

## Longevity 371

Chapter 371: Tao Qian Bestows a Method, Jin Lin Gets a Slap in the Face

Despite having not faced off directly against the "Alchemist" organization until now,

Tao Qian's interactions with them in Southern Yue were only indirect.

Tao Qian had always been confronted with the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, the Devil God Army, and Bai Qin.

It was only when he helped Master Xiao through the Xuanpin Heavenly Gate Ten Absolute Array at Meiling that he had a passing encounter with Qin Wuxiang, and speaking of which, that fellow was still holding on to two demons that rightfully belonged to Master Tao.

Through these indirect contacts and the records that emerged in the process, along with his own repeated investigations,

Tao Qian had vaguely guessed that for the "Saint Heirs" like Qin Wuxiang and Huang Chong, whether they could help their chosen ones ascend the Dragon Court might determine their future ability to become enlightened or to achieve Longevity.

"Qin Wuxiang chose the wrong person and is probably crying somewhere now."

"Compared to that pretty boy, Huang Chong is obviously much more cunning. Despite choosing someone early on, he took advantage of his identity as a Saint Heir to blend in among Zhu Qi's followers, gaining deep trust."

"As for the person chosen by Huang Chong?"

"Most likely, it's that Zhang Jiudeng."

What Tao Qian thought, in fact, had no solid evidence.

But there were plenty of corroboration.

For instance, Kongchan Arhat had just deduced that Zhang Jiudeng had long been connected with the "Alchemists," yet there was no Saint Heir around him, nor had his son, Zhang Baisui, ever mentioned it.

Then there was the calamity of Demon City!

It must be known that once a disaster arises, there must be a wonderful connection between all the characters involved.

If Huang Chong's master was not Zhu Qi, then the second choice could only be either the Fourth Prince Zhu Xuan or Zhang Jiudeng.

"Two parts possibility for Zhu Xuan, eight parts for Zhang Jiudeng."

"Whoever it is, they all calculate well."

"Spy plotting, truly exquisite."

"But it also serves Zhu Qi right for being a freak. For a sovereign, brutality might not be a problem; lacking imperial majesty is the root cause of downfall. Besides his own father, there is a bunch of turncoats under his command. If he doesn't die, who will?"

These comments, though complex, flashed through Tao Qian's mind in an instant.

After pondering a moment, Tao Qian suddenly spoke up to Zhang Baisui, who was outside the quiet room, "Fine, Yunrong and I will stay a few more days."

He could have just said that.

But Tao Qian, looking outside the door and with thoughts turning, suddenly had an idea.

"You two take your time leaving, I have something for you."

After asking Zhang Baisui and his wife to wait, Tao Qian took out the Holy Embryo Bag and rummaged through it.

His identity now was one of the eighteen True Disciples of the Spirit Treasure Sect. Having received not just one round of gifts, not to mention the esteemed foundation of Ascending Immortal Island that even Cavernous Mystery Realm cultivators envied after joining the Mountain Gate, as well as one opportunity after another.

Master Tao was no longer a poor scholar.

Soon, he took out something very special.

It was two unclothed clay figurines, one male and one female. The surface of the figurines was covered with ancient seal script, densely packed like a complete cultivation technique.

Perhaps the poses of the figurines were too strange, attracting Yunrong's curious gaze.

Without even a glance, Tao Qian waved his sleeve, opened the door, and handed out the two clay figurines.

Splitting into two, each fell into the hands of Zhang Baisui and Jin Xiuju.

"This item is called 'Yin Yang Mud Puppets,' a type of Exotic Treasure with a scroll of the 'Yin Yang Ascension Scripture' on it."

"Though it is a Side Door method, it has exceptional merits."

"I originally intended to give this to you on your wedding day as a congratulation gift."

"However, seeing that both of you have weak cultivation, not even qualifying as proper cultivators, and knowing your temperaments, that you can't bear the hardships of surviving on wind and dew or frequent fasting and sitting in meditation to death, this method doesn't require all those complicated matters."

"As long as it conforms to Yin Yang Dao, you can steadily increase your cultivation—this suits you and your spouse perfectly... Forget about other Magic Skills, just refine this one."

"Even though reaching Cavernous Mystery and Transcending Mortality is extremely difficult, stepping into the Foundation Establishment Realm and extending life for a hundred or two hundred years is somewhat possible."

With these few words from Tao Qian, the couple took a closer look at the clay figurines in their hands.

Upon inspection, they became utterly captivated.

It took them a good while before they came back to their senses, their faces flushed.

After exchanging a glance and seeing the joy, shyness, and anticipation in each other's eyes, they carefully tucked the clay figurines into their chests.

At the same time, both husband and wife were about to kneel down and kowtow in synch.

But before they could do so, Tao Qian, discerning their thoughts in advance, stopped them by speaking up again:

"Don't overthink it, I'm not planning to take disciples, not even registered disciples."

"This item was an accidental find, not belonging to the Dragon Clan, which is why I'm willing to give it to you two. It's also the first good karmic connection I've formed since entering the world."

"Go on, go refine it."

As he spoke, Tao Qian swept his sleeves, sending them away.

Yin Yang Ascension Scripture!

This scripture was a method of Dual Cultivation.

It was given to Tao Qian when he first entered the Penglai Sea by a fellow Daoist uncle.

However, that Daoist uncle didn't know that Tao Qian had no shortage of such skills.

In terms of effectiveness, it was actually the Pure Yang Skill taught by Xiao Hua Daoist and the Joyful Zen Technique given by Bai Qin that were stronger.

This time, it just happened to be something Tao Qian could use.

He whimsically decided to give away a cultivation technique treasure this time, claiming it was to create good karma, but that was obviously just the face value reason.

Tao Qian's true aim lay with Zhang Baisui.

"Spirit Treasure Unlimited Tribulation Crossing Technique is the third method, unparalleled in its mystery, and is considered a supreme technique."

"Having identified Lady Mei as the Tribulation Leader, indeed allowed me to infest her with the Desire Sin Worm through her body."

"Given that, Zhang Baisui, as another Tribulation Leader, must also be of great use."

"Befriending one or two, creating good karma, leaving them indebted to me... Perhaps it won't be long before I receive some compensation."

These thoughts surfaced, and Tao Qian did not feel the slightest bit deceitful.

Recklessness could not sustain one for long; one needed to think things through and make arrangements for the future—that was the proper way to proceed.

While Zhang Baisui and his wife joyously went off to cultivate the Yin Yang Ascension Technique, Tao Qian still sat upright in the quiet room, wholeheartedly focused on petting the cat, never leaving the house.

During this time, the National Salvation Congress and the other three little ones continually sent back a wealth of messages.

Inside the Demon City, it was like a brewing storm, like a pot of water on the verge of a rolling boil.

Despite the fact that a large number of cultivators had recently been wiped out by the Taishang Primordial Demon Manifestation Saint True Monarch in one fell swoop.



However, that did not deter the greedy ones chasing after the ultimate treasure.

Especially since the Changchun Society, the White Lotus Sect, Cao Gang, and other powers deliberately spread the rumor that Zhu Qi possessed an unrefined treasure that would leave his body on its own in two days, and whoever was destined could obtain it and instantly ascend to the Cavernous Mystery realm, or even compete for supremacy in the Shen Zhou Holy Land... The rumor grew more intense.

In just 24 hours, the number of evil cultivators and demons that had poured into the Demon City was unprecedented.

Not to mention the refugees, whose numbers swelled every day.

And at the border, the Fungus Demon Army from Ancient Yue Province that was stirring, seeking to rescue their master, the Fourth Prince Zhu Xuan.

At this very moment!

If there were any cultivators skilled in reading the air looking at Demon City,

They would immediately see a scene resembling a thick soup bubbling endlessly, tumultuous and surging.

Zhang Mansion was similar in its restlessness.

Since the visit of Zhang Baisui and his wife, the originally quiet Zhang Mansion began to see visitors.

All claimed to be underlings of Zhang Jiudeng, mostly from heresy and heterodoxy backgrounds.

On the following night.

Zhang Mansion was filled with occupants, mostly cultivators, as well as some demons, or alien beings.

Zhang Baisui hosted over a dozen lavish banquets, then personally came to invite Tao Qian to help him preside over the event.

This was somewhat odd, considering that all these cultivators and demons were supposedly under Zhang Jiudeng's command, and thus should not cause trouble for his sole son.

But upon further thought, it was quite reasonable.

The world had completely changed; the cultivation world and the mortal world had thoroughly merged. Those who had gained extraordinary powers mostly thought in ways different from ordinary people. If Zhang Baisui had his father's cultivation and methods, these individuals would naturally hold deep respect for him.

Unfortunately, Zhang Baisui lacked both cultivation talent and scheming mind.

In others' eyes, he seemed nothing more than an incompetent scion, incapable of standing tall. Any self-respecting cultivator would not bother with him and would merely pay him lip service at best.

...

Tonight seemed somewhat special.

Already residing in Zhang Mansion, the collection of demons and ghostly beings, along with those from heresy and heterodoxy, suddenly saw a fearsomely powerful figure by the weak young master's side.

Though Tao Qian's dragon demon disguise, courtesy of the "Secret Demon Transformation Technique," appeared to have Transcended Mortality,

The oppressive aura could not be faked. Under Zhang Baisui's guidance, the host of heresy and heterodoxy encountered along the way all evaded in fear and shock.

And to Tao Qian, the current state of Zhang Mansion, though not as bloody and terrifying as the Iron Buddha Temple had been initially,

Still could not escape the apt description of being filled with a nefarious qi.

Without even mentioning others, just listening to the continuous introduction of names revealed that the figures Zhang Jiudeng had gathered and dispatched were far from respectable.

"Senior Jin Lin, this is Daoist Liu Yu, who can transform into a Yaksha with a Dharma Image and cast Thunder Skills. He possesses exceptional combat strength."

"This is Daoist Zheng Duoxian, who has cultivated the skills of the Vajra Temple. He is unharmed by blades and swords, able to withstand magical artifacts with his bare body."

"This is the straightforward lion demon, Zhou Sanbu. He belongs to the same Devil Clan as you, and he's an honest and generous fellow."

"This is Baihua Immortal, Shi Yulan. Her famed beauty is well-known throughout Ancient Qin Province, and she also owns eighty painting and music boats on the Xiajing River. If you visit Xiajing, Senior, you should have Lady Shi arrange the entertainment; it'll surely be magnificent."

"Senior Chen Chun'er, the Copper Claw Granny, is a strange person. My father personally left seclusion to invite her down from Copper Claw Mountain."

"Senior Hundred-Eyed Demon King, also a powerful member of the Devil Clan. My father prepared an entire hundred carts of fine wine to entice the Senior to leave his mountain."

"Senior Qiu, the Black Donkey Immortal Child, is a well-known loose cultivator in Xiajing Capital City. I once personally witnessed him when Xiajing was haunted by more than a hundred rampaging demons and ghosts; Senior Qiu rode his black donkey into Xiajing through the morning mist, took a swig of immortal wine, exhaled the liquor into a talisman, and transformed it into thousands of Daoist soldiers, slicing through all the devils and ghosts in moments, an awe-inspiring sight indeed."

...

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is Senior Jin Lin, the Guest Elder Lord recently invited by the centenarian. Senior is an Ancient Dragon Species who gained enlightenment and came from the Overseas Immortal Island. His cultivation and divine skills are unfathomably deep. Upon setting foot in Demon City, he publicly defeated a true inheritor disciple of the Evil Sect, and as you all know, that's one of the topmost Demon Sects in the world, whose true inheritor still wasn't a match for Senior Jin."

"Not long ago, he even killed a Cavernous Mystery realm powerhouse to save Baisui's life. This person's fame is something all of you might have heard of; he came from Beimang Mountain, a ghost cultivator known as the 'Ogre.'"

"This fellow thought he was skilled in cultivation, but had no clue he would meet Senior Jin Lin and not even last fifteen minutes before perishing and turning to ashes."

"Everyone in Demon City witnessed that night, truly a magnificent sight."

Zhang Baisui was a hedonistic young noble, publically performing his role admirably, but also quite petty.

Throughout the introductions, he lavished praise on these heretics, demons, and loose cultivators, handing out compliments as if they cost nothing,

Not allowing them to get too self-inflated, he would immediately toss out Tao Qian's impressive battle record.

The atmosphere of Zhang Mansion that night seemed to be filled with the metaphorical "smack" of faces being slapped.

Chapter 372: Twelve Immortals Demon Suppression Array, Tao Qian's Magical Battle on Huang Jing Road

Zhang Baisui's current demeanor could accurately be described with the phrase "a fox pretending to be a tiger."

His face radiated pride as he praised Tao Qian's accomplishments, and the uninformed might well assume those feats belonged to Zhang Baisui himself.

Since the start of the banquet in the courtyard, they had been making their way to the main hall with continuous praise.

Compared to the demon-monsters and heterodox practitioners outside, the seats within the hall were filled with esteemed and powerful figures, naturally creating a more refined atmosphere.

However, in Tao Qian's eyes, individuals like Copper Claw Granny, Hundred-Eyed Old Demon, and Black Donkey Immortal Child, although slightly better, were only moderately so.

It should be noted that his eyes now bore double pupils, his High Spirit Vision ready to activate at will.

To Tao Qian, the seated "mighty ones" and "senior experts" were utterly exposed, with nowhere to hide their true forms.

Copper Claw Granny, proclaimed to be an Independent Cultivator Female Immortal who had achieved Perfect Transcend Mortality, was in fact a half-human, half-demon, belonging to an alien species.

Tao Qian now took a careful look and spotted a large, wild, female chicken with colorful feathers seated; while its gender was female, its stunning and majestic plumage suggested otherwise. Its chicken claws, whether from an alien species' talent or the mastery of some Divine Power Skill, appeared to be cast from yellow brass, shining brightly and formidable to say the least.

Upon inspecting the Hundred-eyed Demon, its true form was a large centipede with a dark shell and a back covered densely with a hundred blood-red eyes.

As for the Immortal Child with a donkey in his title, he truly was a genuine Human Clan Cultivator. However, he had practiced some mysterious Divine Skill and, although he had obtained significant magical power and was just a breath away from advancing to the Cavernous Mystery Realm, it was clear the price he paid was significant. Beneath his robe, he possessed a pair of black and blue large donkey hooves.

"The world through Senior Sister Xie's eyes may not be entirely terrible. Now, looking at this banquet, I find it somewhat interesting."

Tao Qian mused to himself with a wicked sense of amusement, while Zhang Baisui continued to tirelessly make introductions.

Including Tao Qian, most of those seated could tell.

This pampered young master sought to hitch a ride on Tao Qian's coattails, to prove he wasn't charmless, unable to attract mighty figures to his side.

The impetuosity of a child!

This thought was silently scoffed at by the demons and Heterodox Practitioners.

Transparent as it might be, every single person at the table was a vastly experienced practitioner, each dominating a mountain or a city within Ancient Qin Province. How could they put up with Zhang Baisui's prattle and presumptive face-slapping?

Had Tao Qian displayed auras distinctive of a Cavernous Mystery Realm Cultivator, enduring him would be no problem—strength commands respect, a rule abided by the Cultivation World for countless years.

But the dragon demon that Tao Qian had transformed into only exhibited the Cultivation of the Transcend Mortality Realm.

Merely a peer; how could this command the deference of many?



Nevertheless, Zhang Baisui was adept at boasting, and when the two achievements were recounted by him, they indeed sounded quite extraordinary.

That was until the next moment when the person of the highest standing at the banquet appeared, also the leader among the Heterodox Practitioners who had been sent by Zhang Jiudeng.

Even Zhang Baisui's somewhat frivolous and overblown tone underwent a rare change.

"Senior Jin Lin, this is a highly esteemed expert trusted by my father, known as 'Master Huang Jing,' an Elder of the Heavenly Immortal Dao, one of the Daoist branches officially endorsed by the government of Ancient Qin Province."

"Master is not only a Cavernous Mystery Realm powerhouse, but it is also said he has numerous divine spirits under his command, capable of both defeating enemies and mastering various other affairs, truly omnipotent and skilled in all ways."

These words sounded like sincere amazement and praise.

Yet inexplicably, Master Huang Jing, the person in question, upon hearing them, felt an uncanny mockery.

Introductions are introductions, but who divulges all of someone's secrets right off the bat?

Had it been anyone else, Master Huang Jing would have already struck them dead.

Sadly, the one before him was the Young Master.

Even the most incompetent Young Master was still a Young Master.

Sitting directly at the head of the table and biting back his discontent, Master Huang Jing's gaze then turned to examine Tao Qian with both scrutiny and curiosity.

At the same time, Tao Qian also looked at him.

"What a curious little yellow man!"

Tao Qian exclaimed in a flash.

Indeed, one could hardly blame him. Seated at that spot was a dwarf, yellow through and through, with crumpled skin all over.

Named Huang Jing, he wore a yellow Daoist robe, a yellow cap, and held a Yellow Jade Ruyi.

What was even more astonishing was that, whether due to the Magic Skill he practiced or some other reason, his skin shared the same color.

At first glance, it seemed funny, but the longer one looked, the more they sensed an overwhelming rush of yellow Qi, accompanied by feelings of dizziness and nausea quickly approaching.

"Currently being assaulted by the yellow Evil Qi of Huang God... immunity granted!"

"Sensing the probing by Incense Fire Evil God [Huang Immortal]..."

Two records abruptly burst forth.

Reflected in Tao Qian's eyes, beyond the ugly yellow-skinned dwarf and the surging evil Qi, was an unseen scruffy and smelly yellow fox circling around him, sniffing incessantly.

He kept his composure, letting the creature probe.

Merely a Heterodox Cultivator of the Cavernous Mystery Realm, how could he see through the Secret Demon Transformation Technique?

"Although the Heavenly Immortal Dao is Heterodox and the methods for summoning and nurturing gods are not too peculiar."

"This Daoist, heh, must have practiced astray. Such yellowness, such Evil Qi, he most likely cannot pay the price."

Tao Qian had just made this judgment on one end.

The Master Huang Jing, who was still comfortably seated and acting important, began to deliberate after hearing the results from his Incense Divine Spirit's investigation:

"Ha, a mere Mixed Dragon Demon at the Perfect Transcend Mortality stage dares to show off in front of me."

Chapter 373: The Twelve Immortals Demon Suppression Array, Tao Qian's Magical Duel on Huang Jing Road\_2

"Had retreated the True Inheritor of the Evil Sect, slain the Ogre Li Qingpan... a real knack for showmanship. Had it not been for my Heavenly Immortal Dao having some manpower in Demon City, keeping busy for an entire day, seeking news from the Changchun Society, I would have been truly fooled by this fellow."

"The matter of the Evil Sect's True Inheritor and Lian Yulou is clearly a scheme devised by the Ninth Prince; that fellow merely stumbled upon good fortune."

"As for Li Qingpan? This unlucky ghost was injured at the core by the Tianjiang Immortal; if it were up to me, a surprise attack would surely be a fatal blow with no difficulty at all."

"When it comes to showmanship and boasting, with a Heavenly Immortal Daoist like myself present, how could a Mixed Dragon Demon have its turn?"

"Although this Zhang Baisui lad is born with poor talent, hopeless to take over the foundation of the Nine Lamps Mansion, destined to die before his father, he had, after all, the title of Young Master. It's about time I subjugate him and eliminate the hidden concerns brought to my Heavenly Immortal Dao by that bastard Zhu Quanfu earlier."

"Well then, the timing is just right. Let's see how I display some Divine Power to not only humiliate this Dragon Demon but also thoroughly subjugate Zhang Baisui and these practitioners of heresy and heterodoxy."

"Where the heart of the people goes, all will obey me, making matters much easier to handle."

Huang Jing Daoist made up his mind and immediately spoke before Tao Qian could.

"Young Master is too kind with his praise."

"Compared to the extraordinary military exploits of Mr. Jin, I, Huang Jing, am truly not worth mentioning."

As soon as he uttered these words, there was an immediate stir of whispers inside and outside the main hall.

The hall was filled with old pros who had mixed in these circles for many years, many of them were eccentric, but none were foolish.

Hearing the second sentence, they immediately guessed what Huang Jing Daoist intended to do.

There would be a good show to watch!

In an instant, apart from a few who were genuinely simple-minded.

Most of those from the heterodox paths, Demons and Ghosts, raised their heads at this moment, looking towards the banquet in the main hall in various manners.

The likes of Copper Claw Granny and Black Donkey Immortal Child within the hall even showed an expression of great interest.

They had long been disgruntled with this Zhang Baisui lad, who was riding on Tao Qian's coattails to snide remarks.

Now, at last, there came an opportunity to slap back.

Zhang Baisui, to his credit, wasn't stupid either. Once he heard Huang Jing Daoist's words, he guessed what was coming.

Just about to open his mouth to stop it, Huang Jing Daoist preemptively continued:

"The Divine Power of Mr. Jin has been a topic of much admiration among myself and other Daoist friends throughout today, and we've all grown calluses over our ears from hearing of it."

"However, when coming to Demon City, the Residence Master of the Nine Lamps once advised me, saying the Young Master, in his youthful ignorance, might be deceived when recruiting Guest Elders and could easily be misled."

"Mr. Jin mustn't misunderstand, I'm not insinuating you."

At this point, Tao Qian had to forcefully suppress the urge to chop this old cucumber with a cold strike.

Naturally showing a hint of anger on his face, he then asked:

"Oh, does Huang Jing Daoist have any guidance?"

"I dare not presume to instruct, only abiding by the tasks of the Lord of Nine Lamps, I wish to exchange a few pointers with Taoist friends."

"Spar? Or do you plan to engage in a real fight with me?"

"Do not be angered, friend, how could my old and frail body withstand a battle with a member of the Dragon Clan? Let's opt for a spar instead, something light, to avoid damaging the amicability between us."

Tao Qian and Huang Jing Daoist's exchange,

To the others, including Zhang Baisui, it was apparent that the Dragon Demon known as "Jin Lin" was provoked.

And Huang Jing Daoist's outward demeanor was truly remarkable.

Even before the fight, he seemed to have gained the upper hand.

One could see him, that dwarfish figure with sallow skin, actively floating up and landing in the spacious courtyard.

Then he called over many Demon Cultivators from the Zhang Mansion to bear witness, ostensibly.



Surrounded tightly, the scene was incredibly lively when Huang Jing Daoist declared:

"As for a spar that does not damage friendliness, I happen to have an idea."

"I presume the esteemed Daoist friends here are all aware that I, Huang Jing Daoist, cultivate the 'Jade Emperor Heavenly Immortal Origin Scripture,' belonging to the Incense Fire Dao."

"Thus, I am not only frail in body, but also unskilled in Thunder Skill, unfamiliar with Five Elements, ignorant of swordsmanship, nor proficient in capturing techniques, or Escape Techniques... Rather, it's in the art of Arrays that I've done some research."

"Not like this, I shall arrange a 'Twelve Immortals Demon Suppression Array' here," said the Daoist, "and you will actively try to break through it."

"If within an hour, you can break out of the array, you will be considered the victor."

"If you cannot, then you will have lost to me."

"How about it?"

Huang Jing Daoist let out these words as well as the setup for the duel.

Many Demon Cultivators in the field secretly grumbled in their hearts: This Old Ghost Huang, while expressing concern about others causing a stir, is the one who actually digs one pit after another, saying that this and that won't work; how did he manage to attain the Cultivation of the Cavernous Mystery Realm and expand the Heavenly Immortal Dao's territory step by step within Ancient Qin Province?

Those who knew the details of the array even showed a look of eager anticipation.

Like Copper Claw Granny and Black Donkey Immortal Child, this group of over a dozen Transcend Mortality Cultivators began communicating with each other through voice transmission.

"Old Ghost Huang is as crafty and cunning as ever, clearly being a realm higher than this Dragon Demon and yet so cautious, always intent on setting traps."

"It's normal though; the battle record of this Dragon Demon is indeed extraordinary. We have all heard of Li Qingpan's reputation. Even if he was injured, facing a Transcend Mortality Devil, he shouldn't be so easily crushed to death. This Jin Lin must also possess some special ability; he is no ordinary creature."

"Twelve Immortals Demon Suppression Array? Hah, the name was changed rather quickly; last time I heard, it was still called the Demon Suppression Array. The twelve Evil Gods bred by Huang Jing Daoist after years of painstaking effort, yet he gave them an immortal name."

"If Old Huang really sets up the array and then lets someone try to break through, not to mention a Dragon Demon in the Transcend Mortality Realm, even a genuine Cavernous Mystery Cultivator who enters it would probably not be able to come out."

"One hour? Even if it were an entire day, a month, they would still be trapped to death inside."

"Old Ghost Huang is deliberately slapping faces here; I heard that previously, when people from the Heavenly Immortal Dao came to protect the Young Master, they actually abandoned him during Li Qingpan's assassination attempt... Although the Young Master isn't of much use, he still knows how to complain. Because of that incident, the Heavenly Immortal Dao paid a heavy price to maintain its position in front of the Lord of Nine Lamps."

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Tao Qian naturally could not hear all these transmitted discussions.

But from the expressions on the faces of these Demon Cultivators around him, he could infer quite a lot.

By all means, he should refuse.

Heh!

If the one setting up the array were his Aunt Yunhua, then he would indeed immediately refuse.

Just some practitioner of the Incense Fire Dao, also cultivating a messy heresy and heterodoxy?

"With the skills I possess, and my abnormal soul, along with that item given to me by Aunt Yunhua, if I cannot break this so-called Twelve Immortals Demon Suppression Array within an hour, then I might as well return to the Mountain Gate and not bother transcending any ordeal."

Having made up his mind, Tao Qian spoke out.

"Huang Jing Daoist, set up the array."

"Good!"

Huang Jing Daoist was clearly waiting for Tao Qian's agreement.

Once he got a response, the nauseatingly yellow-skinned Old Ghost immediately cracked a grin full of wrinkles, his breath reeking as he bared his yellow teeth and let out a low shout; twelve rays of bright light shot out.

In the blink of an eye, they settled in the courtyard.

Among the Demon Cultivators, quite a few sharp-eyed ones clearly saw that within those twelve streams of brilliance were twelve particularly lavish, intricate flags with treasure light flowing over them.

Each was embroidered with the image of an immortal, although they were not any of the officially recognized ones by the Daoist community but were Evil Gods concocted out of thin air by Huang Jing Daoist leveraging the power of the Heavenly Immortal Dao and the influence of Nine Lamps Mansion within Ancient Qin Province.

This approach had its advantages and disadvantages: the downside was that these Evil Gods were merely nurtured with the power of incense and could not be compared to real Immortal Gods in terms of mana or Divine Power.

The advantage, however, was that it was simple: These Evil Gods, having been created by him, of course, obeyed him completely.

To create these "Twelve Immortals," Huang Jing Daoist had poured in almost half a lifetime of effort.

The array itself was also one of his proudest creations.

Previously, the Old Ghost had been all humility, but as soon as he had this array in place, he finally showed a bit of his true colors.

He gestured with his hand, signaling to Tao Qian that he could enter the array.

At the same time, he began to speak, as if introducing and boasting:

"I should inform Mr. Jin, this array, though named Demon Suppression, has some specific arrangements targeting the Devil Clan."

"If you are too deeply ensnared, don't fiercely resist. Just call out 'I surrender,' and I will have the Twelve Immortals let you out of the array."

"If you struggle too much, you might endure the punishment of skinning and muscle extraction, and that would be quite unseemly."

Chapter 374: Break the Formation in Ten Breaths, The Secret Plot of the Nine Lamps

In the Cultivation World, any Cultivator who has been around for a little while knows how to maximally insult a member of the Dragon Clan.

Call him a long worm?

Sure, that's passably powerful, but it still lacks punch.

The real heavy-hitter is the phrase "flay and debone."

Any Dragon who hears it simply can't keep their cool.

Just like at this moment, when Tao Qian, playing the role of the Overseas Dragon Demon Jin Lin, heard these words and immediately flew into a rage. Inside the Zhang Mansion, thunder reverberated, and all

the Cultivators and Demons saw the lightning flash in his eyes and the rolling storm clouds behind him, while the terrifying Dragon Roar echoed continuously.

"Since Huang Jing Daoist has kindly reminded me, I'll let you know in advance."

"I've also refined quite a few New Divine Powers recently, which are quite impressive, although I still can't control them perfectly."

"If I destroy your Array flags, I hope you won't hold it against me."

"Why would I? Mr. Jin, please feel free..."

"Roar"

Before Huang Jing Daoist could finish speaking, the official Dragon Roar filled the Zhang Mansion, bringing with it storm, thunder, and rainbow light. The body of a Bo Dragon, with golden pupils, canine teeth, a black tail, and a white body, appeared.

Its cold Dragon eyes swept over Huang Jing Daoist, and then, with a flick of its tail, it dove into the Twelve Immortals Demon Suppression Array that had started to resonate with the sound of Immortal chants.

Seeing the Dragon Demon so easily tricked into the Array, Huang Jing Daoist couldn't help but reveal a smile of successful scheming.

Pinching his mediocre beard and stroking it a few times, he said, putting on an act to Zhang Baisui beside him:

"Young Master need not worry, and it's not that I'm using my age to bully a Guest Elder of the young master's rank."

"This time, I am entrusted by the Residence Master to investigate a bit about this Dragon Demon friend."

"And rest assured, at most he will suffer some skin and flesh wounds. Once he is verified, I will have a drink of water with him as an apology."

Once Huang Jing Daoist finished speaking, all the Demon Cultivators brought by Nine Lamps Mansion understood the reason behind this.

It turned out that it wasn't just Heavenly Immortal Dao trying to regain face. Zhang Jiudeng ultimately didn't trust his prodigal son to secure the allegiance of a powerful Cultivator.

Such an arrangement seemed only normal.



Zhang Baisui obviously guessed this as well, his complexion turning uglier as his face paled.

He was about to rebuke angrily, but then he quickly remembered the terrifying combat power that Tao Qian had demonstrated the other night.

Hope suddenly surged in his heart.

He sneered and, without responding, simply stared silently at the Array, where clouds billowed and the faint sound of Immortal music wafted.

...

Meanwhile, after Tao Qian entered the Array,

The world in front of him changed instantly, and he saw rolling clouds and many visions of Immortal homes materializing. Pavilions and towers, lofty buildings made of jade, and all kinds of Immortal Birds and Exotic Beasts that only existed in ancient texts were present without a single one missing, forming a complete set.

In addition to these, there were also many illusory Heavenly Soldiers and Generals, by the millions, pouring out from a fabricated "South Heavenly Gate," charging towards Tao Qian with overwhelming momentum.

Leading this Heavenly Immortal army was none other than twelve Divine Generals assembled from various elements.

Some wore Daoist robes, some clad in golden armor, and others rode Wind and Fire Wheels, appearing child-like.

Tao Qian couldn't help but laugh at this array of Fake Gods and Evil Immortals advancing towards him.

He laughed because of the highest-status "Heavenly Immortal" at the forefront, with an impressive stance and aura.

This Heavenly Immortal was of remarkable size and build, his head wrapped in a golden flower headscarf, clad in an ochre robe with a Lantian Jade Belt, and feet shod in Flying Phoenix Black Boots. Had it been just that, it would have been quite normal, nothing more than a counterfeit version of some Divine General.

But Huang Jing Daoist, ugly in appearance but vain in thought, designed the face of the Divine General after his own, looking exactly like a steamed-over yellow pancake – abstract and tacky.

Tao Qian had just burst into derisive laughter when the Divine General, leading the other eleven Heavenly Immortals and those illusory soldiers, stormed over, unleashing a dreadful tempest.

Although the Divine General was a Fake God and False Immortal, he was indeed a Cultivator at the Cavernous Mystery Realm, nurtured with vast amounts of Incense Fire Divine Power and fed with methods from the "Jade Emperor Heavenly Immortal Origin Scripture."

He lacked neither combat strength nor wisdom.

Hearing Tao Qian's merciless mockery, they all became furious.

"I am the Taishang Sensing Mighty Demon Suppressing God General. How dare you, Devil Dragon, cause chaos in the Human World? Today, I shall personally lead the Twelve Immortal Generals from the Heavenly Gate to capture you."

"Once you're on the Dragon-slaying Platform, we'll see if you can still laugh."

After this proclamation, Tao Qian could no longer see the God General or the Heavenly Immortals before him.

In his field of vision, there were innumerable strikes of lightning and sword light, along with all kinds of ornate and horrifying treasures: rings, bottles, maces, spears... The numbers were vast, and both the power and the impact were certainly displayed.

Tao Qian seemed to have already foreseen his own defeat, being bound in chains and led to the Dragon-slaying Platform.

It was at that moment that a Record surged in his mind:

[Record Type: Twelve Immortals Demon Suppression Array.]

[Record: This is an Incense Fire Array, originating from the Devil Path but pretending to be Daoist. Its Elder, Huang Jing Daoist, was once a destitute scholar from Ancient Qin Province. One day, he bought a fragmented ancient scroll that contained no methods of Cultivation but held a vicious method of usurping the Cultivation of others. Using this method, Huang Jing usurped the Cultivation of a kind-hearted old yellow-skinned demon, formally stepping onto the path of Cultivation. That old demon cursed Huang Jing with his dying breath, dooming him to that ugly shell of flesh until death, a price of that vicious method that he couldn't escape.]

[Note: The core of this Array is twelve Incense Fire Fake Gods, supplemented by many treasures and spiritual materials. Under the operation of Huang Jing Daoist, it would be challenging for an ordinary Cavernous Mystery Realm Cultivator to break free, let alone survive.]

Chapter 375: Break the Formation in Ten Breaths, The Nine Lamps' Secret Plot\_2

[Note 2: This array, formed through the incense fire divine power, could not be sustained for long. Within one hour, its power peaked, but if it surpassed that time limit, in order to maintain the array's might, it needed to use the twelve immortal divine images scattered throughout Ancient Qin Province to draw the life essence qi from devout followers remotely. An additional hour of operation would cause over ten thousand people to fall severely ill.]

[Note 3: To better display the might of this array, Huang Jing Daoist used his own body as a model, creating the leader of the twelve immortals, the "Taishang Sensing Mighty God General." Thus, this fake god became the vulnerability of the array. If one could strike and kill him, and remove the main flag, the array would lose its array point, operate inefficiently, and could crumble at the slightest disturbance.]

...

As the third note appeared, there was Tao Qian, being endlessly bombarded by divine thunders and magical treasure attacks.

He immediately turned his head, trying to locate the figure of that fake god.

But as soon as the Twelve Immortals Demon Suppression Array operated, the killing and attacking were incessant, yet those fake gods hid exceedingly well.

Tao Qian had only just harbored hostility, and not a single fake god was in sight.

It was clear Huang Jing Daoist also accounted for this vulnerability, intending only to use the array to exhaust Tao Qian to death, without desiring to engage in a tough battle.

Unfortunately for him, he was up against Tao Qian.

Master Tao had not been cultivating for long and had yet to learn arrays in combination.

However, he had thrown in his lot early with Aunt Yunhua, who had gifted him a "Jade" before he left.

This Jade, besides being used to shock people, was also an extraordinary magical treasure.

Moreover, it was specially designed to counteract various types of arrays.

One of its functions: to locate the living gate of the array.

Knowing that the array could also extract the life essence qi from followers, Tao Qian no longer planned to observe and delay.

He quietly took out the Jade Jade, and exhaling immortal spiritual qi.

The next moment, a strong guiding force emerged.

Regardless of the operation of the Heavenly Immortal Array, many flashy elements dazzled and obscured perception, but as soon as the Jade emitted light, the hiding place of the fake god was directly revealed.

"Such a treasure, with this object, most arrays can hardly stop me, Auntie truly did not deceive me."

"Roar!"

Another dragon roar sounded, Tao Qian protected his body with the Golden Light Mantra, cleared the path with the Silent Divine Thunder, disguised as a furious dragon demon.

Defying those attacks, he penetrated deep into the Array's formation, his dragon claw reaching out just as the so-called Taishang Sensing Mighty God General had no time to escape, pinning him down under his claws.

He had just grabbed the fake god when his senses immediately felt a terrifying counterattack incoming.

The grand formation flowed with majestic power, aiming to bombard Tao Qian completely.

Regretfully for them, he who strikes first gains the advantage.

While capturing the fake god, he had already opened his mouth, ostensibly a Dragon Pearl, the Nine Toad Bead, with the enormous force of over a dozen mountains, smashed down.

Inside Zhang Mansion, a crowd of demon cultivators were watching the excitement.

Suddenly, at that moment, they heard a "crack" sound, and the Immortal's grand array in the courtyard dissipated without warning, within the crumbling mists, a magnificent flag crashed to the ground.

The downfall was caused by a dragon pearl.

Such an upheaval!

Quick, too quick.

From Huang Jing Daoist, Zhang Baisui, to a group of cultivators from the Nine Lamps Mansion.

All were stunned in place, disbelievingly watching this scene.

"Has the array broken just like that?"

"Gods above, how did this dragon demon do it? He entered the array, and in just a dozen breaths, a Transcend Mortality Realm dragon demon, so easily broke through Huang Jing Daoist's famous Twelve Heavenly Immortals Array?"

"That one, seems to be the main banner, such good luck?"

"Even if it was good luck, striking the main banner by coincidence is equally astonishing, knowing that each Heavenly Immortal Banner was crafted by Huang Jing Daoist with all his heart and effort. Even a high-level magical treasure shouldn't be able to destroy that banner so easily."

"Hahaha... This has become even more interesting, just moments ago Huang Jing Daoist boastfully said he wanted to scrutinize this dragon demon's origins and even threatened to flay and debone him, yet he didn't expect to be slapped in the face by this demon."



"Such a blow to the face, a severe blow, let's see how Huang Jing Daoist handles this."

A large group from the Nine Lamps Mansion, originally disunited at heart.

Seeing the strongest among them, Huang Jing Daoist, made a fool of, not only did they not share a common hatred, but they also found it extremely amusing.

But what they thought would escalate the conflict did not occur.

The reason lay in the toad pearl spat out by Tao Qian, smashing the main banner wasn't enough, he also pretended to lose control, allowing the dragon pearl to continue its rampage.

In the blink of an eye, three more Heavenly Immortal Banners were destroyed.

Watching that dragon pearl, about to turn and potentially smash another four or five banners.

Huang Jing Daoist, severely pained physically and emotionally, completely lacking the demeanor of an expert, actually took it upon himself to admit defeat, pleading, "Mr. Jin, please stop. I have lost this contest."

Tao Qian heard the words and still pretended to be unable to control himself as he shouted, "Daoist Huang Jing, there's no need to verbally submit if your heart does not, I am still in the Array, and it does not count as having broken out."

When this sentence fell, the Twelve Heavenly Immortal Banners had reduced significantly.

Finally, Daoist Huang Jing spoke again.

"I admit defeat; I truly admit defeat."

"Mr. Jin, please cease immediately."

Hearing the satisfactory response, the devastatingly powerful Dragon Pearl finally paused in mid-air.

Tao Qian opened his mouth to inhale and swallowed it back, returning to human form. He looked towards the Cultivators and especially at Daoist Huang Jing.

His face deliberately showed helplessness as well as apology, and then he said,

"Daoist Huang Jing, I truly am sorry."

"Your Demon Suppression Array is truly formidable; if not for this Dragon Pearl given by an elder in my clan, I would indeed have been unable to break the Array."

"It's just that my cultivation is inadequate, and I cannot yet smoothly operate this pearl."

"Having destroyed six of your flags, Jin Linzi has no face to stay and partake in the banquet anymore; I shall return to face the wall and reflect on my actions."

"My friends, do not see me off, no need to see me off."

After saying these few sentences, under the astonished gaze of the Demon Cultivators, Tao Qian turned directly into a rainbow light and left the banquet.

The other Cultivators and Demons felt that this Dragon Demon, had quite some grace and composure.

Clearly a demon, yet he had mastered the essence of the rituals of the Mortal Human Race.

But when everyone looked back, they soon saw Daoist Huang Jing's extremely ugly face.

Iron blue?

He couldn't manage it; even if his anger twisted his features, it was still the color of chicken shit.

Everyone gazed at the damaged and broken Heavenly Immortal Banner, now only half remaining, then at the extremely angry but helpless Daoist Huang Jing, and gradually they understood.

"That Dragon Demon is truly powerful, gauging it just right, destroying half of Huang Jing's Heavenly Immortal Banners. One more flag, and the Array would have been very difficult to repair, by then Huang Jing would have been driven to desperation and fought with all he had regardless of tearing his face apart."

"Now, not more nor less, just exactly half, and he made Huang Jing submit publicly, almost tearing his face off completely and throwing it on the ground to be fiercely trampled."

"Just as he was about to leave, knowing the proper etiquette, even if Huang Jing was furious, he wouldn't know whom to vent it on."

Zhang Baisui, could also think of these.

But he also knew Daoist Huang Jing was a high-ranking Cultivator of the Nine Lamps Residence, and he felt secretly pleased, yet still had to give enough respect.

This unruly disciple stepped forward, took the initiative to speak, and gave Daoist Huang Jing a way out.

But how could his cunning innards and the glee flying at the corner of his brows escape a Cavernous Mystery Realm Cultivator?

Daoist Huang Jing looked at this Young Master, whose allegiances leaned outward, then at his half-remaining precious Twelve Heavenly Immortal Banner, feeling nauseatingly disgusted as if he had eaten shit.

The strongest Cultivator at the banquet lost interest, and the banquet naturally dispersed quickly.

The Cultivators of the Nine Lamps Residence each returned to their rooms in the quiet chambers.

Daoist Huang Jing, meanwhile, used the excuse that the Nine Lamps Residence Master had urgent matters to instruct, and called Zhang Baisui to a secret room.

After thoroughly checking and ensuring there were no prying eyes,

Daoist Huang Jing's expression suddenly became serious, and he reached into his Storage Treasure Bag to take out an item.

This item was covered with a large red cloth.

While lifting the cover, Daoist Huang Jing solemnly said to Zhang Baisui,

"Young Master, you won't be able to sleep tonight."

"Our members of the Nine Lamps Residence came here not just to assist Prince Zhao's Mansion in drawing in Cultivators, Demons, and Alien Species from various directions into Demon City. The Residence Master also entrusted us with a more pressing matter."

"This item, named 'Taishang Heavenly Golden Palace Venerable Saint King Statue,' is an Exotic Treasure that we of the Heavenly Immortal Dao took several sleepless months to craft. Supported by the Residence Master, Ancient Qin Province is now filled with Saint Temples. Simply recognizing the owner with your blood, you can obtain an external avatar through which Incense Fire Wish Power continuously flows, ensuring that the avatar's Divine Power does not dry up. Consider it a great gift that the Residence Master presents to the Ninth Prince."

"Wonderful treasure!"

"But what does that have to do with me? Tomorrow, Zhu Qi is hosting a treasure convention; just take it to him, unless you want me to stay up all night guarding this divine statue?"

Hearing this retort, Daoist Huang Jing felt great helplessness.

In his heart, he couldn't help but silently curse "Such a simpleton."

Then, he had to patiently explain,

"The Residence Master ordered, the statue has another use."

"However, if it is to serve its purpose, it would be strenuous for the Young Master. You must use your own Essence Blood to refine the statue overnight."

"Young Master, listen carefully, I shall impart to you the 'Jade Emperor Origin Blood Sacrifice Technique.'" With this technique to refine the divine statue, you can eliminate some traces, and even that Taishang Primordial Demon Manifestation Saint True Monarch won't be able to detect anything amiss."

Chapter 376: Good Karma Must Be Rewarded, Tao Qian Possesses Transformative Powers

In the secret chamber of the Zhang Mansion, Zhang Baisui, having listened to the words of the Huang Jing Daoist, looked curiously at the statue.

It was as tall as a man, and looking at its physique and features, it was practically a replica of "Ninth Prince Zhu Qi".

But the statue's attire was much more extravagant than the black dragon robe Zhu Qi usually wore, by far more than a hundredfold.

Once the great red veil was lifted, one could only see the statue adorned with the Supreme Seven Luminaries Treasure Crown, a skirt embroidered with jade and brilliant light resembling flying clouds, complemented by the Elixir Emperor Jade Seal, and girded with the Metallurgy Flying Spirit Summoning Mountain Sword.

If others were present in this dark chamber, at this moment, they would not look at Zhang Baisui and the Huang Jing Daoist at all.

All eyes and attention would be drawn to the statue.

The treasure light was visibly moving about on the statue in strands and wisps.

Even an ignorant mortal of the Human Clan, upon seeing it, would instantly think, "This must surely be a Supreme Treasure".

If it were some knowledgeable cultivators, they would uncontrollably have greedy thoughts arise.

The material of the statue was neither gold nor jade, and certainly not bronze or plaster; no one could guess how much spiritual material treasure it would take to forge such a precious item.

Of course, as one of the creators, the Huang Jing Daoist knew.

Heavenly Immortal Dao!

Though considered heresy and heterodoxy, the Great Lifebook Scripture they cultivated was exceptionally suitable for this chaotic age.



Especially since they had garnered support from the great warlord Zhang Jiudeng, their influence had exploded.

The number of Cavernous Mystery Realm cultivators had caught up with some of the Sects with deep foundations.

Moreover, because they raised a large group of Incense Fire Pseudo Gods, not only were they well-informed, but they also excelled at gathering various treasure and spiritual materials.

"This statue is indeed a treasure that our Heavenly Immortal Dao gave up more than half of our savings to create, utilized all the power of our elites, and refined with Secret Techniques for several months before finally taking shape,"

"If it were not so, how could it deceive a strong being from the Ultimate Happiness Realm?"

"Whether 'Daoist Leader' payment of such a great price is worthwhile, one isn't sure. Although Zhang Jiudeng is absurd and ridiculous, he truly can be regarded as resourceful, a tyrant fit for these troubled times. Yet coincidentally, he only has this one idiot of a son; with such temperament and intelligence, if he truly joined the Cultivation World without Zhang Jiudeng's protection, I'm afraid he wouldn't last three days."

"An idiot is an idiot, but given that Zhang Jiudeng has only this one son, such a critical task can only be carried out by him."

"It seems I, Huang Jing, will have to take the trouble of watching over him tonight, lest any mistakes occur."

As Zhang Baisui observed the statue, Huang Jing Daoist's mind was filled with disdainful thoughts.

Although he had very little respect for the idiot Zhang Baisui, Huang Jing Daoist had a mission to fulfill, and he had to quell his irritation to begin teaching him the Blood Sacrifice Technique bit by bit.

Zhang Baisui was slow to comprehend, necessitating Huang Jing Daoist's hands-on instruction.

The old teacher taught with impatience, and the student, Zhang Baisui, learned with great difficulty.

If not for Zhang Jiudeng's strict orders, this prodigal son would have given up long ago.

During the process, the father and son had even conversed through the Mysterious Light Treasure Mirror.

Although it was somewhat cryptic, Zhang Baisui still glimpsed something wrong. Weren't his warlord father and Ninth Prince Zhu Qi in a cooperative alliance?

Why did it sound like they were planning to harm Zhu Qi with underhanded tactics?

Zhang Baisui became curious and incessantly inquired further.

Unfortunately, out of fear that he might mess things up, whether it was his father or the Huang Jing Daoist, each of them kept their lips sealed.

They simply demanded that he learn the technique well and perform the blood sacrifice throughout the night.

Thus, naturally, some displeasure arose.

Finally, when Zhang Baisui once again failed to properly refine, and when the Huang Jing Daoist could not hide the impatience and disdain on his face, a querulous voice echoed in the secret chamber, with a tone of giving up hope.

"I'm not refining anymore, I'm not refining anymore."

"This so-called Jade Emperor Origin Blood Sacrifice Technique sounds like it's not any decent technique at all, being so abstruse and difficult to understand."

"It's not as good as the Yin Yang Ascension Scripture bestowed upon me by Senior Jin Lin. Now that technique is truly powerful; I got it as soon as I started to refine it."

"Or maybe Uncle Huang Jing, you're not good at teaching; wouldn't it be better to have Senior Jin Lin teach me?"

Zhang Baisui's mention of Tao Qian would have been better left unsaid.

This mention immediately caused a pain in Huang Jing Daoist's chest.

"Damn it, that damned Snake, my Twelve-faced Heavenly Immortal Banner ah."

"If it weren't for coming to Demon City this time to carry out an important task, it wouldn't be good to provoke unnecessary complications; otherwise, I would have sent out all my Divine Spirits to round up and kill that scoundrel."

"Also, that Dragon Ball must be a good treasure."

"Once matters here conclude, I must find an opportunity to commit murder for treasure, skin that Dragon Demon and refine it into Magical Treasures, extract the Dragon Heart and Dragon Marrow to refine spiritual pills; its fat and flesh are just right for boiling down to make Dragon Oil. That Dragon Soul also needs to be extracted to refine a Dragon God, not a single bit can be wasted."

The Huang Jing Daoist's face turned fierce, and he harbored a strong intent to kill towards Tao Qian.

At the same time, he unreservedly expressed his loathing for that Dragon Demon.

He added a few biased words, attempting to sow discord between guest and host:

"Young Master, you are too naive, not knowing the malicious nature of this world, to say nothing of a Snake covered with scales and armor. Such Devils are cunning and deceitful, their approach to Young Master must be scheming for something."

"According to this old Daoist, that scoundrel must be targeting Lord of Nine Lamps."

"Now that the Residence Master is involved in a critical matter, if this can be successful this time, the Young Master may also benefit, ascending to the heavens in a single step."

"With the Young Master's talent, you should have no chance of Transcending Mortality in this life, let alone Cavernous Mystery."

"But if the Residence Master achieves the Venerable rank, with the vast territories of the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty, countless Cultivation Resources at your disposal, there might be a chance to defy the heavens and alter your fate, and perhaps even to advance to Cavernous Mystery, reach Ultimate Happiness, and even attain Daoist Transformation Realm."

"With such a significant matter at hand, Young Master, you need to be cautious in your dealings, to not trust some ulterior-motivated people easily, lest you ruin the Residence Master's big plan, and ultimately destroy your own Dao Path."

"Alright, Young Master, don't delay any further. Time is of the essence, quickly learn the technique, and refining the statue is the proper course of action."

"If it weren't for worrying that the Young Master fears pain and hardship, this old Daoist would directly use Divine Soul transmission of teachings, which would be much faster, becoming proficient in an instant."

Huang Jing Daoist said all this.

In his own view, it was tantamount to speaking earnestly and advising sincerely.

If Zhang Baisui knew better, he should realize the truth.

But he was completely unaware that in his words, apart from the strong malice and intent to kill Tao Qian, he also unconsciously revealed his contempt for Zhang Baisui.

Despite the fact that it was true.

In Ancient Qin Province, even the commoners bullied by Zhang Jiudeng felt that Zhang Baisui, the second-generation descendant, truly lacked any noteworthy talent.

The prevalent opinion was, a hero father had sired a useless sack of a son.

Because Huang Jing Daoist had played the card of his own father's grand plan to press him, Zhang Baisui, despite his dissatisfaction, couldn't show it anymore.

He was determined to prove to Zhang Jiudeng that he, the son, was also useful.

Thus, he had no choice but to contain his frustration and silently continue the refining process.

Unfortunately, the words "natural talent" were cruel and realistic.

Even with just the "Blood Sacrifice Technique," Zhang Baisui found the refining both laborious and painful.

In the initial couple of hours, he grimly persisted, but soon began looking for ways to slack off.

Like at this moment, he used the excuse of depleted mana to sit down in a corner of the secret chamber to concentrate and meditate, supposedly to recover. But in reality, he was silently communicating with Jin Xiuju using the Dual Cultivation Technique from the "Yin Yang Ascension Scripture," and thus the husband and wife began their divine communication over distance.

In this aspect, he wasn't wrong; for refining other magic skills, Zhang Baisui performed terribly.

But in the practice of Yin Yang Ascension Scripture, he excelled.

While using this technique to recover his mana, he also took the opportunity to complain profusely to his wife Jin Xiuju.

Between a married couple, there were no taboos; he spoke whatever came to mind.

Yet the speaker was unintentional, the listener took it to heart.

Jin Xiuju, a young girl who had suddenly faced the tragedy of her family being slaughtered, matured a lot mentally, fully aware that as an orphaned girl, she had little support. The only pillars she could rely on were Tao Qian and Yunrong.

Indeed, her choice was proved right, as both husband and wife were granted the "Yin Yang Ascension Scripture." Zhang Baisui gained a minor benefit, while Jin Xiuju gained considerably more; the technique shockingly matched her exceedingly well.

Feeling her mana growing within and officially stepping onto the path of cultivation, Jin Xiuju was grateful and more firmly determined to cling to those two pillars of support.

Thus, when the divine communication ended and she had heard a heap of words from her husband, she immediately sought out Tao Qian and Yunrong.



She wasn't there to betray a great secret!

Nor did she have any clue that within Zhang Baisui's litany of grumbles, there hid such a critical secret.

She sought the two just to give an early warning that someone intended to harm Tao Qian in secret.

Not long after, within a quiet room of Zhang Mansion.

After hearing a detailed report from Jin Xiuju, Tao Qian couldn't help but raise an eyebrow, a peculiar expression surfacing on his face.

Without delay, he took out a colorful and radiant cloud pocket and threw it into Jin Xiuju's arms, not waiting for her refusal before saying,

"Given that I destroyed that old Daoist's Magical Treasure at the banquet, I had predicted he would hold resentment against me, but I never expected him to be so malicious to spread slander behind my back."

"Thanks to your reminder, Xiuju, I can prepare early."

"So I should be the one thanking you. With the inheritance of Jin Mansion, you are not lacking cultivation resources, only a suitable Protective Dharma Treasure."

"As it happens, this item, named the 'Colorful Clouds Pouch,' is something I acquired unexpectedly, suitable for female cultivators, so I shall gift it to you."

Jin Xiuju had an intention to refuse but couldn't argue against the fact that the treasure was truly remarkable.

After fiddling with it for a bit, under the persuasion from Tao Qian Yunrong, she reluctantly accepted the treasure with a myriad of thanks and departed.

...

Once Jin Xiuju had left, Tao Qian's expression shifted slightly.

The girl's revelation, like Huang Jing Daoist's malice towards him and his potential secret harm, was of no concern to Tao Qian.

What truly caused a stir within Tao Qian, having the tribulation energy and Human Dao Destiny activate spontaneously, was another sentence.

"Zhang Jiudeng has prepared a great gift for Ninth Prince Zhu Qi, a powerful Avatar class Magical Treasure called the 'Taishang Heavenly Golden Palace Venerable Saint King Statue.'"

"At the same time having his only descendant perform a Blood Sacrifice Technique for an entire night before gifting it to Zhu Qi during the treasure exhibit."

"Heh! As if there's no conspiracy or calculation behind this, who would believe it?"

Tao Qian sneered, while also feeling a bit excited.

Indeed, as karma intertwines, there will be repercussions.

Previously, he whimsically gifted Zhang Baisui and his wife a scroll of "Yin Yang Ascension Scripture," thinking of forging a good karma.

It turned out that the repayment came swiftly.

Before, he had wondered. If Huang Chong and Zhang Jiudeng were in cahoots, what would their plan be?

And now, he had a strong premonition.

Within that Saint Statue, there must be answers.

Zhang Baisui, as the Tribulation Leader, might just meet his fate here.

Tao Qian sat cross-legged at his original spot, pondering for some time, then suddenly asked the Yuan Gong Statue in his arms,

"Yuan Gong, did the predecessors of the Secret Demon Sect frequently use the 'Secret Demon Transformation Technique' to transform into various creatures, infiltrate Daoist and Buddhist Sects to cause chaos, and were hard to detect? Aside from the Human Clan, did they also transform into things like snakes, worms, rats, and ants?"

"That is natural. Before those old goats and bald donkeys caught on, us Secret Demon Cultivators had no idea how carefree we were. It was only because I didn't like going out and was too lazy to change. However, my Jiang had boasted before, saying she once turned into a rat, infiltrated the Great Freedom Temple, and devoured the precious lamp oil those monks had painstakingly refined for hundreds of years."

"Huh? You want to try transformation to eavesdrop on that little Incense Fire Evil God's plan? He isn't stupid, how could he possibly reveal his true calculations through words? At most, you'd only hear some inconsequential side details."

After hearing these words, Tao Qian suddenly smiled.

He said to himself, "No worries, I have a Sublime Dharma."

As his voice faded, Tao Qian silently willed a mosquito from outside the quiet room to him.

After observing it for a moment, he formed a seal and began casting.

Before long, a horrifying and bizarre scene unfolded within the quiet room.

Master Tao, in the flesh, actually twisted and spun around until, with a "bang" amid strange smoke, he transformed into an unremarkable mosquito.

Buzzing its wings, it leisurely left the quiet room and flew towards a secret chamber in Zhang Mansion.

Chapter 377: Shocking Truth, Mountain and River

In the secret chamber of Zhang Mansion, a strange yet slightly comical scene was unfolding.

A handsome young master sat cross-legged before a statue of a deity.

With a worried and distressed expression, he was compelled to form hand seals and refine the technique. Each time the Source Qi circulated within his body, he had to open his mouth and spray a large mouthful of Essence Blood toward the statue. As soon as the fresh blood covered the surface of the statue, a flash of bloody light appeared, then vanished into it.

This cycle repeated over and over.

Far from looking sinister, the statue seemed increasingly radiant with treasure light, as if it were truly a Venerable Saint King Divine Spirit descending into the mortal world.

However, it was tough on Zhang Baisui. Even though he had an ample supply of nourishing elixirs and medicines, and his Essence Blood seemed unlimited, the extraction process was a real ordeal. The air in the secret chamber was filled with the stench of blood, resembling the scene of a Blood Sacrifice by those of the Heterodox Demon People, quite deserving of being struck down by heavenly lightning.

Huang Jing Daoist supervised the work while once again indulging in his habit of being a "know-it-all."

Teaching Zhang Baisui the Blood Sacrifice Technique was one thing, but he did not forget to share some experiences of mingling in the Cultivation World through worldly society, warning against the likes of deceptive figures.

Zhang Baisui appeared attentive on the surface, but deep down, he was extremely annoyed.

The long night stretched on, and had it been a charming and coquettish girl chattering beside him, Mr. Zhang might have been able to endure.

But now, what he had was an old dwarf with wrinkled yellow skin—a few more glances, and he felt like vomiting.

Soon enough, he grew tired of listening and forcibly swallowed back the Essence Blood that had reached his throat.

His temper surged, and he abruptly stood up, declaring impatiently, "No more refining, truly too troublesome, let me go rest for a bit."

With that, Zhang Baisui had already arrived at the door of the secret chamber. He crossed through the Forbidden Techniques of the room, opened the door, and stepped out to leave.

Now, the chamber was filled with both treasure light and the stench of blood.

Such an aura was hugely attractive to various creatures like snakes, insects, rats, ants, and Wild Demons.

Almost immediately, a disturbance occurred around the secret chamber.

Usually well-hidden creatures such as snakes, toads, rats, flies, and spiders, driven by instinct, uncontrollably surged toward the secret chamber together with some beings like Wall Niche Ghosts, Lamp Girls, and Candle Ghosts that appeared and vanished at will.

This scene was quite surprising to Zhang Baisui.

But to Huang Jing Daoist, it wasn't even worth a second look.

He didn't even grunt but simply waved his sleeve, and with the power of the Cavernous Mystery Realm, all the vermin and Devils were silently obliterated.

He then reached out and pulled Zhang Baisui back.

Originally furious, he realized that this was his Young Master, not just someone he could punish but whom he must also comfort with gentle words.

If the boy stubbornly refused to continue refining, it could jeopardize the important plans of the Lord of Nine Lamps.

With this thought, Huang Jing Daoist forced a kind face and patiently advised,

"Young Master, please don't be annoyed, the old Daoist here was too talkative just now."

"But this matter is critical to the Dao Path of the Lord of Nine Lamps, please consider it seriously."

"Previously, it was also mentioned in the Mystic Light Mirror by the Lord himself that if tonight's refinement is not successful, allow this old Daoist to implement some special methods..."



Clearly, the last sentence was a threat.

Just as Zhang Baisui was about to lash out, a gust of night wind blew over him, bringing him back to his senses.

Hearing Huang Jing Daoist's words, which were half-threatening and half-advisory, he had no choice but to sulkily close the door and obediently return to the front of the statue, looking nauseously at the face that resembled Zhu Qi, continuing to form seals and spew Essence Blood.

Seeing this, Huang Jing Daoist showed a satisfied smile.

Yet neither of them noticed, or perhaps didn't find anything amiss, that behind the statue, at the base, lay a "dead mosquito."

Indeed!

This was the Sublime Dharma used by Master Tao to pry into secrets.

Starting from Seeking Immortal County, whenever in doubt, simply touch it.

Upon contact with the statue, Tao Qian instantly knew this was indeed an Exotic Treasure.

Images didn't burst forth in his mind immediately but rather slowly sorted themselves out from the fragments.

But soon enough, a complete Record emerged bit by bit:

[Name: Taishang Haotian Golden Palace Venerable Saint King Statue.]

[Record Type: Magical Treasure.]

[Record: This item was crafted by the cultivators of the Heavenly Immortal Dao, using copious spiritual material treasures and forging tirelessly for months. The core of this treasure is embedded with a drop of Essence Blood from Zhu Qi, the Ninth Prince of the current dynasty, innately making it a Magical Treasure belonging to Zhu Qi... To endow this item with great power, the warlord Zhang Jiudeng from Ancient Qin Province has built 999 Saint Temples within his territory, utilizing the conveniences provided by the Heavenly Immortal Dao and harnessing Incense Fire Wish Power. With the training and intent of Zhu Qi, just a thought can summon an Avatar equivalent to a cultivator of the Cavernous Mystery Realm.]

[Note One: This treasure has the potential to grow, as long as the number of "Saint Temples" and the number of believers continues to increase, the power of the Avatar will also continue to rise until it reaches the Daoist Transformation Realm.]

[Note Two: The casting of this treasure is based on an alliance agreement between Zhang Jiudeng and Zhu Qi, introduced by Alchemist Saint Child Huang Chong to form mutual connections... The truth is,

Huang Chong banked early on Zhang Jiudeng becoming the Founding Emperor of the future Longevity Heavenly Dynasty.]

[Note Three: To assist Zhang Jiudeng in ascending the Dragon Court, Huang Chong paid a great price to enlist an old monster from the Alchemist sect to find the first treasure formed from an Ancestor God Forbidden Technique Fragment called the 'Mountain and River Map' and split it into two treasures, the 'Mountain and River Map' and the 'Sheji Seal,' erasing the fate of the Heavenly Mechanism in the process. He then handed the Mountain and River Map to Zhu Qi and gave the Sheji Seal to Zhang Jiudeng.]

Note 4: Inside this divine statue lies a "Golden Palace Secret Ban," which connects to the Ancient Qin Province. Once Zhu Qi begins to refine the Mountain and River Map, Zhang Jiudeng can utilize the dark hand of the Blood Sacrifice Technique to snatch back his avatar and simultaneously activate the secret ban. By employing the connection between the two treasures, he can forcibly take away the already refined Mountain and River Map... Since Zhang Jiudeng, as the Governor of Ancient Qin Province, presides over a vast territory and population that far surpasses Zhu Qi's, the Mountain and River Map would naturally prioritize Zhang Jiudeng in any dispute that arises.

Note 5: Therefore, the cost needed to refine the Ancestor God Forbidden Technique Fragment would all be borne by Zhu Qi. After Zhang Jiudeng reaps the benefits, he could suddenly become the top warlord of the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty, likely to challenge for supremacy in Shen Zhou Holy Land and vie for control over the Central Plains.

...

When these records churned in Tao Qian's mind,

even if he were just a dead mosquito, he still couldn't hide the shock in his eyes.

Such a big secret!

The truth!

Although Tao Qian had anticipated finding something as long as he investigated this suspicious divine statue, likely leading to some finds,

he never imagined the findings would be this significant.

Nor did he anticipate the truth being this outrageous and yet familiar.

Yes, familiar.

Besides these clearly sorted records, some fragmented pieces allowed Tao Qian to piece together and clarify the convoluted cataclysms behind Demonic City.

"That means, the instigator behind this catastrophe in Demonic City is actually Huang Chong, this unassuming figure of an Alchemist Saint Child."

"His first chosen 'Bright Lord' was Zhang Jiudeng, and to support this absurd warlord, Huang Chong arranged a ploy akin to planting seeds in another's nest."

"Mountain and River Map!"

"This treasure, transformed from a fragment of the Ancestor God, possesses terrifying power... but the conditions for refining are extremely strict, unaffected by the cultivator's realm but requiring the fulfillment of conditions like True Dragon Blood and Flesh, Human Dao catastrophe, Blood Sacrifice of the Human Clan... among others, where the costs are tremendously high if artificially produced."

"Moreover, fulfilling the condition of True Dragon Blood and Flesh is impossible for Zhang Jiudeng, given that the hidden dragons are limited in this world. If he should heavily invest in attacking any, he would face the fierce retaliation of the contemporary Imperial Family. However, if these hidden dragons were to massacre each other, it would be a completely different scenario."

"To ensure Zhang Jiudeng successfully acquires the treasure, Huang Chong deliberately joined Zhu Qi's forces, using this Ninth Prince and his father's influence to refine the treasure, such as inciting Zhu Qi to trap and kill his own fourth brother, the current Yue King Zhu Xuan."

"If the plan proceeds smoothly, Zhang Jiudeng will surely snatch the treasure remotely from Ancient Qin Province at the last moment. His reliance is simple and brutish—the expanse of his territory."

"Good heavens! Such a sinister scheme, how similar it is to Bai Qin!"

"But now the victim is not me, but Zhu Qi, the unfortunate."

"Once Zhang Jiudeng succeeds, he will possess not only the Ancient Qin Province and a military of hundreds of thousands but also a treasure capable of activating the 'Absolute Spirit Domain.'"

"With this treasure, if he starts invading neighboring provinces, he would likely be unstoppable, rapidly expanding his territory from province to province, capturing town after town. Calling him the first warlord would not be an exaggeration."

At this moment, Tao Qian simply couldn't suppress the flurry of thoughts in his mind.

Even though he had grown accustomed to this world, both in the Cultivation World and the worldly society, where there were fishing men and old silver coins everywhere,

each time, he was still profoundly shocked.

It was hard to imagine if he didn't have the cheat-like help of his abnormal soul, alone, he would hardly be able to uncover the secretive truth behind all this.

"Huang Chong is stronger than Qin Wuxiang."

"He took personal action, fulfilling the duties of a strategist to the extreme."

"It's as if Zhang Jiudeng is fishing while Huang Chong dives under the water to hook the fish for him."

In making this assessment, Tao Qian couldn't help but become more intensely curious about the Alchemist Organization.

How many such Saint Children had this organization dispatched?

How many, like Huang Chong, possessed such cunning genius?

Just Huang Chong alone connected Ancient Qin Province and Demonic City, causing catastrophic upheavals. What about the over sixty other provinces, are there Alchemist Saint Children manipulating plots and intrigues there as well?

Not long after, Tao Qian suppressed these tumultuous thoughts.

Now having glimpsed the truth behind the scenes, he planned to stay in this secret chamber throughout the night so as not to alert Huang Jing Daoist.

Through the "Saint Statue" of Zhu Qi, Huang Jing Daoist was teaching Zhang Jiudeng's son, digging a deadly pit for Zhu Qi.

Meanwhile, behind closed doors, Tao Qian calmly contemplated how to stop Zhu Qi from using disaster victims in Blood Sacrifice and foil Zhang Jiudeng's cunning strategy when the upcoming treasure conference arrives.

"This Mountain and River Map, this kind of supreme treasure, must not end up in Zhu Qi's hands, nor in Zhang Jiudeng's."

"While Zhu Qi is indeed brutal, Zhang Jiudeng is no better."

"According to the information provided by the National Salvation, this person is not only absurdly ridiculous, but his temperament is also equally tyrannical. His methods to ascend to power were extremely despicable. During his tenure as the Great Governor, he was oppressive and exploitative, treating the civilians in Ancient Qin Province as nothing, and recklessly plundering them."

"Earlier, as I observed the father and son's conversation as the 'Chan Xin Demon,' I heard him mention casually sacrificing hundreds of thousands of people to help Zhang Baisui enhance his cultivation."

"If such a person obtained the Mountain and River Map, the situation would probably get worse."

"I've already implanted a significant amount of Desire Sin Worms in Zhu Qi's body. I wonder if I could also deploy some in this divine statue... Hmm?"

This last spark of inspiration appeared, and in Tao Qian's dead mosquito eyes, an extraordinary light immediately flashed.

Chapter 378: Enchanting Soul Technique, The Absurdity of Worldly Affairs



Zhang Baisui's lack of talent for cultivation was once again confirmed.

He had labored throughout the entire night and then some of the morning.

Finally, at noon, as the last mouthful of Essence Blood sprayed forth, filling the secret chamber with blinding Golden Light, the Blood Sacrifice was announced complete.

When the Golden Light dispersed, what was revealed was a face pale as death with exceedingly dark circles under the eyes, filled with a look of deep resentment, staring at Huang Jing Daoist.

He felt an unprecedented emptiness within himself, even a night spent battling with those dance girls in the Sleepless City, who were as seductive as Beautiful Corpse snakes, had never left him this drained, so weak that he almost couldn't even stand.

Ignoring whatever Huang Jing Daoist wanted to say, Zhang Baisui waved his hand and said:

"Uncle Huang Jing, go rest; I need to sleep for an entire day."

"Don't anyone stop me, I'll sleep right here, right in this..."

Though he had cultivated the Yin Yang Ascension Scripture, Zhang Baisui wasn't a genuine cultivator after all, with not a shred of experience in austere cultivation.

After expending Essence Blood for seven or eight hours straight, he was terribly weak.

As he spoke, Zhang Baisui was planning to push Huang Jing Daoist out and then fall asleep himself.

But suddenly, it seemed he saw something unbelievable, and his eyes widened in shock.

Following his gaze, one could see that the "Saint Statue", originally inanimate, had somehow turned into a body of flesh and blood.

"Eh?"

"How magical! It looks exactly like that bastard Zhu Qi."

"But such a face is equally irritating. It won't do; let me slap him first to soothe my anger."

While speaking, Zhang Baisui, the young master, was about to do something ridiculous.

He forced his weakened body to try and give the Saint Statue a slap.

However, as he made his move, Huang Jing Daoist acted too.

This old Daoist had been patiently interacting with Zhang Baisui for the past dozen or so hours.

And just after the Blood Sacrifice was completed, impatience could no longer be hidden in the old Daoist's eyes as he seized Zhang Baisui, while advising:

"Young Master, please don't move rashly. The Blood Sacrifice has just been completed and the Saint Statue is in the process of 'turning from death to life', extremely fragile and must not be disturbed."

"Also, Young Master, the Residence Master had another order when I came."

"What?" Zhang Baisui was just about to ask when his body was forcibly straightened by Huang Jing Daoist.

Then he saw a face with a forced smile speak to him, "The Residence Master commands, if upon reaching Demon City the Young Master shows improvement, he may be entrusted with an important task. If the Young Master remains the same profligate, then let me, old Daoist, use some special methods. So that at tonight's treasure assembly, the Young Master doesn't leak any secrets and spoil things."

Hearing this, Zhang Baisui's face dramatically changed, and he was just about to shout in anger.

Alas, it was too late.

"Young Master, forgive my offense."

"This method is called 'Heavenly Immortal Enchanting Soul Method'. It has no side effects. On the contrary, it will enable the Young Master to perform perfectly tonight."

Before his words ended, the old Daoist Huang Jing suddenly shone a yellow light from his eyes, enveloping Zhang Baisui within it.

Such a turn of events!

Tao Qian, the third person in the secret chamber, was completely unprepared for this.

But after a little deduction, he understood the reason.

"Although Zhang Baisui is a prodigal son, unable to be entrusted with significant matters, only he could perform the Blood Sacrifice as Zhang Jiudeng's sole blood relation."

"However, Zhang Jiudeng is also afraid that his son will spoil things, so he had Huang Jing Daoist perform this technique afterward, to eliminate any future problems."

"As for why not use the Enchanting Soul Technique from the start? It must be due to a clash of techniques."

"This is a rare opportunity."

Any Enchanting Soul Method requires the practitioner's undivided attention and does not allow for distractions.

Naturally, one also becomes almost unaware of their surroundings.

Huang Jing Daoist could never have anticipated that as he put his own Young Master under a spell,

the Divine Statue that had turned into flesh and blood revealed behind it, a seemingly dead mosquito that suddenly came back to life.

It quietly flapped its wings and flew up to the neck.

Without any hesitation, it pierced into the skin, and its proboscis-like needle began to surge, injecting a large amount of unknown substances into this body of flesh and blood.

Tao Qian was adding something else, handful after handful, of invisible Desire Sin Worms entering Zhu Qi's Incense Avatar.

"If this Divine Statue remained inanimate, these worms would have no effect."

"However, now that it has become a flesh and blood body through the power of Incense Wish Power and the Blood Sacrifice Technique, it's an opportunity not to be missed."

With that thought, Tao Qian finished his addition.

Not long after, the flesh and blood body began to turn back bit by bit into inanimate matter.

Consequently, traces of both the Blood Sacrifice Technique and Tao Qian's Desire Sin Worms were wiped clean.

"This Incense Divine Dao has some mysteries, indeed."

Tao Qian muttered to himself and lay back down to his original spot; the scene of bewitchment had also ended.

When Zhang Baisui awoke once again, he seemed to be unchanged.

But his actions and tone were subtly different.

He no longer thought of slapping Zhu Qi's Avatar, but instead turned his head to Huang Jing Daoist and respectfully said:

"Uncle Huang Jing, gather our Nine Lamps Mansion's people. With little preparation, we will head to Prince Zhao Mansion to offer congratulations later."

"As the Young Master of Nine Lamps Mansion, I must personally deliver our generous gift into the Ninth Prince's hands, to demonstrate our sincerity."

"Young Master's words are most correct, hahaha."

After laughing, Daoist Huang Jing, who felt immensely accomplished, waved his robe and left the quiet room to summon those Demon Cultivators.

Just when he was so full of himself, he failed to notice.

A mosquito was closely following him as he left.

Daoist Huang Jing was extremely cautious. Whether it was setting up Forbidden Techniques or sweeping with his Divine Thought, he'd done it more than once.

If it were just any other spy, they would likely be discovered.

Unfortunately for him, he came across Tao Qian, the wielder of the Secret Demon Transformation Technique.

In the Cultivation World, the ones who could see through this technique were at the very least from powers like the Great Freedom Temple, the Taishang Dao, or the Evil Sect—all major factions of Daoist, Buddhist, and Demon.

The Heavenly Immortal Dao wouldn't cut it.

...

Tao Qian returned to the quiet room and resumed his human form.

He was about to sit down to organize the secrets he had spied upon, while also pondering the next steps of his plan.



But before he could sit down, he suddenly became aware of something.

His brow furrowed as he got up, his big belly protruding, and opened the door.

In the next moment, he saw an extremely eerie sight.

Snow!

Flakes of snow bathed in a black glow appeared out of nowhere and shrouded the entire Demon City.

In just a dozen breaths or so, the vast Demon City seemed to have entered the depth of winter, as buildings, streets, homes, and the refugee zones in the distance were all covered in heavy snow.

Such a sudden change left nearly twenty million people in the Demon City in a daze.

Tao Qian reached out to catch a flake; upon touching his palm, the snowflake immediately melted into a trickle of water running down through his fingers, within which there was a significant amount of pitch-black ash-like substance, and from it, a faint stench wafted.

In his mind, the Record surged:

[Record: Black snow, a celestial omen, denotes a disaster of corpses, or up to millions falling dead.]

Seeing this information, Tao Qian's expression instantly darkened.

But before he could do anything, one after another, more celestial omens began to appear.

Above the sky, blood-red light suddenly appeared, and a crimson star flashed by... [Record: The passage of the Death Star, a celestial omen, portends great disaster.]

A few breaths later, looking again, the edge of the sky darkened and brightened alternately, revealing another star enshrouded in purple light and ominous meaning... [Record: The flashy Death Star, a celestial omen, signifies a disaster of resentful spirits and ghosts.]

The earth suddenly trembled, and large pits mysteriously appeared in each district of Demon City, dark as dungeons and exuding a chill as they emitted countless pale bones... [Record: The earth demon turning over, a supernatural phenomenon, portends a disaster of buried bones.]

With each celestial omen and phenomenon revealed, Tao Qian's complexion grew uglier.

Having cultivated the Cultivation Tribulation Technique, Tao Qian now understood that these phenomena represented the severity of the impending disasters.

"There were also these in Southern Yue during the great human catastrophe, but I was either in Fumin or inside the Beautiful Corpse's belly, blind to them."

"But even then, there weren't as many."

"This means that even though I've glimpsed the truth behind it all, I might still be unable to stop Zhu Qi, Huang Chong, and Zhang Jiudeng."

"Could those millions of people still be doomed to be slaughtered?"

Tao Qian wore a solemn expression, a torrent of thoughts swirling in his mind.

Suddenly, at that moment, a new change occurred.

This time, it wasn't celestial omens or phenomena.

Thunderous explosions echoed above Demon City, drawing the attention of all the people who had fallen into a stupor due to the numerous strange occurrences.

Soon they realized that it wasn't thunder but fireworks.

An incredibly spectacular fireworks display had apparently begun at noon. Those fireworks clearly involved the handiwork of Cultivators; they were not only long-lasting but also dazzling. Even in broad daylight, they thrust the entire Demon City into a festive atmosphere.

If that had been all, onlookers might have seen it as a clumsy cover-up effort.

But quickly, a massive number of Cultivator soldiers poured out from Prince Zhao Mansion, appearing in every district in the blink of an eye.

Apart from clearing traces of the celestial omens, these forces began to dispense money.

Literally, dispensing money.

A tremendous number of copper coins and even silver coins, alongside those circulating vehicles, traversed nearly every bustling street within Demon City.

The citizens, who had been panicking, were now immersed in a frenzy.

They even began to actively spread praise for Prince Zhao—at no charge, they shoveled out accolades by the basketful that rang throughout Demon City.

"The Ninth Prince has proclaimed that today shall be the [Saint's Birthday] in Demon City, a universal celebration."

"To celebrate the Ninth Prince's great achievements and his benevolence to the populace, every hour, we will come out to parade, and where we pass, a shower of flowers shall be silver coins. All who see it shall partake, and everyone will be joyous."

"The orders have been passed down, the Ninth Prince, moved by the hardships of the people, has decided to open the granaries for disaster relief from today, ensuring that millions of refugees will not go hungry—with rice, flour, steamed buns, and porridge in abundance."

"Tonight, the Ninth Prince will host a valuable treasure event, to revel in joy with all people. Just shout 'Long live the Ninth Prince' once, and silver coins and banknotes may fall from the sky, right into your hands."

"Long live the Ninth Prince! Long live the Ninth Prince... Ah, it's true, I got hit, I'm rich!"

"Long live the Ninth Prince! Long live! Long live!"

Who knew when, but Tao Qian's figure appeared on the streets.

The black snow still floated down, and the various omens showed no signs of ceasing, but the panic they brought was soon thoroughly dissipated by the brilliant fireworks and the sky full of copper and silver coins raining down, along with the boundless supply of rice, flour, steamed buns, and porridge around Demon City that had millions of refugees cheering with joy.

At this moment, looking at Demon City, no one could tell that this was a territory on the verge of having millions of people slaughtered and offered in a Blood Sacrifice.

Quite the opposite—it was now a place of peace and rejoicing for all people.

Standing amidst the citizens, who were clamoring for copper and silver coins, Tao Qian slightly opened his mouth, taking a while before he exclaimed in astonishment:

"Is this Zhu Qi's doing, or Huang Chong's?"

"The methods are absurd, yet effective, extremely effective."

Chapter 379: Saint Silver Coin, Demon Buddha at Ease

Demon City, a breath ago it was still snowing black snow, the Death Star paraded across the sky, Calamity Star passed by, corpses surged up from the earth, and with the sound of fireworks, a downpour of flower petals suddenly dragged this metropolis that accommodated nearly twenty million people back into a festive atmosphere.

An uninformed traveler arriving here might suspect that the New Year had come early.

Although Tao Qian was aware of the reasons, he still couldn't help but feel amazed at this moment.

"This place is flourishing, far surpassing Southern Yue, devoid of the barbaric and terrifying scenes of a world thrown into chaos by Demons, yet the danger here is even greater."

"If either Prince Zhao, Zhu Qi, or Zhang Jiudeng succeeded, at the very least, it would mean the slaughter of millions, with endless consequences."

While this thought flashed through his mind, Tao Qian suddenly received a message from Lian Jing'er.

Members of the National Salvation Congress like Yu Yanshi wished to meet to discuss important matters, still at the usual place.

Tao Qian didn't delay and went straight to Xianheng Hotel.

On his way there, he realized that Demon City, at this moment, scarcely had any place that was quiet.

The citizens, almost to a person, had turned out en masse, taking to the streets to pick up money.

For some, it was a few copper coins, or perhaps several dozen, and for others, a silver coin, or even several silver coins.

Before the collapse of order in Demon City, this Silver Coin had considerable purchasing power—children bought candies, while adults bought pork, rice, and flour, all seemingly free for the taking. Who would want to miss out?

As for the required chants of "Long live the Ninth Prince," people would chant as told, for whoever gives money is the boss.

While past dark histories could not be erased with a single stroke, this didn't prevent Prince Zhao, Zhu Qi, from becoming the savior of countless households at this moment.

Tao Qian also felt it and casually reached out to catch a Silver Coin that fell out of nowhere.

The coin was newly minted, yet it didn't bear the portrait of the Emperor who died an untimely death, but the face of the Ninth Prince, Zhu Qi. Around the portrait was a long string of titles—something about Saint, Virtuousness, showing saint, moral transformation, and the like.

Upon contact, the Record burst forth:

[Record: Saint Silver Coins, consecrated through the Incense Fire Divine Dao method, can gather Incense Fire Wish Power for Prince Zhao, Zhu Qi.]

...

"Heh, there is indeed no such thing as a free lunch."



"Even in distributing money, they have to add a little extra."

Tao Qian pinched the Silver Coin, a cold smile appearing at the corner of his mouth.

Without any need for guessing, he knew that even without the recent heavenly signs and phenomena, these copper coins and silver coins would still be scattered throughout Demon City by Zhu Qi, under some pretext or another.

What Zhu Qi sought was not just to use the avatar formed through the incense flame of the Saint more smoothly, but even more importantly, to refine the Mountain and River Map. Incense Fire Wish Power might not be as potent as Human Dao Fortune, but it was still essentially from the same source, patching a small flaw.

Despite being aware of it, Tao Qian also knew that there was nothing he could do to stop it.

Who could prevent others from legally picking up money?

As this thought arose, Tao Qian arrived within Xianheng Hotel, taking the same window-side seat as before.

Previously, it was agreed that Tao Qian would be responsible for training the Rashamon Princess well and acquiring the Formless Chapter of the All Heavens Secret Demon Scripture.

On the other hand, the National Salvation Congress would concentrate their efforts to investigate the numerous movements of Prince Zhao, Zhu Qi.

Tao Qian was determined to oppose Zhu Qi, but he was just one person, accompanied only by three and a half young lads and a Kitten. How could he fight against the current Prince Zhao who was also the Taishang Demon Son, along with the countless forces under him, both big and small?

Yet, if the National Salvation Congress joined in, the odds of success might be somewhat better.

He wasn't sure what they had found out, but when he saw Yu Yanshi, Li Wenyan, and Shi Yingqiong again, the expressions on each of their faces were very grim.

Before Tao Qian could speak, the hot-headed Li Wenyan couldn't hold back his anger; slamming the table with a bang, he looked out the window at the scene that appeared to be a harsh winter month yet contradicted by incessant money rain from fireworks, he angrily transmitted his voice:

"Damn that Zhu Qi, a heaven-damned beast."

"He's determined to use a Blood Sacrifice of millions of disaster victims, and at a time like this, he still hasn't forgotten to fool the citizens with silver coins; if he gets his hands on the power of the realm, the billions of the Mortal Human Race will probably become playthings for this pervert."

Having said this, he then formally reported:

"The Cao Gang and the White Lotus Sect have sent out a large number of people to the surrounding big provinces like Jiangnan Province and Qiantang Province, spreading their message far and wide—even offering boats from the Cao Gang to carry disaster victims to the borders of Demon City."

"Right now, if you look at the river in Demon City, the surface is covered with boats of the Cao Gang, filled with emaciated disaster victims."

"If you look at the surrounding official roads and mountain paths of Demon City, you can see long lines of disaster victims, all of whom are being guided by those Heterodox Demon People of the White Lotus Sect."

"At the border, they have newly established the Thousand Mountains Camp, Ten Thousand Miles Camp, Stove King Camp, Iron Pot Camp, and several other new refugee camps, housing nearly three million people, all arranged by that bastard Zhu Qi to be stationed in the open area between Demon City and the Fungus Demon Army without any cover."

"It doesn't matter whether it's the Fungus Demons or the Heavenly Demon Army, just one or two charges would be enough to turn that place into a field of corpses."

"And we cannot stop him from doing this; to prepare for this massacre, he has spared no expense, taking out nearly all the food reserves in Demon City to build kitchens in front of the camps, continuously boiling porridge and steaming white steamed buns day and night."

"What's even more shameless is that, using this Devilish wind, Zhu Qi has sent some Devil Path Demon Cultivators to each camp for propaganda, making the three million believe in Zhu Qi's benevolence. The number of Longevity Tablets made especially for him must have reached tens of thousands by now."

"I, Li Wenyan, have been traveling through the provinces for many years, yet I have never seen such a shamelessly thick-faced person."

Li Wenyan might be a Cultivator, but he was almost exclusively concerned with the safety and casualties of the Mortal Human Race, only reporting on the movements of the refugees.

As for what was happening within the Cultivation World, he didn't pay any attention.

Beside him, Shi Yingqiong's expression was equally somber, adding a few words:

"Under Zhu Qi's command are also forces like the Changchun Society as well as a great number of Cultivators from the Nine Lamps Mansion. They are spreading rumors in the workshops of the neighboring provinces. A large number of Demon Cultivators now believe that the Ninth Prince, Zhu Qi, has a Supreme Treasure in his possession, and tonight it is going to separate from Zhu Qi's body, available to whoever is destined to receive it."

Chapter 380: Saint Silver Coin, Demon Buddha at Ease\_2

"The number of cultivators and demons in the Demon City region today far exceeds that of the past."

"The occurrences of those abnormal celestial phenomena just now further corroborate this, with more cultivators and demons rushing over."

"Among them, there is no shortage of old demons and old monsters from the Cavernous Mystery Realm. I don't know where Zhu Qi gets such confidence, isn't he afraid that some cultivators from the Ultimate Happiness Realm will be attracted and cause his conspiracy to fail?"

After these two had spoken, Yu Yanshi also frowned and followed up,

"The most troublesome thing is that Zhu Qi's forces are too many, and he has seized the initiative. Even if we sabotage him in secret, we can't stop their actions. The current state of Demon City is like a pot of water slowly coming to a boil, with ingredients jumping in one after another, just waiting for Zhu Qi to sweep them up and achieve his grand ambitions."

After saying this, Yu Yanshi's face softened slightly.

He earnestly turned to Tao Qian and expressed his thanks,

"However, we're indeed fortunate to have the help of Mr. Jin Lin, allowing us to have foreknowledge of his wolfish ambitions."

"It's unrealistic to try to snatch the Mountain and River Map."

"But we should be able to stop his Blood Sacrifice."

"As for those cultivators and demons blinded by greed, who came because of the precious treasures, they need not be bothered about for the moment. We already have plans for the four million disaster-stricken people. The National Salvation Congress has secretly built one hundred and eight Fish and Dragon Escape River Altars in various camps. When Zhu Qi is ready to perform the Blood Sacrifice,

Immortal Master Tianjiang will take action himself, trigger the altars, and call upon the mighty Tianjiang River to take away all four million disaster-stricken people."

"It just so happens that the food supplies prepared by the National Salvation Congress could also be put to good use, ensuring that not a single disaster-stricken person suffers a loss."

"Without the disaster-stricken people, Zhu Qi would have no source for a Blood Sacrifice, making it impossible for him to refine that supreme treasure."

"However, to prevent the desperate mutt from jumping over the wall when he discovers that Yin Qiye has betrayed him and seizing his position, and then ordering the Heavenly Demon Army to slaughter the people of Demon City to make up the numbers, the National Salvation Congress has also set up Arrays outside the Prince Zhao Mansion to block communications. At the critical moment, let Yin Qiye lead the Heavenly Demon Army out of Demon City under the pretext of fighting the Fungus Demon Army."

"As for the Cao Gang, White Lotus Sect, Changchun Society and the like... We have secretly liaised with Qingjing Temple, Xuan Miao Temple, and others, using strategies to deflect troubles elsewhere, ensuring they can't cause any mischief."

"The only problem is Zhu Qi's master, Taishang Demon Saint True Monarch Lingwa."

"Mr. Jin Lin had previously sent a message saying there was already a way to deal with this fiend?"

Not just Yu Yanshi, but Li Wenyan, Shi Yingqiong, and others all looked over with concerned eyes.

Their eyes were full of surprise, doubt, and a hint of disbelief.

That was quite normal.

How powerful was Lingwa?

Being a cultivator of the Ultimate Happiness Realm, even the Tianjiang Immortal Master, one of the Three Immortals of the Great Wilderness, admitted he was no match for Lingwa.

Although they all knew that Tao Qian had a mysterious origin and was certainly no Overseas Dragon Demon,

But how could a nobody like him solve a Taishang Demon, whose name resounded throughout the entire Cultivation World?

Tao Qian's mind raced, grateful that his previous choice had been the right one.

The response of the National Salvation Congress was very thorough.

Apart from one of the Three Immortals of the Great Wilderness being elsewhere and therefore unable to face Lingwa's high-end combat power,

From top to bottom, the National Salvation Congress had corresponding arrangements.

If it were Tao Qian alone, naturally, he could do nothing.

However, this calamity was, after all, his to bear.

Upon hearing this, Tao Qian did not hide anything and directly transmitted a message to them,

"With my meager mana, naturally, I cannot deal with Lingwa."

"But if I can't, it doesn't mean others can't."

"I've learned that Lingwa has a sworn enemy, none other than the Kongchan Arhat from the Demon Buddha Temple. I've specifically sent a message and negotiated a deal with him. Today, the Arhat will take action to lure Lingwa away from Demon City."

These few words fell on their ears, and the group was stunned at first, then all showed expressions of joy.



Those aspiring to save the country and the world often do not stick to the divide between Daoist, Buddhist, Demon, and Devil.

Tao Qian thought for a moment, then suddenly dropped another bombshell,

"Although Zhu Qi's forces are vast, they are extremely complex."

"You also know that I have taken on the identity of Guest Elder at the residence of Elder Zhang Baisui to conduct covert investigations, discovering that Zhang Jiudeng and Zhu Qi actually each have their own schemes."

"Especially Zhang Jiudeng, who actually possesses an Ancestor God Fragment that has turned into a treasure called the Sheji Seal, which works in conjunction with the Mountain and River Map. He plans to take advantage of Zhu Qi's treasure refining to play out a scenario of the mantis stalking the cicada, unaware of the oriole behind; a dog-eat-dog scheme."

"Hisss"

Upon hearing this significant secret, the young prodigies all appeared dumbfounded.

They were about to ask for more details when suddenly, a figure appeared beside Tao Qian without any warning. It was a mechanical species holding a long fork with a Treasure Wheel hanging behind his back.

As soon as Lian Jing'er appeared, he spoke in a mechanical voice, "Target detected along with multiple related targets showing unusual energy signatures, a 90 percent probability that the target has initiated his plan ahead of schedule... According to Little Age's information, this probability rises to 100 percent."

He had just finished speaking when a bronze fingertip touched the Void, and a sight from the distant mountains outside Demon City appeared. Little Age's adorable face was full of defeat, and through the light and shadows, he shouted in panic,

"Something terrible has happened."

"The big group of stinky stinky mushrooms that you asked me to watch, while they were originally progressing leisurely, suddenly discovered an unguarded shortcut without Forbidden Technique alarms, they've used a burrowing technique to cross over a thousand miles, and they should already be near your location."

With Little Age's words, everyone, including Tao Qian, showed a look of dread.

Stinky stinky mushroom people were undoubtedly the Fungus Demon Army under the Fourth Prince Zhu Xuan, cruel and ruthless, with uncanny methods and unparalleled in slaughter.

The original plan that Tao Qian and the National Salvation Congress had coordinated was to have Yin Qiye lead the Heavenly Demon Army out of Demon City to fight this group of fungus demons in the mountains, where deaths and injuries mattered not, as both sides were a scourge to the common Mortal Human Race.