

# LONGEVITY CHRONICLES

## Chapter 13 12 Immortal Realm

Deep into the night at the bookstore, Tao Qian held a book in his hands, his expression fluctuating uncertainly.

He struggled to describe his current feelings, as the lamplight cast onto those large, bright red characters, Tao Qian felt as if he had seen demons after demons breaking free from the pages, lunging at him.

Hair-raising?

Illusory?

He experienced all sorts of sensations.

By now, Tao Qian had fully realized why this "Nameless Secret Manual" had the capacity to drive one to madness; the reason probably lay in the last page.

Should someone persevere and not go mad after reading the earlier parts, they would surely fall at this final page.

Such a contrast that could stop one's heart, not even the most resolute could stand it.

Tao Qian, though, was an exception, like a bug in a system.

At the moment, he was not at ease either, feeling a pressure in his head, wanting to look away.

But his eyes seemed to be sucked in by the book, clenching his teeth, he somehow managed to finish reading this last page.

Those bright red, twisted "ancient seal characters," like blood tadpoles with tusks and claws, swam into Tao Qian's eyes one by one.

After a long while, Tao Qian slowly put down the book.

"Hu,"

A large breath of turbid air was expelled from Tao Qian's mouth.

Finally, he had finished reading.

Tao Qian didn't reach for the copper mirror in the corner. Without looking, he knew his complexion must be terrible.

Resting for a good fifteen minutes, Tao Qian finally shook off the side effects, his spirit and soul returning to peace.

Then, Tao Qian began to ponder over his gains.

Now, he was very grateful that he didn't miss this book; those dozens of copper coins were incredibly worth it.

The autobiography written by Seeking Immortal Hermit Wu Ming before his death, although dangerous and insane,

undeniably had unimaginable significance for Tao Qian at his current stage.

Aside from that "Immortal Fish Technique," everything else described about the Cultivation World in the book was to educate Tao Qian on the relevant knowledge.

To some extent, anyone who finished this book could be considered as having taken the initial steps into a world of transcendence, oddities, and cultivation.

Although it was just Wu Ming's perspective, these were his experiences over thirty years and could hardly be fabricated.

Of course, much of the content in the book was too frenzied and chaotic.

The core knowledge and key points required Tao Qian's personal refinement and summary.

At this moment, numerous related thoughts surfaced in Tao Qian's mind:

"Wu Ming turned to the cultivation of immortality at sixty, with poor talent and good fortune lacking, the people he had contact with over thirty years were all from the lower echelons of the Cultivation World."

"These were none other than the heresy and heterodoxy, worldly society sorcerers, and the like."

"However, due to this, he had a broad and varied source of information, which could be said to sketch out a general Cultivation World."

"According to the book, the laws I had previously guessed were completely correct."

"Anything related to cultivation and transcendence requires a price, without exception."

"No matter which magic skill is cultivated and from which Immortal Gods one learns from, for those who touch the transcendent, there will inevitably be a price to pay, big or small."

"It's just that different schools and paths have varying degrees of cost."

"Rumors have it that Daoist cultivators face the least risk and are therefore commonly referred to as orthodox."

"Next would be the Buddhist sect. There are many restrictions, but most are without the worry of losing their lives."

"Then there are martial and divine cultivation paths with medium risk and cost, yet the upper limit is not low."

"Following these are the many branches of heresy and heterodoxy, which have the greatest momentum but due to their numerous sources, they are not only defeated by the Daoist and Buddhist forces but also unable to confront the many clans and families who cultivate the Martial and Divine Dao."

At this point, several forces mentioned in the book floated into Tao Qian's mind.

Many, yet to Wu Ming's perspective, they were all legends since he couldn't come into contact with them.

"The Daoist sects have the Twelve Major Sects, residing in Immortal Mountain Blessed Land."

"Buddhism, on the other hand, has three thousand and eight hundred temples, widely spread across the world."

"Martial and Divine Cultivation has families and clans like the Zhang Family, the Pei Family, and the Xiu Family, which have been around for hundreds or thousands of years. They are integrated into the worldly society, yet above it, firm as rocky mountains, hard to shake."

"Besides these, there is also the 'Evil Sect,' a bizarre force belonging to the Demon Path according to legends."

"Of course, the most common cultivation forces are the Side Door and Heterodox; they are as plentiful as sand and ants and truly pervade the world."

"The fight I saw today at the pier, with Hong Heihu of the Cao Gang, is a typical example of heresy and heterodoxy. His Lifebound Scripture comes from the 'Blood River Scripture,' whose cultivation techniques are cruel and reckless, with a huge cost. A slight error leads not only to loss of life but also the dual loss of spirit and soul, with no self remaining."

"In recent years, ravaging the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty and successively taking over many markets and counties to even a province, one of the two major rebel armies, Devil God Army, is a gathering of heretic and heterodox practitioners and has become a major concern for the court that has been indestructible."

"The other army, the 'Taiping Army,' is even more mysterious. Its leader has integrated transcendent methods from both eastern and western cultures, spreading faster than the Devil God Army. In a short time, it had swept through most of the Longevity territory, rumored to have two supreme secret Lifebound Scriptures within, namely the 'Taiping Dao Scripture' and the 'Great Brightness Scripture,' each inheriting parts of the orthodox methods from the major eastern and western religions, possessing great power."

...



"This paradoxical world has a far more enormous and complex landscape than my previous life," Tao Qian exclaimed after sorting out the information about the Cultivation World.

At the same time, Tao Qian realized there was an issue right before his eyes, his gaze returning to the last page of the Secret Book.

The Bai Qin Play Fragment was unpracticable in the short term due to the rarity of bird's blood.

But what about the Immortal Fish Technique?

To cultivate, or not to cultivate?

Tao Qian was silent, caught in hesitation.

Judging from Wu Ming's initial warnings, as well as the subsequent bizarre changes, this so-called cultivation technique capable of reaching the heavens was essentially a trap.

Once someone began to cultivate it, they would inevitably face terrifying consequences.

But upon reflection, Tao Qian now had no second option.

If the world was as peaceful and stable as his previous life, Tao Qian would have certainly put the cultivation technique away immediately, avoiding any cultivation whatsoever.

Clearly, however, this world was anything but peaceful, being the chaotic end of a dynasty, not to mention the terrifying and strange things within it.

The common people of this world had to face exploitation by the government, natural and man-made disasters, and the ravages of rebel armies... Let alone all that.

In the foreseeable future, they would also have to face some beings that they simply could not resist.

"Just like those people at the Seeking Immortal Pier during the day, whether they be strong laborers, worldly society experts, or rich scholars, in the face of

the mutated Hong Heihu and the mad young Daoists, your status means nothing."

"If you are not a cultivator, in that kind of situation, you're like a lamb to slaughter or grass waiting to be cut, with no ability to resist, easily destroyed."

"Perhaps this time you might be lucky and avoid it, but what about the next time? Or the time after that?"

"Others will be like this, and if I do not cultivate, if I do not join in, I fear there won't be much difference for me either."

"There's a saying, 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.' Perhaps later on, I'll have the chance to obtain a Daoist cultivation technique with the smallest price to pay, but even the smallest price is still a price."

"But right now, there's a significant chance I can get it for free."

"To cultivate ten times, I can avoid risk nine times, the remaining one being uncontrollable... that one refers to the tenth time, with the first nine times being essentially risk-free."

"If it really is too terrifying and bizarre, and I can't accept it, then it's not too late to give up after this time."

"In that case, there seems little to hesitate over."

Tao Qian knew he had made a decision after these thoughts flashed through his mind.

He immediately cast aside all distractions and took a deep breath.

He picked up the Secret Book once more and turned to the last page again.

Contrary to the mnemonics of the unknown fragmented formula and the pattern of the Bai Qin Play, the cultivation method for the Immortal Fish Technique involved a particularly peculiar form of meditation.

Aside from Wu Ming's mad scribbles on the last page, there was also a figure composed of ancient seal characters, symbols, and diagrams forming the outline of a fish.

Following the annotations below, Tao Qian stared intently at the outline.

His spirit and soul began to enter a blank state.

One breath!

Two breaths!

Three breaths!

The book recorded that it took Wu Ming a full ten days to get a glimpse into the Immortal Fish Technique.

But perhaps due to talent or some other reason,

By the tenth breath, Tao Qian suddenly heard the crisp sound of a water droplet hitting the surface of water.

In an instant, the world seemed to collapse.

No longer was he in a shabby room, no dim yellow light.

Instead, he found himself in an immensely vast, boundless world of darkness.

And somehow, without knowing when, he had turned into a multicolored fish, roughly the size of a thumb, radiating a dazzling brilliance.

What was even more unbelievable was that Tao Qian seamlessly adapted to this fish body.

And compared to the real world, he felt even more comfortable and at ease in this place.

A thought crossed his mind, his tail flicked, and he suddenly leapt up, entering a fantastically magical and beautiful area.

This place seemed filled with a liquid similar to "water," and as they enveloped him.

"Ah!"

Unable to endure it, Tao Qian moaned involuntarily.

At this moment, he suddenly understood the Seeking Immortal Hermit a bit better.

It was too comfortable!

The pleasure within far surpassed any exchange of bodily fluids.

Even more surprising was that in this space, he was not the only fish.

As far as the eye could see, fish of all shapes and sizes were swimming freely.

Countless kinds of dazzling yet soft lights intertwined and flashed, making Tao Qian feel as if he were in the fairyland of legend.

"Is each fish here a cultivator?"

"Do the differences in size and brightness represent the cultivators' disparity in cultivation?"

"Then, isn't this place like a Fairyland Fish Pond?"

Tao Qian couldn't help but comment to himself.

At the same time, he wondered whether there could be communication here.

For a newcomer to seek protection from a big shot was a good and universal rule.

Tao Qian blinked his sparkling fish eyes a few times, searching for a target.



He didn't plan to approach those true big shots who were as big as whales or sharks; what if they swallowed him whole?

Quickly, Tao Qian set his sights on a fish that was slightly bigger than himself.

It was a hand-sized red fish with long whiskers and a graceful body.

Tao Qian intended to seize the opportunity to get close to it, rub against it, and see if he could rub off information awareness.

But just at that moment, an anomaly occurred in this fairyland.

With a crisp sound, something shining like a luminous pearl suddenly fell from above into the unknown.

As soon as it entered the fairyland, it began to sink slowly.

As it descended, "exotic fragrance" that made Tao Qian's mouth in his fish form secrete saliva crazily, while also producing a strong desire to swallow, surged wildly from that pearl.

In an instant, the fairyland boiled over.

"Fish" of all sizes, as if gone mad, rushed toward that pearl.