

Longevity 171

Chapter 171 Yunhua Immortal's Spiritual Resonance Stirred, Daughter Palace Master Has Sent a Message

"Who is this little Daoist that he has the protection of three distinguished Daoists?" When this voice, not of the Human World, arrived, Tao Qian and the others saw that face, which looked human but bore a hint of Divinity.

The three Daoists she spoke of were clearly the Taixuan Ruyi Circle, the Spirit Treasure Rejuvenation Mirror, and the Heavenly Punishment Demon-Slaying Sword, all immortal treasures.

Hearing her speak, the girl lingering beside Tao Qian, Zhong Doudou, immediately raised her hand and jumped up, her voice crisp,

"Goddess Aunt, this is our Young Master."

"Not long ago, True Monarch specifically sent me, the cleverest Zhong Doudou, along with three grandfathers to Southern Yue, to guide the Young Master back to the Sect."

"I'll tell you secretly, my Young Master has exceptional talent, and not long ago, he even forcefully survived the Spirit Treasure Three Calamities."

As Zhong Doudou spoke, Tao Qian had a bad premonition.

Indeed, as soon as she finished speaking,

Tao Qian immediately felt that within the storm, the cultivators of the Spiritual Treasure and the Devil Immortals who were on their way all paused, and then curious and surprised gazes were cast their way.

And soon, numerous Devil Immortals of various forms gathered around.

Many voices filled with concern were also transmitted through the golden light into Tao Qian's ears.

Had Tao Qian not shut off his own perceptions early on, his mind would probably be tormented by now.

Even so, it wasn't much better.

"It seems today is truly a good day to hear such rare news. Always seeking solitude, the True Monarch who finds preaching troublesome, is he actually taking a disciple?"

"Come, come, today our Spirit Treasure Mountain Gate is adding a new member, and it's the first disciple of True Monarch, how marvelous."

"I'd like to see, who has such fine qualities to make the True Monarch send three Daoists to guide him."

"No need for further words, just 'surviving the Three Calamities' alone, it's unprecedented in our Spirit Treasure Sect in hundreds of years, no wonder the True Monarch is so anxious, he even sent Tianxing Daoist."

"Very well, truly a good child, with innate immortal spirit, flawless Perfection, even able to resist the Three Calamities; compared to him, my disciples are far inferior."

"The eldest senior brother indeed has extraordinary methods, to think such a Talent would have been revealed by the Spirit Treasure Golden List, to alarm several senior brothers and sisters, yet he was pre-emptively guarded by the eldest senior brother."

"It must be that the Little Demon on duty was slacking; I too have been thinking of taking a disciple, had I seen this child earlier, even if it meant competing with the eldest senior brother, I would have competed."

"Alas, what a pity."

Tao Qian could never have imagined that the so-called whisper from Zhong Doudou immediately made him the center of the storm.

One after another, the seniors of the Spirit Treasure and various Devil Immortals all gathered around.

Just like Tao Qian had previously watched them, they were now watching him.

Yet he didn't dare say anything, because one after another, they were all seniors from his Sect. Even without considering seniority, Tao Qian still didn't dare speak, as he couldn't defeat any of them.

What made Tao Qian secretly wonder was that he suddenly got the feeling that from the moment the Returning Immortal Mirror Spirit said he should see "Ten Thousand Immortals Coming to Biyou Palace," there seemed to be a hint of arrangement.

Entering the storm, all three Immortal Treasures made an appearance.

Moreover, they each emitted their unique Immortal Treasure brilliance.

In just a few breaths, they were noticed by the "Gu Huo Mountain Goddess," and after a few exchanges with Zhong Doudou, this scene was created.

Tao Qian didn't suspect Zhong Doudou of plotting, as the girl clearly lacked the wisdom to do so.

Those three Immortal Treasures, however, were highly suspicious.

Thinking over it, Tao Qian mused,

"These Three Immortal Treasures, it's as if they are collaborating, aiming to reveal my presence before these many seniors and Devil Immortals, to solidify my status."

"Perhaps I'm overthinking it? My future Master values me so much, seeing the fearsome power of these three Immortal Treasures, it's like clinging to a colossal leg. Even if I were blind, I wouldn't enter another's sect."

With this thought, Tao Qian couldn't help but laugh silently and shook his head to suppress this misperception.

However, it was at this moment that the usually aloof and silent Heavenly Punishment Demon-Slaying Sword, facing the passionate crowd of Devil Immortals, unusually responded,

"Master is often contemplative; a few days ago, he calculated and knew there is a teacher-disciple destiny with this child. Given that the child has faced calamities recklessly without guidance and has even attracted the attention of the monks from Demon Buddha Temple and the Great Freedom Temple."

"To prevent accidents, he sent us to guide the child back to the Sect, and today his teacher-disciple relationship can be confirmed."

"This child is named Tao Qian, and he shall be the senior disciple of the Duobao Lineage."

The weight of these words from the Heavenly Punishment Sword Spirit was evidently extraordinary.

All at once, the gathered senior Devil Immortals nodded.

Starting with the Gu Huo Mountain Goddess, she took out a crystal-clear jade token, sealed inside were three drops of Jade Liquid, with a flick of her finger, the token directly fell into Tao Qian's arms.

Then, in a voice not of the Human World, the mountainous Goddess said, "This is Jade Marrow from my mountain, one drop can extend life by sixty years, you, being talented, might not need it, but you can use it to reward your servants."

With the Goddess leading, the rest of the teachers and Devil Immortals all smiled and then each began giving Tao Qian their gifts.

"This is an Immortal Deer cub, just feed it for half a year and it will grow up; it can be a pet or even a mount."

"This Ziyang Sword Elixir was personally refined by me once, it's a decent sword embryo, it includes one technique, the 'Ziyang Sword Technique,' you can take it and play around with it."

Chapter 172 Yunhua Immortal's Spiritual Resonance Stirred, Daughter Palace Master Has Sent a Message

"This volume is called 'Yin Yang Ascension Scripture'," he announced, having acquired it during his travels. "It's a heterodox scripture for refining Yin and Yang, but it takes an unusual path and is still worth a look."

"This object is called the 'Hidden Soldier Box,' which contains ten thousand ancient terracotta soldiers. They don't possess much killing power, but they should have no problem crushing those who Transcend Mortality. Feel free to take it and enjoy."

"This is a magical treasure I refined in my early years, called the Xuan Yang Iron Ruler. Once you master its use, even Foundation Establishment Realm Evil Demons will not be able to bother you; if you use it well, you can even fight against those who have Transcended Mortality. Go ahead and play with it."

...

Each Devil Immortal's gift, which they called little things, was handed to Tao Qian to be admired and played with.

But it's worth knowing that Tao Qian himself was just a small cultivator at the Qi Refining Realm Perfection.

Each of these treasures, for him, was an incredibly rare and precious item.

Yet, Tao Qian could not refuse them; after the Heavenly Punishment Sword had spoken, it was as if their respectful relationship had been confirmed.

In the eyes of each Devil Immortal master, Tao Qian was seen as their own Senior Brother Qingjing's newly acquired first disciple.

Barring any significant surprises!

This child might someday inherit the Duobao Lineage.

Such a status, naturally, was immensely popular.

Tao Qian had no choice but to accept each gift while expressing his thanks, his refined face soon stiffening into a forced smile.

However, this was admittedly a painful yet joyful experience.

In just a few breaths, Tao Qian's "harvest" was immeasurable.

Even though in the past, Tao Qian had robbed many Evil Cultivators who chased him, storing treasures and cultivation resources in his Mustard Seed Talisman Seed, these were quite abundant.

But those things paled in comparison to the Devil Immortal masters' welcome gifts, each one practically trash.

Later, even Zhong Doudou, Shan Jiu, Little Age, and Lian Jing'er were affected, each receiving their fair share of benefits.

Most popular was "Little Age"; the Taisui Baby was adorable and sweet-talking, swiftly charming the gathering of Devil Immortals, who doted on the cuddly little one. They didn't ask Tao Qian for anything directly but all invited Little Age to visit their Cave Mansions.

Even in the lively and harmonious atmosphere surrounded by tens of thousands of immortals, Tao Qian and the masters weathered the storm together.

Just then, the space ahead suddenly cleared.

A vast sea of rippling blue waves suddenly burst into view.

They saw numerous Immortal Islands scattered like stars across the ocean, with many Immortal Sceneries appearing that were never seen in the Mortal World.

Tao Qian had heard from Zhong Doudou bragging that inside the Penglai Sea, there were a good thousand islands, almost all capable of condensing Source Qi, suitable for establishing Cave Mansions, with some even containing Secret Realms directly.

Now, the Devil Immortal masters visiting the ocean each had their Cave Mansions, but at this moment, none stopped to rest.

Instead, each transformed into a streak of divine light, heading towards the most profound part of the Penglai Sea, a rugged and enormously large island.

There, thunder, fierce winds gathered, billions of clouds and auroras continued up to the sky, and right where they met, a mysterious palace was noticeably floating.

Tao Qian and the others were also swept up in a golden light, merging into the strange spectacle of "Ten Thousand Immortals Coming to Biyou Palace."

It was just in time for the arrival of ten thousand immortals.

The palace doors opened wide, and about thirty Strange and varied Devil Immortals, Daoists stepped out in strides.

At first, the Devil Immortals and Daoists noticed nothing.

Until the leading figure, a tall and rough Daoist, suddenly laughed loudly and stepped forward, greeting the immortals while spitting out two cryptic phrases.

"Dear junior brothers and sisters, I, Duobao Daoist, have calculated that today is a great hour, suitable for me to accept a fine disciple."

"Look, here comes my disciple."

Hearing his words, those thirty-odd Devil Immortals, Daoists all turned their gaze towards the many streaks of divine light, where the Taixuan Ruyi Circle was located.

Seeing Tao Qian's true face, the other Daoists felt little.

Only the leading female fairy suddenly had a Spiritual Resonance, about to begin a divination.

Unexpectedly, a young-looking female fairy flew from afar, landed, and shouted towards her, "Sister Yunhua, you have a letter, sent by your close friend, the Daughter Palace Master."

Chapter 173: Harboursing a scheming heart, competing for the top spot in front of the teacher

The call of the female fairy interrupted Yunhua Immortal's divination, and also made the middle-aged Daoist clad in a green and black Daoist robe, who brazenly exposed two sturdy and hairy legs, suddenly quicken his pace.

He moved to the front of the Ten Thousand Immortals and said directly, "Fellow Daoist brothers and sisters, I presume you have all seen this disciple of mine."

After speaking, he saw the assembled Devil Immortal Daoists all nodding with smiles.

The Daoist, anxious and impatient, pulled Tao Qian over and then addressed the several dozen more powerful Devil Immortal Daoists behind him:

"Fellow Daoist brothers and sisters, this child is called Tao Qian and is the first disciple I, Duobao, have taken under my wing."

"Properly, I should have arranged some sort of ceremony for accepting disciples, but as you all know, I Duobao have the least patience for such formalities; it is enough to just get acquainted."

"This disciple is rash in his cultivation, and now he urgently needs to establish his foundation."

"Your brother won't bother you with any further ado and will take his leave first."

Before anyone could offer congratulations, the moment the last word dropped, the Daoists present saw the front of Biyou Palace light up; the Daoist and the young Daoist who had come from afar vanished without a trace.

At the same moment, Yunhua Immortal had just finished reading a letter from a close friend.

A look of surprise immediately appeared on her beautiful face, and she then began to make calculations with her hands, quickly arriving at a conclusion.

Then the mature and enchanting Immortal, looking resplendent, stomped her foot in agitation, exclaiming:

"What a play Brother Duobao has made; this child received recommendation letters from two of my confidantes and even a personal token from Sister from the Xue family, which is ample proof of the strong Karmic ties between the child and our master-disciple relationship. When we came to Biyou Palace that day, Little Doggy should have first reported this child's presence to me."

"That sneaky old man relies on his superior Prediction Skill to mine; he arrived early that day and actually coerced the dog into covering up the Spirit Treasure Golden List."

"Furthermore, he took advantage of the child's need to Survive Three Calamities to send Heavenly Punishment, Taixuan, and Returning Immortal ahead of time to guide them. With one thing leading to another, he steered the Karmic master-disciple relationship away from me."

Upon saying these things, the Immortal saw her Daoist brothers and sisters around her, as well as a crowd of Devil Immortals, wearing looks of surprise.

Thinking back on the scene of Daoist Duobao fleeing in haste just moments ago, she grew even angrier.

"The die is cast and the roles have been determined; would I, Yunhua, really be so petty as to quarrel with him over a disciple?"

"It is no surprise he won that place at the head of our teacher's seat back then, becoming our eldest senior brother with his dark heart and hidden schemes."

"Such shamelessness, when I see our old master again, I will surely report Brother Duobao's actions to him."

Listening to Yunhua Immortal say this, the Devil Immortals all immediately understood why the eldest senior brother had been so hasty in leaving.

Amused by the situation, they also became curious.

Just now, all the Devil Immortals had seen that young Daoist, good-looking with an inner Immortal spirit, indeed a fine and elegant talent.

But this place is the Mountain Gate of the Spirit Treasure Sect.

There must be nearly a thousand young disciples like him here, if not eight hundred.

What could possibly make those two compete over him?

You should know, both Yunhua Immortal and Duobao Daoist,

One is currently the eldest senior brother within the Spirit Treasure Mountain Gate, who, because of his indolent and hermit-like nature, never got involved in affairs.

But now, with the departure of the Second Generation Ancestors to the Outer Realm, except for a few special existences, he is revered as the senior brother. The other one is currently the leader among the Spirit Treasure Female Immortals.

Even disciples endowed with talents such as Immortal Flesh and Bone, True Yang Body, and Qingwei Dao Body would not be enough to raise such a ruckus in these two.

Under such curiosity, one of the Devil Immortals, wearing a bright yellow Daoist robe, with a handsome appearance and holding a Jade Ruyi in one hand and a Qingning Fan in the other,

Suddenly looked towards the corner, where a young man with bean-shaped eyebrows named Gou Lv'er, a Dog Immortal, was attempting to sneak away.

With a smile in his eyes, he fixed Gou Lv'er in place and brought him over, then said:

"Little Doggy, why do you look so guilty? You were coerced by the senior brother that day, so Sister Yunhua certainly won't blame you."

"However, you lazy dog deserve a punishment; if you want to avoid suffering, just tell us why the senior brother wanted to take this first disciple."

"It appears that the child has some talent, but it shouldn't make both the senior brother and Sister Yunhua so anxious."

The exposed young demon immortal, the Dog Immortal Gou Lv'er, immediately showed a bitter face, his bean-like eyebrows looking rather comical.

While he did not wish to speak, seeing the True Masters all looking towards him,

The pressure became overwhelming, and the small Dog Immortal Gou Lv'er had no choice but to mutter in a small voice:

"It's not that the dog neglected his duty; I dare not disobey the words of True Master."

"That day, while I was on duty, I saw the Spirit Treasure Golden List acting strangely, reflecting a Loose Cultivator with outstanding talent."

"It turns out to be that young master."

"At that time, the young master was far away in Southern Yue, bearing an Innate Dao Seed, and had even refined nine hundred and ninety-nine Immortal Spirit Qi, and when building the No-leak Body, he unexpectedly eradicated Three Corpses and Nine Worms, succeeding in cultivating the Taishang Spiritual Treasure No-leak Body."

Upon hearing this, all the immortals visiting Biyou Palace showed looks of astonishment.

They had previously only known of Tao Qian's ability to "Resist Three Calamities," but they were unaware of the specifics of the child's talent.

Now, hearing this information, it became clear to them.

Such a talent, even amidst the crowded and Talented Spirit Treasure Mountain Gate, would absolutely rank at the forefront, and could even possibly hold the top position.

Indeed, it is no wonder that Duobao True Monarch, usually so lazy, would employ schemes to hijack Yunhua Immortal's disciple.

"Not to speak of the senior brother, but if I had known, I too would have spared no effort to covertly pull strings."

The thoughts had just crossed the minds of all the Devil Immortal Daoists.

Suddenly, the remaining words of Gou Lv'er spilled out, completely shocking the dozens of Devil Immortals and Daoists who were the last to know the answer.

"The young master must have come across the Basic Method of our Spirit Treasure Sect by a stroke of fate, thus stepping onto the Dao Path."

"Afterward, in a short period of time, he reached the Perfect Realm of Qi Refinement."

"However, Doggy guesses that the young master caught the attention of the True Monarch because of his way of surviving the Spirit Treasure Three Calamities."

"Most of the Spirit Treasure Disciples use avoidance or transformation methods to deal with the calamities, only this young master, he actively faced the Spirit Treasure Three Calamities and shattered them with brute force."

"Although the Golden List did not reveal much more of the process, the Doggy also had a rough idea. In the first calamity, with the Cultivation of the Qi Refining Realm, he first killed a Foundation Establishment Realm Demon, then proceeded to slaughter all the Evil Cultivators and Demons in a Demon Market. In the following days, he killed even more, until he forced a Transcend Mortality Demon to mutate and completely broke through the first calamity."

"In the second calamity, the young master faced the great array of Evil Demons, the "Xuanpin Heavenly Gate Ten Absolute Array." After ingeniously destroying this array, he successfully escaped from the chase of a Cavernous Mystery Realm Cultivator."

"It was also because he forcefully survived these two calamities that his third calamity got entangled with the great catastrophe of the Human Dao in Southern Yue."

"By all conventional wisdom, the young master was facing a certain death situation, with no chance of survival."

"But in the end, the young master won, again by brute force shattering the third calamity."

"However, the process in between Doggy does not know, as the Heavenly Mechanism was obscured at that time; it must have been interfered with by the True Monarch's casting."

"I suppose it was then that the True Monarch sent three Immortal Treasure Lords to fetch the young master."

When these words were finished, all the details were supplemented.

Suddenly, in front of Biyou Palace, the powerful Daoists and Devil Immortals all showed looks of surprise and admiration.

Among them, a Daoist clad in a purple-red Daoist robe, with a ferocious face, a bare chest, and carrying a huge Yellow Gourd on his back and a bronze ancient sword at his waist, smacked his lips twice and then displayed envy in his eyes as he said:

"Innate Dao Seed, Nine Extremes Immortal Spirit Qi, Taishang Treasure No-leak Body, surviving the Three Calamities with strength...such talent is seen only once in a hundred years even in our Spirit Treasure Sect."

"If it weren't for the fact that each of our reincarnated ancestors already had their whereabouts known, I would have suspected that one of them had gone missing in the Mortal World. No wonder the eldest brother resorted to tricks."

"If I had known beforehand, I couldn't help but secretly use some Divine Skills to snatch this child for myself."

"In another few decades, that child is bound to accomplish great things."

"Sister Yunhua, don't be angry anymore, with this past event, if you need anything in the future, you can ask the eldest brother to lend his disciple to you, and he surely can't refuse."

With these words spoken, instead of consoling her, they made Yunhua Immortal, who stood nearby, even more annoyed.

Fortunately, at this time, a female fairy with delicate eyebrows, robed in rosy clouds and large sleeves, wearing a phoenix crown and holding a white lotus, sighed softly and then advised her:

"Brother Jin's words may be a bit rough, but there is some sense in them, sister, do not be angry."

"Moreover, the eldest brother is now at that critical stage. If he can survive it well and good, but if he fails to survive, while it's not to say that he would vanish from Dao, he would have to start over again, and it is unknown how many years it will take."

"I suppose it's because of this that the eldest brother, who normally prefers solitude, hastily found a disciple to continue the Duobao Lineage."

"It's just that the eldest brother has high standards, and just happened to snatch the good disciple that should have belonged to you."

Having said that, the countenance of Yunhua Immortal softened a bit.

Then the Daoist who had earlier silenced Gou Lv'er, the one holding the Jade Ruyi and Qingning Fan, opened his mouth to comfort her:

"It has to be this way, the eldest brother is not far from the "Daoist Transformation Realm."

"That realm's peril is not ordinary, and if the Breakthrough fails, being able to be reincarnated and resume Cultivation is already fortunate."

"Seeking that child must be to continue the legacy of the Duobao Lineage; it's not possible that he wanted the child to help Protect Dao, right..."

At this point in the Daoist's words,

Yunhua Immortal no longer had the look of anger on her face, and instead helplessly said:

"How did it all come around to me? I was just spouting off a couple of sentences in anger earlier. The teacher told me long ago to diligently practice the 'Spirit Treasure Sky Displaying Skill', saying that I was too absorbed in array and Forbidden Technique and unable to see the full prediction of Heavenly Mechanism, and I would suffer for it someday. It seems the teacher's words were meant for this occasion."

"Besides practicing the Ten Thousand Treasure Secret well, the eldest brother is good at Divination."

"No wonder there has been some fuss on the Spirit Treasure Golden List multiple times, and we haven't seen the eldest brother show up; it turns out he had already calculated that all the past talents were not worth his attention, only waiting for that child to appear before making his move to snatch him."

"Well then, I'm going to return to my Cave Mansion and diligently practice Divination."

"You all scatter as well, don't think about going to see that child who has survived Three Calamities."

"That child was already blessed with great fortune after surviving Three Calamities and had also received Human Dao Fortune. Without that little Crystal Demon's Nourishing Spirit Technique, the Immortal Spiritual Qi inside him would have erupted long ago, forcing him into the Foundation Establishment. The eldest brother did not deceive us, and now the time should be to send that child to establish his Foundation."

"After he comes out of seclusion, we will all go together to marvel at him and present him with our gifts."

"Although I missed the destiny to be his master, the child has had interactions with two of my close friends, and even saved Miss Xiao's life. Being so close to him, I should at least hear him call me 'Aunt Yunhua'."

After saying these things, the beautiful female immortal at the lead conjured auspicious clouds and mist under her feet, carrying her into the sky and disappearing without a trace.

And in front of Biyou Palace, the remaining Devil Immortals and Daoists chewed on those words, especially the phrase "all the past talents were not worth his attention," which made them all come to a realization.

What a move by Sister Yunhua!

She had been angered and had conveniently dragged all her fellow disciples into it as well.

Followed by the departure of the Daoists and Devil Immortals, they couldn't help but think, "When we were fighting over talented disciples, red in the face and furious, was the eldest brother hiding in his Cave Mansion, secretly laughing and watching?"

"He definitely would have, given the shortest brother's disposition, he could absolutely do that."

After such thoughts, the immortals had to acknowledge Yunhua Immortal's assessment of the eldest brother: Sly and cunning, competing to be the teacher's first disciple.

Chapter 174: Duobao True Monarch Inquires about Dao Heart, Spirit Treasure Miao Tree Establishes Dao Foundation

He spoke of that figure with wildly exploding hair and two fluffy legs swaying about, resembling a brusque and crude Daoist – it was none other than Duobao True Monarch. He had taken Tao Qian and his companions and directly teleported them to a distant cloud.

They did not enter any particular Cave Mansion, nor did he immediately send Tao Qian to undergo Foundation Establishment.

Instead, with a spell, he pulled the conversation between Yunhua Immortal and a group of Devil Immortal Daoists from afar, allowing Tao Qian to hear every word clearly.

After the Immortals in front of the Biyou Palace dispersed, Duobao True Monarch then looked at Tao Qian with a smile and spoke frankly,

"You've heard it clearly, Sister Yunhua's words are spoken in anger, but they are also true."

"If we are to talk about fate, you should have become her disciple."

"However, it was I who used some tricks to create the present situation. But this matter of master-disciple karma, if truly forced, is not good either, so I am willing to let you choose once more."

"I won't hide it from you. Among the third generation of disciples from Spirit Treasure Sect, all the female Immortals regard Junior Sister Yunhua as their leader, not just because of her wide connections and extremely pleasant temperament, but even more so because of her cultivation and her prowess in battle."

"Don't look at me for having the title of eldest senior brother; if Sister Yunhua was truly prepared, setting up one formation after another, especially her signature grand formation 'Spirit Treasure Nine Realms Immortal Extinguishing God Array,' even if I, along with several junior brothers and sisters, joined forces against it, we would inevitably meet our demise."

"If you truly could become Junior Sister Yunhua's disciple, it would be a great fortune indeed, and your Dao Path should be smooth in the future."

"Moreover, Junior Sister Yunhua also keeps a tribe of Qingqiu Fox Clan – those little foxes are individually stunning and extremely good at attending to people."

"Then there's also Junior Sister Yunhua's many intimate friends. You've already met two of them. Actually, there are many more. If you could become her disciple, later on, if you were ever involved in trouble, you wouldn't even need Junior Sister Yunhua to lift a finger. These aunties would naturally stand up for you... The benefits of this, indeed, are too numerous to count."

"But if you take me as your master, you won't have these good things, just a weary and solitary person."

Tao Qian listened patiently and politely throughout the ceaseless persuasion from the brusque Daoist standing before him.

Then, without any delay, he bowed deeply, performing the ceremonial acts of discipleship with great pleasure.

With nothing to hide, he then spoke frankly,

"Master used up all his tricks before saying these things, wasn't it just to show off your wily Divine Skills?"

"Showing off is one thing with other elders, but do you really feel accomplished showing off in front of a little Qi Refinement Realm cultivator like me?"

"After surviving the Three Calamities, I faced many difficulties. If not for Master's arrangements from the start, I might have met with disaster."

"Besides, on my way here, everything was clearly arranged by the Three Immortal Treasures. Having established my status in that Communication with Ghost wind and received a pile of meeting gifts, how could I possibly change my faction?"

"Junior Sister Yunhua's assessment isn't wrong, you do indeed have a heart black as coal. Aren't you just trying to see me in an awkward state, indecisive and troubled?"

As he spoke the last words, Tao Qian's voice carried a note of suspicion.

But when he looked at his new master, his gaze was filled with certainty.

Though they had just met, Tao Qian could already guess what kind of temperament his master possessed from many signs.

Only two words were needed to describe it.

Despicable!

From what those Devil Immortal Daoists had said, this master of his, known as "Duobao True Monarch," was also about to break into the Daoist Transformation Realm, a powerful cultivator.

But who could expect him to be playing childish tricks?

Caught out so suddenly, Duobao Daoist was not annoyed but instead burst into loud laughter.

His giant-like stature leaned forward slightly, his copper bell eyes fixed on Tao Qian, their brightness like lightning, as if capable of piercing through the many secrets within his body in an instant.

The next moment, he spoke with a smirk,

"Good disciple, don't belittle yourself; in the Cultivation World's wilderness, there are countless Loose Cultivators, and many have the chance to obtain the Spirit Treasure Root Skill, but not everyone can cultivate to the Great Perfection stage in such a short time after getting the Magic Skill. Not to mention, you have many talents, even capable of managing a feat like surviving the intensified Three Calamities."

"It's one thing for you to be so compatible with the Spirit Treasure Method, but who would have thought that you would also excel in the Secret Demon Sect's technique."

"Your master has predicted your demon refining methods using the divination arts, Secret Acupoints left empty, you sit alone on the fishing platform; though your methods are simple and crude, they strike right at the essence without any taboo. Truly marvelous, truly marvelous."

"I've also dealt with many Secret Demon Cultivators, although they are experts in refining and controlling demons. If limited to the Qi Refinement Realm, not even the vast Secret Demon Sect could find one who could compare to you."

"Tut-tut, it's lucky the Secret Demon Sect is gone, or they would have definitely come to compete with me for a disciple."

"It's no wonder that the Daughter of Devil God and Bai Qin claim that you are a Secret Demon Dark Child. It truly is very similar."

After Duobao Daoist finished speaking, he looked askance at Tao Qian.

His heart seemed to anticipate the little Daoist's face changing color, panicking, and then hastily defending himself.

Unfortunately for him, what he saw was Tao Qian's face, unchanged.

Even more, Tao Qian glanced back and smiled, "Thank you for the praise, Master. I'm not really good at this Secret Demon magic, it's just passable to observe."

Hearing these words, Tao Qian distinctly saw a moment of stasis in Duobao Daoist's expression, clearly choked by his response.

"This sly one, with truly thick skin."

Duobao Daoist thought this and seemed still not to give up.

Thinking for a moment, he continued to up the ante,

"I am not very worried about the Secret Demon Sect. Those rash fellows, who only know how to play with demons, are not worth my notice at all."

"Taoist monks are most troublesome," said the Daoist, "and though Demon Cultivators one by one are bold and unrestrained, in the eyes of us Daoist Cultivators, the most difficult to deal with are those bald ones from the Buddhist Sect."

"From what I've heard from the Guanyin Temple and Bao Yin Bodhisattva, as well as Bai Qin, they all say you have a fate with Buddha. There is no smoke without fire, and especially during the great disaster in Southern Yue, your ability to obtain the Buddha Bird Relics reaffirmed that statement."

"After my prediction, though obscure, I did glimpse some heavenly mechanisms."

"You are even more compatible with the secrets of the Buddhist Sect, and in the future, you will not only be able to open a separate vein for Bai Qin Temple but also enter Buddhism from Daoism and cultivate into the position of Great Freedom Buddha."

When Duobao Daoist said this, Tao Qian did not show any signs of impatience this time.

On the contrary, he appeared thoughtful, although somewhat inexplicably so.

Yet, for some reason, Tao Qian could tell that his present Master was not deceiving him.

Perhaps in Duobao True Monarch's prediction, it was indeed possible for him to enter Buddhism from Daoism.

Standing in place, after thinking for a moment, Tao Qian suddenly crushed all the numerous distracting thoughts that had begun to emerge in his heart due to Duobao's words.

With a light stamp of his foot, the 999 strands of Immortal Spirit Qi within him surged out immediately, and the Innate Dao Seed leapt out directly from the top of his head. Under the radiance, Tao Qian's Taishang Spirit Treasure No-leak Body also revealed itself. In an instant, within the auspicious cloud and mist, a true practitioner of the Dao road appeared.

With the Spirit Treasure Seal in one hand, Tao Qian spoke with the Nine True Spirit Sound:

"The disciple wishes to refine whatever Dharma he wants to refine."

"But if you, Master, continue to play these trifling tricks, I won't be able to restrain the restlessness within me, and right here I will have to build that Dao Foundation."

Such a scene, such a spectacle.

Finally made Duobao Daoist's face become solemn at first, then he laughed heartily:

"Good, good, to refine whatever Dharma you wish to refine."

"This thought is excellent. Carry this thought with you, and your Dao Foundation can be made."

As the sound of his voice fell, Duobao Daoist suddenly swung his sleeve.

Suddenly, the scenery of heaven and earth changed dramatically.

The sky above the Penglai Sea was originally decorated with auspicious clouds drifting and colorful mist flowing.

But at this abrupt moment, the sky darkened dramatically, many peculiar stars flickered, and this small heavenly realm seemed to directly border another world. A part of something resembling a gigantic tree trunk or a huge tentacle pierced through the star membrane, extending into this realm.

As it slowly descended over the Penglai Sea, branches spread and wrapped around, bursting with light, seeming to condense into one mysterious cave mansion after another filled with starlight.

If you follow it upwards into the deeper radiance, there seems to be many Immortal Palace Jade Towers and the dwellings of divine beings.

Any living creature in this world that catches a glimpse would surely give rise to the desire to explore and crave.

Tao Qian had time only to look twice, without the chance to do anything, before he was swept up by his Master with a wave of the hand.

At the same time, his Master's final words reached his ears:

"This is a piece of the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree's root from our Spirit Treasure Sect; all the disciples of our sect build their Foundation on it."

"My good disciple has a strong and steadfast Dao heart, and building the Foundation should pose no issues."

"Just remember, you mustn't let any flaw appear in your No-leak Dharma body, not even the slightest crack."

"If there is a leak, it will all leak out.

"Also, that Spirit Treasure Immortal Spirit Qi is extremely good, but you must not be greedy for too much."

"For every aspect of cultivation, there is a price to be paid."

"You need to weigh carefully whether you can afford that price."

With the final word from Duobao Daoist, Tao Qian's mind instantly filled with a Dharma filled with profound truths and vital acupoints.

In a moment, he knew that this was the Spirit Treasure Foundation Establishment Method for which Tao Qian had longed.

As he understood the Sublime Dharma, his body was already completely detached from the earth and sky, and suddenly he stood upon the roots of the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree that had come from the Outer Realm, piercing through the star membrane and hanging over the Penglai Sea.

Although called "root tendrils" by Duobao Daoist, what Tao Qian saw in front of him was clearly a wonderland.

Starlight twinkled and shone all around, surrounded by auspicious clouds and mists; while it lacked some auspicious beasts such as Immortal Cranes and Immortal Deer for adornment, the serene image made one want to immerse oneself within it.

Following the memory passed on by Duobao Daoist, Tao Qian knew that the way for the disciples of the Spirit Treasure Sect to establish their Foundation was to choose a suitable cave mansion here, to retreat and swallow the Spirit Treasure Immortal Spirit Qi, and to fill his No-leak Body.

"As expected of the Twelve Major Daoist Sects!"

"Who would have thought that Foundation building would be done in the sky."

"And what kind of Exotic Treasure is the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree, if just a part of its root is so immense and massive, what about the main body?"

Tao Qian muttered a couple of sentences and then strolled forward.

He'd not walked far when a mass of cloud and mist, full of Immortal Spirit Qi, bulged out to his right.

Tao Qian reached out to dispel the clouds and mist, and indeed, where the light emanated, there appeared to be a delicate Cave Mansion. On the outside, like a verdant tree hollow; inside, there seemed to be a pool of starlight, an Immortal Pond, its surface naturally generating a mist of cloud and mist, truly like the dwelling of an Immortal.

But on closer inspection, did this cave mansion already have a master?

Chapter 175: Flawless Becomes Flawed, Three Immortals of Miraculous Tree Devour the Vital Essence

Tao Qian fluttered away the clouds and mist to reveal the Linglong Cave Mansion, where, in the ethereal Immortal Pond, a Daoist figure was sitting in meditation.

Just as he was about to apologize and retreat, the rosy clouds and ethereal mist within the cave seemed to breathe, suddenly withdrawing back into the Immortal Pond.

This allowed Tao Qian to see the corpse seated in the pool waters.

It was unexpectedly a female cultivator. She possessed a delicate and pretty face, eyes tightly shut, naked, with her jet-black hair cascading down, her skin white as snow. If it weren't for Tao Qian's perception sensing not the slightest hint of life from her body, he might have mistaken her for being immersed in a bath or in cultivation.

Tao Qian, with his knowledge, cultivation, and combat capabilities, was far beyond what any ordinary Qi Refining Realm cultivator could compare to.

Even without touching, he could discern the female cultivator's state using his own senses.

She had long died, the time of her demise unknown. The reason her body had remained so well-preserved was probably due to the "Spirit Treasure Immortal Pond."

"Master once said, 'The disciples of Spirit Treasure Sect establish their foundation here.'"

"That is to say, this one must have been one of my sect siblings, at least she was a senior sister, dead because of a failed Foundation Establishment?"

Tao Qian frowned, thinking.

Suddenly, his eyes shifted, and he saw on the wall of the cave emerald-script etched by sharp sword light, leaving behind several lines of elegant and ancient characters:

"My name is Li Xiuqing, who encountered my Master, Peony Immortal, on the night before my marriage."

"Master taught me patiently, and I diligently practiced cultivation, one day achieving a No-leak Body, planning to establish my Dao Foundation in this pond."

"Alas, my greed was too much, my No-leak Body leaked, and I lost all my progress, deserving to die here."

Though the words held no anger, they were filled with sorrow.

Tao Qian instantly understood; clearly, this senior sister who perished here, unknown in which year, was named Li Xiuqing.

Her death resulted from being too greedy during her practice, which caused her No-leak Body to fail, leading not only to the abandonment of her previous achievements but also to the loss of her life.

However, why?

Why does Spirit Treasure Sect treat the remains of their disciples this way? Not gathering them up, but instead leaving them here forever?

Tao Qian stood at the entrance of the cave and, after a moment of contemplation, paid his respects to the remains of his senior sister before stepping back into the clouds and mist.

"There are many more caves here; naturally, there is no need to compete with a deceased senior sister, so I shall seek another."

No sooner had he muttered this than Tao Qian took seven or eight steps.

To both his left and right, stars and clouds began to swell out, each shining over Tao Qian's body.

After consideration, Tao Qian first went to the left.

"Hmm?"

As usual, he dispersed the clouds and mist, and the sight inside caused Tao Qian to exclaim in surprise.

It was still a Linglong Cave Mansion, decorated with even more opulent and ornate objects, but the crucial element remained the Spirit Treasure Immortal Pond.

At this moment, in the pond, there was also a corpse, this time a male cultivator, similarly sitting upright, stark naked, eyes tightly closed, devoid of life, not even leaving behind a couple of parting words.

Tao Qian immediately turned to the right, and as expected, there was a corpse in the pond on that side too.

It was an old cultivator with white hair and beard, who had left his final words on the wall of the cave:

"In my youth, I left home to seek immortality, and at the age of eighty, I was fortunate to meet my Master Peng, who did not despise my dull talent and took me in."

"I had hoped to establish my Dao Foundation, revert to youth, and cultivate sublime methods. Alas, my myriad distractions were too substantial, my No-leak Body leaked, unfit for creation, unfit indeed."

Reading this farewell filled with reluctance, Tao Qian suddenly had a guess.

Could it be that in each of these caves in the front, all were in such a state, all leaving behind the remains of seniors who failed in Foundation Establishment?

Although Spirit Treasure Sect took away items like Storage Treasure Bags, they did not deal with the corpses, leaving them in place as a warning to future generations?

"Seek immortality and ask the Dao, all to pursue longevity."

"Yet the Dao path is cruel, and a mere misstep leads to both death and the annihilation of one's Dao."

After sighing over this phrase, Tao Qian also paid his respects to this old predecessor and continued moving forward.

What he saw next confirmed his speculation.

Along the way, in every cave he encountered, there were almost always corpses present, each sitting naked in the Spirit Treasure Immortal Pond.

Some left final words, while others did not.

Not only were there Human Clan Cultivators, but there were also devil beasts and Mountain Spirits and Ghosts, among others.

The cause of death was the same: Foundation Establishment failure!

Seeing this scene after scene of tragedy, Tao Qian couldn't help but feel a heaviness in his heart.

Although he had long known that the path of cultivation was fraught with danger, each stage was a life-and-death test for cultivators.

One misstep would lead to a violent death.

And this Foundation Establishment stage was especially pivotal and perilous.

What is Foundation Establishment?

For Spirit Treasure Cultivators at the peak of Qi Refinement, it represented not just the next realm but also a significant barrier.

Successfully laying the Foundation allows one to transcend the ordinary world.

Thus, when Spirit Treasure Cultivators reach this point, they need to absorb as much Immortal Spirit Qi into their bodies as possible with their Spirit Treasure No-leak Body, under the premise that the more, the better, provided no leaks occur.

This is because, once Spirit Treasure Cultivators step into the Foundation Establishment Realm, they can no longer absorb Immortal Spirit Qi. They must close their No-leak Body and refine themselves internally and externally to create that Transcendent Taoist Body.

Thus, they can leap directly into the Transcend Mortality Realm.

The key to Spirit Treasure Cultivators absorbing Immortal Spirit Qi lies in these cave accessible Immortal Ponds, which are condensed from Immortal Spirit Qi and connected to one another as if they were the veins of the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree roots.

To establish the Dao Foundation to the greatest extent, naturally, they must strip off their clothes, without any entanglements or obstructions, and sit in the pond to draw Immortal Qi from the Spirit Treasure Immortal Veins.

But once it started, there was no stopping.

Should a problem arise in the middle, it could be fatal.

Why is that?

When Tao Qian came up, Duobao Daoist had specially reminded him not to be greedy and to prevent his No-leak Body from developing leaks.

For once there were leaks, they would completely drain away.

Tao Qian walked towards an unoccupied Cave Mansion while pondering in his heart.

Suddenly, a thought struck Tao Qian's mind, giving rise to doubts.

"Why did all these seniors die from failed Foundation Establishment? It's understandable, but why are all their death states exactly the same, so peaceful and tranquil?"

"If a No-leak Body developed leaks, while it's not exactly a horrifying torture, to watch one's cultivation drain away surely many would mutate and fall, their deaths should differ, shouldn't they?"

"Why are they so identical? Could it be that the Sect has helped in handling this?"

With this question in mind, Tao Qian saw the corpse of a former peer from the Alien Species in one of the Immortal Ponds within a Cave Mansion.

He was a Snake Demon who had entered the Dao, with his original form being a White-Scaled Giant Snake. Even in death, he appeared lifelike, as if the most exquisitely carved statue in the world.

The only unseemly factor was the predecessor's corpse lying face down.

Seeing this, Tao Qian didn't immediately retreat. Instead, he gave an apology and stepped forward to prop up the corpse of this Alien Species senior brother.

As Tao Qian's hands touched the snake's body in an instant, only he knew what kind of Record information burst forth in his mind.

Uncharacteristically, Tao Qian lost his composure.

A flicker of horror passed through his eyes; he sensed something the next moment, abruptly turned his head, and looked outside the Cave Mansion, shouting, "Who is there? Show yourself."

Almost as soon as Tao Qian's words fell, the misty glow unexpectedly stirred, and three different non-human figures materialized.

While they were non-human, aside from some unique limbs, the rest of their bodies were dressed like the Human Clan.

One was an old man in a thick yellow robe with a sharp mouth and monkey cheeks, his small mung bean eyes filled with slyness.

One was a youth in a black gauze dress, with a dark complexion, holding an oil-paper umbrella embroidered with big Cicadas.

And a woman wearing a gorgeous dress, a floral crown upon her head, with wings growing from her back.

Clearly, all three were of the Devil Species, but they bore no Demonic Qi, instead exuding a very rich Immortal Spirit Qi.

Ordinary people would mistake them for Devil Immortals.

Discovered by Tao Qian, they remained calm, and after appearing, they all bowed to Tao Qian, saying,

"The Three Immortals of Miraculous Tree pay respects to this Young Master."

"May we inquire what commands the Young Master has for calling upon us?"

Hearing these two sentences, Tao Qian seemed to be provoked to laughter.

After propping the predecessor's White-Scaled Giant Snake's relic upright, Tao Qian walked out of the Cave Mansion and stood in front of the three demons, scoffing,

"Me call you? Weren't you three Devils hiding in the tree roots, spying on me?"

"If just now I hadn't gone to support this senior brother's relic and caused your Qi to leak, I wouldn't have caught you."

"Three Immortals of Miraculous Tree? When I came up, my master, Duobao True Monarch, certainly did not mention that this Spirit Treasure Miraculous Tree's roots contained three Devil Immortals."

"I see you three are clearly Evil Demons hiding here, plotting to covertly harm the Disciples of the Spirit Treasure Sect..."

Tao Qian uttered the first few words without the three demons flinching.

But as soon as the words "Duobao True Monarch" were spoken, the three demons' expressions changed.

Almost immediately, they gathered around, each one politely making amends,

"It's a misunderstanding, a huge misunderstanding."

"We couldn't imagine the Young Master to be a disciple of the true lord, like a flood washing the Dragon King temple, one's own kin are not recognized."

"Young Master, do not be upset. Since you are a Disciple of the true lord, during the Foundation Establishment, we three immortals will surely lend you a helping hand."

"Spirit Treasure Immortal Spirit Qi will be more than sufficient."

"Absolutely, with the assistance of us Three Immortals of the Miao Tree, Young Master will certainly lay most vigorous Dao Foundation."

These three demons were showing off their flattery.

Tao Qian still scoffed coldly, then even more impatiently interrupted,

"I don't wish to die, how dare I let you three Devils assist me? What assistance do you speak of?"

"Just like you did to the relics of my predecessors—drain their Essence Blood and Primordial Spirits and swallow them into your bellies, leaving only their quiet, dead husks soaked in this Immortal Pond as a display?"

Unexpectedly, the three demons were taken aback, not anticipating Tao Qian to reveal such an alarming truth so suddenly.

That was the Record information that burst forth in Tao Qian's mind the instant he touched the remains of the Snake Cultivator.

"Relics of Spirit Treasure Cultivators... perished during Foundation Establishment... their Essence Blood and Primordial Spirits depleted by the Yellow Aphid Immortal, Black Cicada Immortal, and Flower Moth Immortal."

This first Record, with a slight connection of the dots, suffice to send chills down Tao Qian's spine.

There was almost no other possibility!

Tao Qian recalled the predecessors he had seen along the way in each Cave Mansion, whose relics had failed Foundation Establishment.

Their death states were uniform, peacefully and serenely sitting in the Immortal Ponds.

Initially, Tao Qian was relieved that the predecessors had not suffered before dying, considering it a fortunate matter.

But now, it was clear what happened before their deaths remained uncertain.

Yet their Essence Blood and Primordial Spirits after death likely entered the bellies of these three demons.

Chapter 176: Tao Qian Reveals His Taishang Form, The Nine True Daoist Chants Tempt the Devil Immortal

Tao Qian purposefully revealed the name of Duobao True Monarch, clearly aiming to borrow some prestige, first to intimidate the Three Demon Immortals of enigmatic origin before making plans.

By pinning the label of Evil Demons on them, and then suddenly revealing the truth, he hoped to bluff them into exposing their own roots.

Such actions were naturally because of the future Record glimpsed by Tao Qian.

These Three Demon Immortals were indeed called the "Three Immortals of the Miraculous Tree," and they indeed had not secretly harmed the Spirit Treasure Disciples who had come for Foundation Establishment.

However, why did they drain all the Essence Blood and Primordial Spirit from the dead disciples, leaving only an empty husk?

And, why did his own master, when sending people up, not reveal the existence of these Three Immortals of the Miraculous Tree?

If one were to say that Duobao Daoist did not know, Tao Qian would be the first to disbelieve it.

"My master excels at meticulous calculation and prediction. When sending me up he simply warned me not to be greedy, to think clearly about whether I could afford the price of cultivation, never mentioning these Three Immortals of the Miraculous Tree."

"Was he confident that I could handle them myself?"

"Or is he calculating something else?"

"Although I just said that I was delaying my Foundation Establishment to show my Dao Heart, if I keep delaying like this, the effect of the 'Spirit Treasure Nourishing Spirit Technique' is really about to pass."

These thoughts flashed through Tao Qian's mind.

When the Three Immortals of the Miraculous Tree heard his confrontational words, their expressions changed, and the warm and courteous demeanor vanished. They all stopped what they were doing and looked at Tao Qian with an impatient and indifferent gaze.

The one who was clearly the "Yellow Aphid Immortal," with his sharp mouth and monkey cheeks, the old man in the yellow robe, hunched his body and took a step back, with his hands tucked into his sleeves. In a hoarse voice he said:

"We treated the Young Master with respect because of the reputation of the True Monarch. Yet it seems the Young Master groundlessly harbors malice against us. Do you think by branding us as Evil Demons, you can humiliate the Three Immortals of the Miraculous Tree?"

After the old man finished speaking, the dark-skinned youth holding an oiled-paper umbrella also snorted coldly.

He too took a step back, lifting his head and looking askance at Tao Qian, he said icily:

"The reputation of the True Monarch is indeed grand, but although he can govern the Spirit Treasure Mountain Gate, he cannot control this place. We, submerged in the tree, are under the jurisdiction of the Miraculous Tree Great Venerable."

"Saying that we hide here and secretly harm the Spirit Treasure Disciples?"

"That really is as laughable as a tall tale. We tidy up the Immortal Veins day and night, aiding your Spirit Treasure Disciples in Foundation Establishment. There are some disciples who do not diligently cultivate, who have excessive greed, or perish here due to other causes. Just because we take the Essence and Blood they leave behind after death, it's outrageous to wrongfully accuse us of harming them in secret."

This Black Cicada Immortal spoke even less politely, his face not hiding his disgust for Tao Qian at all.

However, after thinking for a while, the third one, the Flower Moth Immortal, regained a pleasant demeanor. The woman first gave Tao Qian a courteous bow and then spoke softly:

"Perhaps the True Monarch simply forgot to mention our existence, which led the Young Master to misunderstand us."

"That's also normal. The Miraculous Tree Great Venerable has countless roots, and within each section of the roots are different Demon Immortals serving. The True Monarch is busy with myriad duties; how could he remember us three nameless beings?"

"Since the True Monarch forgot to mention it, why not let me do the honors."

"So that the Young Master may understand!"

"The Miraculous Tree Great Venerable and the Spirit Treasure Mountain Gate are not in a master-servant relationship. When a Spirit Treasure disciple borrows from the Immortal Veins for Foundation Establishment, they are free to leave after success. However, should they fail, leak, or perish with their cultivation dissipated and souls gone to the netherworld, all their mortal possessions can be returned to the Mountain Gate, but the relic that once breathed Immortal Veins must be left behind... This rule was established when the Spirit Treasure sect was founded, and it's well known to all at the Mountain Gate."

After Flower Moth Immortal finished speaking, Tao Qian couldn't help but freeze in surprise.

Seeing this, the Three Demon Immortals seemed to have an epiphany, thinking to themselves, "This Young Master is indeed astute, but it seems like the True Monarch has tricked him. We've long heard of Duobao True Monarch's lax nature, and now we've truly witnessed it."

Glancing at each other, the Three Demon Immortals suddenly all smiled, and then bowed their hands in unison, taking turns to speak.

"Young Master, rest assured and proceed with your Foundation Establishment here. The first rule of this tree: Before a Spirit Treasure disciple dies, no Devil Immortal may harm them, not even a single hair."

"The second rule of this tree: When a Spirit Treasure disciple is undergoing Foundation Establishment, Devil Immortals must attend by their side, grooming the Immortal Veins and supplying Immortal Spirit Qi, but they must not disturb."

"The third rule of this tree: Each Spirit Treasure disciple shall inherit a Cave Mansion and an Immortal Pond, and whether they can establish a foundation or not is entirely up to their personal cultivation."

After stating these three rules,

It was then Yellow Aphid Immortal's turn to speak, his old face grinning and revealing sharp, white teeth as he sighed to Tao Qian,

"These three rules are absolutely unbreakable here."

"Especially the first and second, they are directly branded onto our True Souls as soon as we Devil Immortals enter the Dao and develop Spiritual Wisdom."

"If violated, we will die violently in an instant."

"Young Master can also think about it, we Devil Immortals residing on this tree do not hold high status. If we really attacked Spirit Treasure disciples during their Foundation Establishment, would the nobles and Immortals inside the Mountain Gate let us off the hook?"

"As for us taking the essence and blood of these deceased Spirit Treasure disciples, it is also a reluctant act. If we did not do so, the Young Master would not be seeing a calm visage, but rather a terrifying scene of a group of demons dancing wildly."

"Although it is said that Spirit Treasure cultivators are much stronger in mental state and cultivation than other cultivators in the Cultivation World,"

"Once Foundation Establishment fails and the No-leak Dharma Body starts leaking, facing the imminent end of body and Dao, Spirit Treasure cultivators will mutate and fall just the same."

"Although the Miraculous Tree Great Venerable would take action to ensure these disciples pass peacefully, the task of collecting the relics falls to us lowly Devil Immortals."

With the dialogue up to this point, the misunderstanding between the two parties was obviously cleared up.

However, Tao Qian still had some unresolved doubts in his mind.

The key issue was the subtle premonition bubbling up from his heart—the spur of the moment feelings were sending some rather ill omens.

However, on the surface, Tao Qian did not show any signs of distress. Instead, he timely displayed a hint of an embarrassed expression and respectfully said to the Three Demon Immortals with a bow,

"In that case, it was I who misunderstood the three of you. Ashamed, deeply ashamed, I should make amends. Coincidentally, today I acquired quite a few treasures. Please, don't be shy, come choose one or two."

As Tao Qian spoke, he enthusiastically stepped forward and directly grabbed the hands of Yellow Aphid Immortal and Black Cicada Immortal.

Pulling the two Immortals along, he intended to let them pick out some Magical Treasures to make amends.

As soon as Tao Qian made his move, the tension that was as tight as drawn bows instantly improved. The Three Demon Immortals exchanged glances, and it was Yellow Aphid Immortal who spoke up.

The elder repeatedly waved his hands, a distressed expression on his face, saying,

"Young Master, you're too kind, truly too kind."

"It's not that we fail to recognize kindness," said the Yellow Aphid Immortals from the trees, "but the cultivation method of us Demon Immortals is somewhat special. Almost all magic skills and treasures in the cultivation world are of no use to us."

"Even if the Young Master brought out the Spirit Treasure Root Skill or Dao Artifacts and Immortal Treasures, we still couldn't use them."

As he spoke, a look of sorrow and unwillingness emerged involuntarily on the face of the Yellow Aphid Immortal.

The Black Cicada Immortal youth had a similar expression.

Only the Flower Moth Immortal reacted the quickest, swiftly suppressing the look of resentment and speaking hastily,

"Alright, now that the misunderstanding is resolved, let's not delay the Young Master's Foundation Establishment. I see the aura of Immortals bubbling within the Young Master, if we don't establish the foundation soon, I'm afraid trouble will ensue."

"Indeed, indeed!"

"Quickly, this way please, Young Master. We have already selected an excellent Cave Mansion for you."

As they spoke, the Three Demon Immortals began casting spells.

Suddenly, the clouds and starlight in front of them began to stir, and in an instant, a pathway of starlight opened up.

At the end of the path, an Immortal Cave Mansion appeared.

The mansion seemed to be at the heart of this place. Along the way, there were all sorts of extraordinary, mundane, immortal flowers and unusual grasses. Verdant vines meandered and intertwined, and amidst the undulating clouds and starlight, a delicate aperture revealed itself, extending in all directions, with exceedingly resplendent and splendid Spirit Light radiating from everywhere, all converging and entering into a pool of misty Immortal Pond.

Tao Qian had already seen many cave mansions around here, but none could compare to this one.

Most importantly, there were no naked corpses sitting cross-legged inside.

"Good!"

After resolving the misunderstanding, Tao Qian seemed to have no grudges against the Three Demon Immortals.

On seeing this excellent Cave Mansion, he immediately praised it and then stepped forward, entering the mansion in no time.

With the Spirit Light flowing out of his body, obscuring his form, he took off his cumbersome clothes and, following the example of many of his predecessors, sat down in the Spirit Treasure Immortal Pond.

In almost an instant, Tao Qian felt an extremely intense Immortal Spirit Qi.

All he had to do now was to cultivate according to the method given by Duobao Daoist, and it wouldn't be long before he could successfully establish his foundation.

Seeing that Tao Qian was about to start cultivating, the Three Demon Immortals exchanged glances, then congratulated him in unison,

"Good for you, Young Master. We, the three beings, wish you a solid Dao Foundation and a bright path ahead."

Having said that, the Three Demon Immortals tried hard to hide the look of regret in their eyes and turned to leave and hide themselves.

But at that moment, Tao Qian's voice came again.

"Hold on!"

"Hm?"

The Three Demon Immortals turned back in confusion.

The next moment, they were all rounding their eyes, unbelievably staring at Tao Qian.

For Tao Qian had now revealed his Innate Dao Seed, the Nine Extremes Immortal Spirit, and the Taishang Spirit Treasure No-leak Body.

While the Three Demon Immortals were stunned, Tao Qian couldn't help but show off,

"The three of you see, my talent is not too shabby. I have the Innate Dao Seed within me; I refined these nine hundred and ninety-nine strands of Spirit Treasure Immortal Spirit Qi during the Qi Refining Realm, and also acquired the Taishang Treasure No-leak Body."

"One can imagine, I will likely need a gigantic amount of Immortal Spirit Qi when I am establishing my foundation."

"Just now, a rough sensing tells me this Immortal Pond might not be enough for my use."

"I wonder if the Three Demon Immortals of Miraculous Tree have other methods, whether the third rule can be somewhat flexible."

"For the sake of my path, I ask the three demons to surely aid me."

Unexpectedly, after Tao Qian finished speaking,

The Three Demon Immortals of Miraculous Tree fell into a brief silence.

Moreover, they all bowed their heads in unison, as if trying hard to hide the light in their eyes, completely unaware that they were beginning to emit an unusual aura, which Tao Qian's keen senses detected clearly.

The first to respond, still, was the Flower Moth Immortal, whose resolve seemed stronger than the other two demons.

Even so, her voice became somewhat hoarse and trembling, and she emphatically refused, "No, rules must not be discarded. Please, Young Master, do not make things difficult for us."

After saying this, the Flower Moth Immortal immediately tried to leave with the other two demons.

But before she could move them, they seemed to sense the unique fragrance belonging to a top-grade talented Taoist Body and couldn't help revealing greedy looks in their eyes.

The next moment, their ears suddenly heard the Dao sounds emitted by the Nine True Spirit Sound.

It was utterly pure, naturally filled with the essence of the Dao.

To demons, it was akin to a siren song.

But to the Three Demon Immortals of Miraculous Tree, it was filled with an allure that was fundamentally irresistible.

"Three demon Dao friends,"

"I once heard from a senior expert that when it comes to matters of the Dao Path, no matter who it is, they must fight for it."

"Only by fighting, and winning the struggle, can one have hope on the Dao Path."

"It is not that I wish to trouble the three of you, but my talent is indeed exceptional, and just one Immortal Pond is probably not enough."

"Please help me, and I shall surely repay you one day."

With these words, Tao Qian completely shattered the mental defenses of the Three Demon Immortals of Miraculous Tree.

Chapter 177: Three Yellow Aphid Immortals Seek the Dao, Tao Qian Devours the Dried-Up Immortal Veins

Spirit Treasure Miraculous Tree, within A Rosy Cloud Cave Mansion.

The Innate Dao Seed shone brightly, casting its light upon the Taishang Spiritual Treasure No-leak Body, with Immortal Spirit Qi melding into the misty clouds, transforming the Cave Mansion into what seemed an Immortal Secret Realm. A young Immortal, naked as the day he was born, sat cross-legged in the center of the pond, expelling Daoist True Sound from his mouth, requesting the aid of the three Demon Immortals.

Amidst this scene, Tao Qian could even hear the sound of the Three Immortals of the Miraculous Tree covertly swallowing saliva.

Tao Qian sighed silently in his heart, opting not to say anything further but merely waited quietly for the three Immortals' decision.

Although the three Demon Immortals weren't Outer Realm Demons, their bodies were born differently. Watching Tao Qian reveal the Innate Dao Seed and Taishang No-leak Body, beholding this extraordinary Immortal physique, and smelling the rich fragrance, their spirit and Divine Soul both endured torment, struggling with all their might against the greed that kept arising within them.

Their hesitation was not due to a conscientious kindness, but rather the identity of this young man before them.

Not yet realizing it, the three demons had lost their natural bearing, becoming timid, their heads bowed as they withdrew into the rosy clouds—using them to hide the fierce light and hostility that flickered in their eyes.

They were born together, from one source, their silent understanding of one another hardly needed expressing.

A mere glance exchanged would inform them of each other's thoughts; no need for such Divine Power Skills as Secret Transmission.

Yellow Aphid Immortal's eyes shone with the fiercest hostility, Black Cicada Immortal was next; Flower Moth Immortal managed to struggle somewhat.

This Female Fairy appeared tense, constantly plucking at the down on her body while using her gaze to stop the other two Immortals, her voice seemingly resonating from nowhere directly into their hearts:

"Brother Yellow Aphid, Brother Black Cicada, you must restrain yourselves, do not act rashly. If we harm this child, even if we succeed, we three Immortals will surely die without a doubt."

As soon as her thought arose, the other two Immortals immediately responded.

The Yellow Aphid Immortal twisted its head, making a creaking sound, its thoughts most sinister:

"Flower Moth, you worry too much; we are Demon Immortals born from the Miraculous Tree. We don't have to consider those Daoists of Spirit Treasure Mountain, they cannot do anything to us. This boy is arrogant and prideful, wasting such top-notch talent, but what he said is indeed correct, it concerns the Dao Path, and it must be contested—and we must win."

Black Cicada Immortal toyed with the oil-paper umbrella in its hands, the black cicadas painted on it almost seemed to come to life, ready to emit shrill cries:

"That's right, Sister Flower Moth, do not forget that although we Demon Immortals of the Miraculous Tree have long lifespans, we are forever trapped upon this tree, endlessly laboring to groom Immortal Veins, what kind of life is that? How different is it from the servants mentioned in the Mortal World?"

After the dark-skinned youth spoke, Flower Moth Immortal looked at him, ready to say more.

However, immediately, the Yellow Aphid Immortal lifted its head, its eyes a blood-red, its thoughts resonating thunderously in both their minds.

"Don't hesitate any longer; the opportunity for attaining the Dao is right before us."

"Can those Disciples of the Lingbao cultivate and question the Dao, and yet we cannot?"

"Our path as Demon Immortals is just different from theirs."

"We do not require those Divine Power Skills and Exotic Skill and Magical Treasures, initially thinking that this would be all for life. But that day, we couldn't resist and devoured the Essence Blood from an accidental death of a Spirit Treasure Disciple, and immediately realized that everything before was in vain. These days, the Great Venerable's control over us three has weakened."

"If we can devour this child, maybe today we could break free from our bounds, roam freely between heaven and earth, truly becoming carefree Demon Immortals."

"No more need to labor meticulously like the other Demon Immortals among the roots, slaving away, truly it's most pitiful."

"Flower Moth, Black Cicada, Brother asks you, do you desire the Dao?"

Almost instantly, as Yellow Aphid Immortal voiced these thoughts, the eyes of the other two also turned into a crimson blood color.

Quickly, the three Immortals exchanged glances once more, smiles curling on their lips, and soon, the hostility in their eyes dissipated.

Turning around, they said in unison to Tao Qian in the pond:

"Since Young Master has so requested, we should not refuse outright. The third rule indeed allows for some flexibility. Inside this Immortal Vein, there are three Secret Acupoints, which are the birthplaces of

the three of us; if we guard these acupoints, keeping the Immortal Vein unobstructed, Young Master can freely absorb the Immortal Spiritual Qi to fill the No-leak Body."

"We are willing to do this, but Young Master, you must promise us that if the Great Venerable punishes us afterwards, you must implore the True Monarch to speak on our behalf."

"Agreed!"

Tao Qian replied almost immediately.

As his words fell, the three Immortals rose into the air, and suddenly, verdant roots spread and extended, instantly creating three tree-hole Secret Acupoints. The Immortals seated themselves, and the starlight within the clouds became incredibly intense, the Immortal ponds throughout the Cave Mansion began to connect, bubbling and even flowing slowly.

Tao Qian felt it most vividly, the Immortal Spiritual Qi originally in the pond had a certain limit.

But now, he clearly sensed an incredibly vast current of Immortal Spiritual Qi flowing towards him, overwhelming and cleansing him.

Around him, besides the Spirit Treasure Immortal Spiritual Qi, there were no other mixed Source Qi.

Within this Immortal Pond, cultivating no longer required the strenuous refining of Source Qi, nor did the Innate Dao Seed need to collide with the Great Dao's doors.

Tao Qian merely had to operate the Foundation Establishment Method, absorbing Immortal Spiritual Qi, filling his No-Leak Body.

Regarding the meaning of "filling", it is up to the Spirit Treasure Disciple to contemplate.

If too shallow, Foundation Establishment might be achieved, but Transcending Mortality would be hopeless.

If overdone, causing the Taishang Treasure No-leak Body to spring leaks, that would spell certain death.

The reason why many Spirit Treasure Disciples fail to grasp the measure within is because when the Spirit Treasure Immortal Spirit Qi floods their bodies, internal demons and external evils such as the Three Corpses and Nine Worms, illnesses, and Outer Realm Demons will all come invading. One misstep could end their lives. To generally grasp the measure is already considered a prodigious talent.

But Tao Qian was the exception.

He had just sat down to meditate when his mind immediately triggered a perception, and a Record appeared: "Spirit Treasure Immortal Spirit... can exempt from the invasion of external evils, Taishang Treasure No-leak Body is now exempt from the breeding of internal demons."

It was this Record that allowed Tao Qian to have no concerns. After guessing his master's "calculation," he cooperated directly.

After fooling the Three Demon Immortals into his Secret Acupoint, the effect of the Spirit Treasure Nourishing Spirit Technique also just so happened to have passed.

Suddenly, the Qi mechanisms within Tao Qian's body all boiled over, his long-suppressed Cultivation Realm could no longer be contained—especially now as he sat at the Immortal Pond, with the Immortal Veins surging through him, he felt like a starving glutton faced with a table full of sumptuous food, or an impatient man seeing a Beautiful Lady in the nude. How could he possibly hold himself back?

"Let's begin."

With a thought, Tao Qian disregarded everything else.

Eyes closed and spirit concentrated, he straightaway began circulating the Foundation Establishment Method.

He had already reached Perfect Merit, and with the aid of Human Dao Fortune, those spells that seemed difficult and arduous to other Spirit Treasure Disciples—Tao Qian only needed to recite them once to achieve Perfect Merit, flawlessly, and in an instant, he thoroughly opened a crucial Spiritual Acupoint, and a seemingly endless suction force was born within his body.

The next moment, a magnificent and unusual scene unfolded in the Cave Mansion—the Immortal Pond boiled, creating layers of mist. Qingfeng breezes wafted sweet rain, while dazzling clouds filled the

cavern walls, even producing delightful Immortal music upon collision. Then, streams of Immortal Spirit Qi began to gather from all around and pour into Tao Qian's body like fine threads.

Now, with the Taishang Spirit Treasure No-leak Body fully opened, every Spiritual Acupoint welcomed any approaching Qi, absorbing all the Immortal Spirit Qi into his body.

Ordinarily, a single Immortal Pond was enough for a Spirit Treasure Disciple.

The Three Immortals of Miraculous Tree originally thought that although this young man was somewhat special, at most he might need one or two more Immortal Ponds.

Therefore, when they saw the pond drying up not much later, they didn't think much of it, only continuously grooming the Immortal Veins to send more Immortal Spirit Qi his way.

But soon, the three immortals realized simultaneously that Tao Qian's body had become an "insatiable pit". No matter how much Immortal Spirit Qi they sent over, it was all devoured completely and without any sign of leakage.

They silently estimated that in just half an hour, this young man had drained the equivalent of at least five Immortal Ponds worth of Immortal Spirit Qi.

Seeing this, the three immortals were still pleased with themselves, secretly thinking: "This is good, this is very good. We never expected this little Daoist to be so special. It's no wonder he was chosen by Duobao Daoist. If we can consume his Essence Blood, we will surely break free from the shackles of the Great Venerable and be free to roam the Dao Path, carefree in the world."

The three Demon Immortals rejoiced triumphantly, and again redoubled their efforts in grooming the Immortal Veins.

Time passed unknowingly until a shocking change occurred within the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree that stretched down to the Penglai Sea.

One by one, the sparkling Cave Mansions began to dry up, and the many rosy clouds and mists dispersed. Now a "Cloud and Rosy Cloud Immortal Vein" was fully exposed, as the vigorous flow of Immortal Spirit Qi, like a torrent, completely overwhelmed and flushed the three demons before finally converging into Tao Qian's body.

This change caused the three demons to suddenly come to their senses. When they saw the inner scene of the Miraculous Tree, they were nearly frightened out of their wits, and their instinct was to stop the flow all at once.

But now that the Immortal Vein had appeared, its surging could hardly be stopped. Furthermore, the endless suction force from the Taishang No-leak Body acted like a "force," beyond the control of the three immortals. They couldn't stop nor leave, as they had been merged into it, becoming three cyclic points.

The Secret Acupoint that had birthed the three immortals before had now become a prison of death, stealing away their vitality.

Realizing all this, the three Demon Immortals immediately panicked, setting aside all else and crying out:

"Young Master, Young Master, wake up quickly! There's going to be a huge problem—if this segment of the Miraculous Tree's Immortal Vein dries up, all three of us will surely die."

"Young Master, please stop! Our lives are bound with the Immortal Vein. Young Master, you are taking our lives!"

"Returning kindness with enmity, this is returning kindness with enmity!"

The three immortals howled in despair, trying to awaken Tao Qian.

But it appeared as if Tao Qian was completely immersed in his cultivation and paid them no mind.

Almost visible to the naked eye, the three figures, who once seemed like Immortals, were becoming gaunt and twisted, their faces contorting into ferocity.

Soon, amongst the three immortals, Flower Moth Immortal seemed to realize something and immediately changed expression, pleading again:

"Please discern, Young Master, we never harmed any Spirit Treasure Disciples in secret."

"What the Young Master saw—those layers of skin—those were due to inner demons and external evils, greed, lack of diligent cultivation, and other reasons which led to their deaths during Foundation Establishment. We three immortals only took their Essence Blood. We never harmed a Spirit Treasure Disciple, the iron law of the Miraculous Tree Demon Immortals which can never be violated."

Reminded by Flower Moth Immortal, the other two immortals reacted too.

This Young Master had deliberately lured them into the pot. Establishing foundation was true; wanting their lives was also true.

At this juncture of life and death, after repeatedly crying out with no response, the three Demon Immortals had no choice but to confess some truths.

It was Yellow Aphid Immortal who cried incessantly, tears streaming as he said:

"Please, Young Master, spare our lives. We three consumed the Essence Blood of the Spirit Treasure Disciples' remains, breaking our rules, but it was only that. We truly never acted to harm anyone."

"The rules of the Miao Tree do indeed require that the remains of Spirit Treasure Disciples who die during Foundation Establishment be left here. Each section of the Miraculous Tree Roots had been so for years, accumulating countless Spirit Treasure Disciple remains. If the Young Master doesn't believe us, you can verify with the True Monarch."

"The only thing we've concealed is that we couldn't resist the temptation of the Essence Blood some time ago and violated those remains. We're truly remorseful, diligently caring for the bodies to keep them intact as if reborn, hoping for a bit of peace of mind."

"Now retribution has come, and we can say no more. We only ask the Young Master to hand us over to the Great Venerable for punishment, please don't dry up this segment of the Miraculous Tree Immortal Vein."

Chapter 178: Divine General Leaves the Golden Rope on the Miraculous Tree, Tao Qian Perfectly Establishes the Dao Foundation

Hearing their cries and wails, as if they were indeed confessing the truth, Tao Qian finally opened his eyes.

He gazed at the three Demon Immortals with a look of lament, as they continued to cry and plead, seemingly completely unaware of their own "transformation."

Only when Tao Qian thought about it, he cast a Spirit Mirror Technique.

In front of the three immortals, a Cloud Light Mirror appeared simultaneously, reflecting their current forms and features.

At first sight, each of the three Demon Immortals had possessed immortal Qi.

But now, within the tree knot cages, each imprisoned a demon.

One was covered in thick yellow wax armor, with disgusting tentacles hanging down, the body covered with armored tumors, and long needle-like feeding appendages—it was the transformation of the Yellow Aphid Immortal.

The second wore pitch-black scale armor, had back-grown membranous wings, sharp claws, and feeding appendages, with a fierce, venom-spraying countenance.

Although the third still appeared in human form, its body was covered with bright phosphorescent wings, white hair, a distorted face, and blood-red eyes, completely resembling that of an Evil Demon.

"Ah!"

Three sharp screams instantly resounded.

Seeing these, the three Demon Immortals could no longer defend themselves. If they hadn't murdered Spirit Treasure Disciples and only drawn essence blood from relics, even if mutations would occur, they wouldn't have been so thorough.

Especially the next moment, the ironclad evidence suddenly emerged.

As Tao Qian devoured the Immortal Veins, many vines on the Miraculous Tree's roots withered away along with the Cave Mansion, thereby revealing many relics that retained the shape of humans, almost confirming the Yellow Aphid Immortal's previous statement.

Yet, not far from Tao Qian, within a Cave Mansion, a demon's corpse suddenly appeared.

The corpse was covered in holes from which various Alien Insects drilled, its face no longer recognizable, tusks sticking out, evil eyes proliferating, and limbs turned into sharp claws. The chest and abdominal flesh peeled back to show an oval meat membrane, marked with a crimson ghost face, as if nurturing some bizarre demonic fetus.

But still, only a shell remained, its essence blood long drained.

Tao Qian looked at the corpse and sighed,

"Your previous allegations were not entirely false. Spirit Treasure Disciples did indeed die during Foundation Establishment, and their relics would remain on this Miraculous Tree. However, unlike other Demon Immortals on the rest of the roots, it was only you three who not long ago broke your vows and entirely consumed all the relics in this area."

"That alone could have been overlooked, but you three tasted the sweetness of essence blood and became unsatisfied with just relics, targeting living disciples."

"You indeed couldn't violate that iron law, but you cleverly exploited the greed of disciples coming for Foundation Establishment, using an excessive amount of Immortal Spiritual Qi to forcefully break her No-leak Body, not waiting for the Great Venerable of the Miraculous Tree to intervene, you all rushed up and drained her essence, for by then she was no longer considered a Spirit Treasure Disciple, but rather a class of a demon, causing her death in this Evil Demon form."

"Although it was this senior sister's too great greed, leading to her death and the extinguishing of her path, you three demons have already completely fallen into demonhood, could you possibly think there would be a good end?"

"Even if I weren't here today, you three demons wouldn't survive."

"You mutated and corrupted, causing the death of a Spirit Treasure Disciple, if you were allowed to continue and harm a second one, then the seniors and teachers of Spirit Treasure might as well give up their Immortal cultivation pursuits for losing such face."

"Rest in peace, dying by my hand is a fortune for you three demons."

Exposing the truth, as his words fell, Tao Qian closed his eyes again.

He completely ignored the following cries and pleas of the three Demon Immortals and even seemed deaf to their subsequent curses and insults.

Of course, Tao Qian's words have not been fully said.

His coming here for Foundation Establishment, encountering these three Demon Immortals... was all arranged by Duobao True Monarch.

His first purpose was to have Tao Qian deal with these Fallen Demon Immortals.

The reason for not entrusting this to the Great Venerable of the Miraculous Tree was simple; given his unique status and the peculiar state of the Great Venerable, if really left to his handling, the three demons might still have a slight chance of survival, but it was different with Tao Qian.

These three Immortals of the Miraculous Tree were destined to die.

Even ants try to steal life, let alone three heads of Fallen Demons?

Knowing Tao Qian wouldn't respond, they realized that without resistance, their accounts would truly be settled.

Thus, the three demons simultaneously stopped pleading and after exchanging a glance, they all took action.

The Yellow Aphid Immortal suddenly extended its feeding appendage into the tree wall, beginning to frantically draw the tree's sap, and although it was highly poisonous to him, causing his bowels to rupture not long after, he nonetheless continued relentlessly, seemingly wishing to drain the tree wall dry.

Then, the Black Cicada Immortal suddenly began to emit sharp, terrifying screeches that pierced through the clouds and starlight, unknown where they spread.

While the Flower Moth Immortal continually flapped its membranous wings, releasing storm-like beautiful phosphorous powder, drifting upwards.

It seemed like a signal sent out by the three Demon Immortals!

Or perhaps, Tao Qian's absorption was too ruthless.

After not too long, this section of the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree roots that penetrated the Star Membrane and hung down into the Penglai Sea began to tremble and then, amidst a thunderous explosion, withdrew, as if about to return to another world immediately.

Seeing this scene, Tao Qian showed no reaction, not even stopping his absorption; his No-leak Body was just short of filling up, with Foundation Establishment Realm nearly within reach.

He merely glanced casually at the dying three demons and muttered to himself,

"Killing you is one reason, helping me achieve perfect Foundation Establishment is another."

"Let's see how my master handles it."

Almost at the moment Tao Qian finished speaking,

amid the Penglai Sea, atop a secluded and chilly Immortal Island of majestic and grand landscape, a boisterous voice suddenly echoed,

"Hold on, Great Venerable Miraculous Tree, my dear disciple has not yet established his Dao Foundation."

"He has diligently helped you exterminate three pests, the Great Venerable ought to reward him."

"My disciple merely has a larger appetite, but he has not broken any rules, Great Venerable should not skimp on just one root."

Before his words concluded, clusters of dazzling golden light drifted out from the depths of the Immortal Island.

Within each cluster of light was a golden rope filled with talismans.

Bathed in starlight, these golden ropes instantly extended infinitely, in a moment reaching the sky, tightly binding the withdrawing roots of the Miraculous Tree, the talismans at the ends of the ropes flashing as Golden Armored Divine Generals, resembling Barbaric Giants, leaped out each clutching a golden rope, and then began to contest the strength of the Miraculous Tree's roots.

This tug-of-war undoubtedly created a great commotion.

All across the vast Penglai Sea, the many masters within the thousand Immortal Islands, those Devil Immortal Daoists, all distinctly heard the noise.

They each emerged from their Cave Mansions, either deploying Divine Skills or peering at the scene.

Some, friendly and enthusiastic towards Duobao Daoist, even shouted their offers to help.

But there were quite a few who understood Duobao True Monarch's temperament, like Yunhua Immortal and others,

hearing the noise here, after predicting with fingers, they were both amazed and couldn't help but spit out,

"Merely at Foundation Establishment and yet so fiercely draining the roots of the Great Venerable Miraculous Tree, this nephew disciple of ours is truly remarkable; elder brother indeed stumbled upon a treasure."

"Teacher spoke rightly, did not mistake the Daoist title, elder brother being called Duobao is too appropriate, truly enviable."

"Shameless Duobao, just flaunting your treasured disciple moments ago, yet here we go again?"

"Utilizing the hands of Fallen Demon Immortals to secure unobstructed Immortal Veins for swallowing, then turning around to slay those three demons... This child's disposition and tactics, eerily similar to elder brother's, truly fitting to be master and disciple."

"It seems I need to instruct my disciples, not to underestimate this nephew disciple due to his low Cultivation Realm, to avoid being the subject of plots by this cunning master and disciple duo."

...

The Devil Immortal Daoists looked on in surprise, spitting on Duobao as they watched.

On another part of the Penglai Sea, bathed in the universal starlight, with multicolored clouds rising and the shell-like corners of palaces barely visible, the elegant buildings deep within the serene Shell Palace complex were hosting Yunhua Immortal, serving a gathering of female fairies, amidst the shimmering lights, phoenixes carrying flowers, Qingluan presenting dances, truly a feast of immortals.

But just at that moment, the scenery-spoiling voice of Duobao Daoist came through.

Prompting all the female fairies to simultaneously gaze toward the location of the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree, all possessing extraordinary means, after a few looks they roughly guessed the happenings associated with the Miao Tree roots.

For a moment, this sparked envy among the female fairies towards Duobao Daoist.

Among them, one wearing a green robe, naturally adorned with a Spiritual Treasure Immortal Ring and with a visage young as a maiden, candid by nature, completely forgot Yunhua Immortal was present and

just looked afar at the roots of the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree, her vision capable of penetrating the clouds to see Tao Qian seated in the pond, and even the scene of the near-exhausted Immortal Veins.

Only to hear her voice clicking in amazement, she crisply said,

"If I remember correctly, the last time someone drained a segment of the Great Venerable Miraculous Tree's roots at Foundation Establishment was the reincarnated Wushou Ancestor."

"This child not only matches the Second Generation Ancestors in talent but also shares elder brother's cunning heart, if he also learns the Spirit Treasure Sky Displaying Skill, wouldn't that make him another Duobao True Monarch?"

"I too lack a disciple, how did I not recruit one earlier, with him protecting the Dao in the future, who knows how many calamities could be avoided..."

The green-robed fairy half-spoke, then suddenly felt the atmosphere at the table turn chilly.

Turning back, indeed the female fairies were all holding back their laughter, looking at her with teasing eyes.

Looking up, even Sister Yunhua had a hint of amusement while watching her.

Fortunately, she was quick-witted, haste in revealing a flattering smile to Yunhua Immortal and then deliberately speaking despite sounding harsh, she suggested an idea for Yunhua Immortal,

"Sister Yunhua, don't be angry, regarding schemes, we are indeed not as adept as elder brother."

"But we don't need to scheme, this child already has a deep master-disciple connection with Sister, just get close to him, take extra care of him, give him more benefits."

"I see this child values relationships deeply, given time, he will surely treat Sister as a dear senior."

"In doing so, it's as if gaining another disciple, not differing much from elder brother."

As the green-robed fairy finished, she appeared quite pleased with herself.

Yet unexpectedly, another straightforward fairy followed up immediately,

"Sister Lue, elder brother is adept in schemes, how do you know your plans are not already within his Divination Technique?"

"Perhaps our elder brother's lazy character is acting up again, wanting Sister Yunhua to take on the teaching duties in his stead, to bring up a good disciple for him."

Hearing this, the green-robed fairy's face turned flustered, about to retaliate.

However, just at this moment, Yunhua Immortal, who had been watching the show, suddenly stood up, revealing a dazzling smile, then said,

"Alright, isn't everyone curious to see what the unprecedented disciple chosen by elder brother, fit to Survive Three Calamities, looks like?"

"The child has established his Dao Foundation, let's go and take a look at this rarity, and offer some welcoming gifts."

Chapter 179 Duobao Has a Quirk, Yunhua Gifts Immortal Island (Two Chapters in One)

In the Penglai Sea, a tug-of-war was attracting the attention of Ten Thousand Immortals.

The segment of the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree possessed extraordinary might, capable of moving mountains and filling seas with ease, yet it was rendered helpless with a swallowing fairy thief residing within its Immortal Veins. Such a thief had a No-leak Body that acted like a bottomless pit, devouring Immortal Spiritual Qi. Furthermore, its roots were bound by golden ropes, while a horde of Golden Armored Divine Generals exerted their strength below, grunting vigorously.

As one rose and the other fell, these roots could not be detached.

Until, at a certain moment, a thunderbolt resounded from above, and a dazzling golden light, akin to the blazing Red Sun, flashed by and vanished in an instant.

On that chilling Immortal Island, a rough voice reverberated, "Success, success, thanks to the Great Venerable for your help. One day, this poor Daoist will seek you out for a drink."

As Duobao Daoist finished speaking, a streak of golden light fell upon the roots.

And with that, the golden ropes that had bound the Miao Tree fell away. The Spirit Treasure Miao Tree, now free and paying no heed to Duobao Daoist's superficial words, retracted its greatly withered roots at a rapid pace. Before it retreated beyond the world outside the Star Membrane, it didn't forget to give a shake, casting down three devilish corpses that had been attached to it.

That golden light that fell onto the island was, of course, Tao Qian.

At this moment, he had fully undergone "Light Transformation." Every inch of his being was suffused with Spirit Treasure Immortal Spirit Qi.

Even Tao Qian himself could not estimate how much he had absorbed.

He only had one feeling at that moment: fullness.

However, this feeling soon began to fade, and the golden light dimmed, revealing Tao Qian's Human Clan body. As he settled onto a jagged cliff on the Immortal Island, there was no trace of anomaly in his appearance—he seemed to be but a fresh-faced little Daoist.

Seeing this, Tao Qian was not worried but instead joyful. A radiant smile naturally spread across his face as he muttered to himself, "Taishang No Leaking Body seals within and without, confining Immortal Spirit into the fleshly furnace, return to the truth, Dao Foundation Perfection."

Having muttered this, Tao Qian suddenly noticed the three Demon Immortals' corpses that had fallen from the sky, which reminded him of the tribulations atop the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree.

"Never thought that establishing a Dao Foundation could cause so much trouble; it's rather unsatisfactory."

"However, they say that no good deed goes unpunished. Not only did I succeed in establishing the Foundation, but I also reaped other benefits."

The reason Tao Qian uttered these words was that he now had two new Divine Powers in his mind.

Cultivating the Sublime Dharma of the Spirit Treasure, there was a chance to acquire Divine Power Skills with each Breakthrough.

Tao Qian had known this rule for a long time.

His Auspicious Cloud Skill, Sweet Rain Skill, and so on had all come this way.

But he had not expected to acquire two skills at once this time.

One was known as [Spirit Treasure Returning Immortal Technique]. Each Spirit Treasure Disciple would obtain this technique upon Foundation Establishment completion. Described as a Magic Skill, it is more akin to a Divine Power imprint; there's no need for cultivation, as it is directly branded deep within the Spirit Treasure Disciple's psyche, and they can operate this technique upon Foundation Establishment completion.

This technique's function is both simple and quite miraculous.

The Foundation Establishment method of Spirit Treasure Sublime Dharma is extremely unique—first cultivate the No-leak Body, then swallow Immortal Spiritual Qi, use oneself as the furnace, refine both internally and externally, and ultimately shed the mortal body to achieve the Spirit Treasure Sublime Body, making an immediate leap into the Transcend Mortality Realm.

But there is a bottleneck; once the No-leak Body is sealed, Spirit Treasure Disciples can no longer inhale or exhale Source Qi, nor can they use the Immortal Spiritual Qi within their bodies. This naturally leads to a dramatic decline in a Spirit Treasure Disciple's combat effectiveness, making them no different from ordinary mortals.

Hence the importance of this technique. With this Divine Power imprint, Spirit Treasure Disciples can conjure an equivalent amount of Immortal Spiritual Qi within their bodies out of thin air, with no difference from usual times. They can refine and concoct elixirs as before, ensuring that the Spirit Treasure Disciples' combat capability remains intact and not hindering normal cultivation. They only need to restore the consumed Immortal Spiritual Qi when they are in Transcend Mortality Realm, and the imprint then dissipates on its own.

The so-called "Returning Immortal" is derived from the adage "borrow and return."

As for the second Divine Power Tao Qian had acquired, it was somewhat special, named [Spirit Treasure Immortal Binding Technique]. As the name implies, it is a restraining Magic Skill, where at a mere thought, he could summon the Miraculous Tree roots to bind his opponents, leaving them at Tao Qian's mercy.

Although the power of this technique is limited by the user's level of cultivation, Tao Qian was extremely satisfied with it. He silently estimated that with the amount of Immortal Spiritual Qi he could borrow, he might even be able to bind a Cultivator from the Transcend Mortality Realm, or at the very least trap them for a breath or half a moment.

In a fight, this brief moment could be enough to determine life or death.

"Ordinary Spirit Treasure Disciples upon Foundation Establishment will probably only obtain the Returning Immortal Technique."

"I got an extra one, could it be a reward from the Spirit Treasure Miao Tree Venerable for extinguishing those three Demon Immortals?"

"This Great Venerable behaves oddly, as if possessing spiritual wisdom, yet apparently lacking in intelligence, completely manipulated by my Master."

As Tao Qian was murmuring these thoughts, the scene suddenly changed before his eyes. Inexplicably, he whisked past numerous secluded, cold Immortal Lands, over jagged Immortal Mountains, and when he came to a standstill again, he was within a spacious palace hall. Ahead was an Observatory Hall with a Jade Table, a Star Plate, a bronze lamp among other items.

The light from All Heavens' stars shone but failed to illuminate the figure of anyone possessing an Immortal's refined grace.

Instead, it illuminated a middle-aged, disheveled Daoist, wearing a filthy green Daoist robe, with a beard of twisted tendrils, a head of explosive curls, and two big hairy legs still swinging about.

The two youngsters, Little Age and Lian Jing'er, either because of Tao Qian's influence or simply because they found favor with the Daoist, were being questioned incessantly, while every now and then, the Daoist would pull out various Magical Treasures, Immortal Fruits, among other items, and stuff them into the kids' arms.

Not far off, Zhong Doudou and Shan Jiu were whispering to each other, their expressions clearly not intimate, but as if they were quarreling.

As for the three Immortal Treasures, the Taixuan Ruyi Circle was currently on the Daoist's wrist, the Heavenly Punishment Demon-Slaying Sword was hanging on a bronze tree next to the Observatory Hall, and the Returning Immortal Mirror seemed to be in trouble or something, as the Daoist had directly overturned it onto the Jade Table.

Chapter 180 Duobao Has a Strange Habit, Yunhua Gifts Immortal Island (Two Chapters in One)_2

Tao Qian had just been transferred over, and everyone looked at him in unison, with Duobao Daoist directly challenging him,

"Just now, I thought I heard someone speaking ill of Master behind his back; what a pity that Daoist painstakingly devised a plan, not minding offending Miraculous Tree Great Venerate, just to help his disobedient disciple achieve a more perfect Foundation Establishment."

"You ingrate, not only do you not appreciate my efforts, but you also accuse me of scheming behind my back—this is not something a good disciple should do."

After finishing his words, the Daoist immediately displayed an evil and fearsome expression.

Combined with his robust build and face, his intimidating presence was undeniable.

However, Tao Qian remained unfazed, and even retorted,

"Master never mentioned the Three Demon Immortals when he sent me to the Miraculous Tree, not even a hint, leaving me, a little cultivator naive to the ways of the world, to face the unwitting Miraculous Tree Demon Immortals who had fallen from grace. Had I not guessed Master's intentions, just one misstep could have fallen right into the demons' trap."

"Not only would your disciple die and vanish, but Master would also lose face."

As soon as Tao Qian finished speaking, Duobao Daoist's eyes, sharp as copper bells, stood up in feigned anger,

"You even thwarted Bai Qin's bald donkey's conspiracy, storing the Buddha Bird relics that were the key to his cultivation into your own treasure bag, and you still need me, your Master, to worry about a yellow aphid, a big black cicada, and a fluttering moth?"

"Now tell me, just how much did you gain this time? Without draining that Great Venerate's root dry, could you have filled your Taishang Treasure No-leak Body? Without those stinking bugs, could you have obtained the Spirit Treasure Immortal Binding Technique?"

Duobao had just spat out these words, not waiting to continue his reprimand.

Suddenly, Tao Qian's expression turned solemn, and he bowed formally with three kowtows to Duobao Daoist, before genuinely saying,

"Thank you, Master, for your meticulous planning. This time I was able to perfectly complete my Foundation Establishment and ascend a level on my Dao path, largely thanks to Master's Divine Skills, and it affirms that your disciple did not choose wrongly that day."

A flattering remark quickly brought the faux anger of Duobao Daoist to a smile.

However, he soon realized that while the flattery was one thing, the slick disciple had effectively confirmed his little schemes.

The lonely Daoist, who had been alone for many years, was then eager to engage in a verbal sparring with his disciple.

But at that moment, a series of glows started flashing outside the hall, and one after another, a variety of oddly dressed, distinctive looking Demon Immortals and Daoists, all radiating Divine Light and Immortal Qi, appeared in succession.

What had appeared to be an unnamed palace that had seemed vast and desolate, suddenly became filled with celestial music, suffused with a radiance of dawn, and rising mists, transforming the place as if it were a heavenly pavilion on high, where Immortals and True Masters would discuss Dao and watch the stars.

Leading the way was an unattractive Daoist with his chest bare, a treasure sword at his waist, and a Yellow Gourd on his back. He'd clearly overheard the conversation between the master and disciple outside the hall.

Upon entering, he immediately laughed and said, "This child's temperament and means are almost identical to those of our eldest brother in his youth, even with an even thicker skin, well suited to be your disciple."

As soon as the ugly Daoist finished speaking, a white-robed Immortal, his hair and skin also pallor white, clearly non-human, holding a pipa, nodded in agreement.

Approaching Tao Qian, he gave him a look-over and said,

"I am Bai Xie Daoist; you may call me Master Scorpion."

"My disciple couldn't restrain his greed and fell victim to the Three Demon Immortals; I'd face some difficulties if I took action myself, but luckily you handled those three fiends for me, and for that I must thank you."

"This object is called [Scorpion Immortal Stinger], a venomous needle sloughed from my true form. Though I've only rushed to refine it once, it's already sufficient for enemy encounters. Even a Cultivator of the Transcend Mortality Realm would instantly die upon a prick from this needle, while a loose cultivator would perish on the spot. A disciple from a Great Sect like the Taishang Dao might have the means to withstand it, but would still endure unbearable agony. At that point, you could deliver the killing blow."

Watching Master Scorpion walk up to him, Tao Qian felt no emotional fluctuation while receiving the thanks and being handed an object about a foot long, tapered at both ends, and with a chilling whitish-blue glow.

As the exchange continued, Tao Qian felt a cold killing intent emanate from the poison needle.

It was clear that Master Scorpion was ruthless, even considering Taishang Dao disciples as measuring sticks.

The first Foundation Establishment disciple who couldn't resist the secret harm of the Three Demon Immortals was Master Scorpion's own.

It was fortunate that Tao Qian had acted; one could hardly imagine the torment the Three Demon Immortals would have faced at his hands.

Bai Xie Daoist, thus setting a precedent.

As Tao Qian received the vicious Magical Treasure under the beaming encouragement of Duobao Daoist, the first ugly Daoist who had entered the hall slapped his greasy belly.

Reaching inside, he remarkably fetched out a slightly smaller Yellow Gourd.

While tossing it toward Tao Qian, he said,

"This item is called [Blood Demon Gourd], only a playful imitation of my great treasure, not for serious use."

"However, since you've acquired the Spirit Treasure Immortal Binding Technique, it pairs nicely. Once you've bound someone, use this gourd to collect them, and after shaking it thrice, within a few days, the enemy inside will dissolve into pus."

"Of course, if you don't wish to kill, just avoid shaking the gourd."

Taking the gourd, Tao Qian felt as if the term 'not for serious use' was being redefined for him.

After receiving the Scorpion Immortal Stinger and the Blood Demon Gourd, two malevolent Magical Treasures, he scarcely had time for reflection.

He saw Demon Immortals and Daoists, one after another, sizing him up seriously and nodding with smiles, subsequently throwing many more Magical Treasures, Elixirs, alien objects, and even Divine Power Skills, Exotic Skills, and the like his way.