where eyes had once been.

Ning Fan didn't have the chance to ask a question before the person charged at him, the Middle Human Profound Stage aura sweeping across the starry sky.

"Were this person's eyes dug out?"

Ning Fan showed a thoughtful expression, casually casting Heaven Sealing Art to immobilize the strange figure in place, naturally rendering it impossible for himself to be harmed by mere Human Profound Life Immortal...

Chapter 974: Giant Carp

With Ning Fan's cultivation, if he wants to restrain any Fate Immortal, the opponent will be unable to break free under any circumstances.

That strange man was restrained, unable to break free, and immediately roared like a wild beast, maniacal and furious.

Ning Fan ignored the strange man's roars, his figure flickered, arriving in front of the strange man, reaching out a palm, pressing it on the strange man's Tian Ling, utilizing the Reverse Spirit Technique, attempting to peer into the strange man's memories.

However, to his surprise, the strange man's divine sense was pitch black, like an expanse formed by ink, with nothing visible.

Moreover, a drop of ink that was extremely dark suddenly flew out from the strange man's Tian Ling, heading straight for Ning Fan's Tian Ling. The mutation appeared too quickly, catching Ning Fan off guard; even if switched to a powerful Immortal Emperor, it would be difficult to evade the ink's attack.

At the critical moment, a golden shield automatically defended outside Ning Fan's body, blocking the ink and preventing it from approaching.

Missing its target, the ink seemed to possess spirit awareness, retreating swiftly at an unimaginable speed, vanishing without a trace. As for the strange man's physical defense, after the ink left the body, it gradually faded like ink in water, disappearing from the world, as if never existed...

"What is that ink..."

Ning Fan's face was solemn as water; if he hadn't had the God-Extinguishing Shield for protection, he would have surely been invaded by that ink into his Tian Ling, with unpredictable consequences afterwards.

The ink's speed was too fast; even among Immortal Emperors, few could mount a defense. The ink's retreating speed was even more unimaginable; with Ning Fan's cultivation speed, it was difficult to pursue that drop of ink...

While pondering, a dripping sound suddenly came from the endless galaxies, seemingly close yet seemingly distant...

Drip, drip, drip...

Ning Fan's gaze slightly focused, as he listened intently, that dripping sound became extremely eerie, no longer audible.

Then, another voice emerged from the endless void, as if a woman very far away, yet extremely close, whispered softly to him.

"Little butterfly, don't sleep, wake up..."

"Little butterfly, don't sleep... don't sleep..."

Whose voice is this!

So familiar, yet, so unfamiliar...

Ning Fan's eyes abruptly tightened, recalling that he had heard this voice in the Scriptures Tower gifted by Ancient Chaos.

In the tenth layer of the Scriptures Tower, there was a stone door that only a Saint could open, inside the stone door, a voice had once spoken to Ning Fan,

'I am your key, yet you have forgotten me... The ruler does not recognize the concubine...'

Was it just now the voice of the woman claiming to be the key?

Ning Fan's expression showed a trace of confusion, the voice just now, he was very sure, was not emanating from within the Mysterious Yin World...

The voice was the same, but seemed... like it was coming from another timeline...

Clearly so distant, yet as if close at hand; clearly close at hand, yet like one awakening, one slumbering, existing in overlapping timelines, like day and night, like participation and discussion, like life and death, like memory and forgetfulness, forever unable to meet...

"This place is very strange, first it's this picture world that resembles yet differs from the four heavens and nine worlds, an empty city but with traces of presence... then the strange man, followed by the ink, finally came the dripping sound, and that familiar yet alien female voice..."

Ning Fan pondered, everything here was incomprehensible to him. Numerous anomalies appeared here that defy logic, yet adhere to some kind of strange logic...

Ning Fan felt as if he was in a dream, everything here gave him the feeling of dreaming...

Dream...

Only in dreams would various unreasonable things appear, only in dreams would give the feeling of near and far...

Ning Fan's eyes flashed brilliantly, following this line of thought, suddenly understanding many things and gradually comprehending this world.

"So that's it, this realm within the painting is actually a dream world. From the moment I entered this place, though awakened, it was as if I entered a dream, and everything I saw was the presentation of my memories within the dream, yet among these, there were many things outside my memories, like I hadn't traversed the nine worlds in reality but saw the complete nine worlds here; I hadn't seen that strange man but saw him in this pictorial dream... Those are not my memories, nor solely my dream... Thus, it seems this realm can not only integrate my memories but also incorporate others' memories to form a complete dream..."

"Just earlier I thought of the Eastern Heaven, and found myself in the Eastern Heaven; if this place is a dream, then there is an explanation..."

"Among mortals, there is a saying called lucid dream, where one can remain awake in the dream, freely control the development of things within the dream... My current state seems very similar to a lucid dream..."

"If this place is truly my dream, then I could fulfill all my wishes in the dream, for instance, I hope in this dream that the cultivation of divine, demon, and transformation bloodlines all reach the level of Blood Lightning!"

This thought had just emerged in Ning Fan's mind, his cultivation levels immediately changed.

Blood Lightning cultivation did not change, but Ancient Devil Cultivation Realm suddenly surged from the Eighth Nirvana of the Heavenly Demon to the peak of the Twelve Nirvana of the Heavenly Demon, and in the next moment, it continued to breakthrough, reaching the Ancestral Regression Level!

Ancient Devil Cultivation, Ancestral Regression first realm! It was actually comparable to the Eternity's First Tribulation!

"So this is the power of Ancestral Regression Ancient Demon..."

Feeling the exponentially strengthened physical defense, Ning Fan's eyes slightly trembled.

He certainly knew this cultivation increase was false, that when the dream awakens, all growth would vanish.

Despite this, this place was somewhat inconceivable, gaining the opportunity once to experience Ancestral Regression Ancient Demon cultivation will definitely be of great benefit to Ning Fan's future breakthrough to Ancient Devil Cultivation Realm!

Fiendgods and ancient demons' cultivation equally surged, reaching the level of Eternity's First Tribulation.

Ning Fan could personally feel the power bursting out from his body, yet unable to comprehend the specific process of cultivation surge.

In reality, his Shekong Heart Tribulation had not descended, and in the painting dream, he equally did not experience the stage of Shekong Heart Tribulation, yet directly possessed the ancient demons and Fiendgods cultivation level of Eternity's First Tribulation...

"Although this is a dream, allowing free imagination of one's cultivation, this imagination must surely have a limit... This is the world created by the Golden Talisman Palace Ancestor, definitely subject to his cultivation constraints, and thus limited..."

Ning Fan attempted to continuously raise the cultivation of four bloodlines, but could only raise each cultivation to the level of Nine Tribulations Peak Immortal Emperor. Beyond this, no matter how it was attempted, it was impossible to achieve.

"Oh? Young Friend Ning just entered the realm within the painting for a while, and understood the essence of the dream within the painting?"

Outside the pictorial realm, Daoist Wood Pine and Xiang Mingzi both sensed the changes in Dao traces on the giant painting, though they couldn't see specifically what Ning Fan did, they could make guesses.

If their assumptions were correct, Ning Fan already utilized the dream characteristics of the pictorial realm to rapidly increase his cultivation, thus traveling securely in the Land of Dreams.

"How remarkable. I spent a full ten days breaking through the essence of the pictorial realm when I entered the painting, while many Masters died in the painting unable to realize this, yet this child used such a short time..." Xiang Mingzi clicked his tongue in admiration.

"The cultivation that can be imagined in this realm within the painting can reach only Nine Tribulations Peak at most. With such cultivation, this child has no worries for survival, but to bring out the things I need from the pictorial realm, is not so simple... If unable to open the eyes..." Daoist Wood Pine was hopeful yet worried.

In the four heavens, very few masters can open their eyes. Without opening the eyes, one cannot see the things Daoist Wood Pine needs...

"The world I see, can you, see..."

...

Ning Fan borrowed the dream's imagination, causing his cultivation to surge, at this moment his four bloodlines combined, nearly exploding with the combat strength of a First Order Quasi-Saint!

With his current strength, using the God-Extinguishing Shield is not merely defending against an Eight Tribulations Celestial Emperor attack, even against the attack of a Second-Grade Quasi-Saint, Ning Fan has considerable confidence to withstand!

"I wish... to possess the speed of Earth-Penetrating Golden Light Ninth Passage!"

Ning Fan stepped into the void, nine faint golden ripples appeared under his feet and his figure instantly shot out, actually pursuing in the direction where the ink previously fled.

He still does not know what eyes Daoist Wood Pine needs, but intuitively feels that capturing that ink drop should yield some clues.

The speed of Golden Light Ninth Passage was too fast, it was Ning Fan's never experienced cultivation speed, seemingly needing only a step to reach any point in the Eastern Heaven from where he stood!

This speed had already surpassed Ning Fan's understanding. In reality, he could not achieve such speed, but here, he was afforded a rare opportunity to experience it.

In just a flicker, Ning Fan crossed countless galaxies and blocked the path of the ink that was frantically fleeing. With a flick of his finger, he unleashed the force of a First Order Quasi-Saint's Heaven Sealing Art, immobilizing the ink in the starry sky.

"Yang Carp..."

From the ink came a sudden, rough voice, followed by an eruption of an almost terrifying temperature, incinerating the binding Heaven Sealing Art.

It was the power of extreme Yang. That tiny droplet of ink had a terrifying Yang force capable of incinerating a First Order Quasi-Saint.

"Such strong Yang force, this is... the Yang Dao Origin Force!"

The scorching heat wave approached, causing Ning Fan's expression to tense instantly.

He had already heard from Daoist Wood Pine about what a Dao Source was. He also knew that the Liangyi Square Seal he had obtained was a treasure containing the power of Yin and Yang Dao Origin Forces.

What Ning Fan did not know was that Daoist Wood Pine had created the Liangyi Square Seal to suppress the Yin-Yang Dao Source Power of the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting. Unfortunately, with Mu Song's

Second Rank Quasi-Saint cultivation and the power of the Liangyi Square Seal, each entry into the painting resulted in severe injuries, and he could only barely save his life...

Throughout his life, Mu Song entered the painting's second realm seven times, each time suffering severe injuries from some fierce creature within the painting.

He had seven opportunities to bring out eyes from the painting, but only succeeded once.

Compared to Mu Song, Senluo was far luckier. He entered the second painting once and successfully brought out an eyeball, earning Mu Song's indebtedness to him.

Due to the extreme peril of this painting, Mu Song was unwilling to enter it himself. He had entered this painting too many times; once inside, the creatures could sense his aura... He had to ask others to do it on his behalf, and it must be someone who had never entered the painting before...

"I am still worried about Young Friend Ning's safety. If those two fierce creatures awaken..." Speaking of the fierce creatures, Xiang Mingzi's expression was more solemn than ever.

"No need to worry. Normally, those two fierce creatures won't awaken for ordinary people entering. The cost of their awakening is too great. Unless they smell the spirit odor of a Quasi-Saint, they absolutely will not attack the intruder... Even if unforeseen circumstances arise, and the creatures do awaken, you and I are prepared and can forcibly pull Young Friend Ning out of the painting... If the creatures do not awaken, and faced with ordinary Dao Carps, with Young Friend Ning's enhanced cultivation and sword technique capable of severing the Dao Source, he could traverse the painting unharmed!" Daoist Mu Song confidently stated.

His only concern was that Ning Fan might ultimately not be able to open his eyes, but he was not worried about Ning Fan facing danger.

The ink seemed enraged by Ning Fan's Heaven Sealing Art, its surrounding Yang force growing increasingly intense, igniting the void of the starry sky.

Ning Fan's standing ground had become the convergence point of the Yang force, with the void's space turning into molten red liquid! Were it not for his skyrocketing cultivation and his body being protected by the God-Extinguishing Shield, he would have been reduced to ashes beneath this Yang force!

"Yin Seal Phoenix Freeze Heaven, suppress!"

Without any hesitation, Ning Fan pointed forward with his finger, instantly unleashing an extremely sharp treasure light that vibrated towards the starry sky.

This seal was the very Liangyi Square Seal he had seized from Wu Laoba!

With Ning Fan's current cultivation driving the first transformation of the seal, four bone-chilling phoenix cries resounded.

The half of the starry sky where Ning Fan stood turned into a sudden deep winter, generating an endless Yin cold force that repelled the Yang force emitted by the ink. Half the starry sky was extreme Yang, and the other half was extreme Yin. The two forces began to cancel each other out, reducing the omnipresent Yang force by more than fifty percent.

Ning Fan then swung his hand, summoning the Memory Severing Dao Sword, and employed the Severing Dao Divine Sword technique, slashing fiercely forward.

With his current comprehension of the Severing Dao Divine Sword, without the assistance of the Liangyi Square Seal, it would be challenging to sever such terrifying Yang force.

Fortunately, his cultivation had surged. This slash, too, was formidable, directly severing the densely interwoven Yang Dao Source ahead!

The surrounding Yang Dao Source Power had already been weakened by the Liangyi Square Seal. It could no longer withstand Ning Fan's slash, collapsing like a mountain, and in an instant, the half of the sky where the ink resided plunged into a wildly chaotic collapse.

"Cannot withstand..."

The ink seemed to fear Ning Fan, no longer favoring battle. With a flicker, it disappeared without a trace from the collapsing starry sky.

The surrounding commotion gradually subsided, and Ning Fan stowed away the treasure seal and Dao Sword, spreading his spirit sense to search for the ink's whereabouts, but to no avail.

The ink, like a dream evaporating, vanished...

What's more troubling was that the scenery around Ning Fan started changing back to the landscape of Hai Ning's Ning Clan.

Standing within the city of Hai Ning's Ning Clan, Ning Fan's eyes briefly showed confusion.

His cultivation reverted to the level it had when he first entered the Realm Within Paintings.

His memory seemed partially erased, as if he could not remember just now battling the strange ink...

His memory seemed to have returned to the moment he first entered the Realm Within Paintings...

"This is... Hai Ning's Ning Clan!" Ning Fan's eyes slightly narrowed.

"I clearly stepped into the painting world, yet why do I appear here... Is this scenery all an illusion..."

Ning Fan had a strange feeling, a persistent sense that he had uttered these same words before, seen this same scene somewhere before...

Why did he have this strange thought?

He could not remember...

He began searching, as he had when he first entered the Realm Within Paintings, seeing the same empty city...

Then he began exploring other lower realms, appeared in the Eastern Heaven, encountered strange people, saw the strange ink, and then... heard the sound of dripping water and the eerily familiar yet unfamiliar female voice.

"Little butterfly, don't sleep, wake up..."

"Little butterfly, don't sleep... don't sleep..."

Why was he told again not to sleep...

Ning Fan's eyes tightened briefly, then a moment of bewilderment swept over him, a persistent discomfort in his heart without finding its source.

So, he discovered for the second time the mystique of this dreamland, his cultivation rising, pursuing the ink a second time, driving it back a second time...

And then, forgetting everything a third time, appearing in Hai Ning's Ning Clan...

Thus, over and over...

At present, trapped in the Realm Within Paintings, Ning Fan still did not know that this realm had three thousand layers. In the deepest of those three thousand layers, amidst endless void, lay a giant skeleton clad in golden armor, standing upright, still holding the pose of pointing angrily at the sky before death.

Around that giant skeleton were two light pillars, each entwined with countless chains, shackling two colossal carps like Cultivation Stars, one black, one white, both slumbering with closed eyes.

Amid the two giant carps, numerous ink dots, both black and white, swam about...

"Report to the king, there is an outsider master intruding in the realm..." A white dot suddenly swam towards the giant carp to report.

"Another outsider came in? What is their cultivation?" The white giant carp lazily did not bother to open his eyes, displaying an indifferent attitude, while the black giant carp slightly opened its eyes, sinisterly asked.

"Reporting to the king, that master seems to be of the Eternal First Calamity cultivation..."

"Eternal First Calamity? Merely an ant. This individual's Spirit likely lacks any taste. You may divide it among yourselves and eat it! Do not disturb my slumber again!" sighed the black giant carp impatiently, closing its eyes again.

Seeing this, the little white dot that wanted to continue reporting could only shut its mouth in frustration.

It initially wanted to report to the king, that the master who entered this time should not be underestimated, for they had even defeated the fourth-ranked Dao Carp in the Dao Carp military...

If it weren't for that master being trapped in the endless cycle of the Dream Realm, they might have caught up with this carp and killed it...

Forget it, since the kings weren't interested in dealing with this intruder, it was left to these subordinates to handle it...

Chapter 975: Jiuli

The 12th time dreaming back to Hai Ning's Ning Clan...

The 24th time dreaming back to Hai Ning's Ning Clan...

The 36th time dreaming back...

The 48th time dreaming back...

Ning Fan felt as if trapped in a dream, unable to escape no matter what, returning again and again to Hai Ning's Ning City.

"Is it my illusion, it feels like I've experienced this scene many times already..."

The 49th time dreaming back, Ning Fan appeared again at Hai Ning's Ning Clan, brows deeply furrowed.

For the first time, he looked up at the sky. The sky was gray, under that grayness, something seemed hidden, watching him. He covered his eyes with Tianren Green Light, yet could see nothing beneath the gray sky...

"I feel like there's a gaze hidden beneath that gray sky... Is it an illusion..."

In reality, above the gray dome, a gaze was indeed hidden. Seeing Ning Fan looking up at the sky, it was slightly surprised.

"This place is the first layer of the Three Thousand Painted Realms, it's his 49th cycle of dreaming here... The 49th cycle, has he finally sensed my gaze? Unfortunately, he hasn't opened his eyes, hasn't seen the Real Realms, so he can't see my Dao Carp Sect, nor escape this place's endless dream repetition, trapped here..."

"Not having opened eyes, not a Quasi-Saint, most likely the two kings won't intervene, the troublesome thing is, he can see through the mystery of this dream realm, which can raise his cultivations sharply, with mysterious techniques matching Dao Source Power, therefore, with my rank fourth strength in Dao Carp Sect, I'm truly no match for him... Are reinforcements still not arriving..."

The 50th time dreaming back, the 51st time, the 52nd time... the 60th time.

Ning Fan arrived once more at the Eastern Heaven, once more warded off the black ink spots, once more... heard that voice of a woman, reminiscent yet almost forgotten.

Little butterfly, don't sleep, wake up.

Don't sleep, don't sleep...

Ning Fan's brows furrowed deeply, somehow feeling this voice, he hadn't heard it just once, but repeatedly many times...

"This place feels very strange to me, it's as though I've been continuously doing the same things, like the point trapped on a circle, completing lap after lap, yet never able to leave this circle..."

"The senses can deceive, memories can deceive, but cause and effect alone cannot deceive... Others can't see the cause and effect, but with my vision in the Second Realm of Tianren, I can see it clearly..."

Ning Fan reached out his hand, grasping at the endless starry sky, promptly revealing dozens of cause and effect lines.

These lines of cause and effect, one end linked to his body, the other end seemed connected to the depths of the void, unknown where it led.

This was the cause and effect Ning Fan formed with that ink, totaling 60 lines!

"What is this person doing..." The gaze hidden within the heaven and earth was utterly puzzled, unable to see the cause and effect, not understanding what Ning Fan had grasped virtually.

Ning Fan's gaze focused, affirming his inner suspicion.

"60 lines of cause and effect... So, I've clashed with that strange ink 60 times already, it's true, I haven't experienced this for the first time, but have been repeating it repeatedly!"

"This Pictorial Realm is indeed terrifying, able to make me experience 60 repetitive dream cycles without realizing it... Luckily, I can see cause and effect, following it, I surely can escape this endless cycle of dream repetition..."

Ning Fan raised his right hand, pressing his five fingers toward the direction those cause and effect lines connected, instantly channeling a vast power in that direction.

With Ning Fan's current virtual rise in cultivation, a press down immediately tore open the void before him, as a drop of black ink fell out from the void crack with a muffled groan.

"Impossible, you haven't opened your eyes, how can you find my hiding place!" That ink expressed disbelief.

Ning Fan naturally didn't answer the ink's question. Without a word, he directly summoned the Liangyi Square Seal, smashing it down upon the ink.

Once struck, the ink let out a muffled groan, retreating in the starry sky, revealing its true form under injury.

The true form of that ink was a white carp ten zhang giant, that drop of ink was indeed the eye of the white carp!

"Could it be... what Senior Mu Song wants me to take, is this carp's eye..." Ning Fan's gaze slightly concentrated, secretly pondering.

"An outsider cultivator has the audacity to impersonate a Gold Talisman Palace disciple, infiltrating the Pictorial Realm, the punishment should be gouging both eyes first, refining them into ink, then slaughtering the Spirit to feed my Dao Carp Lineage! With my own strength alone, without reinforcements, killing you isn't easy, in this way, I can only resort to my life-bound Imperial Gold Talisman, as the fourth Carp General of Dao Carp Sect, to summon the left side of the Imperial Gold Talisman and suppress this cultivator!"

The white carp was furious after Ning Fan struck its true form with a seal, actually spitting out a ray of golden light from its mouth, under the golden light was an ancient and worn talisman paper.

On the four corners of the talisman paper were mysterious and esoteric symbols, while in the center, in cinnabar, was written a hasty "圭" character.

"This is..." Ning Fan's gaze focused, sensing an extremely perilous feeling from the damaged talisman.

This character, "圭", seems... very familiar...

"By the order of my Dao Carp sect's fourth Carp General, summon the Imperial Gold Talisman, seal and extinguish this Master!"

White Carp spat out another golden light, and again, beneath the light was an ancient talisman paper. However, this time, the paper bore the character '寸'...

The characters '圭' and '寸' together form the character for 'seal'!

"This... resembles the power of the Heaven-Sealing Celestial Decree!"

Ning Fan's sense of crisis intensified as the two talisman papers undeniably contained power comparable to the Heaven-Sealing Celestial Decree!

One should know that when the Heaven-Sealing Celestial Decree locked the primitive wilderness in the past, giants like the Tongtian Ancient Emperor or the Chief of the True Dragon Clan, who were first-order Quasi-Saints, were unable to forcibly enter the wilderness, which speaks volumes about the decree's might.

The two talisman papers before him possess sealing force no less powerful than the Heaven-Sealing Celestial Decree. How could they be underestimated!

"Seal!"

White Carp coldly shouted, and the two talisman papers instantly merged into one. In an instant, a crimson light swept across the starry sky. Wherever the crimson light went, all the Great Daos were sealed, and on the traces, a layer of crimson ice seemed to solidify, freezing the operation of the Daos.

The light shot forward all the way and, upon nearing a hundred meters from Ning Fan, suddenly transformed into a giant web big enough to obscure the starry sky, sealing all of Ning Fan's escape routes and abruptly covering him.

Ning Fan urged the Liangyi Square Seal to strike towards the web. This seal was an innate magical treasure, and its momentum was earth-shattering. One seal shook the heavens, and the force of its smash could make the starry sky tremble. Despite its immense power, when smashed upon the web, it felt like a fist hitting cotton, unable to break the magic with force, blocking the web's descent. Instead, the web was stained with a layer of crimson exotic glow.

Subsequently, a crimson '封' character appeared on the seal, and the Dao source power within the seal was immediately, forcefully sealed, unable to exert its mighty force any further.

"My Gold Talisman Palace's Imperial Gold Talisman can seal everything in the world; it particularly excels at restraining various magical treasures. In this world, there's always something to overcome another. This child's innate treasure seal is not weak. It has approached the grade of mid-level innate, but unfortunately, against this general's life-bound Imperial Gold Talisman, it ends up being restrained!" White Carp thought disdainfully.

Seeing that the Liangyi Square Seal couldn't even slightly block the web, Ning Fan's expression grew more solemn. Without hesitation, he directly channeled the power of the God-Extinguishing Shield, transforming into the golden flame shadow of the God-Slaying Giant outside his body.

At this moment, all four of his cultivations inflated to the Nine Tribulations Peak, and with the four forces combined, he could exert the strength of a first-order Quasi-Saint. Utilizing the God-Extinguishing Shield with such cultivation, naturally, the God-Slaying Giant would be immensely formidable.

The God-Slaying Giant, holding a shield with its left hand, slightly crouched its body, and with a roar, dashed forward like a cannonball. As it charged forward, the traces shattered.

White Carp's eyes were filled with even more disdain. He could vaguely see that Ning Fan had borrowed some magical treasure's power to manifest the giant protector outside his body. Magical treasure's power huh... Heh, the Imperial Gold Talisman of the Gold Talisman Palace was made to counter all heavenly magical treasures. This child's treasure would surely be instantly sealed by the Imperial Gold Talisman!

However, the development completely caught White Carp by surprise.

Suddenly, a loud boom was heard as the crimson web, big enough to cover the heavens, was brazenly smashed out of the way by Ning Fan, creating a large hole with golden flames blazing fiercely over it.

This web, which could easily seal the attacks of the Liangyi Square Seal, couldn't seal the collision of the God-Extinguishing Shield!

Ning Fan continued to control the God-Slaying Giant, recklessly charging forward. Within a few breaths, he smashed the Zhou Tian web into pieces, breaking it into scattered crimson dust...

Once the web broke, the talisman papers which had merged together shook and then separated, their spiritual light dimming significantly. It seemed they got strongly counteracted by Ning Fan breaking them.

White Carp, whose life was bound to the Imperial Gold Talisman, received even more intense backlash!

The Imperial Gold Talisman of the Gold Talisman Palace is truly life-bound. If the talisman is damaged, the cultivator themselves will suffer severe injuries. Because this talisman is related to one's life, it cannot be used recklessly. Hence, White Carp had not used it prior. If not for Ning Fan being too difficult to deal with, White Carp would definitely not have used it.

Due to the talisman being damaged, White Carp's aura immediately weakened by one-third, his expression incredibly shocked.

"Impossible! How could this child's magical treasure directly break my all-countering Imperial Gold Talisman! This general is formed from a tenth-level Imperial-Grade Dao Soul Dao Carp, and this Imperial Gold Talisman's grade has reached mid-level innate. Against a superior innate magical treasure, it'd have a huge advantage. Even if not victorious, it wouldn't lose so easily! This child wielded a defensive magical treasure; attacking isn't its strength, so how can it directly break the Imperial Gold Talisman's seal..."

"Could it be that this child is using a supreme innate magical treasure, which is only qualified for Saints to use!"

As soon as this possibility was considered, White Carp's expression became extremely unpleasant.

In terms of cultivation, Ning Fan falsely inflated his strength enough to manifest first-order Quasi-Saint power, while White Carp's cultivation weakened by a third due to backlash from the magical treasure. Comparing the two, White Carp had already fallen behind in terms of cultivation!

In terms of divine skills, he excelled in using Yang Dao Origin Force for attacking enemies first and employing life-bound Imperial Gold Talisman to seal enemies second. But now, both were broken by Ning Fan...

"Damn! Why hasn't reinforcements arrived yet? With just my own strength, it's absolutely impossible to kill this child. If I persist in combat, I'd face deadly danger!"

White Carp panicked; he opened his mouth and swallowed the Imperial Gold Talisman back into his stomach, not daring to use it further, fearing more damage and backlash by using it again. Then, with a flick of his body, he dispersed like ink, fleeing once more, not daring to confront Ning Fan directly.

"Trying to escape?"

The God-Slaying Giant grabbed, and the Cause and Effect Line between Ning Fan and White Carp instantly showed up with utmost clarity.

Following the direction of the Cause and Effect Line, the God-Slaying Giant charged forward, diving directly into the endless void, emerging into another realm.

It was no longer the scene of the four heavens and nine worlds, but rather a boundless black ground with sky reaching out endlessly bathed in golden color.

This is the second layer of the Pictorial Realm. The White Carp was resting in this layer of the world, and upon seeing that Ning Fan actually pursued him to this layer, his expression changed dramatically.

"Impossible! Without opening your eyes, without finding the way to the second layer, you just crashed in with brute force!"

Taken aback, the White Carp fled towards the third layer of the Pictorial Realm again, its speed exceptionally fast.

Ning Fan would not let this White Carp escape. Earlier, this carp had intended to kill him, and now, it was going to pay the price!

The God-Slaying Giant opened a path between the golden sky and black earth with a single crash, chasing all the way into the third, fourth, fifth layers...

After all, the White Carp possessed cultivation comparable to a First Order Quasi-Saint. Many times, Ning Fan nearly caught up with the carp, but lacked the means to grievously injure a First Order Quasi-Saint. He could only wound the carp repeatedly with brute force without being able to deliver a fatal blow.

The White Carp fled continually, its injuries ought to worsen more and more, yet strangely, the deeper it fled into the Pictorial Realm, the lighter its wounds became, and its momentum slightly increased. On the contrary, the deeper Ning Fan went, the more suppressed his aura became...

"Foolish cultivator! You dare pursue me! Fine, if you have the skills then keep chasing me! If I enter beyond the thousand-layer mark, I can instantly heal these minor injuries, and with the increase in aura, I might not lose to you who are suppressed by your cultivation. Moreover, if I can summon reinforcements from the depths, it won't be as difficult to kill you as it was before..."

Seeing that Ning Fan still couldn't kill him, the White Carp felt slightly reassured. Occasionally, he let out strange roars as if calling for reinforcements...

"There's something peculiar about this place. The further in I go, the more suppressed I become, but this carp seems to thrive here..."

A glimmer of azure light flickered in Ning Fan's eyes, barely perceiving that the true form of the White Carp resembled an existence akin to the Heaven's Dao Soul, not a demon beast.

A sudden realization dawned within him; the deeper into the Pictorial Realm he went, the more amplification it seemed to provide to beings like the Dao Soul, while increasingly restraining cultivators.

"I can't go any deeper. I must devise a way to sever this carp early, at the very least seize the carp's fish eyes; delay brings change..."

"I am not a true Quasi-Saint; my cultivation is only pretentious. It's hard to slay this Quasi-Saint Dao Carp with a fake cultivation. If I truly can't slay this carp or get the fish eyes, I might have to retreat from this realm for now. In any case, I mustn't enter deeper into the Pictorial Realm!"

The deeper he went, the more Ning Fan could sense that lurking within the depths of the Pictorial Realm lay numerous formidable presences, ten or more with power comparable to an Immortal Emperor! Several other presences like the Quasi-Saint aura of the White Carp existed as well.

Among them, there were even two auras, though not as powerful as Yin Mo, far stronger than Mu Song!

These were Second Order Quasi-Saint auras! And not ordinary Second Order Quasi-Saints! For some reason, these two auras, one Yin and one Yang, together exuded a threat comparable to a Third Order Quasi-Saint for Ning Fan...

Ning Fan was secretly startled; the depths of this Pictorial Realm might be extremely perilous, and given his current cultivation level, he'd best avoid courting death by entering there...

layers, 200 layers, 300 layers... 900 layers!

The White Carp had already recovered most of its injuries and with its secret technique, detected that reinforcements lay not far ahead.

"Oh? The top three Carp Generals have all set out. With this, even if the two great kings don't act, we have four First Order Quasi-Saints who can besiege him. We are sure to execute him here! This one's true cultivation isn't high, his spirit might be distasteful, but if we can seize the top-grade innate treasure in his possession and present it to the two great kings, it will surely be a significant achievement..."

The White Carp sneered continuously, the scales of victory beginning to tilt in his favor.

Ning Fan's senses were exceptionally keen; he could perceive not only the White Carp but also three other Quasi-Saint level auras rapidly approaching his direction.

This is troublesome. It seems not only might I fail to kill the White Carp, but I also might end up besieged by four Quasi-Saints...

"The fish eyes that Senior Mu Song needs seem unlikely to be obtained now..."

Ning Fan sighed slightly; upon reaching the 900th layer of the Pictorial Realm, his cultivation was nearly suppressed by fifty percent. If he were besieged by four Quasi-Saints, even with the God-Extinguishing Shield as protection, he might end up in a Nine-Deaths-One-Life situation.

Moreover, within the depths of the Pictorial Realm lurked even more terrifying presences...

No wonder so many old monsters perished here; the danger and strangeness of this place were by no means ordinary...

Pictorial Realm, the 922nd layer.

Chasing all the way here, Ning Fan decided not to continue pursuing the White Carp, sighing slightly as he retracted the God-Slaying Giant's manifestation, turned around, and left.

Seeing Ning Fan inexplicably choose not to pursue further, the White Carp cursed Ning Fan for his cunning. Had Ning Fan persisted a while longer, he could have joined other Quasi-Saint Carp Generals to besiege Ning Fan.

"Hmph! You chase me all this way and expect to leave just like that? There's no such easy thing in the world!"

The White Carp, seeing Ning Fan trying to flee, turned and pursued, cursing and snarling with outrageous arrogance, seemingly intent on provoking Ning Fan into fighting him.

A glacial glint grew heavier in Ning Fan's eyes. A single White Carp he did not fear, but against three more, he had no certainty of escaping unscathed. He had no choice but to endure the White Carp's taunts.

Inwardly, there was a hint of frustration.

"Master... please allow the Black Evil Sect to battle..." A cold and detached feminine voice suddenly echoed in Ning Fan's divine sense.

It was the Heavenly Dao Black Cat, whom Ning Fan had subdued earlier, requesting to fight on his behalf.

The black cat was deeply asleep in the Western Xuanyin Realm but sensed the oppression within Ning Fan.

The master seemed to be bullied...

The one bullying the master seemed to be... just some Dao Carp...

Courting death, courting death! Just a mere Dao Carp... dare to bully the master!

"You want to fight? Huh, you can talk?" Ning Fan was slightly surprised. Since subduing the black cat, it was the first time he heard it speak.

It turned out this black cat could talk, it just didn't like to talk.

If it weren't for seeing Ning Fan being bullied this time, if it weren't for seeing the master's humiliation and getting angry, she would never have opened her mouth to speak. Her character was most silent and reticent.

"..." The black cat said nothing more, but the fighting spirit erupting from her was overwhelming; her desire to fight no longer needed words.

"You may not be a match for that White Carp..." Ning Fan subtly transmitted his voice to the black cat.

The black cat and the White Carp were both Heaven's Dao Souls, but their levels were vastly different.

That White Carp's Dao Soul level was extremely high and could display quasi-saint cultivations, naturally not of the mortal grade. The black cat, however, was different. She was originally a Dao Soul from the Barbarian Wilderness Heavenly Dao, and because the Barbarian Wilderness Heavenly Dao was damaged, her power was also not strong. If the White Carp was a tenth-level Emperor-Grade Heaven's Dao Soul, then the black cat was perhaps only at the second-level Emperor-Grade, eight grades below the White Carp...

In Ning Fan's opinion, the black cat was not the White Carp's opponent, and naturally, he did not want her to go out and die.

"Master... trust me... I can..." The black cat, who did not like to speak, forced herself to utter another sentence.

Her will was very steadfast, and Ning Fan, who cultivated War Yin and Yang, could perceive her strong will.

Not allowing her master to be humiliated was absolutely not allowable!

If anyone dared to bully my master, I would even defy heaven to vent for my master!

Believe in me, I can do it, please master believe in me...

"Could it be that this black cat has some secret technique that could harm the White Carp..." Ning Fan silently speculated.

The black cat carried an aura of confidence, as if she truly never considered the White Carp worth noticing...

Thinking of this, Ning Fan no longer escaped, at layer 914, he stopped his escape light, coldly watching the approaching White Carp.

"Oh? Not running anymore? Resigned to your fate?" The White Carp sneered.

"Hmm, I have one servant who wants to fight you; I want her to try." Ning Fan said calmly.

There was still a little time. If the black cat couldn't harm the White Carp, he could still escape.

"Hmph, even you are no match for this general; how could your servant be my equal in a single bout!" The White Carp sneered even more, but the next moment, he was unable to laugh.

Only to see Ning Fan summon with a hand, immediately a black light was summoned by him, it was a palm-sized black cat.

The aura of this black cat was not terrifying enough to make the White Carp fear.

The black cat's appearance was not fierce at all, yet as soon as this cat appeared, the previously arrogant White Carp felt fear for the first time!

The White Carp seemed to fall into an ice cave in an instant, bones chilled; he couldn't imagine, couldn't fathom, that the servant Ning Fan referred to was such a terrifying creature!

"Nine... Nine-Tailed Fox! It's the fourth-ranked in the top ten Dao Soul Clans above the three worlds, the Nine-Tailed Fox Dao Soul!"

This Nine-Tailed Fox was quite unique; before its transformation, it had no cultivation by itself and could only merge with Masters to enhance the Master's cultivation.

But even without transforming, the Nine-Tailed Fox was enough to make most Dao Soul Clans tremble!

Because the Nine-Tailed Fox Clan used other Heavenly Dao Souls as their food!

Most of the Dao Soul Clans faced bloodline suppression from the Nine-Tailed Fox Clan, among them, the Dao Carp Clan was most suppressed!

Cats eat fish, this is the most fundamental rule in the universe! The Dao Carp Clan is precisely the favorite food of the Nine-Tailed Fox Clan!

"Not good! This Nine-Tailed Fox may only be Imperial-Grade Level Two, but it is still enough to kill me!"

The once extremely arrogant White Carp turns panic-stricken, turns around and runs, fleeing desperately...

Chapter 976: Immortal Emperor, Please Quell Your Anger!

Seeing the White Carp turn around and flee, Ning Fan was greatly surprised. He had initially thought his little cat might only possess some secret technique, slightly restraining the White Carp. Unexpectedly, this unimpressive-looking little cat directly scared the White Carp away...

Natural enemy!

Ning Fan's first reaction was these two words. The White Carp's gaze upon the black cat wouldn't be wrong; it was precisely the expression of encountering a natural enemy among animals, unwilling to fight, only escape!

Although the White Carp has a brazen personality, it is extremely cautious. If anything seems amiss, it runs faster than anyone else. Ning Fan already deeply understood this from previous confrontations. It's highly likely that the White Carp sensed a deadly danger from the black cat, hence fleeing so decisively. But there's also a slight possibility... the White Carp is trying to lure by feigning escape, aiming to draw him deeper into the Pictorial Realm...

"Can you be confident, before the arrival of the other three Quasi-Saints, to help me take away this Carp's eye..."

Ning Fan seemed to be asking the black cat, but he had already taken action, channeling his cultivations into his right index finger, pointing towards the front.

Seal!

With a point to seal the heavens, directly fixating the White Carp in mid-air, abruptly halting its escape.

Meow—

The black cat replied seemingly nonchalantly, but in reality, her lungs were about to explode with rage.

Such a trivial Dao Carp, daring to bully her master, guilty, greatly guilty!

Fourth of the Nine-Tailed, Tunya...

Reciting spells unknown to Ning Fan in her heart, strange black ice threads began to appear on the black cat's body. She opened her mouth, the pretty little tiger teeth gleaming with cold light, leaping into a black flash, rushing towards the immobilized White Carp.

"Again, this Divine Skill! How can it immobilize the Dao Source flow within my body!"

As the White Carp was fixed, seeing the black cat charging towards him, he was immediately scared out of his wits, driving his survival instinct to exert full strength, with a sound bang, forcibly breaking free from the Heaven Sealing Art's bindings.

However, he was ultimately a step too late; the black cat was already upon him, opening her mouth to bite on his fat carp body. With a tear, she ripped off a large chunk of fish meat, swallowing it into her belly as white mist.

Ning Fan's gaze slightly condensed. This cat's sharp teeth seem to possess special defensive breaking power against Dao Souls!

Note that the White Carp, as a Quasi-Saint, is incredibly physically strong. In previous confrontations, it has withstood numerous hits from the Liangyi Square Seal, and even being struck by the God-Slaying Giant did not cause significant injury. Yet, the Black Cat's bite directly disregarded all the White Carp's defenses, easily inflicting considerable damage on him!

Roar!!!!!!!

The White Carp let out a heart-wrenching scream, at the fish meat tear, the wound leaking not blood, but mysterious white ink... in shock and anger, the White Carp slightly subdued his fear of the black cat, swinging his tail towards her, the strong force sweeping down the starry sky, a regrettable strike in White Carp's fury that shouldn't be underestimated!

Second of the Nine-Tailed, Duankong...

The black cat slightly disdainful, silently reciting spells, creating a black air wall in front of her, Fish Tail sweeping on the air wall, only cracking it rather than breaking it.

Ning Fan secretly praised, if he hasn't seen wrong, this air wall seems specifically immune to Dao Soul attacks... his family's little cat, her abilities are impressive.

The black cat, however, wasn't pleased, joking aside, her Nine-Tailed Clan's Duankong Wall was cracked by a trivial Dao Carp!

Shame, sheer shame!

Indeed, my level is still too low; had it been a mature transformed Nine-Tailed, such level Dao Soul attacks would never breach the Duankong Wall...

She brought disgrace to the Nine-Tailed Clan, embarrassed her master, she is guilty...

Seventh of the Nine-Tailed, Cat Blade...

The air wall suddenly disappeared, in the next moment, the black cat transformed into a glittering black curved blade, cutting on the White Carp's tail like tofu.

Despite the modest momentum of the cut, Ning Fan felt an illusion that this blade seemed to specialize in cutting Dao Souls...

Ah!!!!!!!

A scream echoed, the entire fish tail of White Carp was cut off by the curved blade, its surface as smooth as a mirror, presenting an extremely eerie sight.

"Can't provoke, the Jiuli Nine Arts, those outside of the top three clans among Dao Soul Clans cannot resist; this Nine-Tailed is clearly immature, yet knows three arts among the Nine, impossible, must flee, if not I'll die here! In this Realm Within Paintings, only two great kings can handle this damn Nine-Tailed!"

The White Carp no longer worried about his Imperial Gold Talisman's destruction, spitting a red glow, instantly freezing the world with crimson ice. While he himself fled desperately into the depths of the Pictorial Realm.

"Unable to move..." Ning Fan was slightly alarmed; this time, the White Carp actually unleashed the full power of the Imperial Gold Talisman, freezing the whole world, solidifying Ning Fan's body, rendering mobility challenging.

Only by using the power of the God-Extinguishing Shield can one break free from such ice sealing...

However, before Ning Fan could act, the Black Cat had already made a move.

The Eighth of the Nine-Tailed, Mirror Return...

No one knew what spell the Black Cat chanted, but the entire world, enveloped in crimson ice, suddenly dissolved into clouds and smoke.

She calmly withdrew from the curved blade, opened her mouth to turn a large section of chopped fish tail into white mist, and swallowed it into her belly.

In contrast, the White Carp, having barely escaped to a deeper layer, suddenly found himself unable to move. Along with the entire world, he had been frozen into a crimson block of ice!

"The... the fourth Jiuli Technique! She actually knows four techniques, and it's the eighth one... which can rebound Dao-Soul Divine Skills..." White Carp, trapped in the crimson ice, desperately struggled to break free, but there was no escape.

The eighth technique of the Jiuli Clan, Mirror Return, can reflect the enemy's Dao-Soul Divine Skills doubly. His Imperial Gold Talisman was already formidable, but with its power increased, not many First Order Quasi-Saints could escape this defense. Unfortunately, in the hands of the Black Cat, his strength was greatly diminished, making him unable to break free...

"I didn't expect you to be so formidable..."

Ning Fan's slightly complimentary voice, like a nightmare, reached the ears of White Carp. Of course, this remark was directed at the Black Cat.

Relying on the Black Cat's prowess, Ning Fan and the Black Cat quickly pursued this world, while White Carp continued to struggle in the ice. Once he saw Ning Fan and the Black Cat catch up, he was utterly hopeless.

His reinforcements likely wouldn't arrive in time, and even if they did, they wouldn't be a match for this Jiuli... This Jiuli, though not yet fully grown, was proficient in four Jiuli Techniques, with exceptional talent. Could it be the legendary Royal Jiuli? In the Pictorial Realm, perhaps only the two great kings could handle the Royal Jiuli... but those two kings were bound to the Sea-Stabilizing Divine Iron, and without paying a huge price, they couldn't break free from the seal. They could only return to slumber daily...

Even if they paid a great price to temporarily break the Iron's seal, it would be too late for them to save him...

"Enough, enough, my young friend, you and I have no deep-seated enmity. Considering my Dao-Soul existence, achieving Dao is not easy. Could you please spare me... You came for the eye, didn't you? I know that's the goal of every master entering the Pictorial Realm. I can give you the eye, even gift you the Imperial Gold Talisman linked to my life, just spare me a way to live! If you kill me, the Imperial Gold Talisman will perish with me. Think it over! Such a precious treasure, if missed, what a pity..."

Oh? If I spare this Carp, I'll get the Imperial Gold Talisman linked to its life?

Ning Fan had witnessed the power of that Imperial Gold Talisman; it was definitely a first-class sealing treasure. He was very tempted by it...

Indeed, he bore no deep hatred toward this Carp and didn't necessarily have to kill it. If the benefits were sufficient, sparing its life wasn't impossible...

Seeing Ning Fan consider his proposal, White Carp was overjoyed. Having seen the terror of the Jiuli, he absolutely didn't want to become Ning Fan's enemy.

It was just sacrificing two fish eyes, just gifting Ning Fan an Imperial Gold Talisman, in exchange for life; this deal was worthwhile!

Without the fish eyes, he could still devour the eyes of the Gold Talisman Palace masters and grow fish eyes again.

Even if he gifted away the Imperial Gold Talisman, he could forge another linked to his life. Starting anew was better than losing his life!

If he could escape from the Jiuli's grasp, he would certainly flee to the Three Thousand Layers, informing all Dao Carp kin, as well as the two great kings, that Ning Fan was not to be trifled with! Because in Ning Fan's hands, there was a Jiuli servant!

"Young friend, have you considered it? Perhaps the Imperial Gold Talisman is not enough; if you spare me, I have other treasures to offer..." White Carp, in an attempt to persuade Ning Fan, added more to his offer.

"Oh, other treasures?" Ning Fan's eyes flashed, curious about what White Carp might have to offer.

But in the next moment, he frowned, as three auras interrupted, severing the possibility of further negotiation with White Carp.

Crack, crack, crack...

Three beams of Dao Source light, either black or white, suddenly descended from the sky. The vast power instantly cleaved the world. The crimson ice confining White Carp shattered under the impact. In the next moment, three wild laughs echoed through the heavens and earth.

"Li Si, oh Li Si, you really are in a pitiful state! As the fourth Carp General of the Dao Li Sect, you actually got yourself sealed by your own Imperial Gold Talisman. Don't tell me it was a slip of the hand that led to such a foolish act!"

Three giant carps, one white and two black, appeared in the world, joining the battle. These three giant carps all emanated an aura of a Quasi-Saint, ranking among the top three Carp Generals in the Dao Li Sect!

Including Li Si, there were four Quasi-Saints on their side! Such a splendid lineup would strike fear into any force in the Eastern Heaven. Even the Dark Clan or Southern Clan wouldn't dare provoke four Quasi-Saints openly!

Such a luxurious lineup didn't intimidate Ning Fan in the least, for he had witnessed the Black Cat's unparalleled suppression of the Dao Carp Clan.

His heart spirit was slightly connected to the Black Cat, from whom comforting emotions continuously flowed, reassuring Ning Fan not to fear, for what came were not Quasi-Saints but delicious fish treats...

"So, is the deal off now?" Ning Fan asked, looking at Li Si with a blank expression.

Facing Ning Fan's gaze, the White Carp known as Li Si felt distressed, without any joy of rescue, only the urge to curse.

He was about to peacefully resolve the problem with Ning Fan, and right at that moment, the reinforcements he had long awaited showed up, but untimely! These three were here to stir trouble, coming neither early nor late, but at this critical moment!

"Not invalid, of course not invalid, as long as you, sir, take the item and agree to leave, everything can be discussed..." Li Si tried hard to humble his tone, secretly guessing that the four of them together might not be able to fight off one Royal Jiuli. If this matter could be resolved peacefully, it would be best...

The other three quasi-saint giant carps were not pleased.

The black carp named Li San coldly reprimanded, "Li Si! We understand that you are unable to defeat this master, but why do you bow and scrape to him, even willing to sacrifice your eyes just to please him? Do you realize that your words just now have completely disgraced the Dao Carp Lineage!"

Another white carp, Li'er, ferociously said, "Humph! An outsider dare enter the Pictorial Realm, just kill him! Haven't we killed enough outsiders? This one isn't even a quasi-saint. It's your incompetence if you can't kill him; I'm not like you. Give me ten breaths, and I'll be able to kill him. Then his Spirit will be mine, and his flesh can be shared among you. That's settled!"

Their casual remarks had already reduced Ning Fan to food!

Li Yi was a black carp and the strongest among the Dao Li Sect, more cautious and composed than Li'er and Li San, as he scrutinized Ning Fan and the black cat.

Ning Fan, not a concern, but this black cat... Hiss! What nonsense of a black cat, this isn't any ordinary cat!

Li Yi's breath caught, his heart raced uncontrollably, and he exclaimed.

"Jiuli! This black cat is actually Jiuli!"

As soon as these words were spoken, Li'er and Li San turned pale. They had arrived hastily and didn't notice the black cat; now they realized this inconspicuous cat greatly resembled the Jiuli described in ancient texts, sending chills through their bodies.

There's no mistake! It truly is Jiuli, upon closer inspection, you can tell!

No wonder, no wonder that the brazenly audacious Li Si humbled himself before Ning Fan, a mere ant. It turns out, he had a Jiuli beside him!

"This Jiuli..." Li'er was so shocked he couldn't even speak coherently.

"This Jiuli is the footman of this young friend..." Li Si explained.

What! A footman!

What remarkable ability does this young man possess, to subdue Jiuli into service!

It's known that the Dao Soul Clans are inherently superior, with the proud Heaven's Dao Soul never submitting to any second step cultivator! Ranked fourth among the Dao Soul Clans, how could Jiuli possibly serve anyone as a footman? This is indeed absurd, yet... it's actually occurring!

Li'er and Li San were immediately intimidated by Jiuli's name. Earlier, blustering about consuming Ning Fan's flesh, now they dared not utter a word, wishing they could grow eight legs to escape quicker.

Li Yi feared Jiuli's reputation as well but amidst the fear, there was also an excited feeling.

Jiuli, truly Jiuli!

While other carp generals might not know, he knew that presently, the two kings were weakened to the brink. If no measures are taken, the day of Dao extinction draws near. Jiuli, amongst the Dao Soul Clans, is a unique anomaly. In this world, only a few rare things can assist cultivators in delaying the coming of Dao extinction, the flesh and blood of an adult Jiuli being one of them! If he can capture this Jiuli, raise it to maturity, and present it to the two kings, he can surely extend the kings' immortal lifespans...

This Jiuli, he is resolute to obtain!

However, the Jiuli Clan is naturally counter to the Dao Soul Clans, especially against the Dao Carp Lineage. This group of Dao Carp intends to capture Jiuli, but cannot use brute force, only clever strategy...

Li Yi, deep in calculation, instantly conceived dozens of cunning strategies, sufficient to ensnare Ning Fan without a trace. Outwardly, he feigned fear, and said to Ning Fan,

"Young friend is truly remarkable, at such a tender age, able to acquire Jiuli for protection. Hehe, young friend has gone through great lengths to enter the Pictorial Realm. Presumably, like previous cultivators, you're here for the Yang Realm's Eye, but seeing young friend's appearance, it seems you might not know much about it..."

"So?" Ning Fan slightly furrowed his brow and asked in return.

"Therefore, this jade scroll, young friend can take and read, I'm sure after reading it you'll understand the Yang Realm's Eye better. Not to hide from young friend, directly taking Li Si's eyes is a lesser method, likely harming the Scene within the Yang Eye. The jade scroll records four eye extraction techniques and seven eye cultivation methods, you can take a look..."

Li Yi, in an explanatory tone, spewed a black jade scroll, sending it before Ning Fan, while secretly transmitting to Li'er, Li San, and Li Si, telling them his plans.

This jade scroll is not actually a record of information on the Yang Realm's Eye, but a trap. Once Ning Fan opens it, he'll be trapped within the pictorial prison inside the jade scroll, where life and death will be at Li Yi's whim!

This Jiuli is Ning Fan's footman, in this manner, as long as Ning Fan's life is held captive, wouldn't this Jiuli be at their mercy!

Hearing Li Yi's plan, Li'er and Li San were eagerly moved, fearing the Jiuli Clan while also wishing to accomplish, kill Jiuli, and present it to the two kings!

Unexpectedly, the two kings were already nearing Dao extinction, this news was the first they'd heard. If they can capture this Jiuli... no, they can only do this! There's no retreat to speak of, if the kings die, they... must die too!

Li Si's eyes showed hesitation, but soon, it was replaced by ruthless resolution, agreeing with Li Yi's plan.

Since this matter concerns the life and death of the kings, there's no need to negotiate with Ning Fan anymore! They must capture this Jiuli for the kings!

"Speaking of which, I have yet to inquire the young friend's name? This old man is Li Yi, the foremost carp general among the Dao Li Sect..." To dispel Ning Fan's suspicion, Li Yi spoke amicably and started a conversation with Ning Fan.

Ning Fan did not take the jade scroll but instead looked coldly at Li Yi. Within his Dantian, the God-Extinguishing Shield constantly sent warnings.

This jade scroll... is a trap!

"I will ask one last time, is the transaction we just made going to be voided?"

Ning Fan's gaze swept over Li Si, and Li Si's heart skipped a beat, secretly thinking that it was bad. The other Carp Generals also realized that Ning Fan might have already detected their poisonous plan.

"You're joking, my friend. How could this transaction be voided..." Li Si still wanted to say more, but Ning Fan's eyes showed ruthlessness as he gave orders to the black cat beside him.

"Kill, leave none alive!"

Ning Fan had given these Dao Carps chances. If possible, he did not mind sparing these Dao Carps a way out. After all, the two auras deep within the Pictorial Realm could bring him the deterrence power of an Ancient Great Cultivator. If possible, he didn't want to make too much commotion in the Pictorial Realm to avoid unforeseen changes...

However, unfortunately, these Dao Carps were determined to plot against him, then let them face his ruthlessness!

Having received Ning Fan's order, the black cat's eyes immediately surged with murderous intent.

She has been Ning Fan's servant for a very long time. Her entire life, she only served one master, Ning Fan! She would tolerate no one cheating her master, no one plotting against her master!

With the master's order, how could she not obey?

Don't mention just killing a few little fishes, even killing Saints or Immortal Emperors, she would not blink. Even if she is unmatched, even if she shatters her bones and scatters her flesh, she would fight to the last drop of blood for her master!

Because he has always been her master, from a very long time ago!

"I am Nifan, a Pluck, yet not a Pluck."

"I am not watching ants and insects, but waiting for a meeting with a butterfly... No, this time, it is not the butterfly, but the cocoon, the caterpillar, or perhaps a tracing back... A strong wind can blow away a piece of white paper but cannot blow away a butterfly; the power of Dao lies in this noncompliance..."

"He opens, he closes, he closes, he opens. I often wonder, after forty-two reincarnations, he still cannot see me. Is it because I am unwilling to close my eyes, thus he cannot open them..."

"You want me to name you? Naming... I'm not very good at it... Hmm, let's call you Black Evil Sect then, this name fits the completion of your cycle of reincarnation."

"I have to leave. When the tenth appearance of the Barbarian God Battle Sky Phenomenon occurs, I will return to take you away..."

The tenth occurrence of the Barbarian God Battle Sky Phenomenon has already appeared!

The master has truly returned!

Although times have changed, many things have altered, and the master is vastly different from before, no matter how he changes, he will always be her master, only this point will never change...

When she just awakened, she was still a bit confused, instinctively craving her master's Punishment Power. Gradually, she became clear-headed and recalled the past...

"I don't like to speak, just say it once... I will not allow anyone to cheat my master! No one is allowed!"

Nine-tailed Fox of the Nine, Royal Bow...

The black cat transformed suddenly, amidst the black light surrounding her, into a longbow as dark as the night, without a string or arrow, appearing both strange and mundane.

With the emergence of this bow, Li Yi and the four Carp Generals didn't feel fear, but the two Carp Kings, deep in the three thousand layers of the Pictorial Realm, awoke from their slumber in an instant, trembling all over!

It was instinctual shaking, a fear embedded in their bone and blood, evoking memories of countless years ago...

"...Ancestor of Jiuli, ten steps to draw the bow, chasing Dao-Soul Three Emperors across ten billion worlds, seizing the good fortune of Yin Yang Transformation..."

No mistake! Someone has employed the strongest of the Jiuli Nine Arts, able to transform into the shadow of the Jiuli King Bow, the fiercest weapon of the Dao Soul Clans, even if only a shadow...

"Before the Royal Bow, these four generals are bonded with my Dao Carp lineage, absolutely cannot let them be shot, otherwise we will never be able to leave this place for eternity! The wrath of the Carp Saint, we cannot withstand!" the White Carp King said tremblingly.

"Go! Go! Go! You damned Sea-Stabilizing Divine Iron, at other times I can tolerate you, but this time, I cannot! Return my power, quickly! Otherwise, we will all die!" the Black Carp King screamed angrily at the pillar of light behind.

The most terrifying aspect of the Jiuli King Bow is not its destructive power, but... the ability to obliterate and capture the good fortune of a clan!

We absolutely cannot... let this bow be drawn! Otherwise, the Carp Saint will be enraged, and the world will no longer accommodate the two of us...

"Immortal Emperor, please restrain your anger! To extinguish the good fortune of my Dao Carp lineage, this cause and effect, you cannot bear. Before drawing the bow, please reconsider!" The high and mighty Black and White Carp Kings, for the first time, spoke in a pleading tone to a person.

Chapter 977: Yin and Yang

The voices of the two Carp Kings, using Great Divine Power, echoed throughout the Three Thousand Painted Realms around Ning Fan.

Both of these Carp Kings only had the cultivation of a Second Calamity Quasi-Saint, but when their voices combined for some reason, it exuded an overwhelming aura, causing severe pain in Ning Fan's ears, humming and resounding!

So powerful, just what kind of monstrous creature is hidden deep in the Pictorial Realm, such that its mere voice can cause my eardrums pain!

Comparable to ancient great cultivator!

It must be understood that Ning Fan, at this moment, had four aspects of cultivation elevated to the peak of the Nine Tribulations, his body filled with power, completely not inferior to a First Order Quasi-Saint, yet still somewhat unable to bear the impact of this voice's might...

"Immortal Emperor, is this calling out to me... what does it mean to extinguish a clan's fate, could it be related to the Black Cat transforming into a bow... What force is this Dao Carp Lineage, in my cultivation journey, it is the first time I've heard of this name, are these White Carp and Black Carp all belonging to the Dao Carp Lineage..."

Ning Fan's gaze slightly flickered.

The two voices, though strong, were full of fear. Ning Fan knew that these two voices were definitely not afraid of him but were afraid of his little kitten.

The little kitten had already transformed into a Black Bow, which seemed like a mere illusion and not a physical entity. Even so, it gave Ning Fan a heart-pounding sensation, a feeling he had only experienced when first facing the God-Extinguishing Shield!

It was the imposing pressure of a Heaven-Opening Artifact!

The Black Bow transformed by the little kitten was likely a shadow of the Heaven-Opening Artifact!

The only confusing part for Ning Fan was the strange familiarity he felt towards this Black Bow.

It seemed, he had seen this bow somewhere, yet seemingly... never seen it before...

He was very sure that in his lifetime he had never seen this bow, was this strange familiarity merely an illusion...

"Immortal Emperor, calm your anger, this bow must not be opened, it must not be opened!"

The voices of the two Carp Kings pleading for mercy continued to sound, yet the Black Cat maintained a completely indifferent attitude. Only now thinking of begging for mercy? Too late! Mere Dao Carp dared to deceive her master, she will not let this matter rest easily!

"Give me the flesh and blood of the Dao Carp I swallowed, to form the string of the Royal Bow!"

The voice of the Black Cat came out, and the Black Bow she had transformed into suddenly flashed with black light, forming a bowstring.

The bowstring was formed from the Dao Carp flesh she previously swallowed. The strings and arrows of the Royal Bow require the sacrifice of certain things to be gained; if no price is paid, the bow cannot be opened to kill!

"Without sacrificing, nothing can be gained... The way of this bow somewhat resembles the Sha Lan Sect..." Ning Fan had a look of recollection, suddenly remembering that in the Immemorial Fisherman's Raincoat Painting, he promised Old Ancestor She Lan to kill the Sect Master of Western Heavenly Path...

Yes, this cause and effect will have to be repaid one day, but unfortunately, today is not the time to go to the Western Heaven...

As the bowstring transformed, the expressions of the four Quasi-Saint Carp Generals changed dramatically. Finally, they sensed the lethal threat on the Black Bow.

The feeling was like having a knife's edge pressed against their throats, and then the knife's edge slowly pierced in, such deepening oppression was suffocating...

"What kind of bow is this! This bow must be extremely terrifying; otherwise, with the pride of two kings, it would be absolutely impossible to bow their heads to this fox!"

The four Quasi-Saint Carp Generals sensed danger, and without another word, attempted to escape, but unfortunately, where could they escape to.

"Give me the Essence of the Sun and Moon I have swallowed for seven million years, to form the Liangyi Seven Stars Arrow!"

As the Black Cat's voice fell, her aura suddenly weakened significantly. The weakened part transformed into an arrow light intertwined with black and white, swirled around the Black Bow into a circle, amidst the arrow shadow, faint starlight emitted...

Then, with just a thought from the Black Cat, the black and white arrow autonomously flew to the bowstring, opening the bow!

This Black Bow opened entirely by the will of the Black Cat, needing no assistance from Ning Fan.

Ning Fan slightly furrowed his brows, with his sight, how could he not discern that to materialize a black and white arrow, the Black Cat actually sacrificed the power of her own Dao Spirit's source, causing its rank to drop...

This Black Cat truly regarded him as the master; naturally, he would also regard her sincerely as a footman.

Between him and these Dao Carp, there was no deep hatred, if attacking these Dao Carp would cause the Black Cat's rank to drop, he would rather let these Dao Carp escape.

And what puzzled Ning Fan was that this black and white arrow also gave him an oddly familiar feeling...

This black and white arrow contained pure power of the Dao Source of Yin and the Dao Source of Yang! And the operational trajectory of these two Dao Sources was somewhat similar to the cultivation technique Yin Yang Transformation, as for the starlight in the arrow shadow, for some unknown reason, it seemed somewhat similar to the Slaughter Hall's Reverse Big Dipper technique...

The starlight seemed to plunder others' fate...

"Strange, could this black and white arrow have some connection with Ancient Chaos and the Big Dipper Immortal Domain..." Ning Fan pondered slightly.

The next moment, the Black Bow opened!

The moment the bow opened, Ning Fan's gaze suddenly contracted; even with his sight of the Second Realm of Tianren, he could not clearly see the afterimage of the black and white arrow leaving the string.

The speed at which this black and white arrow left the string was too fast! This speed seemed enough to transcend time and space, already beyond the comprehension of the second step of cultivation, giving people a profound sense that there was no way to evade!

"Not good!"

Feeling the black and white arrow leaving the string, the expressions of the two Carp Kings changed drastically, and the four Quasi-Saint Dao Carp who hurriedly attempted to flee suddenly had their scalps tingle in that instant!

No arrow shadow could be seen shooting in, but, Carp Four at this very moment, let out the first scream, his massive fish body suddenly bizarrely enlarged, indescribable pain surged throughout, striking down upon him, as his body expanded to the limit, then suddenly like a balloon, with a bang, directly exploded!

Flesh and blood scattered!

Then from his remnants, a strange black and white arrow light darted out, flickered once, and disappeared again.

"This... this... what kind of arrow is this! When did it get shot into Carp Four's body!" The remaining three Quasi-Saints broke out in cold sweat.

Even more inexplicable for them was that with Carp Four's death, they felt their own fate had weakened slightly...

No, to be precise, it wasn't their personal fate that had weakened, but rather... clan's fate, the fate of the entire clan!

Fate is heaven's recognition, if a person's fate isn't high, then life won't be smooth, if a clan's fate isn't high, then the whole clan cannot prosper, cannot produce peak powerhouses.

The three Quasi-Saints could only vaguely sense that the arrow just now had oddly weakened the Dao Carp Lineage's fate, but they couldn't see deeper meaning.

Only the two Carp Kings realized it accurately.

The arrow just now, killing Carp Four was a small matter, the trouble is, it directly took away about five hundred colors of the Dao Carp lineage's tribal fortune!

"It's tragic, it's really irreparable now! The Carp Saint has been exhausting his efforts for countless years for our lineage, spending ten rounds of time, to strategize and obtain one hundred thousand colors of tribal fortune from the cracks between various clans. Now you and I have lost five hundred colors of tribal fortune in one go, the Carp Saint will definitely be enraged! In this way, even if we are lucky enough to return to the Real Realm one day, it will be difficult to escape severe punishment..."

Thinking of the ruthless and heartless nature of the Carp Saint, madness appeared in the eyes of the two Carp Kings, and at this moment, following Carp Four, Carp Three's fish body similarly started to expand!

This Carp Three, unexpectedly also had that black and white arrow shot into his body at some unknown time!

No, we cannot let Carp Three die again. Losing five hundred colors of tribal fortune would at most be a crime of imprisonment, but if we lose more than a thousand colors, I'm afraid we'll be crippled of seven-tenths of our cultivation once we return to the Real Realm!

"Jiuli Malicious Spirit! You've gone too far in bullying! You destroy five hundred colors of tribal fortune of my Dao Carp lineage, this enmity cannot coexist under the same sky, never shall rest until death! Roar!!!"

The two Carp Kings didn't know what price they paid, but they directly broke all the chains on their bodies, temporarily relieving themselves from the Sea-Stabilizing Divine Iron's restraint, and charged out madly toward where Ning Fan was, the frenzied killing intent nearly froze the sky of the three thousand layers of the Pictorial Realm at the same time!

"Five hundred colors of tribal fortune, what does it mean..." Ning Fan was slightly moved, not understanding what the black cat did, causing the vicious creatures in the depths of the Pictorial Realm to erupt with such insane killing intent.

The black cat was indifferent to the killing intent of the two Carp Kings. Although her level was not high, if she put her life on the line, she might not necessarily fail to kill these two Carp Kings!

"Sacrifice another seven million years of Essence of the Sun and Moon... kill!"

With the sound of the black cat, her breath severely weakened again. At the same time, Carp Three's body completely burst, dying with a final breath!

The tribal fortune of the Dao Carp lineage weakened by another five hundred colors!

"No!!!"

The two Carp Kings' eyes were blood-red, and they had only reached the 2980th layer, still far from where Ning Fan was.

They lost one thousand colors of tribal fortune from the Dao Carp Clan, the Carp Saint would not easily forgive them...

Unforgivable, unless they kill Ning Fan and this Jiuli, they swore not to return to being fish!

"Sacrifice another seven million years of Essence of the Sun and Moon... form the third arrow!"

Black cat's tone was already somewhat breathless, it was obvious that making three shots continuously was not an easy burden.

As she finished speaking, Carp Two's body began to expand, reaching the extremity in an instant.

Carp Two's fish face twisted in fear, wanting to resist but could do nothing, only exploding into fragments of blood and flesh in the air...

The tribal fortune of the Dao Carp lineage reduced by another five hundred colors!

"Fifteen hundred colors! With the personality of Lord Carp Saint, how would he spare our lives!" The two Carp Kings in frenzy had resolved to die, this time, they wanted to burn the jade and stone alike, and kill Ning Fan and black cat in the Pictorial Realm!

"The last arrow..."

The black cat's voice trembled a bit, she couldn't bear the immense consumption of the Royal Bow's shadow.

After all, what she commanded was the fragmented Heavenly Dao of the primitive and wild, even though she had commanded it for countless years, she hadn't absorbed much of the Essence of the Sun and Moon... this time, to vent a breath of evil for Ning Fan, she was utterly determined to use up all the power accumulated over countless years.

"Enough. There's no need to shoot the fourth arrow, let's go."

Ning Fan suddenly reached out his hand, touching the black bow lightly, with the gentle stroke, the black cat could no longer maintain the bow form, reverting to her cat shape, her body became illusionary, noticeably weakened by the previous three arrows.

The black cat's Dao Soul level nearly dropped below the realm of the Secondary Emperor Soul, if the fourth arrow was shot, although she might kill another Carp One, it would inevitably degrade the black cat to fall completely from the realm of Dao Soul.

Not worth it!

"Master, didn't you say to leave none alive..." Black cat was still quite displeased, it was really unwilling to let those who schemed against the master Dao Carp go.

But that's the master's order, if the master doesn't allow her to shoot the fourth arrow, even if a Saint forces her, she would definitely not shoot the fourth arrow!

"Here, this is the spoils of war obtained by Black Evil Sect using the Ninth Technique..."

Black cat shook her tail, immediately three light spheres appeared in front of Ning Fan.

Each of the light spheres had five hundred colors, resplendent and eye-catching, Ning Fan saw this thing for the first time, not knowing what it was, yet he faintly felt it was absolutely no ordinary thing.

"This is..." Ning Fan still wanted to ask what this was, when over there, the black cat had already fainted from being too weak.

Indeed, not letting her forcibly shoot the fourth arrow was correct...

Although the Jiuli Clan subdued the Dao Carp, the little kitten's level was too low, killing across ranks was not as easy as it appeared...

"Enough, you rest first."

Ning Fan flipped his hand, taking the black cat and three light spheres back into the Xuan Yin Treasure, after thinking for a while, he also collected the blood and flesh of the three dead Carp Generals and Carp Eyes along the escape route of the various Carp Generals.

The Carp Eyes were naturally needed by Daoist Wood Pine, those fish flesh, maybe they could be fed to the little kitten, perhaps after supplementing them, she wouldn't be so weak.

"The little kitten can no longer fight, with my own cultivation, I should not stay here for long, it's better to leave the Pictorial Realm quickly..."

Thinking of this, Ning Fan urged his speed to the maximum, turning to flee towards the first layer of the Pictorial Realm.

Carp One fled all the way, not daring to look back, Carp Two, Carp Three, Carp Four's deaths were like shadows covering his heart, that scene, was too terrifying! Unable to defend, certain death, in front of the divine skills of Jiuli, his First Order Quasi-Saint Dao Carp cultivation was utterly unable to resist!

"Can't stop it, must flee..."

He desperately escaped to the depths of the Pictorial Realm, not knowing that the black cat had long fainted, and Ning Fan didn't pursue, but instead fled out of the Pictorial Realm.

The two Carp Kings already held a firm intention to kill Ning Fan, yet unfortunately they hadn't arrived before Ning Fan fled through the Pictorial Realm...

He's a cunning lad, seeing the situation wasn't right, he ran faster than anyone else!

"The brat is hateful! The brat is hateful, ah! Roar!!!"

The two Carp Kings roared to the sky, venting their discontent and anger, with this roar, the entire Pictorial Realm seemed to be washed away with oil paint by rainwater, the scenery wiped away a layer, undergoing changes.

In the originally empty Pictorial Realm world, countless bloody eyeballs suddenly appeared, not fish eyes, but human eyeballs, floating in the air, extremely strange.

Every eyeball was filled with blood strands, all were filled with the madness, hatred, and fear right before death!

These eyeballs are all from cultivators of the Gold Talisman Palace!

These eyeballs have existed in every layer of the Painting World since ancient times. After Ning Fan entered the Painting World, he also passed by these eyeballs countless times.

But unfortunately, Ning Fan couldn't see these blood-red human eyes...

What Ning Fan didn't know was that what Daoist Wood Pine wanted him to retrieve was actually these blood-stained human eyes he hadn't seen, rather than the Dao Carp's fish eyes...

...

Outside, in the Wood Palm Space Void.

Both Daoist Wood Pine and Xiang Mingzi had a shocked expression, as the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting hanging in front of them was trembling violently at this moment. Without a doubt, unimaginable activity had occurred within the Painting World!

"Could it be that Young Friend Ning Fan has actually stirred the two Dao Carp Kings in the depths of the Painting World! Otherwise, this painting could not possibly tremble like this!" Daoist Wood Pine exclaimed.

Recalling the terrifying nature of the two Dao Carp Kings, even with his cultivation, his expression couldn't help but darken a bit.

Without the power of an Ancient Great Cultivator, it's absolutely impossible to fight against two Carp Kings, not to mention that there are many powerful Carp Generals in the Painting World...

"Quick! We can't wait any longer! We two must join forces to swiftly pull Young Friend Ning out of the Painting World!" Xiang Mingzi said urgently.

Daoist Wood Pine nodded, but his expression couldn't hide a trace of disappointment.

Within the Painting World, the Sun Realm Eyes are many, but they are all hidden between heaven and earth. Only those cultivators who have opened their eyes can locate those Sun Realm Eyes.

If someone in the Painting World had opened their eyes, this painting would definitely display something, but it did not...

Did Young Friend Ning Fan not succeed in opening his eyes within the Painting World?

So, instead, this child has only one alternative to acquire a Sun Realm Eye, which is to kill a Dao Carp.

However, the grade of the Dao Carp's carp eye is mostly too low...

With this thought, Daoist Wood Pine sighed again, "In the end, this child's talent still falls short of Senluo... After all, Senluo once opened his eyes within this painting, his talent rivaling mine, but this child cannot do it. I originally thought that as the inheritor of the Ancient Chaotic Grand Emperor, it would be easier for him to open his eyes, but now it seems, ha, I have overestimated him..."

While Daoist Wood Pine sighed, he activated his Divine Skills and, together with Xiang Mingzi, attempted to pull Ning Fan out of the Painting World.

However, before the two could assist him, Ning Fan had already burst out of the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting and returned in front of them.

"Young Friend may not have opened his eyes, but his escape speed isn't slow. In this way, Old Xiang and I won't need to pay a price to save you, haha, it makes things easier."

Daoist Wood Pine seemed to be smiling, but his tone was rather dull. Whether it was an illusion or not, Ning Fan seemed to hear a hint of mockery in Wood Pine's tone.

What does it mean to escape quickly... Why does this sound a bit awkward...

Forget it, Daoist Wood Pine is known for his sarcasm. This was something Senior Xiang Mingzi had warned me about, so there's no need to pay too much attention to Wood Pine's tone.

Xiang Mingzi was quite satisfied with Ning Fan. Two Dao Carp Kings had already mobilized, yet Ning Fan was still able to safely escape from the Painting World, indicating that this child was extraordinary.

"Well, did you successfully bring out what Old Wood needed?" Xiang Mingzi asked with a smile.

Unlike Daoist Wood Pine, he had full confidence in Ning Fan.

"I brought it out, but I'm not sure if this item is indeed the eye that Senior Wood Pine needs..."

Ning Fan didn't mind Wood Pine's coldness, flipping his hand to take out an eyeball.

Wood Pine immediately paused, unexpectedly Ning Fan, without opening his eyes, actually brought out a Sun Realm Eye, indeed, he must have slain a Dao Carp...

Haha, the Dao Carp's eye grade isn't as good as the cultivators of the Gold Talisman Palace. In terms of grade, the eyes of the Gold Talisman Palace cultivators rank as middle-ranked, while the eyes of ordinary Dao Carps can only be considered low grade. Only a Quasi-Saint cultivated Dao Carp's eye can reach middle-ranked, barely on par with an ordinary eye of a Gold Talisman Palace cultivator. Haha, even if this child's cultivation inflated within the Painting World, it's impossible for him to kill a Quasi-Saint Dao Carp. Dao Carps are so difficult to kill, and Wood Pine has firsthand experience of this...

The eye Ning Fan obtained was probably just a low-grade Sun Realm Eye.

Forget it, the fact that this child managed to obtain a low-grade eye is already very rare, I will reluctantly make a move for him once...

Wood Pine took the eye handed over by Ning Fan with a hint of disappointment and casually probed it with his spirit sense.

With this probe, his initially calm demeanor immediately turned to shock. This eye... is actually middle-ranked!

"Did you open your eyes? Did you see the tens of thousands of eyeballs floating in the Painting World?" Wood Pine said in surprise.

"Open eyes? Floating tens of thousands of eyeballs?" Ning Fan paused slightly, how could he possibly know there were tens of thousands of eyeballs floating in the Painting World.

"You... didn't see them? Indeed, you didn't open your eyes, so, did you snatch this eye from a Quasi-Saint Carp General..." Wood Pine set aside the previous condescension.

Although Ning Fan hadn't opened his eyes, being able to enter the Painting World with his Eon-old Tribulation Cultivation and seize a Quasi-Saint's eye is considered exceedingly rare.

At least... Xiang Mingzi couldn't accomplish such a feat...

"Good! Being able to bring back a Sun Realm Eye is enough to exchange for my action once. I certainly won't sit by and ignore your feud with the Dark Clan!"

Daoist Wood Pine flipped his hand to store the eye away, unaware that Ning Fan had five more of these eyes. He also didn't know that Ning Fan killed a total of three Quasi-Saint Dao Carps on this trip!

Of course, strictly speaking, those three Dao Carps were not killed by Ning Fan, but by the Black Cat...

Ning Fan didn't bring out all six eyeballs. Since the eye was valued so highly by Wood Pine, it surely had great use. Presenting one to get Wood Pine to take action was already enough; the rest could be kept for the time being...

Seeing Wood Pine finally agree to help Ning Fan, Xiang Mingzi breathed a sigh of relief—thus, the goal of coming to Mu Island was completely achieved.

Xiang Mingzi was in a good mood, and Wood Pine, having obtained a Sun Realm Eye, was also delighted. He uncharacteristically set up a banquet on Mu Island to warmly host Ning Fan and his party.

During the banquet, a natural discussion of Dao ensued between the group. Ning Fan, able to exchange cultivation experiences with two Quasi-Saints, gained a lot, and as the wine reached its midpoint, the conversation naturally shifted to the Sun Realm Eye.

Wood Pine, not withholding information, explained to Ning Fan the marvelous uses of the Sun Realm Eye, only then did Ning Fan realize that he hadn't used the method Wood Pine had expected to retrieve the eye...

Xiang Mingzi was also greatly astonished. It was only today he learned that the correct Palatial Void method was to open one's eyes... No wonder the Dark Clan had used an unparalleled divine skill to rob him of his sense of sight back then—it turned out they were attempting to destroy his potential to open his eyes...

"Opening your eyes is the correct way to cultivate the Palatial Void, and is simultaneously a step that must be taken to reach the Second Rank of the Quasi-Saint..."

Mu Song sighed and looked at Xiang Mingzi, who was also a bit gloomy, thinking no wonder he couldn't step into the second rank of Quasi-Saint; it turned out the issue lay here...

"The so-called enlightenment is not as simple as its surface meaning; it requires seeing the other side of the world. Every world has two sides, the Yin side and the Yang side. The world we are in is the Dreamland Realm, and what we usually see is actually... just the Yin side of the Dreamland Realm..."

Ning Fan, Xiang Mingzi, Wu Laoba, and the group of Mu Island Sect Members showed expressions of confusion to varying degrees, listening seemingly understanding yet not fully. On this, Mu Song could only express deep helplessness, as these people had not seen the Yang side of the world with their own eyes, and listening to his explanation would naturally seem abstract.

"... In short, we, the people of the Dreamland Realm, are essentially people of the Yin world, the part of the world not acknowledged by the Heavens, unable to live in the Yang world unless... one can open their eyes in the Yang world."

They couldn't understand! Wu Laoba scratched his ears and cheeks, knowing that what Mu Song said was precious, yet he just couldn't grasp it...

"Everything has Yin and Yang, brightness and darkness, like people have shadows, leaves have roots. The people of the Yin world cannot be said to be nonexistent; they are just unable to be recognized by the great Tao... We, cultivators of the Dreamland Realm, if we wish to become Saints, must not only seek completeness but also move from Yin to Yang... However, this step is extremely difficult..."

Senior Mu, don't talk about becoming Saints, that's too distant! Talk about breaking through the Second Calamity of the Eternals! I'm more interested in that!

Wu Laoba secretly complained internally, yet naturally didn't dare to speak his thoughts aloud.

"In the Dreamland Realm, there are three clans: God, Yin Yang Transformation, and Demon, and these three clans are not acknowledged by the great Tao... so, I switched to cultivating Buddha..."

What? The three clans are not acknowledged by the great Tao? How come I've never heard of this!

Wu Laoba looked at Mu Song skeptically, secretly thinking perhaps the spiritual wine was too strong, intoxicated Mu Song, and he started talking nonsense?

"There was once a sect called the Gold Talisman Palace, whose Golden Talisman Ancestor was said to have significant connections with the Dao Soul Clan. Most of the disciples within this sect could open their eyes and see the Yang world within the Yin world... Such eyes that have seen the Yang world for themselves mostly retained scenes of the Yang world, called the 'Eyes of the Yang World'. Later, the Gold Talisman Palace encountered an unknown incident and was obliterated, and the sect's treasure—the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting—fell into my hands after several transfers. This painting is filled with extremely powerful Yin Yang power, which can aid cultivators in perfectly integrating their Spirit and Emperor energy, increasing the success rate of breaking through the Immortal Emperor bottleneck. Naturally, what I value more are the countless 'Eyes of the Yang World' hidden in the painting... It's a pity you haven't opened your eyes, otherwise, you should be able to see the countless bloody eyeballs floating in the Pictorial Realm..."

Mu Song sighed slightly, determined that Ning Fan's aptitude was inferior to Senluo, unable to open his eyes in the Pictorial Realm, which served as proof.

"The Eyes of the Yang World can help cultivators open their eyes and help those who have already opened their eyes see more scenes... It's a pity you didn't acquire more eyeballs from the Pictorial Realm, otherwise, you could use some for yourself, which would be beneficial..." When saying this, Mu Song observed Ning Fan's expression and saw him showing a look of regret, unable to help but shake his head secretly.

It seems this child indeed only got one eyeball from the Pictorial Realm... If this child had more eyeballs, he might try to obtain them...

Ning Fan's face was full of regret, but internally, he sighed, thinking that Mu Song could be a strong ally but not someone to deeply befriend. Interactions with him should have some reservations, unlike the casual manner with Xiang Mingzi.

"Speaking of which, every cultivator sees their own scene when they open their eyes... When I opened my eyes back then, I saw a scene of a woodcutter chopping pines and comprehended the source of wood, thereby creating my own Palatial Void. As for Senluo's child, he reportedly saw a scene of a woman feeding eagles with her flesh... the specific image, however, he hasn't mentioned, only he knows..."

Woodcutter chopping pines...

Feeding eagles with flesh...

Ning Fan silently pondered, if he used up the five eyeballs he had, he wondered if he could open his eyes and see his own scene.

After listening to the teachings, mostly everyone hadn't gained much insight from Mu Song, except for Ning Fan and Xiang Mingzi, who occasionally showed thoughtful expressions.

After the banquet, Ning Fan made a request to Daoist Mu Song, wanting to look at the various ancient tomes on Mu Island.

Daoist Mu Song had collected many lost ancient tomes, and quite a few were related to Buddha Talisman and Symbol of Devil Raising, along with many cultivation technique classics, which could verify the first volume of Ning Fan's self-created Dao Scripture. Anyway, since he was at Mu Island, Ning Fan naturally wanted to look at those ancient tomes. This wasn't a big deal, and Daoist Mu Song agreed to Ning Fan's request.

However, Dao Crystals had to be paid to see the books!

Daoist Mu Song was skilled at accounting and took Dao Crystals not for large profits but to avoid owing Ning Fan any karmic debt, which was also a kind gesture.

Ning Fan didn't have many Dao Crystals, but not too few either, making sure he definitely had enough for reading. Mu Song was indeed an outstanding figure in Eastern Heaven; his collection included many rare tomes, greatly enhancing Ning Fan's knowledge.

The collection even included records on the Dao Soul Clan!

"... The Dao has Spirit; those who take the Spirit from Yang are called Dao Soul, and those who take the Spirit from Yin are called Demon Soul..."

"... The Dao has Form; those who take the Form from Yang are called Buddha, and those who take the Form from Yin are called Demon..."

"... The Dao has Mind; those who take the Mind from Yang are called Abandoned, and those who take the Mind from Yin are called God..."

"... The Dao has Dust; those who take the Dust from Yang are called Ghost Servant, and those who take the Dust from Yin are called Pluck..."

"... The Dao has..."

Afterward, there seemed to be more text, but because it was a fragmented tome, it couldn't be seen.

Ning Fan silently pondered, linking this book with Mu Song's words, appearing to have gained insight into the God, Yin Yang Transformation, Demon, and other clans.

Buddha Talisman and Symbol of Devil Raising correspond; one cultivates Buddha Talisman, one cultivates Symbol of Devil Raising, could they be a relationship of Yang and Yin?

Dao Soul, Demon Soul... Ghost Servant, Pluck... Could they also be a relationship of Yang and Yin?

As for the Abandoned that corresponds with God cultivators, what's that...

The back of the ancient tome even introduced the Dao Soul Clan, including a special introduction to the Jiuli.

Concerning his own Little Black Kitten, Ning Fan certainly cared deeply and carefully read through the introduction focused on the Jiuli Clan.

The introduction wasn't detailed, but there was a sentence that drastically changed Ning Fan's expression, showing a serious look.

"... Of everything in the world, according to some knowledge, there are Five Grades of Extreme Yang Items that can extend the period of Dao extinction: one is the Shangqing Lotus Leaf, two the Ancient Dao Immortal Apricot, third the Primeval Fusang, fourth the Jiuli Soul Blood, fifth the Breath of the Reverse Saint..."

Ning Fan's heart pounded, unexpectedly finding a method to save the Ancient Chaotic Grand Emperor in the ancient tomes here!

Shangqing Lotus Leaf, Ancient Dao Immortal Apricot, Primeval Fusang, these three are legendary treasures, the first time Ning Fan heard of them.

The Breath of the Reverse Saint refers to the Fourth Step Immortal Emperor exhaling a breath, allowing a person destined to die to extend life, of course Ning Fan couldn't find an Immortal Emperor to breathe on Ancient Chaos...

But the Jiuli Soul Blood...

This book records that taking a drop of adult Jiuli Soul Blood can delay the Dao extinction period by a thousand years!

Ning Fan didn't know that the blood of his own Little Black Kitten was still of such great use!

If he got a drop of Little Black Kitten's soul blood... it should be not too harmful to her...

But then comes the problem...

This Little Black Kitten seems not to be an adult yet...

Chapter 978: Two Strands of Karma

Every world has a Heavenly Dao, and every Heavenly Dao has its soul.

The Dao-Soul Clan, born with the world and responding to its destiny, controls the cycles of the Heavenly Dao, divided into four realms: Mortal, Immortal, Emperor, and Saint.

The Mortal Realm corresponds to the first step of cultivation; the Immortal Realm corresponds to the cultivation of Fate Immortal and True Immortal; the Emperor Grade twelve levels correspond to the Eternal Nine Calamities and Quasi-Saint Third Grade; the Saint Grade corresponds to the Saint Realm.

According to Daoist Wood Pine's ancient records, the relationship between the Dao-Soul Clan and the demon race is essentially one of yang and yin.

The Dao-Soul Clan is acknowledged by the Great Dao, is yang, and it is said that the Heavenly Dao of the Three Great Realms is all governed by the various Dao-Soul Clans. In addition, more than half of the Land of Dreams is also controlled by the Dao-Soul Clan.

The demon race, not acknowledged by the Great Dao, is yin. They are not qualified to govern the Heavenly Dao of the Real Realms, only to govern a small portion of the Land of Dreams' Heavenly Dao...

Ning Fan's eyes showed a hint of reminiscence. Speaking of which, Li Xiaoxiao, who had quite a grudge with him, was once the Heavenly Dao Soul of the Rain Immortal World...

Li Xiaoxiao governs the Heavenly Dao of the Rain Immortal World. Her true form is a demon and possibly even Fu Li.

The Black Cat governs the Heavenly Dao of the Fan Family Wildlands. The Fan Family Wildlands was originally a piece of land in the Barbaric Wilderness Realm, and its Heavenly Dao belonged to the Real Realms...

The Jiuli Clan is an extremely unique Dao-Soul Clan that can enhance its cultivation by devouring other Dao Souls. Ning Fan has picked up quite a bit of Quasi-Saint Carp Meat, most of which could help the Black Cat improve its cultivation, but could not help the Black Cat enter the Adult Stage...

Ning Fan browsed through the ancient book in his hands, his brow slightly furrowed.

Unlike the demon race, entering the Adult Stage is quite troublesome for the Dao-Soul Clan. First, the cultivation and bone age must meet the requirements for adulthood. Secondly, a specialized Soul Awakening Ritual must be held. An immature Jiuli cannot transform, and its soul blood does not have the ability to delay Dao annihilation. To save the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor, first, the Black Cat must enter the Adult Stage!

The Black Cat's bone age and cultivation have long been qualified for adulthood; only a Soul Awakening Ritual is needed to reach adulthood. But this is also the most troublesome part...

The process of the Soul Awakening Ritual is not problematic as it is detailed in the ancient books. The troublesome part is that during the ritual, at least one innate rank clan Dao-Soul Ritual Vessel must be used; without the vessel, the ritual cannot be completed.

The Ritual Vessel is an extremely special type of magical treasure, mostly used for holding rituals, varying among different clans. When Ning Fan was young, he obtained many Offering Vessels of Ancient Demons, but most were low-grade vessels.

High-grade ritual vessels are mostly preserved within each clan's temple as treasured items passed down through generations, and it's rare for high-grade ritual vessels to circulate outside.

Ning Fan felt a bit troubled. Where can he find a Jiuli clan Dao-Soul Ritual Vessel, and it must be of the innate rank...

Innate magical treasures between heaven and earth are already scarce, and among them, innate ritual vessels are even fewer. The Jiuli Clan is a force of the Real Realms, not in the Dreamland Realm. The chance of finding a Jiuli innate ritual vessel in the Dreamland Realm is extremely slim...

Ning Fan's eyes showed bitterness.

It's so hard to see a glimmer of hope to save the Ancient Chaos, only for this hope to be so slim, nearly nonexistent...

"Master... I know... where the vessel is..." Suddenly, the voice of Little Kitten came from within his Heart Spirit, having just awakened from a coma.

"You know? Where's the vessel!" Ning Fan slightly stirred.

"Can't accurately sense... but can faintly feel... somewhere hidden in this starry sky... is the Jiuli Ritual Vessel..."

Ning Fan pondered, his expression mixed with joy and worry.

Joyful that there was a Jiuli innate ritual vessel within Eastern Heaven; worried that the Black Cat could only vaguely sense its existence and couldn't detect where it was specifically.

"Can you determine approximately where in Eastern Heaven your sensed Jiuli Ritual Vessel might be?" Ning Fan asked.

"I'm sorry... Black Evil spirit sense is insufficient... cannot perceive the entire Eastern Starry Sky..." The Black Cat felt deeply remorseful.

"So, if your spirit sense could cover Eastern Heaven, you might be able to perceive where the vessel is located..."

Ning Fan's eyes flashed with resolution, he put down the ancient book, quickly left the Sutra Pavilion, returned to the meditation room, sat cross-legged on a mat, and flipped his hand to summon the Black Cat.

By this time, the Black Cat had eaten all the Quasi-Saint Carp Meat after awakening, and her wilting aura had returned to normal, her cultivation had notably improved.

There was also quite a lot of Quasi-Saint Blood and Meat energy stored within her body, slowly being refined, causing her cultivation to steadily and stably increase.

Ning Fan summoned the Black Cat and immediately merged with her, his cultivation surged to the level of the Second Calamity of the Eternals. Then, he performed the Heaven Prying Rain Technique.

In an instant, light rain descended on Mu Island, spreading outward from the center of Mu Island to the entire Eastern Heaven, and soon, all of Eastern Heaven was enveloped in Ning Fan's spirit sense!

As for Ning Fan himself, his aura was calm and balanced, seemingly just meditating, without any fluctuations in his aura.

"This is..." Both Daoist Wood Pine and Xiang Mingzi were slightly startled at this moment.

This rain...

They could perceive this rain seemed man-made, yet they couldn't perceive that Ning Fan's spirit sense was hidden within the rain.

No traces to be found!

Ning Fan had once entered the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting, virtually inflated his cultivation, and experienced what higher-level rain techniques were like. With this experience, his current rain techniques were becoming more natural, clearly performing the technique on Mu Island, clearly not far from Daoist Wood Pine and Xiang Mingzi, yet neither could detect the source of the rain technique!

Even these two Quasi-Saints couldn't perceive this, others definitely couldn't either and would likely assume this sudden rain was just a common rain brought by some powerful Master. Even so, it was enough to leave people astonished.

The rain covering Eastern Heaven, what a great gesture! To change the entire weather of Eastern Heaven, one must at least have Quasi-Saint cultivation!

"I don't know which old expert is responsible for this rain..." Daoist Wood Pine slightly pondered.

A few days ago, there was also a rain covering the entire Eastern Heaven... it should be the same person.

Today's rain seems more natural than the rain four days ago. It appears the old monster's Divine Skills have improved...

Back then, when Ning Fan roared amid the rain, only a few sects heard the roar. Daoist Wood Pine didn't hear it, so he naturally didn't know this rain was caused by Ning Fan.

Xiang Mingzi also didn't know, yet he seemed thoughtful as he swept his spirit sense in the direction of Ning Fan...

Ning Fan appeared to be meditating, with no fluctuation in aura around him. Could this rain be caused by this little guy...

Hmm, it must indeed be this little guy. The last rain, and this time as well... could this technique be the Heaven Prying Rain Technique of the Rain Ancestor? Looking across the Four Heavens, no one could master this technique, yet this child managed to learn it. Such aptitude truly befits the title of Rain Immortal Monarch.

Having never underestimated Ning Fan, Xiang Mingzi once again held a higher regard for him.

"Rain in the Nine Heavens, encompassing one realm, clouds are my eyes, rain is my spirit... That day in the downpour, without using the black cat's power, I could initially cover the entire Eastern Heaven with my spirit sense. Now, naturally, it can be done even more easily. Encompassing one realm, encompassing one realm..."

Ning Fan's spirit sense seemed to merge with the entire starry sky of Eastern Heaven. At this moment, he was one with the black cat, and the scene he saw, the black cat could also see.

The black cat couldn't search for the ritual vessel's whereabouts throughout the Eastern Heaven, but Ning Fan could help her do it!

Not here either, not here...

Godly Void Pavilion, Slaughter Hall, Extreme Thunder Palace, Qianqiu Sect, Medicine Sect... The black cat's spirit sense blended with Ning Fan's, merged into the rain, sweeping over one starry sky after another, yet could not find the location of the ritual vessel.

Pill Sect, Danxia Star.

In the grand hall, the Sect Master of the Pill Sect was receiving guests. In recent days, many Old Monsters of Eastern Heaven accepted his invitation to come to the Pill Sect, intending to join the Anti-Ning Alliance. However, many other old monsters were still observing or on their way to the Pill Sect.

After some pleasantries, the Sect Master called on disciples to escort these guests who had traveled from afar to rest.

"In another twenty days, the conference will convene. Once the alliance is formed, I will no longer need to fear that Ning Fan brat. Hmm... The four Immortal Venerable I invited, Ancestor Sun of the Sun Family has already arrived, and the one from the Wang Clan is on his way. Ancestor Han considers the reward too low; if I add some incentive, I might be able to invite him. Only Ancestor Wu... why, to this day, hasn't he given me a definitive answer? Never mind, even if he doesn't come, I have three Immortal Venerables on my side, especially Ancestor Han, who is said to have broken through to the realm of the Second Calamity of the Eternals..."

Thinking about the formidable lineup of the alliance, the Sect Master of the Pill Sect felt relieved. Who would have thought that within a mere hundred years, that Ning Fan brat could reach this stage, possessing the terrifying cultivation to slay Deyun Ancestor?

Alas, he is still just a grasshopper after autumn, won't be jumping for much longer!

As the Sect Master of the Pill Sect was sneering, he suddenly shivered inexplicably, realizing that outside the hall, it had started to rain heavily.

"This rain... stretches across the starry sky, with no end in sight! Truly don't know which senior displayed such divine skills, it's truly incredible!"

The Sect Master marveled and continued to set up alliance matters, unaware that everything he did was within Ning Fan's awareness.

"Pill Sect..."

A cold light flickered in Ning Fan's eyes. Twenty days later, at the Pill Sect's alliance meeting, he would definitely not miss it.

He would certainly capture all attending enemies in one swoop!

In the Eastern Heaven Southern Cang Snow Domain, where heavy snow fell year-round in the starry sky, on this day, the snow suddenly turned to rain.

At this moment, in the snow domain, a giant snow gate suddenly appeared out of thin air. As it opened, an unruly elder with a bare upper body, wearing a beast-skin skirt, stepped out, his muscles bulging with explosive power.

Following behind the elder was a woman in a feathered cloak holding an umbrella.

"Strange, why did my Southern Clan's snow formation suddenly bring rain, is it some old monster altering the weather? Moreover, why do these raindrops carry a breath that makes my heart tremble..."

This elder exuded an imposing aura without anger, carrying the presence of a First Order Quasi-Saint!

Few knew that this elder was Ancestor Tashi of the Barbarian Sect, one of the Four Divisions - Witch, Plague, Gu, and Barbarian - of the Southern Clan.

"Ancestor must be joking. With your noble cultivation, only facing an Ancient Great Cultivator could possibly cause a heart-stirring feeling. This rain has no lethal force, why should it make heart tremble?"

"...Can't say for sure, maybe this rain is concocted by the Old Undying of the Dark Clan? Ancient Great Cultivators, hmph, nowadays, it's not impossible..." The elder replied with a frown.

"The Old Undying of the Dark Clan?" The umbrella-holding woman was puzzled.

"You are the Holy Maiden of my clan, having broken through to the Timeless Realm, it's time you learned some secrets... but then again, it's not something easily summed up. Wait until that old thing, Nan Tianhua, comes out of seclusion, then he'll personally explain to you. I wonder if that boy from Zhao Family can successfully 'invite' that Rain Immortal Monarch here, hmm... trusting Lv Wen's words is questionable... How can the Rain Immortal Monarch be the same person as the Ancient Great Cultivator who swept across the Barbarians... if he's not..."

The elder gave a defiant cold snort, transmitting his words, causing the umbrella-holding woman to frown slightly.

Rain Immortal Monarch, Ning Fan...

Ancient Great Cultivator, Zhao Jian...

They are probably not the same person; if the Rain Monarch did have the cultivation of an Ancient Great Cultivator, he wouldn't be so afraid of the Dark Clan...

Forget it, better handle this matter cautiously...

"This Southern Cang Snow Domain actually hides a passage to the Southern Clan..."

"And what those two just discussed..."

Ning Fan's eyes narrowed slightly, from the Quasi-Saint elder's words it seemed, the Dark Clan also had an Old Undying rivaling Ancient Great Cultivators...

As for the later transmitted voice, it was inaudible...

The rain continued to pour steadily. Within the Three Thousand Thunder Realm, in a certain Sixth Level Thunder Region, an elder in a blue robe looked up at the drizzle, fiddling with a compass in his right hand. The compass depicted three eyes, each of his movements seemed to deduce something.

"...94, commerce exchange unsettled, illness brings joy... Looks like that Rain Monarch won't be easily swayed. Ah, for that girl's sake, perhaps a humble approach with the Rain Monarch might be necessary. Whether he is Zhao Jian or not, this is unknown; fortune and misfortune are hard to distinguish, even if he's not... sigh... everything was within my calculations, except this child, whom I miscalculated... Never expected in this world, there was someone even I, Chongming Phoenix Emperor, couldn't fully discern..."

The elder in the blue robe didn't perceive anything peculiar about the rain, nor did Ning Fan care much for him. Ning Fan's spirit sense merely brushed over him and moved on.

"Not within Extreme Thunder Palace either..." Ning Fan wondered inwardly, deliberately dispersing his spirit sense towards major forces, considering that if the Jiuli Ritual Vessel existed, it would most likely be in the hands of a major force.

"No, not here either... there is nothing there... not here either..."

The black cat's breath grew slightly hurried. Taking advantage of Ning Fan's divine skills, her spirit sense surveyed the entire Eastern Heaven, yet found the burden of such scrutiny hard to bear.

Ning Fan remained as calm as usual, already accustomed to the massive consumption of the rain technique. Now, he had further cultivated the Wood Yin Yang technique, which carried the advantage of endless vitality. Even if he didn't actively replenish his mana, the mana consumed within his body would recover at an astonishing speed on its own.

If he were to duel with an Immortal Venerable of the same level, there would likely be few who could match him in terms of mana endurance.

"Found it!" the black cat suddenly exclaimed joyfully.

Following the direction of the black cat's spirit sense, Ning Fan emitted his own spirit sense, and his gaze immediately focused.

Supreme Pill Sacred Domain!

The direction pointed out by the black cat's offering vessel was actually directly facing the entrance of the Supreme Pill Sacred Domain!

"Could it be... the Nine-Li sacrificial device that Little Kitten sensed is actually inside the Supreme Pill Sacred Domain?"

Ning Fan furrowed his brows.

In that case, everything would return to the starting point. This Supreme Pill Sacred Domain was still a place he could not avoid going to...

Whether it was for the possibly existent Heaven-opening Spiritual Medicine, or... for the Nine-Li sacrificial device!

"It's raining again..."

In the Yuan Dan Starfield, within the Supreme Pill Divine City.

The Yuan Dan Emperor was originally in seclusion, but upon noticing the rain covering the starry sky outside, he couldn't help but frown.

He was a pill demon, possessing the power of the medicine soul, and his perception was much sharper than ordinary people. He always felt that someone might be peering into the Supreme Pill Divine City through the rain; was it just an illusion...

"That Rain Monarch, as the inheritor of the Ancient Chaos, most likely carries the Yin Yang Locket! The Yin Yang Locket, heh heh, inside this locket, there should be the key to the domain passage, leading directly to the Sky Desolate Ancient Realm, and onward to the Real Realms. The ancient records state that this key cannot be obtained by anyone other than a Saint. This stone door is essentially a wasted door, drawing no real attention from the human or demon races. But I do not believe it; in my hand, I have a treasure. According to the ancient texts, it should be able to ignore the rules and extract the key from the Yin Yang Locket..."

The Yuan Dan Emperor flipped his hand, producing an ancient fossil, which seemed like amber, yet didn't.

Within the translucent fossil, a butterfly wing was sealed, appearing to be a left wing, with a clean cut, as if severed by some sharp blade. On the surface, this butterfly wing seemed ordinary, like that of a mundane butterfly, but the unique aspect was the chilling Sword Intent emanating from the edge of the wing!

What a terrifying Sword Intent! Even with the Yuan Dan Emperor's Immortal Emperor cultivation, facing this Sword Intent left him feeling cold to his bones. It was imaginable how formidable the person who left behind this Sword Intent must be; after countless years, just a trace of residual Sword Intent was enough to make an Immortal Emperor tremble with fear.

Another flip of his hand, and he stored away the fossil. No one knew about this. Not even Ning Fan, who had no idea that the Yuan Dan Emperor, during his seclusion, had looked at such things.

Why, after all, should he hide in the stone seclusion cave?

After thoroughly confirming the location of the Nine-Li sacrificial device, Ning Fan had to seriously craft his current plan.

Supreme Pill Sacred Domain, Ning Fan had no choice but to go. It was time to inform the Qianqiu Sect to gather more intel on the Supreme Pill Sacred Domain.

Hmm, the Six Desires Sect should be informed as well, to investigate together...

Although Ning Fan had clearly stopped the rain technique, as soon as his mind moved, inexplicably, a fine rain began to fall simultaneously outside the sects of the Six Desires Sect and the Qianqiu Sect. Within the fine rain, Ning Fan's voice was directly transmitted to the subordinates of both sects!

He could actually transmit his voice across the entire Heavenly range, ignoring distance, the whole realm could hear his voice!

And only within the two sects' range, did it rain! Ning Fan's rain technique had reached such a refined degree, able to communicate across a whole realm through a thought!

"It's... the Sect Master's transmission! From how far is the Sect Master transmitting this voice!" Several of the Enlightenment-stage subordinates of the Six Desires Sect were all startled by Ning Fan's methods. A hundred years ago, they pledged loyalty to Ning Fan; a hundred years later, Ning Fan returned to the East Heaven with an overwhelmingly powerful presence, and instructed them to gather intel on the Supreme Pill Sacred Domain. How could they dare not follow!

Compared to the Six Desires Sect, the subordinates of the Qianqiu Sect were much calmer, after all, they had already witnessed Ning Fan's might firsthand.

Ning Fan came to Mu Island with only two purposes: to repair the God-Extinguishing Shield and to seek Daoist Wood Pine as an ally. Now, both purposes had been achieved; once he dealt with the last few spoils of battle, he planned to leave Mu Island.

After a round of inquiries, Ning Fan found out that those three five-colored light clusters were the clan fortune that the black cat had seized from the Dao Carp Clan.

Clan fortune was something Ning Fan didn't know much about; it couldn't be used to increase personal fortune, only to increase the fortune of a sect or clan.

When Ning Fan returned to the Qianqiu Sect and used this item, it could increase the sect's fortune by fifteen hundred colors in a short time!

Of course, this clan fortune could also be applied to other powers.

Ning Fan hadn't yet experienced the benefits of clan fortune, and didn't pay much attention to it. What caught his focus were those five Quasi-Saint Carp Eyes.

Open the eyes... open the eyes...

Daoist Wood Pine had been deferential before but became critical afterward, seemingly because he couldn't open his eyes, leaving Wood Pine disappointed.

From the tone of Wood Pine, his words hinted that Ning Fan wasn't as good as Senluo...

Having cultivated for many years, Ning Fan's heart was as steadfast as stone. He didn't care whether his talent was higher or lower than Senluo, nor did he care about Wood Pine's opinion.

Talent doesn't determine everything... Moreover, Ning Fan vaguely felt that the reason he couldn't open his eyes wasn't solely due to insufficient talent; rather, it was more about being suppressed by external forces.

"I clearly am at the Second Realm of Tianren, yet I cannot open my eyes in the Pictorial Realm like Wood Pine and Senluo. After entering the Pictorial Realm, I fell into sixty cycles of dreams within it. If I hadn't perceived the cause and effect, I might have been trapped in the infinite dream cycles of the Pictorial Realm..."

"Cause and effect are why I walked out of the Pictorial Realm, yet they are also what I doubted. Before entering the Pictorial Realm, the Yin Yang Locket within my body clearly had a tremor, sensing something within it. But after I entered, that sensing never appeared again, as if a force forcibly cut off the connection between that mysterious object and the Yin Yang Locket... Since that perception occurred, naturally there was cause and effect; between that mysterious object and the Yin Yang Locket, there was a cause and effect. But after I entered the Pictorial Realm, I only found the sixty causes and effects between me and Li Si, and didn't find the cause and effect between the Yin Yang Locket and that mysterious object... At the moment I stepped into the Pictorial Realm, the cause and effect tinged by the Yin Yang Locket was severed... Whether this was done by someone, or for other reasons... Perhaps the trigger was the Yin Yang Locket itself, or perhaps, it wasn't..."

Ning Fan recalled the sound of that water droplet, recalled the mysterious female voice, and felt a large stone pressing on his heart, making it difficult to breathe.

What was the origin of the owner of that voice...

Everything within the Pictorial Realm was a dream; was that voice his own dream, or the dream of the Carp Generals...

If only he could open his eyes upon entering the Pictorial Realm, could he then find out where that voice came from.

Open the eyes, open the eyes... Perhaps by opening the eyes, he could clarify the doubts in his heart...

Ning Fan entered the Xuan Yin Treasure and in the cave house of the Western Xuanyin Realm, he took out the first eyeball.

What he gave to Mu Song was Li Si's left eye; this one is Li Si's right eye.

With both hands flat, he merged the carp eyes in his palms; he could feel a tremendous power of pure Yang within this carp eye, which must be what Daoist Wood Pine coveted.

"According to Wood Pine's words, there are four methods to extract the eye, seven methods to nurture it, and twelve methods to swallow the eye... Cutting the carp to extract the eye is a lower approach; it will damage the vision within the carp eye. To restore all seven visions, one must carefully nurture the carp eye before devouring it."

Ning Fan's palm emitted a brilliant azure spike, using an endless flow of wood mana to repair the carp eye in his palm.

After an indeterminate period, Ning Fan suddenly flipped his hand and tossed the carp eye high, changing his fingers' gestures and casting countless spirit sense at the carp eye.

The ordinary-looking carp eye suddenly sprouted like a seed, blossomed, and within just over ten breaths, completely unfolded into a white lotus.

"According to Senior Wood Pine, this lotus is transformed from the pure Yang vision within the carp eye. Once it becomes a lotus, it can only survive for twelve breaths. If unable to swallow the entire lotus within twelve breaths, the lotus withers and the carp eye is destroyed..."

Ning Fan's gaze was exceedingly serious as he pushed the power of the Yin Yang Locket within his Dantian to the extreme, summoned the Liangyi Square Seal for protection, and then opened his mouth to swallow the white lotus.

Instantly, the white lotus turned into a blazing white light, which Ning Fan directly devoured into his abdomen. In a moment, a scorching pain, as if he had swallowed a branding iron, emerged intensely from his belly.

This is the pure Yang vision within the carp eye. Only the people of the Yang World can safely absorb it. The people of the Netherworld, if absorbing it forcefully, face great danger; even with Yin Yang Locket

and Liangyi Square Seal as protective Yin Yang magic treasures, Ning Fan still found the pain unbearable. Yet he disregarded the pain and insanely absorbed the extreme Yang.

Ignoring the burns inside his body, Ning Fan was reckless, only seeking to consume the white lotus within twelve breaths, willing to pay a bit of the price!

One breath, two breaths, three breaths... nine breaths!

If Mu Song discovered Ning Fan took only nine breaths to consume the first white lotus, he would surely be astonished. You must understand that even Mu Song, when he first devoured the Yang Eye White Lotus, took eleven breaths and was directly burned through his organs by the extreme Yang within the lotus!

Of course, that was because Mu Song lacked a body-protecting magical treasure. When he devoured the Yang Eye White Lotus the second time, he crafted the Liangyi Square Seal to restrain the seed's extreme Yang.

Ning Fan, however, was different. He not only received Mu Song's Liangyi Square Seal but also possessed the Chaotic Ancient Emperor Treasure Yin Yang Locket and inherently had a fierce nature. The time he took was less than Mu Song's.

Once the extreme Yang was swallowed, the scenery in front of him, as though washed by water, revealed a different scene.

The scenery of the Xuan Yin Treasure vanished from Ning Fan's view!

He was clearly still sitting within the Xuan Yin Treasure; to Black Cat, Ning Fan was indeed still sitting there, but the scene Ning Fan saw was one that Black Cat couldn't perceive.

As if in another space-time!

"This is the scene Wood Pine spoke of, it's a pity this isn't my scene but one that Li Si saw in the past..."

The scene that Ning Fan saw was a boundless desert, within which a man dressed in Western Region attire lay faintly breathless upon the sand, gradually nearing death under the roasting sun.

"Thirsty, so thirsty..."

"If there's a next life... I want to be a fish, spend my life in water, then I won't die of thirst..."

With Ning Fan's eyesight, he instantly saw that two lines of causality appeared on the man's body, linking him to something unknown...

"Two causalities..." For a moment, Ning Fan's gaze became bewildered.

One breath, two breaths, three breaths...

After three breaths, this scene disappeared like water washing away, and the scenery of the Xuan Yin Treasure reappeared before Ning Fan's eyes.

Was this the scene in Li Si's eyes...

What does this scene mean...

It's a pity that Li Si's left eye was given to Mu Song. I wonder if the scene in the left and right eyes is different...

Drip-drip, drip-drip, drip-drip...

After using one carp eye, Ning Fan suddenly noticed the dripping sound echoed again beside his ears.

Soon after, came the call of a woman's voice.

"Little Butterfly, stop sleeping, wake up quickly."

"Little Butterfly, stop sleeping, stop sleeping."

"If you sleep longer, you'll miss the once-in-a-decade Chao Yue of Primeval Mountain..."

Chao Yue, what is that...

With a slight contemplation, Ning Fan, upon consuming one carp eye, not only saw Li Si's scene but also heard an additional phrase. What mystery lies within...

The woman's voice drew nearer, almost as if she was about to appear before Ning Fan.

Ning Fan's gaze solidified as he speculated that this calling woman might be the scene he sees upon opening his eyes...

It seemed he was one step closer to opening his eyes. What if he continued devouring the carp eyes...

This thought had barely emerged when, for the first time, Ning Fan heard the sound of chains, clinking and clanging from an unknown origin.

Once the sound of chains resonated, the imminent feeling of opening his eyes immediately vanished completely!

The sound of chains clearly intended to prevent him from opening his eyes!

Chapter 979: Celestial Melody Resounds on the Origin Bridge

"What force is preventing me from opening my eyes..."

The sound of chains clashing gradually faded, and Ning Fan began to ponder lightly.

The moment the sound of the chain clashing occurred, he felt a sudden chill enveloping him, as if a lone boat drifting in an ocean of tumultuous waves, surrounded by towering sea waves, with a single misstep leading to a watery grave.

Within the sound of the chain, a certain will existed, the will of heaven, suggesting that if he defied this will, his Dao, his everything, would be erased by that will!

It was heaven's will repelling his Dao!

Fellow Daoist!

People of the Netherworld cannot open their eyes because they do not receive heaven's recognition; heaven does not permit citizens of the Netherworld to see the scenes of the Yang World. Only those fortunate Yin citizens who receive heaven's recognition, and with adequate aptitude, can open their eyes.

Ning Fan was unaware of this, but at this moment, he began to speculate.

Could it be that he was unable to open his eyes not due to inadequate aptitude, but because he practiced the Fellow Daoist way, not tolerated by heaven and earth?

Each of the True Immortal Realm requires cultivators to give up their inner obsessions. Cultivators need to abandon earthly concerns to embark on the path of immortality. Buddhist practitioners especially must not harbor obsessions; if they do, they fall into demonic barriers. Cultivation universally requires the abandonment of obsessions, yet Ning Fan chose the path of not abandoning.

Heaven demands cultivators let go of their obsessions. Thus, the True Bridge on the Zhenhuan River simply does not belong to Fellow Daoist cultivators.

If it's said that people of the Netherworld are unrecognized existences, then those who practice the Fellow Daoist path among the Netherworld citizens are extraordinarily unrecognized, making the difficulty of opening their eyes exceptionally great!

"If this is indeed the case, then it's not surprising that I find it difficult to open my eyes... Is it heaven's disapproval..."

It seems that to open one's eyes, one must gain heaven's recognition as much as possible.

No wonder Daoist Wood Pine insisted on switching to Ancient Buddhism; Ancient Buddhism is recognized by heaven. What he seeks is likely heaven's approval, thereby reducing the difficulty of opening his eyes.

Ning Fan remained silent; he possessed four lines of cultivation, aside from Calamity Thought cultivation, the forces of the other three lines were all unrecognized by heaven and earth.

Moreover, his Dao was an anomaly repelled by heaven and earth. If replaced by Wood Pine, he would likely abandon the God, Demon, and Monster cultivation lines, abandon the Fellow Daoist path, and fully conform to heaven's will. In this way, he could reduce the difficulty of opening his eyes and gradually move from Yin to Yang...

But Ning Fan isn't Wood Pine; he will not abandon his Dao for the sake of opening his eyes.

"So, heaven disapproves, but what if I were determined to defy heaven's will and forcefully open my eyes?"

Ning Fan flipped his hand, taking out Lisan's left eye, and like the previous method, he transformed the carp eye into a lotus and swallowed it whole.

One breath, two breaths, three breaths... eight breaths!

Having the first experience of swallowing the lotus, Ning Fan took only eight breaths this time to absorb a trace of Pure Yang from the white lotus.

Before his eyes, heaven and earth seemed cleansed, followed by a scene emerging again. This scene was what Lisan saw upon opening his eyes, remaining in the left eye, preserved to this day!

In the scene, there was a village nestled beside mountains and rivers. The village was sparsely populated. By the riverbank at the village head, an old man, bald and with missing teeth, cast his line into the water.

Beside him was a bamboo basket, which already contained several fish he had caught. The old man gazed at the river water, his eyes profound as the starry sky.

"Today people fish, someday heaven will fish me... This is, cause and effect!"

The old man suddenly let out a sigh.

As he sighed, two more causes and effects appeared on him, seemingly pointing to two distinct paths.

"Today people fish, someday heaven will fish me..." Ning Fan murmured. This sentence indeed encapsulates the law of cause and effect and reincarnation.

Speaking of which, the scene in Lisi's eye was of a person dying of thirst in the desert, yearning in their dying moments to reincarnate as a fish in the next life.

The scene in Lisan's left eye was the old man fishing... Upon closer consideration, the scenes both seem related to fish...

Cause and effect... Could it be...

Ning Fan's heart filled with speculation but not complete certainty.

As with the first time consuming the lotus, this scene lasted only a short three breaths before vanishing.

After viewing the second scene, the mysterious sound of dripping water echoed again, followed by a woman's calling voice, echoing beside his ear. Then came the sound of the chain clashing, attempting to prevent Ning Fan from opening his eyes.

Still unable to open his eyes, but this time, after the sound of the chain, Ning Fan heard other voices; it seemed like two children conversing...

Apparently, continually devouring carp eyes was not entirely fruitless, it held some effect.

"This woman's heart is steadfast, but the Great Way is heartless; it seems she'll wait in vain. We are the Dao practitioners of the Holy Sect, guarding the snowy valley for countless years, yet never have we seen a deceased soul from the Mortal Grade snowy valley return to the True Realm. This woman has waited through forty-two reincarnations, her body turned to dust, thoughts dissipated like green smoke, yet her obsession remains unextinguished. Truly, what kind of person is she obsessing over..." This was one of the child's voices.

"The deceased is difficult to revive, especially a deceased with no immortal roots; this snowy valley is Mortal Grade, its coffin owner is a mortal, seeking to return to the True Realm is difficult, difficult, difficult. Our master said, the creature sealed within this coffin is not human, but a mere mortal butterfly. Although without cultivations, our master said this butterfly once committed serious crimes in its mortal form, angering the existence of Primeval Mountain and was destroyed by the Desolate Sword Third Yang. Tsk, such a mere butterfly garnered attention from Immortal Emperor's intervention, further having its ashes retrieved amidst the Desolate Sword Third Yang by a certain individual of the Purple Mountain Dou Sea. If not for that, this butterfly would likely not have even its ashes remain..." This was the other child's voice.

"Master's truly senile. What qualifications does a mere mortal butterfly have to warrant a Fourth Step Immortal Emperor's personal intervention to destroy it? And what qualifications to have another save it? If it were the legendary Vast Expanse Nine Butterflies, then perhaps it'd be possible, but a mere mortal butterfly, ha ha..."

"Anyway, all this happened forty-two reincarnations ago, far too ancient to determine its truth. Moreover, since it was said by our master, it is even less believable, likely false. Isn't it known that our master is the monk from Hongjun Holy Sect who loves nonsense more? Were it not for this penchant for nonsense angering this era's Hongjun, he wouldn't be punished to the snowy valley for reflection... With a master like this, we juniors cannot hold our heads high among our peers."

"Indeed, truly regrettable to have such a master. Just two days ago, master even said 'there exists in this world a kind of being whose peculiarity lies in its commonness, in its ordinariness, for the ordinary and common is the yin side of the immortal family. If mortals reach yin, even yang cannot refuse; mortals can slay immortals! Yin and yang, who is superior?' Alas, master is beyond help. Mortals can slay

immortals... cough, mortals have no cultivations, on what basis can they kill immortals? To me, master has read too many books, causing erratic thoughts... Master also said..."

At this point, the voice ceased. The two children appeared to continue discussing their master, but the remaining words were beyond Ning Fan's hearing.

Ning Fan took a deep breath; what he heard this time seemed... something extraordinary!

Hongjun Holy Sect... snowy valley... woman... forty-two reincarnations... butterfly... Primeval Mountain... Desolate Sword Third Yang... Purple Mountain Dou Sea...

The conversation between these two children seemed to involve extremely frightening secrets! Even though he couldn't comprehend the specifics, Ning Fan could deduce that these words were extraordinary, not something a practitioner of the Land of Dreams could say.

Could this be the conversation of the People of the True Realm!

The butterfly, could it be referring to himself? Or someone else entirely...

What place is the snowy valley? What does Hongjun Holy Sect refer to?

Why, among these secrets, did Ning Fan hear the conversation of these two children? Could it be the conversation was part of the scene he saw upon opening his eyes?

Cause and effect, cause and effect... Could it be...

Especially what Ning Fan paid attention to, were the last words of the two children.

'Master also said, in this world exists a form of life whose power lies in its ordinariness, in its commonality, because ordinariness and commonality are the yin side of the immortal family. If mortal reaches yin, even Yang can't refuse, mortals can slay immortals!'

Mortals are Yin, immortals are Yang. This indeed corresponds to Yin and Yang.

All things in the world of Yin and Yang can be reversed, this is Ning Fan's insight after years of practicing the Yin Yang Grand Dao. Fire can dry out water, water can extinguish fire, the Yin side and the Yang side may not necessarily be superior or inferior to one another. However, hearing this might sound absurd at first.

Mortals can kill immortals... can mortals really kill immortals?

For some reason, upon thinking of this, Ning Fan recalled the scene from his former life in the Ancient Heavenly Court, where his butterfly body's Fen Chi crashed and destroyed the Eye of Affection Control.

If mortals can reach yin, even Yang can't refuse, mortals can slay immortals...

If mortals can reach yin...

This phrase echoed endlessly in Ning Fan's mind, completely erasing the few doubts his spirit sense encountered after meeting Wood Pine.

Seeing Wood Pine and Senluo both able to open their eyes while he couldn't, he had questioned his own aptitude.

Seeing that Mu Song could open his eyes and peek into the scenery of the Yang World, while he could not, he didn't feel without regret.

Seeing that the will of heaven obstructed him, not allowing him to open his eyes, his heart was not without resentment, desiring to contend against the heavens.

But this resentment extinguished completely upon hearing that sentence.

If mortals could reach the utmost Yin...

Ning Fan seemed to see a completely new path of cultivation, a path different from all cultivators in the Dreamland Realm.

The Dreamland Realm is the Yin side of the Three Great Realms, and the cultivators of the Dreamland Realm are the people of the Mysterious Yin World, whose only path is to follow the will of heaven, step by step cultivating from Yin to Yang, step by step to become the people of the True Realm. To step into the Third Step, this is the path the people of the Mysterious Yin World must take.

But what if Ning Fan didn't take this path?

What if he insisted on living in the Yin World, insisting on walking this path to the utmost Yin... what then?

What if he insisted on not opening his eyes, insisted on walking forward with closed eyes, what would that lead to?

Opening one's eyes is one path.

Closing one's eyes seems to be another path.

"I really want to know who the master the two children mentioned is, such a person of high standing. Just a few words from them gifted me with such a revelation, surely they are not an ordinary person," Ning Fan mused to himself.

"The sound of water dripping, the call of a woman, the conversation of two young apprentices, these things are likely part of the scenery I will see once I open my eyes. Although I haven't opened my eyes yet, the number of voices I hear is increasing. Does this mean the more pure Yang I absorb from the eyes of the Carp, the closer I am to opening my eyes? Hmm, let's see what effect swallowing a third Carp Eye will have."

Ning Fan, following the previous method, consumed the third Carp Eye, which was the right eye of Li San.

This time the scene presented before him was still the sight of an old man fishing, the sight contained in Li San's left and right eyes turned out to be identical. However, the perspectives were different!

The left eye of Li San showed the perspective of the fishing old man, while the perspective of the right eye was from the fish in the river.

Once again watching this old man fish, once again hearing the old man say 'Today I fish, someday the heavens will fish me,' Ning Fan's feelings differed from before.

Ning Fan's gaze turned momentarily vacant, and for a moment, he felt as if he had merged into this scene, becoming the fishing old man, looking at the fish in the river with a complex gaze; yet somehow, he also felt like the fish struggling desperately on the fishing hook...

For just three breaths, he seemed to grasp the entire life of the fishing old man in an instant, and also seemed to grasp the entire life of the fish in an instant.

After three breaths, the scene disappeared, but Ning Fan still sat there, dazed, with azure light flickering in his eyes!

He seemed entranced, unable to distinguish whether he was the person fishing or the fish, or perhaps... both at once!

The sense of enlightenment became increasingly strong, until at one moment, Ning Fan suddenly awoke from his trance, suddenly aware. He was drenched in sweat, his heart still pounding wildly!

What... just happened to him? Wait a moment, why were there... fish scales on the back of his hand!

Ning Fan took a sharp intake of breath, realizing that in the brief period he was entranced, there emerged a strand of power from the Dao Carp lineage within him!

With just a thought, fish scales would appear upon his body, and another thought would cause the scales to retract back into his body.

"Why is there now a power from the Dao Carp lineage within my body?"

Ning Fan was exceedingly serious as he discovered that this newly emerged power from the Dao Carp was merging with the Demon Bloodline within him, gradually giving rise to a new type of Demon Carp Bloodline. This Demon Carp Blood was very thin, but it undeniably existed!

The Dao Soul Clan and Demon Race are in a correspondence of Yang and Yin, and their powers can devour or merge with each other under certain conditions. This extra Dao Carp Bloodline, due to its weak power, was assimilated into Ning Fan's Demon Blood.

"This Carp Race Demon Blood is very thin, but it contains a trace of Palm Position Power!"

Ning Fan carefully felt the new Carp Bloodline within him; there was no mistake, a trace of Palm Position Power indeed existed within this bloodline.

Swallowing a Carp Eye and seeing the scenery after opening one's eyes allowed Ning Fan to cultivate a trace of Palm Position Power. This matter truly left Ning Fan in disbelief!

It seems the method Elder Wood Pine mentioned about opening one's eyes is real; this method truly can help cultivators cultivate out Palatial Void Positions...

However, there was one thing that Ning Fan could not understand.

He swallowed a single eye of Li Si without gaining benefits.

He swallowed Li San's left eye and did not gain benefits, but after swallowing the right eye, he did. Why is this?

Could it be that swallowing both eyes together is necessary to gain benefits? No, that cannot be. Didn't Elder Wood Pine become extremely pleased from just obtaining a single Carp Eye? This shows that even having just one single Carp Eye can yield benefits.

"Swallowing Li San's left eye, the scene I saw was from the perspective of the fishing old man; the right eye's scene was from the perspective of the fish... the fishing old man and the fish... two causes..."

Ning Fan slightly closed his eyes, recalling the scene from Li San's eyes, seemingly once again becoming the fishing old man, once again becoming the fish...

Today, people fish for fish; someday, the heavens will fish for me... these words echoed continually by Ning Fan's ear; suddenly, Ning Fan opened his eyes, as if grasping some understanding.

The old man wasn't fishing for fish!

He was fishing for himself!

This bizarre thought suddenly appeared in Ning Fan's mind and would not be dispelled.

This old man was fishing for himself to become a fish in the next life, so that past life would meet future life...

This scene seemed to contain profound Dao Enlightenment, but unfortunately, in such a short time, Ning Fan could not fully comprehend it, so he gave up.

But there was one point he could confirm, that the benefit he gained from a strand of Carp Blood was closely related to the magical feeling of being both the fisher and fish.

"Swallowing a Carp Eye allows you to see the scenery of others; if you gain any understanding, you can obtain benefits from it, yet such benefits can never match those gained from opening your own eyes and seeing your own scenery. Trying to cultivate your own Palatial Void Positions from the scenery seen through other people's eyes is as hard as ascending to heaven."

"I am a Dao Upholder, and opening my eyes is more difficult than most, but fortunately, having swallowed the pinnacle of Yang from three Carp Eyes, I am already much closer to truly opening my eyes. As long as the pure Yang is sufficient, even if that sound of the chain tries to stop me, I have the

confidence to forcefully open my eyes... I just do not know how much pure Yang it will really take to fully open my eyes."

Ning Fan turned his hand and fetched out the fourth eyeball, swallowing it the same way, which was the left eye of Li'er. Soon, he swallowed the right eye of Li'er too.

In Li'er's left eye's scenery, the setting was a temple, and there was a monk feeding carp fish in a water vat within the temple.

The scenery in Li'er's right eye was the same as the left, only the perspective was different; one was the perspective of the monk, the other the perspective of the carp fish inside the vat.

At one moment, the monk even exchanged a glance with the carp fish inside the vat. At that moment, Ning Fan had an extremely strong feeling.

The monk wasn't looking at the fish, but at himself!

As expected, after experiencing the perspectives of both the monk and the carp fish, Ning Fan once again cultivated out a trace of Carp Race Demon Blood within his body. Though thin, it nevertheless contained a trace of Palm Position Power, by no means insignificant.

Anyway, Ning Fan can cultivate nine types of Demon Yin-Yang; in the future, when conditions allow, he can well cultivate a Carp Yin-Yang, so he doesn't need to mind the Carp Race Demon Blood now.

At this moment, the thing he valued most was one thing, which is... to open his eyes!

Having absorbed the pure Yang from the fourth Carp Eye, Ning Fan did not hear more sounds but saw the existence of the chain for the first time!

All the scenery around turned into nothingness, ceasing to exist; though Ning Fan was still within the Xuan Yin Treasure, it felt as if he stood within a desolate void. Above this void, before him, twelve phantom stone bridges rose towering.

Upon absorbing the pure Yang from the fifth Carp Eye, those phantom stone bridges before his eyes... solidified!

The twelve stone bridges, each emanating a different divine brilliance, imparted a grand, untouchable, sacred feeling.

"Can you see these stone bridges?"

Ning Fan asked the void beside him.

There, it's not actually just the void, but where the black cat lay resting, in the Xuan Yin Treasure.

"The Black Evil Sect doesn't get it, what stone bridge?" The black cat lazily yawned; she couldn't see any stone bridge here.

It's a scenery from another dimension, invisible to her, yet visible to Ning Fan.

"Is this a sight that only I can see..." Ning Fan pondered silently.

Clang, clang, clang...

Twelve stone bridges connected end to end; Ning Fan attempted to fly towards the first stone bridge, and as soon as he moved, the sound of chains clashing reached him, and gradually, dark red chains emerged on his body, binding him.

The closer he got to the stone bridge, the tighter the chains bound him, almost piercing into his flesh.

One hundred zhang, ninety zhang, eighty zhang...

With Ning Fan's eons comparable cultivation level, he could only fly within seventy zhang of the stone bridge, unable to approach further. If he tried, his physical body would be crushed by the chains, causing

injury. These chains weren't material but manifestations of the will of heaven, forbidding Ning Fan from nearing the stone bridge.

"Retreat!"

"Retreat!!"

"Retreat!!!"

"People of the Netherworld, with your guilty body, you are unqualified to ascend the [Origin Bridge]!"

Suddenly, a stone eye opened on the bridge of the first stone bridge, gazing indifferently and mercilessly at Ning Fan. It is the guardian bridge god of the Origin Bridge; its true body resides in the Three Great Realms, and what appeared before Ning Fan was merely a projection.

If a cultivator opens their eyes and summons this bridge, it will appear as a projection; ascending the Origin Bridge is a special entitlement for the people of the Yang World, who can receive heaven's blessings through the bridge. Even cultivators opening their eyes for the first time can see the projection of the Origin Bridge.

Bridge God Gu Jiang felt quite frustrated, where is this Dreamland Realm exactly? He doesn't know. With hundreds of billions of Dreamland Realms, who remembers where this is?

Who is this Netherworld cultivator before him? He doesn't know. He is Bridge God Gu Jiang; he would never recognize a random Netherworld cultivator from Dreamland.

This kid hasn't opened his eyes yet, how could he possess so much pure Yang? It's making the upper realm sense, misguiding this god into believing someone in this realm has opened their eyes, bringing down the projection.

This kid hasn't truly opened his eyes, definitely, for if he had, his inner pure Yang would gradually transform into [Breath of the True Realm], unique to True Realm cultivators. Even a novice who opens

their eyes would have some pure Yang transformation, yet this kid has no Breath of the True Realm at all! Hmph, this time a huge mistake was made!

A cultivator who hasn't opened their eyes fooled him into descension of the projection! Bridge God Gu Jiang feels his intelligence suffered a significant insult.

Furthermore, this kid is bound by Dao-Soul Blood Chains, undeniably a cultivator guilty of the Ten Major Sins, leading to the confinement by Dao-Soul Blood Chains, the heavens' disdain. Judging by the number of these chains, this kid committed at least the fourth, fifth, and sixth sins among the Ten Major Sins. Dao-Soul Clan established laws: practicing Dao Upholding as the fourth sin, shapeshifting as the fifth sin, refusing heavenly fate as the sixth sin; it's uncertain which sin this kid committed, but unquestionably a sinner...

Hmph, a sinner cannot ascend the Origin Bridge!

Bridge God Gu Jiang coldly looked at Ning Fan as if warning him. He had descended the projection erroneously, already causing a huge mistake; if he permitted a sinner to ascend the bridge, it could lead to punishment from the Dao-Soul Clan of the Upper Three Sects once this event gets out.

"What is the Origin Bridge, and what does guilty body mean?"

In response to Bridge God Gu Jiang's warning, Ning Fan didn't get angry but calmly inquired.

"Hmph, I am the Bridge God of the Origin Bridge, and what identity do you have to dare question me!" Gu Jiang responded irritably.

Ning Fan's gaze slightly cooled; this bridge god seemed excessively arrogant.

The Origin Bridge and the Bridge God before him were merely projections, a product of the gathering of Dao Source Power, not entities. They were somewhat akin to the Yin Phoenix within the Liangyi Square Seal.

Ordinary cultivators couldn't harm this Origin Bridge, nor the projection of Bridge God Gu Jiang. Because Gu Jiang saw Ning Fan's cultivation level as low, he dared to act arrogantly.

Desiring to survive the half-hour and retract the projection, suddenly, an extremely dangerous sensation swept over, causing astonishment in Gu Jiang's stone eye.

At that moment, Ning Fan took out the Memory Severing Dao Sword, slightly raising its edge toward the stone bridge direction.

Logically, that Dao Sword wasn't high-tier, but Gu Jiang sensed danger from it.

Definitely, this little sinner is using a terrifying sword technique, capable of endangering the Dao Source Power projection with eons comparable cultivation level!

"Are you sure I don't qualify to question you?"

Ning Fan became disinterested in arguing with the bridge god. If the bridge god remained arrogant, he'd simply slash him with the sword.

Gu Jiang got stunned by Ning Fan's straightforward and blunt manner! It was his first encounter with such overbearing Netherworld cultivators, who openly wielded swords against the True Realm Bridge God!

Speaking of which, Gu Jiang descended merely a projection; if it were destroyed, his true body might bear injuries, but life wouldn't be at risk.

However, the regulations stated: as an exalted bridge god, injuries caused by Netherworld cultivators humiliate the Dao-Soul Clan's reputation, leading to at least five thousand merits deduction!

No, that can't be! Merits are his lifeline, can't let them deduct!

Consequently, Bridge God Gu Jiang's demeanor changed, and his tone turned amicable as if meeting a close relative.

"My fellow friend from the Nether, uh no, little friend from the Netherworld, let's talk amicably, hehe, let's not brandish sword and spear, it's damaging to harmony. It's just a few questions, I can tell you, I can tell you."

Therefore, Bridge God Gu Jiang shared a load of information, revealing details related to the Origin Bridge to Ning Fan. Yet topics concerning true realm secrets remained unmentioned, as regulations above are diligently obeyed by him.

Seeing Gu Jiang's compliance, Ning Fan sheathed his Dao Sword and listened attentively. It was the first time he learned of the existence of something like an Origin Bridge in the world.

Opening one's eyes is the pathway to sainthood; those who have done so can summon Origin Bridge projections, yet even Saints might not traverse all twelve Origin Bridges!

Opening your eyes actually divides into twelve levels; like Daoist Wood Pine, practically standing on the first Origin Bridge, craving the Yang World's eye to absorb pure Yang for ascending to the second Origin Bridge as soon as possible.

Because, only by ascending the first Origin Bridge, could he break through to Second-Grade Quasi-Saint. Only by ascending the second Origin Bridge, could he break through to Third-Order Quasi-Saint!

Even non-quasi saints receive immense benefits from ascending the Origin Bridge, such as ascending the first bridge aids cultivators in crafting their own Palatial Void bit by bit! If reaching the first bridge's end, the seventy-seventh step position, it might open the bottleneck of Second-Grade Quasi-Saint...

"Unexpected, I haven't opened my eyes, yet drew down the Origin Bridge projection...getting the bridge god to descend errantly, what extraordinary fortune..."

Ning Fan murmured, sensing that his luck skyrocketed more than just a bit ever since subduing Wu Laoba.

Wu Laoba is a thousand-year jinx; others approaching him undeniably catch bad luck, Ning Fan approaching him...could his luck inversely increase? Because he is Fu Li?

"The Origin Bridge, each bridge, stretches seventy-seven steps. Every step taken brings great benefits. Others must open their eyes to see the Origin Bridge; I haven't opened mine yet have the chance to ascend..."

The only trouble is, Ning Fan is encumbered by chains, seemingly a sinner status, barred by the Great Way from approaching the Origin Bridge.

At present, with distance seventy zhang from the first Origin Bridge, it's already Ning Fan's limit. Swapping with Daoist Wood Pine, relying on Second-Grade Quasi-Saint cultivation, donned with chains, might not get him any closer to the first Origin Bridge, even risking life should shuffle a few steps across the first bridge...

"The Origin Bridge's projection doesn't always descend incorrectly; whether such opportunity arises next time is uncertain. Without these chains, with my current cultivation, I could cover the last seventy zhang distance and climb the first Origin Bridge; how far I walk on it, is unknown..."

If only these chains weren't here.

However, if those chains weren't present, with Ning Fan's talent, he likely would have opened his eyes at entry into the Pictorial Realm, granting him the ability to summon the Origin Bridge projection at any time, making ascending it not a rare opportunity.

So be it, bondage it is; with God-Extinguishing Shield, it should offer some defense against chains' harm...

Seeing Ning Fan mumbling to himself, Bridge God Gu Jiang muttered quietly.

"Uh, this kid is babbling. Could he actually be planning to ascend the bridge? No, impossible. His body is bound by Dao-Soul Blood Chains, enough to restrict weaker Second-Grade Quasi-Saints from ascending the Origin Bridge. This kid definitely can't..."

Before he finished speaking, something happened that made his jaw drop.

He saw Ning Fan's body suddenly emit bursts of golden light, actually withstanding the damage from the Dao-Soul Blood Chains, forcing his way within sixty zhang of the Origin Bridge.

"Such a strong protective magical treasure! At least a mid-grade Innate Treasure! Otherwise, with his cultivation, he couldn't possibly enter sixty zhang!"

Even in the Three Great Realms, mid-grade Innate Treasures are not particularly abundant.

Gu Jiang was greatly surprised that Ning Fan, with his cultivation, actually possessed a mid-grade Innate Treasure, which was quite rare.

But sixty zhang should be this kid's limit, right? Gu Jiang thought this, but then he saw Ning Fan entering fifty zhang, forty zhang, thirty zhang...

"Thirty zhang! Could it be that this kid is using a superior Innate Treasure!"

Gu Jiang was moved.

Even he didn't own a superior Innate Treasure, and he was a bit envious of Ning Fan's wealth.

However, even with a superior Innate Treasure, he would surely have to stop at thirty zhang...

Step by step, Ning Fan continuously narrowed the distance to the Origin Bridge: twenty zhang, fifteen zhang, ten zhang...

The God-Extinguishing Shield, though a Heaven-Opening Artifact, was not a complete one. When Ning Fan was at ten zhang from the Origin Bridge, it could no longer fully negate the damage of the Dao-Soul Blood Chains.

Any further and he would definitely suffer severe injuries...

"Ten zhang! This kid is definitely using a top-grade Innate Treasure!"

Gu Jiang's eyes were ablaze.

A top-grade Innate Treasure is something even Saints covet. Who would have thought a mere Immortal Venerable of the Dreamland Realm could possess such a supreme treasure, truly enviable.

Unfortunately, he was just a projection and couldn't kill and rob treasures; otherwise, he could have... sigh! What a pity!

So be it, even if this kid has a top-grade Innate Treasure, what of it, his cultivation is not high. If he wants to ascend the first bridge of the Origin Bridge, he will certainly be severely injured.

This one is a sinner, please don't ascend the Origin Bridge, otherwise, you'll lose two thousand merits!

"Young friend, stop! Going any further, you will be severely injured. The Dao-Soul Blood Chains are instruments of punishment condensed from the will of heaven and earth. Under normal circumstances, they cause no harm, but they do not allow sinners to open their eyes and approach the Origin Bridge. So you mustn't..."

Gu Jiang was still painstakingly advising, but Ning Fan completely ignored his counsel. With a leap, he crossed the last ten zhang distance and stepped onto the first step of the Origin Bridge!

Boom!

It was the sound of large bursts of blood spraying from Ning Fan's body, indeed severely injured!

Woo!

A sound like a horn suddenly echoed around the Origin Bridge!

Ah!

It was Gu Jiang's anguished cry. The sinner stepped on the bridge, ah ah ah, two thousand merits gone!

You cannot walk on the bridge, please don't do this!

Dear sir, you're a sinner. You ascend the bridge, I lose two thousand, and every step you take, I lose another five hundred!

Gu Jiang felt a little regretful, sensing an ominous feeling.

This sinner kid shouldn't have the ability to take a second step on the bridge, should he? Surely... not...

...

Woo——

Above Mu Island, suddenly came a wailing horn sound, ancient and mournful, resonating between heaven and earth, seemingly everywhere, making it impossible to discern where it originated from.

With the sound of this horn, all of Mu Island suddenly began to snow, temperatures plummeting, as if plunged into the dead of winter.

"Hmm? Where is the horn sound coming from?" Masters like Wu Laoba could not comprehend why it suddenly started snowing for no reason.

Recently, the heavenly phenomena have indeed been odd, raining one moment, snowing the next...

Xiang Mingzi was slightly shocked, seeing the sky full of flying snow, an astonishing Divine Skill, faintly appearing to have a power that could freeze his inner Dao Source Power.

Fortunately, this horn sound bore no malice, otherwise, even if he were a First Order Quasi-Saint, he would have become an ice sculpture under this horn sound!

"What is this horn, how terrifying its power! Could it be some Old Monster of East Heaven testing a newly acquired treasure!" Xiang Mingzi exclaimed in shock.

"No, this horn sound wasn't created by anyone, but is the sound of heaven!" Mu Song stated excitedly.

"The sound of heaven, what do you mean?" Xiang Mingzi asked, puzzled.

"I mean it literally." Mu Song didn't intend to explain further, but inside, waves were crashing in his heart.

It was the heavenly sound of the Ice Sealing Horn! Who opened their eyes, drawing down the abnormal phenomenon of the Origin Bridge, and stepped onto the first bridge!

The heavenly sound was within the range of Mu Island, the person who triggered the abnormal phenomenon must be nearby, could it be...

No, impossible! This kid clearly didn't open his eyes, not a trace of the Breath of the True Realm within him, but if not him, then who...

"There must have been a mistake! Back then, even Senluo, who opened his eyes, had no ability to ascend the Origin Bridge. I too, after many hardships, ascended only the first bridge of the Origin Bridge, and after countless eons, walked only 14 steps on it."

steps on the first bridge, yet only 14 have been taken, this is the gap of Mu Song towards the Third Order Quasi-Saint.

If the person who ascended was indeed Ning Fan, then this kid's aptitude... is inconceivable!

Woo——

The mournful sound of the horn, like the cold wind of winter, suddenly swept across the ocean of stars surrounding Mu Island, instantly freezing the entire ocean of stars into ice.

At this moment, there were an elder and a young cultivator approaching Mu Island. Noticing the stance of this cold wind, their expressions changed markedly.

The elder was none other than Plague King Lü Wen; his cultivation wasn't as profound as Mu Song's and Xiang Mingzi's, so he couldn't personally perceive this cold wind's terror, capable of freezing Dao Source Power.

The young one, clad in a red robe, with cold eyes and thin lips, was speechless from shock.

"Why is there the heavenly sound of the Ice Sealing Horn from over by Mu Island! The ancestor once said only those who have opened their eyes can trigger the heavenly sound. Could it be... that it was triggered by Daoist Wood Pine!"

This red-robed youth was the Second Young Emperor of the Southern Clan's Four Barbarian Departments. With his identity within the Southern Clan, he had heard of such secrets.

"Indeed, this Wood Pine is very hidden and cannot be underestimated. If he can ascend the Origin Bridge, it is mostly without doubt that he has reached Second-Grade Quasi-Saint. We must not offend this person on this trip. As for Ning Fan... hmm, if he truly is an Ancient Great Cultivator, I will courteously invite him to the Southern Clan. But if he isn't..." the red-robed youth sneered slightly. If Ning Fan wasn't an Ancient Great Cultivator, he wouldn't be polite, for impersonating a Southern Clan cultivator was a major crime that could not be lightly forgiven!

Beside him, Lü Wen, seeing the cold look in the red-robed youth's eyes, couldn't help but break a sweat for Ning Fan from afar.

In his heart, he silently prayed, "Brother, brother, I asked you, and you said you have a way to deal with the Southern Clan visitors. Could it be... you truly are an Ancient Great Cultivator, if not... sigh, what trouble this will be, truly troublesome..."

Chapter 980: Mastering the Quasi-Saint, Shocking Mu Island

Ning Fan fought desperately, forcibly ascending the Origin Bridge. His white robes were stained with blood, wounds inflicted by the blood lock on his body.

This was even with the protection of the God-Extinguishing Shield. Without it, he might have been killed instantly by the Soul Blood Chain upon setting foot on the Origin Bridge.

In his ears were the resonant trumpet sounds. As they rang, a white light flew out from his position on the first step of the Origin Bridge, transforming into a white lotus before him.

It was a snow-like lotus, yet it felt intensely hot. Such heat was not considered scorching to the people of the Sun Realm, but to those of the Netherworld, it was unendurable.

Extreme Yang! This white lotus was filled with Extreme Yang Power, resembling the white lotus transformed by Koi-eye but containing much more Extreme Yang Power.

Especially remarkable to Ning Fan was that there were two lotus seeds on this white lotus. With their appearance, the space trembled under the immense energy they contained.

"Bridge God Gu Jiang said before that each step on the Origin Bridge grants rewards. The Twelve Bridges each offer different rewards. The reward for the first bridge is a white lotus; some are lucky enough to get a lotus with seeds. The Extreme Yang of the white lotus aids cultivators in gaining Heaven's approval, while the lotus seeds have other uses. In the Three Great Realms, these seeds are known as [Primordial Lotus Seeds], which assist in cultivating Palatial Void..."

"However, according to Bridge God Gu Jiang, even the luckiest True Realm cultivator won't be rewarded with seeds at every step, and at most, one seed at a time. Securing seeds on the first step is extremely rare... Why have I, an alleged sinner, received more rewards than others?"

Ning Fan pondered briefly, unaware that "sinners" was simply a derogatory term used by the Dao Soul Clan for ten classes of cultivators. The Holder Cultivators were the fourth class, spurned by the Dao Soul Clan.

The Dao Soul Clan controlled the Heaven's orders and forbade Holder Cultivators from nearing the Origin Bridge. Yet, the bridge itself welcomed them, offering richer rewards than to other cultivators.

This could be considered an exclusive privilege for Holder Cultivators.

"Two Primordial Lotus Seeds! Perhaps he is a Holder Cultivator!" Gu Jiang speculated silently, seasoned and full of conjecture.

Ning Fan did not immediately take the second step. Instead, he collected and refined the white lotus and seeds granted by the Origin Bridge, knowing they would vanish if not used quickly.

The refining process lasted about a quarter of an hour.

Even after refining the Extreme Yang from the white lotus, Ning Fan was unable to break free from the chains or open his eyes. He still lacked sufficient Extreme Yang.

However, the two Primordial Lotus Seeds proved more helpful. Upon consuming them, Ning Fan felt scorching sensations from his Rain Star Point, Battle Star Point, Dark Star Point, and Jupiter Point, and an increase in the Palatial Power of Yin and Yang embedded in them.

"He possesses four types of Palatial Power, and consuming the seeds has elevated each to 10 levels of Spiritual Juncture!" Gu Jiang was astonished; cultivators with four types were rare.

Spiritual Juncture is a unit in the Three Great Realms, measuring the quantity of a cultivator's Palatial Power.

If cultivated to the extreme, traces of strength in Dao can generate Palatial Dao Traces; if reaching 10 levels of Spiritual Juncture, it is considered small accomplishment. Upon hitting 100, one enters the

medium realm; at 500, they reach grand accomplishment. In theory, with medium realm power, one can cultivate Palatial Void, achievable only by Palatial Great Emperor.

Previously, Ning Fan barely wielded minor Palatial Power through the Chaos Ring Decision Technique, far less than half a Spiritual Juncture.

A single Primordial Lotus Seed could add about 20 levels; two would grant 40, spread across four Palatial Powers, each gaining 10.

Regrettably, Ancient God Heart Apertures enhance only cultivation-enhancing items, offering no boost to Primordial Lotus Seeds, otherwise Ning Fan would gain even more.

Familiar with the stages from Gu Jiang, though unsure about Spiritual Juncture entirely, Ning Fan could ascertain his four powers achieved small accomplishment!

Ning Fan summoned the Memory Severing Dao Sword, enshrouding it with the four types of Palatial Dao Traces, nodding as he scrutinized it.

Previously, entwining normal Dao Traces improved the sword's power significantly. Now, the purer Palatial Dao Traces enhance it cumulatively, containing 40 levels of Palatial Power, doubling its strength!

Though not boosting his cultivation, the increased Palatial Power markedly enhanced Ning Fan's combat prowess!

"Should I take the second step..."

Ning Fan hesitated only briefly before resolutely stepping forward on the first bridge, shrouded in blood mist.

The bridge's inherent force deterred progress, testing the climber, causing injury if overcome, halting advancement.

This force, combined with the chains on Ning Fan, instantly wounded his Spirit, causing nearly a third to become phantom-like!

Grievously injured, a severe wound! For cultivators, damage to Spirit is far harder to heal than physical harm. Even with the shield, without it, others would face similar Spirit damage!

"Another five hundred! Does this Netherworld kid risk his life for the second step, uninhibited by Soul Blood Chains?" Gu Jiang lamented, vexed.

With each move, Ning Fan cost him five hundred deeds, how heartbreaking!

"Netherworld friend, you should reconsider. Blood chains harm beyond what treasures prevent, each step incurs injury, impairing your foundation or costing your life. Return, heed my advice, only take rewards within your grasp... Return, or the deeds deducted are mine!"

"I appreciate your concern, I know my limits." Ning Fan wiped the blood from his lips, collecting the reward from the second step.

Reflecting on nearly slaying Gu Jiang before, Ning Fan felt apologetic. The bridge god's concern was commendable, a broad-minded character.

"That wasn't concern!" Gu Jiang cared for his deeds, exasperated by the misunderstanding. Ning Fan, having refined the second reward, stepped to the third!

Another five hundred!

The second step rewarded a white lotus and two seeds.

The third step was similar.

On the third step, Ning Fan's Spirit was now two-thirds phantom. A fourth step would likely crumble it.

The third step was his limit; even with the shield, he couldn't proceed further.

Consuming two more Extreme Yang white lotuses didn't let him open his eyes but the four seeds pushed his powers to 30 levels.

The combined powers exceeded 120 levels, stronger than some medium realm Palatial Immortal Emperors!

Sadly, no single power reached medium realm status, or Ning Fan might cultivate Palatial Void.

"Netherworld friend, surely you won't step the fourth?" Gu Jiang was anxious about further steps.

"No further, the third step is my limit," Ning Fan's tone softened seeing Gu Jiang's 'concern.'

"That's not concern..." Gu Jiang decided against explaining. The projection's time was about over, readying to return to the Real Realms.

This projection to Dreamland Realm was disastrous, never wanting to visit again.

The Twelve Origin Bridges gradually faded, merging with the trumpet sounds, vanishing from the Dark Yin Realm.

The scene reverted to Dark Yin Realm, and Ning Fan's first act was using a Millennium Age Tower for healing.

The injuries caused by the Dao-Soul Blood Chains were truly terrifying, with an almost frightening heavenly will continuously tearing at Ning Fan's Spirit and further causing a temporary drop in his cultivation due to the unhealed wounds. Without a thousand years of time, Ning Fan had no confidence in healing these injuries and was forced to immediately enter seclusion.

When he emerged from the Millennium Age Tower, Ning Fan's injuries were completely healed, and his cultivation had returned to normal.

He did not open his eyes, yet he was able to summon the Origin Bridge and take three steps upon it, which was extremely rare. Such an opportunity might not occur again. To call forth the Origin Bridge again, he would only be able to break free from the chains' shackles and open his eyes.

Open eyes...

No one knows how much Extreme Yang is still needed...

Ning Fan shook his head, as Extreme Yang was something only found in the True Realms, very few things in the Dreamland Realm contained Extreme Yang. The carp eye in the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting did contain a significant amount of Extreme Yang, but unfortunately, due to his previous experience of entering the painting, if he were to enter it again, he would most likely be targeted by the fierce beasts deep within the pictorial realm, and even bringing the Jiuli Black Cat wouldn't guarantee his safe retreat...

Moreover, he didn't have a second Gold Talisman Palace Brush anymore, so to enter the Golden Sky Black Earth Painting again, he could only enter with his Spirit and couldn't bring the black cat...

Forget it, matters concerning Extreme Yang and opening his eyes can be set aside for now. It's time to leave Mu Island.

There are some things Ning Fan still hasn't figured out, yet he can only wait to understand them in due time. He shook his body to exit the Xuan Yin Treasure, and upon returning to the outside world, his gaze suddenly narrowed.

At that moment, quite a number of people had gathered outside his room, including Daoist Wood Pine, Xiang Mingzi, Wu Laoba, and a group of Mu Island Sect Members. In addition, there was Lv Wen and a red-robed Immortal Venerable with a malicious expression.

"Oh? Why are you all gathered outside my room? Hmm? Big brother, are you here as well?"

Ning Fan stepped out of the guest room in the Zen courtyard, smiled at Lv Wen, but his gaze was filled with inquiry.

Lv Wen nodded, seeing this, Ning Fan's heart tightened, understanding it.

It seems that the red-robed Immortal Venerable is a person from the Southern Clan!

The last time Ning Fan went to the Godly Void Pavilion, he had a deep discussion with Lv Wen, during which Lv Wen informed Ning Fan of some bad news.

The Southern Clan had learned about someone impersonating members of their tribe! It was not Lv Wen who reported it, but rather a powerful ancestor within the tribe who deduced it! This matter happened about a few decades after Ning Fan entered the Barbarian Wilderness Ancient Domain.

In those years, Ning Fan had stolen the Gu Command of the Southern Clan's tribe members; this matter connected heaven and earth, linked cause and effect, and could deceive most people in the world, but could not escape the deductions of those old monsters who were skilled in calculations. By chance, it was deduced by that old monster.

Upon learning that someone dared to impersonate a Southern Clan member, the Southern Clan ancestor was naturally furious, finding Lv Wen through cause and effect, and used secret technique to search Lv Wen's memories, thus learning the whole story of Ning Fan impersonating a Southern Clan cultivator.

What a Rain Immortal Monarch! To dare to impersonate a Southern Clan member, didn't he know that such an act violated the Southern Clan's taboo!

Fortunately, at that time, Ning Fan's identity as an inheritor of the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor had almost been spread throughout the Eastern Heaven, and the Southern Clan ancestor, wary of Ning Fan's reputation as an inheritor of Ancient Chaos, didn't dare to openly confront him, and since Ning Fan hadn't appeared in the Eastern Heaven, the matter was temporarily set aside.

Unexpectedly, after several decades, a major incident occurred in the Barbarian Wilderness Ancient Domain, the Southern Clan, as one of the ten great secret clans, naturally had the means to ascertain the details within.

Within the Barbarian Wilderness Ancient Domain, two ancient Great Cultivators emerged, engaging in a life and death battle!

One of them, named Zhao Jian, was a mysterious cultivator with a ghost eye and silver hair...

Upon receiving this news, the entire Southern Clan became restless; Zhao Jian was the name used by Ning Fan to impersonate a Southern Clan member! And according to first-hand intelligence acquired by the Southern Clan ancestors, the ancient Great Cultivator Zhao Jian in the Barbarian Wilderness Ancient Domain was exactly the same as Ning Fan!

"Impossible! This child was clearly the inheritor of Ancient Chaos, a nameless Fate Immortal junior, how could he be an ancient Great Cultivator who shook the Barbarian Wilderness!" Many Southern Clan ancestors couldn't believe this matter, yet they couldn't prove otherwise.

Then, two years later, Ning Fan returned to the Eastern Heaven with an incredibly strong presence.

A hundred years ago, Ning Fan was only a Fate Immortal; a hundred years later, Ning Fan unexpectedly possessed the cultivation level of an Immortal Venerable, and the Southern Clan's old monsters did not believe Ning Fan had advanced from Fate Immortal to Eternal Immortal Venerable Realm in just a hundred years, truly thinking that the Eternal Immortal Venerable was like cabbage; if one could cultivate to that realm in a hundred years, how could there be so many Fragmented Thought Elders, having spent hundreds, even millions of years, unable to cultivate to that level!

Clearly, Ning Fan's cultivation hasn't improved, but he originally possessed such a cultivation level; the previous Fate Immortal cultivation level was merely an illusion!

No, it's very likely that even the Immortal Venerable cultivation level is an illusion... the cultivation level of the ancient Great Cultivator is indeed Ning Fan's actual Spirit Severing Realm!

Thus, most Southern Clan old monsters chose to believe that Ning Fan was indeed an ancient Great Cultivator concealing his cultivation level. The things he did in the Eastern Heaven, the name he spread, were very likely just illusions, and even the name Ning Fan might be false.

Yet there were still a few Southern Clan old monsters who felt that Ning Fan, this Zhao Jian, and the great cultivator Zhao Jian in the Barbarian Wilderness were not the same person. While they thought so, those Southern Clan old monsters did not dare to make any unfavorable moves against Ning Fan.

What if? What if Ning Fan was indeed an ancient Great Cultivator, his fury was something even the Southern Clan could not endure!

Even if Ning Fan wasn't an ancient Great Cultivator, he was still the inheritor of Ancient Chaos, after all, his master in Ancient Chaos hadn't died, who dared to suppress him by force? Even the Dark Clan, who bore deep animosity towards Ning Fan, wouldn't dare!

The Southern Clan's old monsters had grave concerns, not daring to touch Ning Fan, yet also unable to completely ignore Ning Fan's impersonation of a Southern Clan member. After all, they were a dignified secret clan; even if the other party were an ancient Great Cultivator, the Southern Clan's old monsters must seek justice, of course, if the other party truly was an ancient Great Cultivator, so-called seeking justice would only be a formality to slightly uphold the Southern Clan's reputation, letting others know that no one could impersonate a Southern Clan member at will, and not genuinely seeking enmity with Ning Fan.

When Ning Fan went to the Divine Tomb, Lv Wen told him the whole story, and it must be said that Lv Wen was indeed a reliable makeshift adopted brother. Even when faced with inquiries from the Southern Clan's ancestors, Lv Wen never disclosed half a word that was unfavorable to Ning Fan; it was a pity that his memory was searched, otherwise, so many matters wouldn't have been exposed.

Lv Wen was very worried about Ning Fan's situation, his connections couldn't compare to the Southern Clan, not knowing the details of the battle in the Barbarian Wilderness, nor knowing that Ning Fan's ghost eye silver-haired appearance matched that of the Barbarian Wilderness great cultivator.

From the discourse among the Southern Clan's old monsters, Lv Wen heard words such as 'Is this child really an ancient Great Cultivator?' 'Does this child truly possess an ancient Great Cultivator's cultivation level?'

It seems the Southern Clan's old monsters were suspicious that their adopted brother was an ancient Great Cultivator, and with the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor nearing his demise, they dared not act.

Trouble, this is really trouble now! His adopted brother Ning Fan, how could he possibly be an ancient Great Cultivator! If the Southern Clan discovered the truth, once Ancient Chaos died, no one could protect Ning Fan anymore.

Having been born in the Southern Clan, Lv Wen naturally knew the Southern Clan's terrifying power, their vast legacy would be enough to make any Immortal King, Immortal Emperor, tremble, much less Ning Fan who wasn't even an Immortal King.

Indeed, when he initially discovered Ning Fan was not a Southern Clan member, Lv Wen had some sense of being deceived. When he first befriended Ning Fan, he indeed had ulterior motives, but later, Ning Fan enlightened him, causing his cultivation to recover rapidly; after being crippled in a calamity by Senluo, he had already regained most within a hundred years!

Now Lv Wen truly treated Ning Fan as his brother; he wasn't a good person, yet he was very straightforward; if others treat him well he reciprocates tenfold, if others treat him poorly he may slaughter their family, annihilate their sect. Ning Fan treated him well, so he naturally regarded Ning Fan sincerely as his adopted brother, and upon discovering Ning Fan stood opposite the Southern Clan, he gritted his teeth and stood on Ning Fan's side.

"Ning Younger Brother, do you really have a way to deal with the Southern Clan?" Lv Wen thought it over but still transmitted the question.

"Don't worry, Big Brother, it's not difficult." Ning Fan transmitted back as well.

Ning Fan did have a method to make the Southern Clan mistakenly believe that he was an ancient Great Cultivator; as long as he used the God-Extinguishing Shield, this Heaven-Opening Artifact, to set up some minor plans, it should convince some Southern Clan old monsters that he was an ancient Great Cultivator.

This was Ning Fan's initial thought, and upon seeing the Southern Clan's visitor, the belief was reinforced.

In the eyes of that red-robed Immortal Venerable, hostility was undisguised; if the truth about him not being an ancient Great Cultivator was exposed, the Southern Clan would certainly have many within it harboring such enmity towards him! Impersonating a Southern Clan member violated their taboo, the

Southern Clan was replete with old stubborn people, it was entirely possible to kill Ning Fan over this taboo!

He had already antagonized the Dark Clan, if there was another Southern Clan...

Ning Fan was not afraid of trouble, but if he could avoid some trouble, who would want trouble?

"Young Friend Ning, you..." Mu Song, Xiang Mingzi wanted to question Ning Fan, naturally, inquiring about the matter of the horn heavenly sound.

Unfortunately, before the two quasi-saints finished speaking, the Southern Clan's red-robed Immortal Venerable couldn't wait and arrogantly said to Ning Fan,

"You are Ning Fan? Hmph, I am the Second Young Emperor of the Barbarian Sect of the Southern Tribe. You, come with me back to the Southern Tribe! Do not resist, or don't blame me for being merciless!"

Is this kid out of his mind?

Including Wu Laoba, everyone looked at this red-clad youth with eyes of disbelief.

Even if you are an Immortal Venerable of the Southern Tribe, you can't just interrupt two Quasi-Saints, can you? Not to mention Daoist Wood Pine; just take Xiang Mingzi for example. Any First Order Quasi-Saint from the secret clans would have to address him politely as 'Daoist friend,' yet here you are, just an Immortal Venerable from the Southern Tribe, daring to interrupt Quasi-Saints. Do you really think the Southern Tribe reigns supreme over the Eastern Heaven?

Mu Island's people do not fear the Southern Tribe. They are well aware of their master's impressive battle achievements; he once fought off three Quasi-Saints of the Dark Clan alone — how domineering.

Even Wu Laoba isn't afraid of the Southern Tribe. Southern Tribe? He would squat outside their door, and they'd have to pay him to leave...

Ning Fan was also speechless.

Wasn't the Southern Tribe suspicious of him being an ancient great cultivator? For those old monsters who have reached the Timeless Realm, which one isn't cautious and prudent? If there were even a hint of Ning Fan being an ancient great cultivator, would any no-name person dare to provoke him? Even if they did invite Ning Fan to the Southern Tribe, they should be extremely courteous. To speak so rudely at the outset — aren't they afraid of causing trouble?

This red-clad Immortal Venerable in front of him — could he be the type of cultivator raised by his family? Lacking much experience in dealing with people, inexperienced in the deception of the cultivation world, perhaps given elixirs from birth for cultivating, thus leading to such a lack of maturity?

"Hmph, I haven't spoken yet, is it your turn to talk?" Daoist Wood Pine's expression turned cold. He was already a rather reclusive individual, and it was rare enough for him to show Ning Fan a good face. How could he show warmth to just any Tom, Dick, or Harry?

"You... fine, Senior is right to reprimand me." The red-clad Immortal Venerable gritted his teeth but eventually submitted to Daoist Wood Pine, although he did so with a tone of great reluctance.

As expected, a fool. Even for someone from the Southern Tribe, treating Daoist Wood Pine so discourteously is truly uncalled for...

Since he is a fool, it's perfect for some abuse!

If Ning Fan wanted the Southern Tribe to firmly believe he was an ancient great cultivator, he must take action to slightly intimidate them. He decided to use this red-clad Immortal Venerable to stage a performance!

As an ancient great cultivator, what to do? Being threatened by this red-clad Immortal Venerable — if he didn't teach this young Immortal Venerable a lesson, it wouldn't suit the identity of an ancient great cultivator!

Ning Fan was just about to summon the God-Slaying Giant and knock this unfortunate kid down for a shock effect on the Southern Tribe, but suddenly hesitated.

This hesitation wasn't due to Second thoughts; it was because he detected a faint aura from this red-clad Immortal Venerable.

A Barbarian Cultivator's aura!

This red-clad Immortal Venerable turns out to be a Barbarian Cultivator! Above the Four Heavens, why would there be a Barbarian Cultivator?

It's said that the Southern Tribe consists of four divisions: Witch, Gu, Barbarian, and War. This red-clad Immortal Venerable hails from one of the Barbarian divisions of the Southern Tribe. Could it be that the Southern Tribe's Barbarian Sect are all Barbarians? It's also possible that the entire Southern Tribe cultivates Barbarians, or that Barbarian cultivators are just a few among them, and this person might only be the sole Barbarian cultivator of the Southern Tribe...

It shouldn't be that all members are Barbarian Cultivators; Lv Wen once belonged to the Southern Tribe, but his body held no Barbarian cultivation...

In just a moment, Ning Fan's mind went through various conjectures, yet he couldn't verify them. However, if this red-clad Immortal Venerable is a Barbarian Cultivator, then there's no need to summon the God-Extinguishing Shield. Ning Fan can give him an even more terrifying shock.

Barbarian Cultivator, ha, when facing the Barbarian God, what should be done!

"If I don't go back to the Southern Tribe with you, you'll be merciless to me, is that it?" Ning Fan turned to the red-clad Immortal Venerable, asking with a blank expression.

"Correct! If you obediently follow me back to the Southern Tribe, I will be somewhat courteous to you. But if you dare defy my orders, I will let you know that the inheritor of Ancient Chaos is nothing in my eyes!" the red-clad Immortal Venerable said arrogantly.

"Then let's see how you will be merciless to me — get lost!"

Ning Fan suddenly directed a cold, sharp word at the red-clad youth. One simple word, yet it seemed to be imbued with the majesty of heaven. It was as if, in that instant, Ning Fan's will replaced heaven, replaced the Great Dao of the Heavens, becoming the ruler of all Barbarian Cultivators in the world!

Scram!

Scram!!

Scram!!!

Without invoking any cultivation, without using a trace of mana, there suddenly arose a pillar of golden light, like a gale, sweeping towards the red-clad Immortal Venerable. When nearing, it transformed into a human-sized golden palm imprint, heavily imprinting down on the red-clad Immortal Venerable.

The supreme power contained within that golden light shook everyone's heart. The overwhelming might shattered all of the red-clad Immortal Venerable's protective Dharma treasures, including a piece of Innate Spirit Armor!

It's no wonder this person is so arrogant; having even an Innate Spirit Armor shows that he must be a person of significant importance within the Southern Tribe.

Yet, even such an Innate Spirit Armor couldn't protect this red-clad Immortal Venerable. In an instant, it was shattered by the golden palm imprint. Following that, even the physical body of the red-clad Immortal Venerable was pulverized into a mist of blood under the golden palm. His primal spirit was terrified to the extreme, pale as he gazed at the golden palm imprint that struck him, feeling the approach of death like never before!

I will die, I will die, I will die!

What kind of divine ability is this! This Rain Monarch clearly did not use even a speck of mana, yet how could he unleash such a terrifying golden palm imprint!

Unresistable, indefensible — this feeling, I only experienced it in the innermost forbidden area of my clan. Only our clan's Southern Extreme Ancestor in closed-door meditation has such cultivation!

This is definitely the cultivation of an ancient great cultivator!

Curse it, curse it, curse it! Why did I have to be discourteous to an ancient great cultivator? Why did I refuse to believe he was an ancient great cultivator! This Rain Monarch is definitely an ancient great cultivator hiding his cultivation! This golden palm imprint, I cannot withstand it; even the First Order and Second Order Quasi-Saints in the clan cannot withstand it! Only the progenitor, only the progenitor...

At the brink of death, a snow-colored jade pendant hanging on the primal spirit of the red-clad Immortal Venerable suddenly shattered into two pieces, releasing an aged figure who shot out from the jade pendant, wielding a giant bone club to clash with the golden palm imprint.

"Daoist friend, calm your anger! This is definitely a misunderstanding; our Southern Tribe has no intention of antagonizing you!"

The elder who suddenly appeared exuded a powerful aura of a First Order Quasi-Saint, though it wasn't his true body but a projection. However, even with this Quasi-Saint's projection cultivation, he could not stop the descent of the golden palm imprint. His bone club was shattered by the golden palm in one blow, and his figure was subsequently crushed under the golden palm, dissolving into particles of light.

Destroying an Innate Treasure and an Immortal Venerable's physical body with one blow might not be shocking, but to obliterate a Quasi-Saint's projection with a single strike is undeniably shocking!

"It's the projection of Man Daosan, annihilated by this youngster with a single blow!" Both Daoist Wood Pine and Xiang Mingzi were stunned.

Others couldn't recognize the slain projection of a Quasi-Saint, but how could these two fail to identify it? That Man Daosan is a Quasi-Saint of the Southern Tribe's Barbarian Sect, whose true body has almost reached the peak of First Order Quasi-Saint. Even after years of diligent cultivation, his mere projection could rival an ordinary First Order Quasi-Saint.

Was what we just witnessed real? Ning Fan... with one hand, obliterated Man Daosan's Quasi-Saint projection!!!

"Even the elder's projection was destroyed, I'll die, I'll die..." The red-clad Immortal Venerable was already in despair, dumbfounded by Ning Fan's power.

Yet, the anticipated death did not come. When that golden palm hit his primal spirit, it unexpectedly turned into a gust of wind, blowing him several hundred star regions away from Mu Island!

The crowd of cultivators was aghast!

"I won't kill you this time, but there won't be a next time. Your identity as the Young Emperor of the Barbarian Sect isn't enough! Next time, let your Barbarian Quasi-Saint talk to me!"

Though Ning Fan spoke on Mu Island, through his Ice Rain Technique, these words were conveyed directly to the ears of the red-clad Immortal Venerable.

"Thank you, Senior, for sparing my life. When I return to the clan, I will certainly convey Senior's decree to my Barbarian Sect ancestor!"

The Immortal Venerable in the red robe shivered with fear, his Spirit tiny hand made a distant fist toward Mu Island, and then he skulked away.

It's over, it's over, he didn't know if his actions had angered this Ancient Great Cultivator... let's see how the clan elders handle this matter.

Spurt!

Within the Southern Clan, in the Southern Pole Hall, five Quasi-Saints of the Southern Clan sat in sequence, closing their eyes and waiting for something.

Suddenly, one Quasi-Saint inexplicably spat blood and then received the memory of his body double, revealing a shocked expression.

The one who spat blood was none other than Man Daosan's true body!

"What happened!" The other Quasi-Saints were all astonished when they saw Man Daosan spitting blood.

In the entire Southern Clan, besides the Great Elder Southern Pole Ancestor who is still recovering, only the Second Elder is a Second-Grade Quasi-Saint, and Man Daosan is the third strongest in the Southern Clan. Why does he suddenly spit blood!

"It's Rain Monarch, this person is unfathomable, one palm destroyed my body double... he cannot be provoked, under no circumstances should this person be provoked!" When Man Daosan spoke, the other Quasi-Saints were all shocked.

One palm destroyed Man Daosan's Quasi-Saint clone... what kind of terrifying cultivation is this!

Ancient Great Cultivator!

Rain Monarch Ning Fan, truly is that Barbarian Wilderness Great Cultivator!

"As for my body double, it doesn't matter, paying some price I can cultivate back, but..." Man Daosan gave a slight bitter laugh.

If the Southern Clan, due to today's probe, breaks bad with this person, invoking the wrath of an Ancient Great Cultivator, that would truly be irreparable.

Not to mention the Great Elder is seriously injured with difficulty recovering, even at full strength, the Great Elder would not allow the Southern Clan to offend an Ancient Great Cultivator.

So, if the other party really gets angry, should we Southern Clan bow to this person...

"What a joke! In my Southern Clan's ancestors, generations have been Immortal Emperor Guardian Generals of the Southern Heavenly Gate, only warriors who die in battle, no bowing ones. If this Ning Fan doesn't provoke us, we are willing to peacefully resolve this dispute, even slightly yielding some, it's feasible. But if this person pushes too far, we will risk the entire clan dying in battle to make this person pay the price! Southern Clan cultivators, no fear of battle, no fear of death!"

Of course, it's better not to provoke Ning Fan, no one is willing to create an abysmal enemy out of nothing...

One palm slaying a Quasi-Saint...

Several Southern Clan old monsters secretly shivered, and once the red-robed Immortal Venerable scampered back to the Southern Clan and conveyed Ning Fan's words, the shirking began again.

Ning Fan said, next time at least let a Quasi-Saint from the Barbarian Sect go to have a dialogue with him...

Yes, sending an Eternal Immortal Venerable to Ning Fan, it's somewhat improper in status.

Then the problem arose, who would go to talk to Ning Fan...

The Fourth Elder Nan Tianhua nonchalantly picked up a teacup, took half an hour to drink a cup of tea, stubbornly not finishing it, seemingly having a contest with his teacup. He is a Quasi-Saint of the Gu Clan, inside, lacking Barbarian Cultivation.

The Fifth Elder Zhao Wanggong continued finger-pinching to calculate something, an appearance of divining good and bad luck, seemingly unrelated to negotiating with Ning Fan, wanting to stay out.

The Sixth Elder Tashi looked at each other with the Third Elder Man Daosan, neither volunteering to talk to Ning Fan.

No kidding, having a talk with Ning Fan, what if negotiations break down? Then getting killed by a palm of Ning Fan? It's risky, whoever's strong steps up!

Finally, it was the Second Elder Southern Pole Ancestor who spoke.

"Ning Daoist said to let a Quasi-Saint from the Barbarian Sect talk... So, Old Three, Old Six, one of you go have a chat with him."

"Cough, cough, cough, Old Six, my body double was just destroyed, injuries not healed, so..." As soon as Man Daosan remembered Ning Fan's terrifying nature, he felt apprehensive, looking pleadingly at Old Six Tashi.

At seeing his Third Brother, who had never asked for anything in life, giving such a look, Tashi sighed deeply, saying,

"Forget it, I am a Quasi-Saint of the Barbarian Sect, I'll go talk with him! At worst it's just death, we Southern Clan men, have no cowards, I..."

Tashi was about to bravely speak two sentences, when a sweet female voice was heard from outside the hall.

"Grandpa Six, rather than you going, how about letting Weiyu go instead?"

A woman clad in feathers, holding an umbrella, walked softly into the Southern Pole Hall.

This woman is the Southern Clan's first Saintess, named Tantai Weiyu, a name identical to a woman Ning Fan had met before.

However, this woman's appearance, cultivation level, and bone age, all differ from the Tantai Weiyu Ning Fan met.

Moreover, that Tantai Weiyu hailed from the Purple Mansion Academy of Southern Heaven, whereas this Tantai Weiyu is the esteemed Southern Clan Saintess, seemingly two entirely different existences.

"You? No way! Our Southern Clan's great trouble, cannot let you a mere girl to shoulder, no more talking, Third Grandpa goes, you're not allowed to go!" Man Daosan also stopped being afraid, he decided to meet Ning Fan himself, anyway, he won't let little Weiyu girl send herself to death! Ning Fan is a fierce person, disagreements lead to destruction of bodies and doubles, he is definitely not kind-hearted!

"I'll go!"

"No, let me go!"

"Allow me!"

The original situation of mutual avoidance unexpectedly changed due to Weiyu's suggestion.

Tantai Weiyu felt warmth in her heart, but shook her head, saying, "No, let Weiyu go. You guys don't understand this person, whereas I, should somewhat understand..." As she spoke, Weiyu seemed to have a look of reminiscence, smiling faintly.

"You've met the Rain Monarch? When? You've never been ten thousand miles from the Southern Clan's territory since birth, how could you've met this person?"

"A secret..."

Tantai Weiyu gave a mischievous smile.

Indeed, she's met him, that Ning Fan, had encountered her voodoo doll... this, several Quasi-Saint Grandpas did not know.

That discourse of years past, still vividly recalled by her...

A really cunning person, surprisingly masquerading as an Ancient Great Cultivator, scaring several Quasi-Saint Grandpas. Rain Immortal Monarch, right... while others may not know you've come from Rain Immortal World, I do know...