

Longevity 41

Chapter 41: Corpse Slave Demon Dance, Tremendous Benefits

Tao Qian, this novice with no cultivation experience, knew that upon encountering a powerful Evil Demon with malintent, he must escape immediately, as recklessly striking back would lead him to death.

Other disciples from major sects, of course, understood this even better.

Thus, when the "Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva" turned its head and exuded malintent, they didn't hesitate and immediately used their skills to flee.

In the chaos, some other cultivators and demons got mixed in.

Clearly not the dessert mentioned by the Bodhisattva, they too panicked and began to flee, using Evasion Light and sword light.

This chaos, however, somewhat increased the chances for Tao Qian and the others to escape.

In an instant, hundreds of lights burst forth, shooting in all directions.

Above them, the seductive laughter of the Bodhisattva suddenly rang out, and then the previously subsided chanting and Buddhist hymns sounded again, amplifying the visible golden Buddha Light tenfold in an instant, enveloping Tengshe Mountain and the surrounding area.

Wherever the Buddha Light reached, all escape skills and sword techniques seemed to malfunction.

Worse still, the next second saw about a dozen enchanting figures flying out from the "Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva."

Each one was naked, skin like creamy jade, features like paintings, appearing as sacred as Heavenly Girls.

These dozen Heavenly Girls each picked a target and flew towards them.

At the same time, a seductive sound that penetrated deep into the marrow of the soul infiltrated the ears of several people, including Tao Qian.

"Fragrant and delectable young men, don't blame me for not giving you a chance. As long as you can escape from the 'Corpse Slave's' hands, you can preserve your Essence Blood and Soul."

"If you can't manage to escape with your skills, your elders will have no face to trouble me, so just stay and join me in Ultimate Happiness."

As soon as the voice fell, the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva's body seemed unable to restrain itself.

That languid body flew straight off the Lotus Platform towards the banquet on the Tengshe Platform.

Seeing this situation, was she really planning to let these young men off the hook?

However, including Tao Qian, none of the dozen believed it.

At the foot of the mountain, accompanied by the passing of Buddha Light.

A figure like that of a baby emerged from the void and was fixed midair.

Releasing a unique milky fragrance, forced to waste a strand of Nascent Soul Source Energy, Tao Qian fell down holding a nameless black lacquered iron sword.

Before he could stabilize himself, he naturally blurted out a curse:

"Enjoy your mother*** ..."

Just as Tao Qian's curse emerged, his vision suddenly flickered.

But then, from within the Buddha Light, gorgeous lotuses appeared, even showing dew on them, and from a blooming lotus, that corpse slave, resembling a Heavenly Girl, walked out.

Not wearing a thread, she approached with a graceful walk.

From her cherry lips, a moan-like sound emerged, instantly creating an enchanting atmosphere.

Looking more closely, this corpse slave appeared no different from a real person, with affectionate eyes and flushed cheeks, even the fine hairs on her snowy skin and details like a teardrop mole under her eye or a small mole near her thigh all made her seem like a real woman.

It seemed she was compelled to act, teary-eyed as she approached, while caressing her pale hand and summoning some lightweight clothes and performing an extremely charming dance.

Though her movements were awkward, the seductive atmosphere notably intensified.

Originally golden, the Buddha Light instantly turned pink, and Tao Qian felt as though he had fallen into a realm of chaotic Heavenly Demons, with a demon witch in front offering him a dance of the Heavenly Demon.

In just a moment, the desires in Tao Qian's heart were triggered, and certain parts of him began to stir restlessly.

Biting down hard, Tao Qian strained to break free from the pink Buddha Light's obstruction.

Wielding the sword in his hand, he staggeringly ran toward the distance, continuously shouting in panic, "Don't come any closer... I can't lose my Primordial Yang... Don't come any closer."

His voice was urgent, his actions unruly.

His appearance was like a dragon cub about to succumb to temptation.

In other areas, some people performed worse than him, while others excelled.

For instance, a handsome young man not far from Tao Qian, blocked by the Buddha Light and seemingly paralyzed with a layer of frost on his face upon seeing the corpse slave approach, did not wait for her to make a move. With a cold snort, he spat out a sword elixir that pulsed up and down, emitting a chilling aura, instantly freezing his surroundings.

With a pinch of a sword technique, the sword elixir burst in an instant, sending out thousands of blasts of cold air, wrapping around the young man and turning into a cold light capable of piercing mountains, destroying the corpse slave's body and vanishing without a trace.

Though the corpse slave's body recovered instantly, it was too late to catch up.

A similar scene included:

A young man in a Daoist robe, seeing the corpse slave flying towards him, chuckled and suddenly leaped up, transforming into a bright green light and easily breaking free from the Buddha Light towards the high skies, leaving the frustrated corpse slave stomping on the spot, lamenting his lack of romantic spirit.

Even more ferocious was a young man with an almost perfectly robust body. He grinned, showing forty large white teeth, his body visibly bulging, with muscles wildly spreading. Four large bulges under his ribs bursting forth, creating four new terrifying arms. Accompanied by fiery red steam hissing, this monstrous young man took only a second to smash the corpse into mincemeat and then arrogantly bounded away, shaking the ground with loud thuds as he left.

While these face-slapping scenes unfolded, the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, already at the banquet at a high place of Tengshe Mountain, showed no anger.

Her attention seemed entirely focused on the main course, "Hui Xin the little monk."

Seeing this, everyone knew that the Bodhisattva was deliberately letting things slip.

Although she did indeed intend to catch some delicacies, and had already captured five or six handsome young men, she did not plan to capture them all at once; instead, she set a limit.

Those who could easily break through the blockade of corpse slaves were clearly of significant origin.

Despite her notorious reputation and the protection of the Demon Buddha Temple, it would not be wise to completely offend all the powerful forces in the world.

Realizing this, Tao Qian, who had already escaped a distance, immediately devised a plan in his heart.

Seeing the pink Buddha light flashing again ahead, the corpse slave walked out, and Tao Qian sheathed his black lacquered iron sword.

His face flushed as if he could no longer hold back; he resignedly opened his arms and threw himself into the beautiful naked body, shouting as he went, "Brother has never lost my virginity, my Primordial Yang is still intact, please be gentle, sister."

Hearing such flirtatious words, the corpse slave immediately restrained her naive expression, transforming into the aura of a beautiful woman.

She also stretched out her lotus arm and embraced the robust and handsome dragon cub.

The moment their bodies touched, the corpse slave was about to use her powers to extract the young dragon's Primordial Yang.

But in that instant, Tao Qian leaned close to her ear and affectionately called out "good sister," followed by a loud roar.

"Roar"

Worried that normal methods wouldn't affect the corpse slave, Tao Qian released the Bo Dragon Sound without any reservation for the first time.

Bo Dragon Driving Origin Qi, surging powerfully.

In an instant, within several miles,

All living beings heard a roar as if it came from the Yunmeng Great Swamp, a primordial echo.

Wind, rain, thunder, and lightning arose, and the inferior demons and monsters below shivered.

The corpse slave, being the closest, only groaned once, and her beautiful body dissipated into light smoke.

After several seconds, she reformed.

By then, the thundercloud wrapped with the dragon shadow had already disappeared without a trace.

Such a disturbance drew the attention of Tao Qian, the young sword cultivator who released the sword elixir, and the six-armed youth who smashed the corpse slave, observed by the terrifying beings from the peak of Tengshe Mountain.

Before any of those beings could speak, suddenly another Buddhist chant sounded.

"Amithaba, Form is Emptiness, Emptiness is Form. If senior already possesses such cultivation, why still cling to the carnal desires of the flesh?"

"Yo, does the little monk wish to debate Buddhist principles with me? To me, this is like flirting and scolding in love, the whispered sweet nothings of lovers in bed, which I cannot get enough of."

"But this is not the right place. When we return to my Beautiful Corpse Buddhist Temple, we can have a good debate for seven days and nights, wouldn't that be wonderful?"

As her words ended, a surge of pink Buddha light erupted.

The beings turned back only to see the silhouette of "Master Hui Xin" bulging from the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva's bare stomach, accompanied by a compassionate Buddhist chant, then disappearing.

Reflecting on the conversation, everyone knew that Hui Xin, the little monk, had been captured by the Female Demon's tactics.

Satisfied with her main meal, the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, in high spirits, turned her body around.

But the first thing she looked at was the gracefully beautiful woman beside Tang Xianzong, showing a hint of appreciation before stating two sentences that greatly soured the beautiful woman's expression.

"The Joyful Pavilion Market is well organized, attracting so many young talents with extraordinary backgrounds."

"Stay close to me later; this place is also very suitable as one of my hunting grounds."

Seeing the beautiful woman beside him troubled by the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, Tang Xianzong patted her hand under the table.

He then laughed heartily, deliberately first waving his hand to summon the mist to obscure the high platform banquet again, isolating the gazes of the lower-level cultivators and demons below.

Only then did he address the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva and the other powerful demons and species present:

"A little drama, not worth much concern."

"Now that the Bodhisattva has arrived, and our banquet is complete with distinguished guests, I will not keep you in suspense and will state the main matter."

"I have invited you, esteemed powerhouses, because there is a significant matter to discuss."

"At the same time, I also wish to offer you an opportunity."

"I know that many of your cultivations require living blood and the Seven Emotions and Six Desires."

"Thus, this world, filled with hundreds of millions of humans, is indeed a treasure trove for you."

"Take the land of Southern Yue for example, with a near billion human population. If all the natural beings in this region were managed by you, wouldn't that be a tremendous advantage?"

Almost immediately,

When Tang Xianzong uttered these words, not to mention the other demons and alien species present, even the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, who had been daydreaming about frolicking with Master Hui Xin,

Now stared in surprise.

Although most restrained themselves, the eyes of these great demons and terrifying creatures still flickered with greed.

Chapter 42: Shocking Secrets, Ancestor God Forbidden Technique

Seeing that he had piqued the interest of this group of Great Demons with just a few words, Tang Xianzong's date-red face showed an even thicker smile.

However, almost immediately, a Python Demon, whose upper body was human and lower body that of a python, clad in a black and red cloak, with a gloomy look in his eyes, suddenly hissed twice with his tongue.

Then, his narrow mouth split open, and in an extremely soft voice, he said, "General Tang, you surely aren't indulging in wild fantasies about having us help you rebel, are you?"

"If we were those lowly Magicians under your command, this might be feasible."

"But with our level of Cultivation, if we were to broadly enter the mortal world, I fear it wouldn't be many days before we'd automatically trigger that 'Ancestor God Forbidden Technique' and be obliterated out of the blue."

"It's been over two thousand years, which Demon or Alien Species would still fall for this?"

After the Python Demon spoke, he immediately resonated with the other Great Demons.

On the right, reclining in a wide chair, was a giant infant, filthy all over, with a broad nose, large eyes, and a mouth full of tusks, wrapped in a huge swaddle, attended by four plump maids, baring their

breasts, and the voice that came out was rough and loud, shaking the cups and dishes at the banquet, clinking and clanging.

"That's right, Tang Xianzong, you should stop indulging in wishful thinking."

"As long as that Ancestor God Forbidden Technique exists, let alone us, even those who have become Immortals and Ancestors wouldn't be able to withstand the consequences of an Ancestor God Forbidden Technique and the opening of the Longevity Barrier—a soul scattered, all accounts settled."

After the giant infant had spoken, the rest of the Demons and Monsters nodded in agreement.

It was then that the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva suddenly became serious, staring intensely at Tang Xianzong, and hesitantly asked, "Is that true?"

Despite being questioned by the Demons, Tang Xianzong's face, as red as a date, showed no sign of annoyance. Seeing the Bodhisattva looking over and questioning him, this mysterious general who had emerged from the Devil God Army, revealed an extremely radiant smile.

Then, he revealed news that made all Demons and Alien Species, including the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, ecstatic.

"My friends, Bodhisattva, I understand your concerns."

"From the day two thousand years ago when the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty was established, this land was subjected to the so-called 'Nine Heavens and Ten Earths Ancestor God Demon Destruction Forbidden Technique,' which, once it senses a large-scale entry of Demons and Monsters into the world, automatically initiates various sized Longevity Barriers to obliterate rebellious Demons and Monsters."

"Even those powerful beings who have crossed the 'Daoist Transformation Realm' cannot withstand the force of that Forbidden Technique."

"This is why we Alien Species lack resources and cannot achieve Dao,"

"while the secret realms and source mountains of the world have been occupied by the Major Buddhist and Daoist Sects, or the millennium-old clans, making it difficult for us to oppose them after a lifetime of arduous Cultivation, oppressed for more than two thousand years."

"But now, the opportunity for change has come."

"I dare to guarantee with my life that the Ancestor God Forbidden Technique that has enshrouded this realm for over two thousand years has completely shattered, dissipating into the Chaos Abyss."

"The rule that Demons and Monsters cannot enter the world on a large scale... will be completely abolished."

"My friends, will you let go of such a heaven-sent opportunity to alter your fate?"

Tang Xianzong, who already held responsibilities over such matters of controlling minds and shaping souls within the Devil God Army,

And given the truly shocking nature of this news, no one in the hall could remain calm after he spoke.

Even the naked Terror Alien, resembling a Snow Woman, lit up in the eyes, which appeared like gemstones reflecting an endless array of fresh red worms.

"Tang Xianzong, this is truly a top affair in the world, sufficient to overturn the entire Longevity Heavenly Dynasty. What proof do you have?"

Among the crowd of demons, someone couldn't help but ask.

Tang Xianzong seemed already prepared for this question and immediately smiled again.

He picked up the wine cup before him, drained it in one gulp, stood tall, and burst out into a wild laugh:

"Proof?"

"Let me think, so much, indeed too much."

"The Ancestor God Forbidden Technique didn't shatter instantaneously; it began to weaken a hundred years ago, gradually revealing more flaws, then piece by piece it broke apart, until ultimately it completely vanished."

"Look at the current structure of the world."

"Have you heard of blond, blue-eyed Western Barbarians who have traveled from afar, bringing with them the pantheon of Western gods, beginning to encroach upon the territories of the Buddhist and Daoist Sects?"

"Have you heard about the various terrifying incidents erupting frequently on this land in recent days-- blood moons, acid rains, meteorites and other calamities taking turns playing out?"

"Have you heard how that group of cowardly Imperial Family members who control the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty are presently making desperate overtures to recruit Buddhist, Daoist, and even Demon Sects as well as those several thousand-year-old clans, offering titles where titles are due, sending off a Prince here, even the Heterodox Sect Ten Thousand Infant taking the Third Prince as a True Disciple, and currently the young Emperor's father is causing a stir wanting to go to the Great Freedom Temple to become a monk?"

"If you have not heard of these, have you seen the sweep of my Devil God Army, along with the Taiping Peaceful Allies, ravaging the momentum across a dozen major provinces?"

"If that 'Ancestor God Forbidden Technique' were still in effect, would any of this have occurred?"

"You all know, the Longevity Barrier has actually always shrouded this land, and it targets not just us Demons and Monsters, but even if those vile Taoists and monks were to enter the world on a large scale, their fate would be the same, not to mention those Western false gods and demons."

"Going back hundreds of years, when they step into this realm, they would be stripped of their abnormal powers within a few hours, quickly weaken, and die abruptly."

"But now, all these things have happened."

When Tang Xianzong finished speaking, every Demon was stunned.

Then, all eyes emitted a terrifying, greedy light.

It was as if the clouds that had been accumulating for many years dispersed in that moment, and they saw an extremely beautiful future.

Seeing that the moment was ripe, Tang Xianzong's smile grew even more brilliant, hammering down the final blow.

"Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, although you have just joined the Demon Buddha Temple, given your status, it won't be many days before the high monks of the Demon Buddha Temple will inform you of this matter."

"The rest of you are at a bit of a disadvantage, as your Cultivation is indeed much stronger than mine, but you don't have much of a backing. If it were not for my advantage of being born in the Devil God Army, it would also be hard for me to learn this secret beforehand."

"However, this secret couldn't be kept hidden for too long. The Imperial Family of the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty and the high and mighty of various major forces knew it early on and began to strategize."

"As for the Forbidden Immortal Hall and several other more covert new government offices, they are the result of collaboration between the Imperial Family and various sects."

"The several major Daoist sects, over a dozen major Buddhist temples, and a few ancient clans... nearly all are in cooperation with the Imperial Family, working to strengthen the mundane army of the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty with the dynasty's own deep-rooted resources."

"If we take action any later, even when those secrets are revealed, all we could feast on would be the remains and scraps."

As the last statement was made, nearly all the Devils present had made their decision.

"Let's do it!"

"General Tang, speak of the collaboration plan, how shall we distribute the Southern Yue territory among us?"

"I suggest we descend the mountain now. I cannot speak for the provincial city, but nearby Seeking Immortal County and Wending County alone, I could conquer by myself."

From cautious and timid to restless and eager.

The difference was in having General Tang Xianzong's words.

Seeing that all the Devils were hooked, Tang Xianzong resumed his seat, knocked on the wine table, and said in a deep voice:

"We have discovered that secret too late, a third of the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty's army has already received the support of the Buddhist and Daoist clans, they are not as fragile as they were before."

"No to mention others, take the Governor of Southern Yue, Ji Xianxian, who not only introduced Western barbarian's magic artifacts into his large army on a large scale but also diligently practiced the 'Ten Thousand Buddha Town Magic Array' from Vajra Temple. Any of you, even the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, if trapped, it would take just a few hours before you would be grinded to death."

"Furthermore, within the Forbidden Immortal Hall are the disciples and elders from each sect; if they interfere, do you think we could still survive?"

After these remarks, the audience of Devils was stunned once more.

Unbeknownst to them, their emotions had been manipulated since they discovered that great secret by General Tang.

To fight or not to fight.

The Devils were all confused.

Until General Tang spoke again with a serious face:

"I want you all to know that our army already has a complete plan."

"The key point lies in Seeking Immortal County. Now, Governor Ji Xianxian of Southern Yue is searching for our army, wishing for a decisive battle to death."

"We deliberately show ourselves here, where many eyes increase the chance of our presence being leaked."

"Then, we'll find some pretext to harass Seeking Immortal County intensely, drawing the nearby army and the people from Forbidden Immortal Hall over. At that time, we'll openly set up our forces, using Seeking Immortal County as the battleground to counter them."

"Ji Xianxian, being a man fond of great achievements, will suspect that the Devil God Army aims to take this pivotal port city, and he'll bring forth a large force to exterminate us."

"Once he moves out, Southern Yue's provincial city will be empty. In less than half a day, our ambush-ready Devil God Army can capture the provincial city, using its population of tens of millions as a resource, easily swallowing the entire Southern Yue territory."

"By then, each of you will have greatly contributed, and the Devil God will surely reward you."

"From the Great Book 'Heavenly Demon Slaughter God Scripture,' apart from the Basic Method, you can all request the other supplementary volumes from the Devil God. If you are not willing to cultivate this method, the Devil God also promises that each of you will receive one personal teaching session, and the Devil God's treasure vault will also be opened to you all, each allowed to take one Exotic Treasure."

"I will be overseeing this matter, and your futures all rely on you now."

"General Tang Xianzong, my thanks."

As the words fell, this future son-in-law to the Devil Goddess, in front of all the Demon and Monster present, performed a profoundly respectful bow.

About dozens of Demon and Monster, after hesitating a moment, all stood up and eagerly agreed.

Moved by Tang Xianzong?

Of course not, this group of Demon and Monster were clearly seduced by the hefty rewards promised by Tang Xianzong.

Furthermore, the future scene painted by the general was too wonderful, making it hard for them to control themselves.

The Python Demon, in an overexcited state, immediately shed its great mantle, revealing its monstrous true form and began to wriggle towards the center of the banquet, its upper body rising and starting to dance, as hallucinogenic gas, slightly toxic and causing immense joy to any living being, burst forth from beneath its scales.

The infant Demon laughed loudly, burying its head into the chests of four maids, squirming and sniffing wildly.

The Snow Woman exhibited thousands of holes on its surface, from which myriad fresh red tapeworms fluttered out, spreading a sweet and pungent exotic fragrance immediately.

A Wolf Demon, in one go, drank the contents of a dozen demi-human-sized wine jars, directly revealing its giant white wolf form, stood on the wine table, and howled at the moon.

An old man with a Yin Yang Dual Body smiled creepily, taking a Black Banner from within his robes and shaking it, instantly causing a torrent of demonic qi to rise, and hundreds of nude men and women flew out. They not only danced around the banquet but also publically demonstrated the Yin Yang Dao.

Thus, the high platform banquet had transformed into a scene of chaotic dancing among a multitude of demons, replete with stunning bodily displays, making everyone completely immersed.

Therefore, no one noticed that General Tang Xianzong, who orchestrated everything, was exchanging gazes with the "Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva."

Both flashes in their eyes revealed a smile, signifying a conspiracy had succeeded.

After shifting their gazes away, the Bodhisattva continued to instruct Master Hui Xin in her belly.

As for Tang Xianzong, after finishing a jar of wine, he thought to himself with a big laugh:

"Grand rewards?"

"Heh, achieving such a Great Plan as conquering an entire province, how could it be so rudimentary."

"You all are merely baits. If this plan succeeds, my great career as Tang Xianzong is foreseeable, hahaha."

In his exhilarated state, this general, having a body with unusual signs, suddenly smashed the wine jar and, imitating the giant infant, grabbed Sister Meng who was next to him, bringing his head close and starting intimate whispers.

Chapter 43 Tao Qian Slays the Dragon, 9 True Spirit Sounds

Outside Seeking Immortal County, a mass of dark clouds enshrouded with faint thunderous sounds fell into a deep valley.

Before long, a somewhat disheveled Tao Qian emerged from the valley.

Though he had escaped from the "Corpse Slave," and even just wasted a whiff of Nascent Soul Source Energy, the cost was a bit smaller than Tao Qian had anticipated.

Nevertheless, this did not prevent Tao Qian from feeling stifled. He believed that other young cultivators who had escaped were likely experiencing similar feelings.

"Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva!"

Tao Qian murmured those four words and silently took note of this grudge.

Seeking revenge?

In the short term, it was not possible.

But it was still necessary to keep a little account, and if an opportunity arose in the future, Tao Qian, with his pettiness, would certainly not let it pass.

As for now, he simply discerned his bearings and headed unhesitatingly towards a direction that deviated from Seeking Immortal County.

He had originally planned to return to his bookshop after strolling through Tengshe Square.

But now, he had changed his mind.

"The Cultivation World is too dangerous. Just walking down the street could lead to unforeseen disasters. One can imagine how many troubles one might encounter without reason in the future."

"As long as there is a chance to enhance one's strength, there must be no delay. The Root Skill has been obtained, and it's time to begin the first practice of cultivation."

Not long after these thoughts materialized, Tao Qian's figure had already appeared in a desolate mountain creek.

If he were practicing some not-so-complex Divine Power Secret Technique, Tao Qian would've just done it at his bookshop.

But the Root Skill was different.

Moreover, this was his first time cultivating, and his body still contained an intense Bo Dragon Driving Origin Qi, which was extremely important and could not be taken lightly.

Tao Qian stood at a higher ground, looking towards the creek in front of him. It was very deep and steep, and not so wide. Through the gap of roughly dozens of feet, one could faintly hear the sound of water below, and amidst the rising white mist, some short green trees and clumps of aquatic plants were dimly visible.

This place was called Tiger Jiao Gorge, because some woodcutters and hunters occasionally heard a sound similar to a Jiao Dragon roaring from the bottom of the gorge, hence the naming.

Seeking Immortal Hermit Wu Ming heard about it and came from afar, watching patiently for half a month but never saw a glimpse of the Jiao Dragon. Eventually, unable to contain his curiosity, he took a risk and climbed down to the bottom of the gorge.

He did not encounter any Jiao Dragon or Exotic Beasts, but instead found a not-so-large cave in the middle of the cliff wall, completely empty inside, without any sign of living creatures. After sitting in the cave for several days, Wu Ming unveiled the mystery. The so-called "Jiao Dragon's roar" was actually the combined effect of the stream, air, and the gorge itself.

Disappointed and exhausted, he left without finding an Immortal—Wu Ming.

It was a pity for someone seeking Immortals, but for Tao Qian, it had a bit of use.

He found a huge rock from somewhere and, with a move of his body, plunged straight into the bottom of the gorge.

Half a second later, Tao Qian appeared inside a stone cave.

The cave was quite deep; the outer layer was more moist and had accumulated a puddle of water that looked like a mirror on the ground, surrounded by various aquatic plants and algae.

But at the deepest part was a dry platform just enough to accommodate one person sitting cross-legged.

"Nice place!"

Not sure if it was because he had the Bo Dragon Bloodline, but Tao Qian actually felt that this desolate stone cave seemed quite comfortable.

After checking and observing for a while, Tao Qian's heart settled.

He directly blocked the cave entrance with the giant rock. Although it left him in complete darkness, for Tao Qian, half Abnormality and half Bo Dragon, this had no impact on him at all. In fact, it even aided in his meditation.

The conditions were simple, but it was his first cultivation.

As a newbie in the Cultivation World, Tao Qian was still fully prepared.

First, he summoned the moisture to cleanse his body, changed into new clothes, and lit the incense bought from the Joyful Treasure Pavilion, which was said to aid in "Concentrating and Calming."

Afterwards, Tao Qian faced east and tapped his teeth nine times—an action that Tao Qian didn't know if it had any use, but since it was the first time, the sense of ritual still had to be there.

With all preparations complete, Tao Qian then solemnly took out the "Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Diagram."

With all stray thoughts shattered, he opened the first page of the Secret Book and began to read intently.

Time passed indeterminately until Tao Qian slowly extracted himself from the book.

In his eyes, a clear sense of understanding flickered.

Some of the confusions he had since entering the Cultivation World were now suddenly clear.

Though he had yet to officially begin cultivating, Tao Qian had fewer worries and doubts deep within his heart.

"According to the Secret Book's statement, if I were an ordinary person with an empty body, to cultivate one of the Spirit Treasure Root Skills, I would only need to follow the steps systematically, diligently learning, chanting the treasure verses day and night. If the talent permits, life Spirit Treasure Source Qi would be born in the body after one cycle, it could attract Source Qi to refine the body after ten, and after a hundred, it could integrate Source Qi with the blood. After a thousand, not only could it define the Life Seed, but also there is a chance to naturally develop Divine Ability, leaping straight into the Qi Refining Realm."

"Of course, every word in the Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Diagram contains something special, and to chant it completely and correctly once is no simple matter."

"It could even be said to be extremely difficult, you should know that missing just one word makes all efforts in vain."

"Of course, this is a pure routine for a new person to practice the method, but it's different for a cultivator like me who has already acquired a certain Source Qi through Body Refining."

"To cultivate this method, the first step is to visualize the 'Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Map,' using the Divine Ability of this map to refine oneself, wash away all dust, and to refine all the Alien Species Source Qi in the body into the pure Spirit Treasure Source Qi."

"The refining process, depending on whether the Source Qi is pure or mixed, will result in either loss or gain."

"The 'Divine Power Exotic Skill' born from the Alien Species Source Qi will also undergo the corresponding Transformation, or it may disappear entirely..."

This last thought made Tao Qian hesitate.

Practicing the "Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Map," cleansing Bo Dragon Driving Origin Qi, the good outcome would be great, but at the same time the bad result was that he would lose affinity to wind, rain, thunder, and lightning, and might even lose the Divine Power "Bo Dragon Sound."

For the currently almost powerless Tao Qian, this was naturally a hit.

But then again, what was the use of having Bo Dragon Sound? All his Bloodline Divine Power came from the Bo Dragon Pearl Fragment, it seemed strong for now, but after all, was like water without a source, without a clear path ahead.

"Just talk about one without the basic methods of cultivation, he shouldn't even dream of stepping into the 'Qi Refining Realm.'"

"But it's different with the 'Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Diagram.'"

"This is one of the top fundamental methods in the world, though costly and risky, and seemingly hopeless in the eyes of others, Tao Qian knows that this magical skill is essentially a path that the 'Spirit Treasure Sect' uses to select new disciples."

"After possessing Spirit Treasure Source Qi, when casting magical skills such as the 'Small Innate Nascent Soul Escape Technique' and 'Secret Demon Sacrifice Body Sword Technique,' its power is far better than that of Bo Dragon Source Qi."

"Moreover, the results of purification might not necessarily be bad."

"I am proceeding with the practice!"

Light flashed in Tao Qian's eyes, his mind firmly decided.

He didn't start visualizing immediately but concentrated and calmed his mind once more.

Assuring himself of no distractions, Tao Qian then opened the 'Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Diagram,' flipping to the central page.

Yet what he saw depicted there was an unimaginable Innate Divine Being, reposing in the Yellow Room of Yanxi Cloud Palace, within the Seven Treasures Veil, as if making eye contact with any creature in front of the book.

Suddenly, a grand and profound Dao sound echoed in Tao Qian's mind: "Primordial Cave Void Nothingness, Three Qi Essence comes to the door. Zirong View of the Sky, Four Bright Planting Spirit Roots..."

Before Tao Qian could listen closely to this sound, an alien presence started rebelling within him.

"Roar!"

The familiar sound of the Bo Dragon fiercely erupted.

But this time, it wasn't external but internal.

The Bo Dragon Source Qi within his body sensed a catastrophe and surged violently from his limbs and internal organs, merging into a Bo Dragon silhouette that straddled the line between illusion and reality.

In the pitch-black cave, light suddenly flooded the area as the Bo Dragon silhouette roared angrily. From bottom to top, it leaped up, trying to escape directly through the Baihui point atop the skull and leave Tao Qian's body completely.

But at that moment, Tao Qian's voice, which seemed to have undergone a Daoist transformation, cold and detached, came through:

"You were meant as bait, once ingested by me, how could you possibly escape?"

Under these circumstances, as Tao Qian recited the Dao sound, indeed a special power was born.

A tremendous force followed Tao Qian's will, pressing down from above with the momentum to suppress.

Its force was like the Tianhe river running in reverse, its intention to purify all dust.

"Boom!"

The next second, the Bo Dragon silhouette was dispersed.

The rich and pure Bo Dragon Source Qi abruptly reverted to its origin, transforming into another kind of vast and pure, natural, and translucent special Source Qi. Like sweet rain from heaven, it showered down from the Baihui point and completely merged into Tao Qian's limbs and internal organs.

As the purification concluded, the Dao sound abruptly ceased, and Tao Qian's visualization came to a halt.

Deep in his mind, information about his own changes spontaneously emerged.

Tao Qian sensed with a thought, and immediately joy jumped into his eyes.

"I've succeeded!"

"All the Bo Dragon Source Qi in my body has been purified into Spirit Treasure Source Qi, the loss is there but not much, just a tenth or twentieth of it."

"My cultivation level is still in the 'Energy-Introducing Realm,' but I've jumped from the Body Refining Stage to the Blood Fusion Stage."

"Though I've lost the affinity for Wind, Rain, Thunder, and Lightning, I'm now closer to the nature of heaven and earth, which is the wonder of Spirit Treasure Source Qi."

"What's most surprising is the Divine Power 'Bo Dragon Sound,' which has also undergone purification and transformation, becoming another kind of special Divine Power called 'Nine True Spirit Sounds.'"

With these thoughts, Tao Qian realized something.

He smiled slightly, then formed a hand seal and said, "Nine Heavens Ultimate Truth, the Great Mysteries."

In an instant, the cave was bathed in bright light.

A Qingjing brilliance that could utterly dissolve all demon and devil aliens emerged. Amid this divine sound, Tao Qian stood up and approached a water puddle in front of him.

Using its mirror-like surface for reflection, sure enough, all traces of Bo Dragon features had vanished from his face.

Not only had he regained his Human Clan features, but there was also a jade-like luminous quality to his face, giving him an air of otherworldliness akin to an Immortal.

With such a temperament, if he were to don a Daoist robe, no one would doubt if he claimed to be an advanced disciple of the Daoist school.

"Hm."

"Now if I say I'm a Spirit Treasure Daoist, it's not much of a stretch."

Tao Qian voiced his thought with great satisfaction.

He safely put away the Secret Book and took bold steps towards the entrance of the cave, moving the boulder aside.

Judging the angle, he leaped, landing precisely above the creek.

It was also at just the right moment, as Tao Qian emerged from his isolation, the rising sun at the horizon cast billions of warming rays upon the earth. In front of him, the water mist rose from the mountain streams, and the birds in the forests were chirping competitively, with all the beasts awakening too. This magnificent scenery seemed to be a reflection of Tao Qian's mood at the moment.

"If the Cultivation World here were about Qingjing nature and harmony in the pursuit of longevity, then as I formally enter the Dao and obtain a New Divine Power, it would be appropriate to let out a loud cry to express my determination, spouting the Nine True Spirit Sounds and flaunt before all the beasts."

"Unfortunately, the world of cultivation is fickle and fraught with sudden troubles, so it's better to keep a low profile."

With that, Tao Qian patted his dust-free sleeves.

Then, with a posture aspiring to be transcendent (though the effect was mediocre), he used a "Flying Jump" technique and headed for Seeking Immortal County in the distance.

He had no choice; there were gains and losses.

After purifying all the Bo Dragon Source Qi in his body and officially practicing the 'Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Diagram,' entering the Energy Introduction and Blood Melting Stage and acquiring 'Nine True Spirit Sounds' Divine Power.

The first price to pay became apparent: he had lost the ability to manipulate Wind, Rain, Thunder, and Lightning and could not even perform short-distance flying.

"When there's a chance, I need to learn a flying technique. If I can't even levitate, how can that be considered cultivation?"

In the woods, some intelligent beasts watched enviously as the youth, who resembled a transcendent Daoist, passed. Little did they know his mind was filled with such worldly thoughts.

Chapter 44 Cultivator Heroes, Grand Views and Marvels

Tao Qian returned to Seeking Immortal County without any surprises or dangers. Fortunately, being a bachelor who lived alone, no one inquired about his whereabouts after not returning all night.

He naturally entered the city with a crowd of villagers heading to the market and casually bought some fried dough cakes and soy milk for breakfast. Tao Qian had also found out that most Daoists in this world did not have "dietary restrictions"; they did not have to exclusively eat pure food, drink the gentle breeze, or sip dew without roots.

It was the monks who had more dietary restrictions, or perhaps those from heretical or heterodox paths that had some bizarre restrictions.

In any case, practicing the Dao should not affect Tao Qian's desire for food.

"This Seeking Immortal County doesn't have much in the way of gourmet food. Having a meal at Taoran Inn or trying the mutton hotpot isn't that unusual. I'll still have to travel to the provincial city or to Demon City and the Imperial City."

"The Spirit Treasure Method emphasizes the importance of the heart and mind; only by following one's desires can one make progress, which suits my requirements perfectly."

"Having been reborn, I shouldn't mistreat myself."

"Of course, I shouldn't indulge myself too much, otherwise I could make some big mistakes while getting carried away."

As these thoughts flashed through his mind, Tao Qian recalled last night's experiences.

Silently, he made a mental note of the "Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva" in his little black book in his heart.

Fortunately, this did not affect Tao Qian's cheerful mood. He quickly passed through the market, entered his bookstore's compartment through the side door in the back alley off Vegetable Market Street.

After leisurely finishing his meal and washing up and changing clothes, he didn't give it much thought and moved away the board that served as the door. Greeting the bustling noise of the early market, Chengyou Bookstore opened for the day.

After mending the "Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Diagram," Tao Qian considered whether to continue running the bookstore or not.

The conclusion was to keep it going, as he currently had nowhere else to go.

If he wanted to join the Spirit Treasure Sect, his cultivation was still lacking. He needed to step into the Qi Refining Realm and condense the Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Map within his body to know the location of the sect's gate.

Before that, Tao Qian decided to blend in for a while longer.

There wasn't much business early in the morning.

Actually, there weren't many customers in the afternoon either. Selling those magazine girls and vulgar banned books did earn him silver coins twice.

But such income was like a man's virility, not long-lasting.

Even though there were plenty of licentious old men, they wouldn't come every day to purchase such books. After all, too much self-comforting would inevitably lead to a weakening body; they had to rest.

As for another suggestion from Jia Qiang: selling Western Barbarian books.

That was a small mistake. Tao Qian did stock these books, but the two big bookshops on the main street did the same, and given Chengyou Bookstore's small and shabby setup, it naturally had no competitive edge.

Luckily, after receiving a thousand banknotes from Zhang Xian of the Four Beasts of She County, Tao Qian had no immediate desire for mundane silver coins, so he let it be.

In his boredom, Tao Qian wasn't idle.

In his mind, he silently recited the Spirit Treasure Sublime Dharma.

At the same time, he reflected on the difficulty of cultivation.

"The Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Diagram claims to be an introductory method, which in theory should be very simple, but in practice, it's not the case at all."

"Such a thick book, you need to be in a state of concentration and calm to recite the entire thing, and there are even requirements for tone and rhythm."

"One mistake in a word, start over."

"If those mnemonics were ordinary mortal 'words,' it would be fine and just a test of memory."

"Unfortunately, it's not the case; each word has its own special power, not something you can recite at will."

"For an ordinary person to completely recite it once, it would likely take months or even longer... No wonder they dare say that once one finishes reciting it, they would receive the Spirit Treasure Source Qi and directly step into the Energy-Introducing Realm."

"I skipped this step; perhaps after a few recitations, I could advance from the 'Blood Fusion' phase to the 'Fetus Stabilization' phase, and then attempt to break into the Qi Refinement Realm."

Tao Qian was indulging in his cultivation aspirations within his shop when suddenly the light in front of him changed.

He saw two young men dressed in long robes entering the store, one with thick glasses and a generous face, looking to be in his late twenties and always in good spirits, while the other was older, with rough skin, sharp eyes and a black mustache, quite imposing.

The two customers greeted Tao Qian with a cupped-hand salute; the one with glasses jovially said, "Good morning, shopkeeper. We heard that you've got some Western Barbarian books in, and we came especially to look."

Tao Qian glanced at the two men, returned the gesture, and pointed to a section of the bookstore, "Please, help yourselves."

Following the guidance, they quickly went over.

Each picked up books that interested them; the glasses-wearing customer excitedly counted the titles as he read.

"Calendars from various Western countries, records of changes in ruling groups, railway construction methods, Evolution of All Things, Western Alchemy History, a hundred kinds of secret sailing techniques... these are comprehensive, and all of them are quality books. Unlike Shihan Hall or Dagan Hall, which only select trashy foreign books, the shopkeeper has exceptional taste and insight."

"It's just a pity that there's no essential guide to Franco machine gun production or secrets of making explosive gunpowder..."

"Cough, cough!"

As the glasses-wearing customer muttered excitedly, the man with the mustache coughed to interrupt him.

The former quickly realized and lowered his voice, taking a cautious look towards the counter, only to find the bookstore shopkeeper still focused on reading a book, which made him relax.

However, he failed to notice Tao Qian rolling his eyes under his lowered head.

"I would indeed like to buy those books on essential machine gun production, explosive gunpowder secrets, and secret techniques of producing strange machines... but that would require others to be willing to sell them. Indeed, the translation bureau organized by the Governor of Southern Yue has translated these books, but they are all for internal use; how could they allow a small bookstore owner like me to buy them?"

While Tao Qian grumbled, he also vaguely guessed the identities of the men.

If there was no surprise, both were the type of heroes who sought to resist the court and overthrow tyranny.

Someone else, had they speculated this, might have gone to the government office to report and claim a reward.

But Tao Qian, of course, would not do so.

He pretended to hear nothing and only waited for the two men to buy their books and leave.

However, what he ended up waiting for was a third person who surprised and astonished Tao Qian immensely.

The light in front of the store changed again, when a tall middle-aged man wearing an indigo Daoist robe walked in.

His appearance could not be considered handsome, and his hair was half black, half white, lending him an air of abnormality. However, he had a pair of profound eyes, thick eyebrows that extended towards his temples, and a prominent nose, all of which gave him a particularly heroic bearing.

As he stepped through the door, he nodded to the bookstore owner who was looking at him and then addressed the two who were picking out books, "Xian Yong, Ming Tai, so you two are here, I've been searching for you."

The two addressed looked up and immediately dragged the middle-aged Daoist over with surprise and delight.

"Zhichang, come take a look at this 'Evolution of All Things' and this 'Western Alchemy History'... If what's described here is true and not fabricated, the Western barbarians truly have some impressive skills."

"Hmm, and this railway construction method—if we follow it, our nation's people could also travel a thousand miles in a day, just like transcendent beings among mortals."

The middle-aged Daoist initially listened to their introductions with skepticism until he took the two books and quickly skimmed through them.

Afterward, his expression subtly changed, and a hint of light flashed in his eyes as he said,

"The methods of these Western barbarians are indeed distinct from ours; it's as if they can disseminate great power among countless mortals through machinery and other such mediums."

"This is worth learning from, it's really worth borrowing."

"Is this what Ji Xianxian and several others from the Young and Strong Group are trying to accomplish? Attempting to replicate the methods and secret skills of the Western barbarians in full so that ordinary humans can also possess the power to contend with strange and transcendent entities?"

"And it seems they have already made some initial achievements."

As the Daoist spoke, the air in the bookstore seemed to sharpen.

This, in fact, was not an illusion.

Tao Qian still looked like any regular bookstore owner with a penchant for lewdness, his head buried in a magazine of girls from the provincial city, seemingly uninterested in the conversation between the three.

But at this moment, a tidal wave of emotions surged in Tao Qian's heart, a strong sensation continually reminding him that the middle-aged Daoist not far away was a genuine human cultivator, and his cultivation was much higher than Tao Qian who was currently at the Energy-Introducing Realm.

"Is this sharp aura from a Daoist cultivator, or is he a powerful warrior who has trained in martial arts?"

Tao Qian pretended not to care, but he was actively guessing deep down.

However, he did not have to speculate for long, as the answer soon came.

The slightly excited middle-aged Daoist stretched out his hand and pointed to the pile of translated Western books, then said to the bookstore owner, "Please give me a total for these books; I'll take them all."

"Alright!"

Tao Qian's performance, once in character, had always been natural.

He stood up to neatly package the books and handed them over while saying, "I've rounded the change down for you. The total comes to fifteen silver coins."

Tao Qian did not actually care about the money.

His enthusiastic service was only to touch the middle-aged Daoist as he handed over the money.

The next moment, Tao Qian got what he wanted.

After all, who could have imagined that there was such an anomaly like Tao Qian in the world, who could sense many hidden messages with just a touch, and therefore, no one would be on guard.

The exchange of silver coins and books happened, and the instant Tao Qian received the fifteen silver coins, his mind immediately felt a sensation.

A mess of information emerged, about to form a strange pattern.

But before Tao Qian could peruse it, a change occurred.

"Dang dang dang"

Outside the store, on the street, a constable could suddenly be heard rushing by, ringing a copper gong as he went.

At the same time, he shouted out a message,

"To protect Seeking Immortal County from the attack of the Devil God Chaos Army, the county magistrate has sent a special request to the court, asking for military support."

"The Governor of the province agreed to this request today and has dispatched several thousand troops to be stationed in Seeking Immortal County, to safeguard the livelihood and well-being of tens of thousands in the county."

"Moreover, the Governor has also sent a super battleship named 'Demon Suppression' to escort them, along with the experts from the Forbidden Immortal Hall."

"They're about to dock at Seeking Immortal Pier, an incredibly magnificent sight. You may only get to see this once in your lifetime, so hurry and take a look."

This message was straightforward but contained a large amount of information.

The people from Forbidden Immortal Hall had arrived.

The new and powerful troops stationed in Seeking Immortal County had arrived.

And of course, the most eye-catching were the words "super battleship."

The common folk loved to witness such wonders and giants.

As the constable said, they might only get this one chance in their lifetime, and after seeing it, they could boast about it for a lifetime.

Thus, as those constables roamed the streets, beating gongs and drums to spread the news,

Soon, all of Seeking Immortal County was abuzz.

Crowds of people flowed from the streets toward Seeking Immortal Pier, clearly all eager to see what the legendary super ironclad, capable of carrying thousands of people to sail the vast oceans, looked like.

Inside Chengyou Bookstore, the four exchanged glances.

Finally, the bespectacled man, with a face full of excitement, suggested, "Shall we... go take a look as well?"

He was obviously addressing his two companions.

But unexpectedly, before the two could respond, Tao Qian had already replied.

He very naturally placed the fifteen silver coins into his pocket, and with a smile and a nod, he said to them, "Let's go have a look, such a grand spectacle is indeed worth witnessing for ourselves."

Chapter 45: The Iron Ship Calms the River Waves, The Golden Rope Binds the Demon

Gu Zhichang, Chen Xianyong, and Li Mingtai, the trio, had only planned to stroll around Seeking Immortal County, but somehow they ended up in a muddle helping a bookstore owner close his shop before following him into the crowd.

Amidst the deafening drumbeats and gong clashes, they arrived at the Seeking Immortal Pier together.

By now, there were already a great many boats at the dock—some selling books, others "flowers," some delivering vegetables, and there were those transporting salt and iron; there were also steam iron ships resembling sea monsters that had come from the Western Barbarians, capable of spouting black flames.

But none of these counted as a grand spectacle, for the people of Seeking Immortal County had grown accustomed to such sights.

So the four men blended into the crowd, watching as the citizens clicked their tongues in disdain, occasionally standing on tiptoes to peer at the broad expanse of Seeking Immortal River.

Hushed murmurs occasionally gave way to a few rebellious mutterings.

"Have they arrived yet? Is there a warship that legends say can battle through the Tianhe Ocean?"

"No, just two black-smoke-belching chunks of iron, and a group of charming girls in Jingwan, all with captivating figures."

"Tsk, what a disgrace."

"I think, the county government is just blowing its own trumpet. Were there really demons, neither a constable nor a soldier would be seen anywhere. Just like that day on this dock when Hong Heihu, usually such a good man, turned into an ogre, not a single person dared to approach. That terrifying incident still haunts my nightmares..."

A chatterbox of an old man was saying this.

Suddenly, he fell silent.

With a clang, his walking stick dropped to the ground.

The noisy crowd abruptly went quiet at this moment, everyone silenced by the sight that struck awe.

Soon after, all eyes widened, and the sound of sharp intakes of breath hissed through the air.

Tao Qian and his companions, all of tall stature, didn't need to stand on tiptoes; they merely looked up and in the next second, they too beheld the sight.

It was unclear whether the dock had received early notice, but the fishing and cargo vessels that usually traversed the wide river had been cleared away, leaving a vast channel where the sky merged with the water in the far distance.

But at that moment, that junction was violently occupied by a colossus of a ship beyond imagination.

The ship, forged entirely of cold steel, appeared so massive it seemed to weigh as much as a mountain. And yet, it eerily floated on the surface, swiftly cleaving through the water toward Seeking Immortal Pier.

Its exterior was decidedly different from ordinary iron ships. Aside from its ferocious and majestic figurehead resembling a lion or a tiger, the ship also sported bizarre iron wings on both sides.

Additionally, the massive ship was outfitted with a plethora of cannons engraved with strange runes, as well as a chillingly effective mechanical spear that seemed designed to hunt Jiao Dragons.

Boom!

Such was the sound emanating from the giant ship as it plowed through the river.

The initially broad and placid surface of Seeking Immortal River became filled with this thunderous noise, with large waves scattered into mist, dispersing in all directions.

On the pier, silence reigned.

As a county town built along a major river and a port of foreign trade,

the residents of Seeking Immortal County were no strangers to large ships. Yet at that moment, tens of thousands of residents were stunned.

Their eyes were wide with shock, greedily fixed on the approaching "Demon Suppression."

For the first time, everyone accepted that the ship was aptly named.

Such a colossus not only subdued demons but, in the eyes of the masses, was also capable of slaughtering them convincingly.

Tens of thousands thought that this was sufficiently astonishing and that it was an apt conclusion.

However, it was only the beginning.

Bang bang bang!

Just behind the "Demon Suppression," at the spot where the sky touched the river surface, a series of explosive sounds, like air bursting, suddenly reverberated.

The result was a scene that left Seeking Immortal County's tens of thousands of residents agape:

As if the auroras from the legends of the Extreme North had manifested here, around a dozen rainbow beams with long, trailing luminous tails shot forth.

A moment later, these beams fanned out above the Demon Suppression.

A dozen or so youthful silhouettes then revealed themselves to the tens of thousands of onlookers.

Among these dozen, there were men, women, and children, all young, wearing fabrics rarely seen, some resplendent, some refined, others strange.

More astonishingly, each of them stood suspended in the air as though they were Immortals or experts.

No, compared to the tens of thousands of common folk below, these dozen truly resembled Immortal Gods or exalted beings.

They didn't just stand in the air; they were surrounded by various mists, with aurora light forming around them. Each one was transcendental, making one feel the urge to kneel and pray for protection.

The most eye-catching were the five in the front.

Two were men, and two were women, plus an entity resembling a big baby.

The two male cultivators were both tall and heroic, with looks unattainable by mortal standards.

One had dark skin, high cheekbones and deep-set eyes; his full head of black hair cascaded like a waterfall down to his ankles. What was more striking were the wings resembling those of an eagle that grew under his ribs. The feathers were sleek and hard, shimmering faintly. At the base of the wings, two vortexes gathered, emitting occasional peals of thunder.

The other man was fair-skinned, clad in a snow-white Daoist robe, his hair secured with a jade hairpin. A Flying Sword that appeared made of ice and jade seemed to have a life of its own as it danced around him, shedding icy jade fragments, making him look carefree as an Immortal.

As for the two women, one was a green-haired girl stepping on a Flying Carpet, with dainty features accentuated by a beauty spot on her nose, exuding a pure and spirituous aura that made her impossible to dislike.

The slightly older woman looked more heroic, with piercing eyes seemingly capable of seeing through people's hearts, using some method to float in the sky, and holding a bizarre Stone Cover with holes, its interior flickering with a firelight.

But the big baby captured the most attention.

He was dressed in a red cloth, his right hand twined with a shiny golden rope, seemingly unashamed, his round eyes looking curiously at the tens of thousands below, his chubby face full of excitement.

The county government had arranged for constables to beat gongs and drums, leading the residents through streets and lanes to the dock. Of course, for such a grand spectacle, someone was arranged to set the rhythm.

Just as tens of thousands of people were becoming dumbfounded by the arrival of the Demon Suppression and those dozen or so "young immortals,"

someone in the crowd suddenly cried out as if waking from a deep dream:

"The Demon Suppression Giant Ship, the Forbidden Immortal Hall."

"I get it now, these are reinforcements requested by our county governor from above. With this giant ship and the disciples from the Immortal Sects, our Seeking Immortal County will definitely not fall like the other pitiful towns to that group of vicious devils who commit all manner of atrocities and feast on blood and flesh. Our properties and homes, our friends and families, can all be kept safe."

"The county governor is wise, long live the Governor,"

Someone took the lead, and the common people followed suit with a thunderous shout.

The scene was very harmonious.

Tao Qian also came to his senses at this time, and silently ridiculed in his mind, "The Demon Suppression Giant Ship, making a grand entrance before the public, such flamboyance, couldn't really just be to make it easier to find excuses to raise taxes, right?"

Just as he finished muttering in his heart, he suddenly twitched his ears, because he heard the middle-aged Daoist named Gu Zhichang next to him whispering an explanation to his two companions.

The surrounding was noisy, and the four stood apart. Gu Zhichang whispered, hoping that the bookstore owner would not hear him.

But who would have thought that Tao Qian, with his supernatural senses, would eavesdrop so clearly?

"That Demon Suppression must fundamentally be the work of the Western Barbarians, yet it has been modified by the Heterodox Sect of Heavenly Mechanism Building. Its cannons and mechanical spears possess the power to slay demons."

"These dozen young ones, many are from side branches of Heterodox Sects, it seems that the youth from both the Daoist and Buddhist Major Sects and from the old clans have been deployed to major cities."

"However, the leaders of the five have some significant backgrounds. That Big Baby surely comes from the Ten Thousand Infant Sect, the two young ladies from Fire God Temple and Lingxi Temple. Though they do not belong to the Twelve Major Sects, they are still renowned in the Daoist sects. The two male cultivators are from the Wind Thunder Cliff and the Wudang Sect, the former being a Great Heterodox Sect, and the latter also a renowned Daoist Sect."

With just a few words, Gu Zhichang had introduced the young cultivators thoroughly, giving away a lot of information.

While Tao Qian gained insight, he thought to himself, "Truly deserving of being a True Practitioner from Shenxiao, one of the Twelve Major Daoist Sects. His knowledge is probably even more broad than Daoist Xiao Hua."

That's right, just as Gu Zhichang perceived the origins of others, Tao Qian silently perceived Gu Zhichang's as well.

Very significant, so significant that Tao Qian began considering "clinging onto big thighs" again.

However, another aspect of Gu Zhichang's identity made Tao Qian hesitate.

Though he possessed memories of being both a Hero and a scholar, Tao Qian was still unsure of his own direction.

This world was too complicated, somewhat similar to his previous life in a certain dynasty, but there were too many differences. How could he see clearly after only a few days of residing and experiencing this world?

However, the ideals and aspirations he brought from his previous life were always clear and had never changed.

While Tao Qian pondered, an unforeseen event happened again at the tragic Seeking Immortal Pier.

The dozen or so high-standing young immortals seemed very pleased with the thunderous welcome from tens of thousands of commoners.

Especially the one in the front, the Big Baby, who was hopping excitedly on a cloud of mist.

Soon, he suddenly spoke in an adorable childlike voice:

"Not bad at all, I like it here."

"Everyone is so enthusiastic, it makes Tong Dudu itch to give a gift."

"Got it, while those guys are still peeping around, it's just right to catch them and present it as a small welcome gift for everyone."

No sooner had the baby finished speaking than he stretched out his chubby hands and pulled out a stack of wanted notices from the void.

Under the astonished gaze of all, this infant named "Tong Dudu" began to read out names.

But what he called out were all evil Magicians who were notorious criminals.

"Ruan Du'er!"

"Bang"

As the first name was uttered, the surface of the Seeking Immortal River erupted, and a water beast-like figure, small and sturdy, burst out in panic with a face full of ferocity and fear. It seemed as if he was forced to appear, and as soon as he did, he hurriedly rushed away across the water's surface.

Seeing him flee, the Big Baby appeared unconcerned and simply laughed, "Run a little farther, it's more fun when I catch you."

And then, he continued to recite names.

"Wang Hanshui!"

"Zheng Dabiao!"

"Dong Shang!"

"Selling Chestnut Woman!"

"Bang, bang, bang"

As each name was called out, different parts of Seeking Immortal County, one by one, saw evil Magicians popping up.

They seemed to have been summoned against their will, but being old hands in the worldly society, even in terror, they still fled in different directions, thinking that they might somehow escape this predicament.

But in the very next instant, they all realized that they were wrong.

After the Big Baby had finished calling the names, he started unwrapping the golden rope from his wrist while chuckling, "You've been caught by the adorable Tong Dudu's 'Infant Spirits Soul-searching Technique', there's no chance of escaping."

"Freeze!"

"Capture!"

As these two words were uttered, both the tens of thousands of people and the novice in the Cultivation World, Tao Qian, watched in amazement,

every Evil Cultivator paused in place. Then, the golden rope thrown by the baby inflated with the wind.

In an instant, it turned into a seemingly infinitely extending golden rope, swiftly binding all the evil cultivators tightly together, like a string of gourds, and were hauled back into the hands of the Big Baby.

Chapter 46: The Evil Cultivator Meets His End on Vegetable Market Street, The Beautiful Corpse Descends Upon Seeking Immortal County

Seeking Immortal Pier teemed with citizens who were all remarking how their visit was totally worth it.

This time, they really indulged their curiosity to the fullest.

Not to mention the Demon Suppression, which resembled a behemoth made of steel, the dozen or so young cultivators from the Forbidden Immortal Hall were even more breathtaking.

Especially the one they called "Tong Dudu," who appeared to be just a slightly larger infant, yet displayed the immortal means described and depicted in operas and storytelling.

Watching the baby casually recite names, the called-out evil cultivators could not even resist and just popped out on their own.

Then this "Immortal Infant" whimsically stilled and collected, and the golden, shining Immortal Rope instantly encircled half of Seeking Immortal County, tying up a dozen miscreants who had committed numerous wrongdoings.

It was too shocking!

From the wealthy to the poor, everyone felt as if their eyes had been opened.

After returning, they would surely boast to those who couldn't make it to Seeking Immortal Pier.

What excited the crowds even more were the words spit out by this Immortal Infant.

They saw the Immortal Infant, dressed in a red onesie, donning a chubby face, and waddling on stubby white legs, striding back and forth above the clouds, all the while casually swinging the golden rope in hand.

Even though the rope was tied with a dozen evil cultivators, it seemed as light as a feather in his hand, swung with ease and nonchalance.

The poor evil cultivators nearly threw up their uneaten dinner from the night before.

"I hear that Seeking Immortal County has a tradition of beheading at Vegetable Market Street, complete with a Soul Summoning Pole."

"This sounds fun, we might as well chop off these stinky guys' heads today and hang them all on the pole."

"Before I left, my mom told me to slay demons and protect the Human Clan. Seeing me perform so well, she will definitely praise me."

"Ahahaha..."

Feeling smug, the one called Tong Dudu lifted his head, placed his hands on his hips, and laughed with utter satisfaction.

Below, the crowd who suddenly heard the news burst into expressions of surprise.

Then, they all politely burst into applause.

Some of the bolder ones even lavished the "Immortal Infant" with flattery.

Some of the elderly dropped to their knees, praying for the Immortal Infant's blessings.

Having witnessed the Immortal Infant effortlessly capture the evil magicians, and now about to witness a rare scene of evil cultivators' heads being chopped off, the excited citizens couldn't help but follow the crowd towards the Vegetable Market Street, trailing the "immortals" who glided through the sky.

The dock area quickly emptied.

Tao Qian also sauntered back at a leisurely pace, not noticing when the three brothers who stood beside him had disappeared.

Tao Qian didn't care too much, among them, only the middle-aged Daoist named Gu Zhichang was a cultivator, while the other two were ordinary people.

[Name: Gu Zhichang.]

[Record Type: Cultivator.]

[Record: A True Cultivation Disciple from one of the Twelve Major Daoist Sects, the Shenxiao Sect, who practiced the 'Nine Heavens Sound Thundering Scripture.' For some reason, he has left the sect, but only his Daoist title was revoked, his cultivation was not taken back...]

These brief pieces of information were enough to prove some things.

For instance, the other's cultivation realm was higher than his, and undoubtedly higher than Daoist Xiao Hua's.

"The Nine Cultivation Realms, the first realm is 'Energy Introduction,' which has three stages: Body Refining, Blood Fusion, and Fetus Stabilization. In this realm, cultivators begin to control the Extraordinary Powers generated from their own Source Qi, and their bodies undergo some unimaginably bizarre changes."

"The Second Realm is the Qi Refinement Realm. I've not yet experienced it, but I know that this realm is where cultivators refine 'Source Qi.' Only by refining it for one's use can one truly master those Transcendent Extraordinary Powers and even developed various Divine Skills."

"The Third Realm, the Foundation Establishment Realm, is said to require cultivators to massively inhale and exhale Source Qi, nurturing themselves as if the body were a container. The more it can contain, the stronger the power, and the greater the possibility of breaking through to the next realm."

"The Fourth Realm is the Transcend Mortality Realm. It's said that from this realm onwards, cultivators begin to make different choices and follow different paths, which in turn lead to different forms. Many cultivators have acquired a second form other than human, becoming otherworldly and inscrutable."

"Beyond that, the Fifth and Sixth Realms are known as the Cavernous Mystery Realm and the Ultimate Happiness Realm, respectively. However, the specific details of these realms are not something I can comprehend at the moment."

"Gu Zhichang could be at Foundation Establishment or even Transcend Mortality."

"As for those dozen or so juniors from Forbidden Immortal Hall, I'd guess they're all in the Qi Refinement Realm, and perhaps there are a few who are, like me, still tender fledglings in the Energy-Introducing Realm."

"That Tong Dudu's status is the highest, and there's no need to even talk about his Cultivation Realm. What's most fearsome is probably his Magical Treasures. The Ten Thousand Infant Sect is one of the top-ranking Heterodox sects, and its strength is on some level comparable to that of the Twelve Daoist Sects or the great Buddhist Temples..."

While summarizing his knowledge of cultivation, Tao Qian speculated about the cultivation levels of the cultivators he'd seen that day.

At the same time, he didn't forget to join in the excitement at Vegetable Market Street.

The results did not disappoint Tao Qian or the residents of Seeking Immortal County.

That group of evil cultivators, who were used to acting with impunity, couldn't bear the thought of being decapitated in front of everyone with their heads hung on the Soul Summoning Pole.

Every one of them resisted.

For instance, the one Tao Qian jokingly called the "Water Monkey Mage," Ruan Du'er, was a vicious, skinny monkey who was too slippery for the executioners to hold down. It took a young cultivator from Forbidden Immortal Hall to step forward, pat his head, and with a flash of yellow light, the body of the evil magician, who had eaten at least a hundred people, immediately turned as supple as noodles, truly becoming a Ruan Du'er.

There was also the "Three-Headed Monarch Wang Hanshui," who, before the executioner could swing his blade, had lumps of flesh on his left and right shoulders fly off first, planning to escape with some sort of detachment skill. Unfortunately, no sooner had they flown into the air when a female cultivator casually flicked two sparks at them, burning them to ashes.

And that self-proclaimed "Gourd Immortal," Zheng Dabiao, as soon as he was free from the golden rope, began chanting spells. From the red line gourd hanging at his waist, a multitude of blood shadows burst forth. But before these blood shadows could unleash their power, a winged male cultivator sneered and uttered a low shout. In an instant, thunder and lightning arrived together, annihilating the blood shadows and the red line gourd completely.

The only magician who almost succeeded was the "Selling Chestnut Woman." This old pious woman somehow managed to toss out a multitude of fragrant chestnuts, and the exotic fragrance they emitted caused the surrounding crowd to uncontrollably and frantically scramble for them, nearly plunging the scene into utter chaos.

This time, a green-haired, freckle-nosed young girl stepped forward. She took out a purification bottle from her treasure bag and sprinkled it over the crowd. Like sweet rain from the heavens, it directly neutralized the Selling Chestnut Woman's evil technique.

These evil cultivators had struggled and resisted.

Unfortunately, whether it was their cultivation realms or their magical treasures, the gap was just too wide.

What followed was the standard act of beheading, as one by one, the unyielding heads of the evil practitioners were mounted on poles.

The day's excitement thus came to an end.

From above, the experts of the Forbidden Immortal Hall—who were supposed to be out of touch, high and mighty—unexpectedly received a warm welcome from almost the entire population of Seeking Immortal County.

And the one with the highest popularity, without a doubt, was "Immortal Infant Tong Dudu."

If there had been more time, it's possible the more impatient elders would have hurriedly built a "Immortal Infant Temple."

Although no temple was built, all the citizens had no objections to the Forbidden Immortal Hall experts taking residence in the highest building in Seeking Immortal County, which also served as a famous tourist destination with a history of three hundred years: the Star-picking Pavilion.

Immortals, after all, should reside in lofty buildings where they could pluck stars and catch the moon.

...

With the day's clamor having ended, Seeking Immortal County entered the night.

Tao Qian closed the Chengyou Bookstore and, in his private compartment at home, washed up and changed clothes. After lighting some mind-soothing incense, he planned to meditate and practice the "Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Diagram."

Although because he had just completed refining his Source Qi and only a day had passed, Tao Qian couldn't recite the entire scripture from start to finish.

However, Tao Qian could already feel that this technique was incredibly compatible with him and his cultivation proceeded exceptionally smoothly.

So, in this small compartment, Tao Qian sat cross-legged with his eyes closed, reciting the mantra silently in his mind: "Primordial Cave Void is nothingness, Three Qi Essence comes knocking at the door. Zirong View of the Sky, Four Bright Planting of Spirit Roots..."

Compared to the "Pure Yang Small Introduction" and the "Health Care Secret," the Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Diagram was the thickest.

Each word also has its special ability, and to recite them smoothly is no easy feat.

Therefore, Tao Qian's first attempt, unsurprisingly, ended in failure. A single mistake meant he had to start over.

Tao Qian was not discouraged; he continued with the second, third, fourth attempts... In matters of cultivation, aside from being vigilant about the cost, one must also have perseverance, something Tao Qian was well-prepared for mentally.

With each recitation of the mantra, he mobilized the Spiritual Treasure Source Qi within his body to cleanse his flesh.

The Qi within him became increasingly agile and lively.

Tao Qian had long understood that each "Source Qi" had its unique characteristics, but when it would manifest and when a cultivator could master it was not set in stone.

And for something like Spiritual Treasure Source Qi, which is top-notch in this world, it might display an extraordinary trait even during the Energy-Introducing Realm.

It was during this moment of surging spiritual resonance within Tao Qian that,

Suddenly, his spirit gave a leap.

The surging Spiritual Treasure Source Qi washing over his body unexpectedly emitted a warning-like extraordinary sensation of danger.

Tao Qian found it difficult to describe the feeling, only knowing that the "warning" from the Qi within his body was intensifying.

"Danger alert?"

"Tonight, something big is going to happen?"

The thought directly formed in Tao Qian's mind.

Soon after, as if blessed with sudden insight, he abruptly opened his eyes and stood up, slightly leaning forward, his gaze intent as though trying to penetrate the brick wall and look directly towards the center of Vegetable Market Street, where a nearly ten-meter tall Soul Summoning Pole stood.

Even though his gaze couldn't penetrate the wall, Tao Qian knew that the pole currently bore a row of evil cultivators' heads.

Just as Tao Qian realized that those heads might be the source of the crisis, his heart immediately began thumping madly, as if to confirm his suspicion.

In his mind, the images of last night's harrowing encounter, the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, the eerie general known as "Tang Xianzong," the mention of the words "Devil God Army"... these scenes flickered past like a strobe of light.

"Damn!"

Tao Qian's complexion changed abruptly, and he blurted out.

Almost at that moment, in Seeking Immortal County, which had been in peaceful slumber,

A Buddha's Ten Thousand Feet of Light, without any warning, descended from afar and enshrouded the area, plunging the entire Seeking Immortal County into a Buddha Country. What followed was a Buddhist chant, so strange that even the deaf could hear it clearly.

This signature entrance announced the arrival of the visitors unmistakably.

"TMD's... Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva!"

In the bookstore compartment, Tao Qian cursed without any reservation.

Chapter 47: Buddha Refining Demon with Corpses, Immortal Infant in Peril

Buddha Light descended, and the chant resonated; Tao Qian, who had experienced the might of the "Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva" the previous night, subconsciously thought to pack up his belongings and flee.

It wasn't that he lacked courage, but the disparity in cultivation between them was outrageously vast.

Tao Qian assessed that even if he could leap several realms, he still wouldn't be a match for that Female Bodhisattva.

However, just as he was about to make his move, he suddenly remembered something and immediately halted.

"With the terrifying cultivation of the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, now that Seeking Immortal County is enveloped by Buddha Light, I fear not even the movement of mosquitoes or ants could escape the Female Bodhisattva's notice. If I escape alone, it would suggest I have something to hide, and I would surely be caught."

"Moreover, last night I cleansed my body, the Bo Dragon traits and aura have completely vanished. The Spirit Treasure Source Qi itself possesses the Abnormal Trait of being close to heaven and earth, blending seamlessly. As long as I don't deliberately reveal it, no one can detect it – didn't that true disciple from the Shenxiao Sect today also fail to sense my depth?"

"Besides, in Seeking Immortal County at the moment, there is a group of juniors from the Forbidden Immortal Hall's Great Sects. Where the juniors tread, I do not believe their powerful elders would not arrange protective measures behind them."

"In any case, acting rashly will only bring disaster; better to stay put for now and observe the situation before planning further."

Probably because he had just emerged from a state of cultivation, Tao Qian's mind was exceptionally clear.

In just a few thoughts, he had sorted out the situation.

Therefore, Tao Qian did not continue cultivating but instead took out a nameless, black-painted longsword from the Plague Golden Toad Fragrance Pouch.

This sword was indeed an alien object; apart from being incredibly hard, it also contained a segment of incomplete Sword Intent, which could allow someone to grasp swordsmanship directly upon holding the sword, transforming an ordinary person into a martial arts master of the Sword Dao.

If this sword were to circulate in worldly society, it would undeniably bring about a maelstrom of bloodshed.

But in the Cultivation World, it was merely an ordinary plaything.

Tao Qian had purchased it not for anything else but to be able to successfully execute the fearsome "Secret Demon Sacrifice Body Sword."

"With my cultivation in the Energy-Introducing Realm at the Blood Fusion Stage, drawing upon my entire Spirit Treasure Source Qi, how powerful would the Sacrifice Body Sword be that I release? Would it be able to kill opponents of what realm?"

"Infant Cultivator in the Fetus Formation Stage? Or perhaps, a Qi Refining Realm cultivator?"

As a newcomer, Tao Qian dared not let his imagination run too wild in his speculations.

With determination set, he returned to his bed to sit cross-legged, placing the sword across his knees, raising his senses to their utmost, listening to the movements outside.

When Seeking Immortal County was suddenly shrouded in Buddha Light, at the tallest building — Star-picking Pavilion.

Those dozen or so disciples from the Great Sects, who made quite the impression during the day, transformed into rainbow lights and flew out, still led by "Immortal Infant Tong Dudu."

Like calves unafraid of tigers, and having just slain a batch of Evil Cultivator magicians, their momentum was particularly strong.

Feeling the malicious intent within the Buddha Light and chant, utterly unobscured, they were about to curse and berate.

Then, they saw a group of horrendously terrifying demons.

The Ink-Scaled Snake Demon, Giant Infant Demon, tapeworm Snow Woman, Moon Howling White Wolf, Yin Yang Elder... These utterly terrifying demons, in various forms, were significantly different in aura compared to those weak magicians from the day.

Visible currents of devilish, Demonic Qi wreaked havoc alongside the Buddha Light, surging straight towards the sky.

Boom!

In an instant, the whole of Seeking Immortal County was completely enveloped.

At such a moment, they could probably sense even if a single mouse tried to escape.

And what shocked everyone the most was the figure at the very front, lazily lying upon a lotus pedestal, scantily clad and supremely enchanting--the female Bodhisattva.

Yet it was she who instilled profound fear among the disciples from the Great Sects.

Although arrogant, they were not foolish; upon this initial encounter, they felt the insurmountable gap between them.

Below, the entire Seeking Immortal County had awakened.

Nearly a hundred thousand residents, within a matter of seconds, experienced a roller coaster of emotions.

At first, they were inexplicably overjoyed by the sight of the Buddha Light.

Then, as the people looked out of windows or simply stepped out of their homes, they realized what was at the source of that Buddha Light.

Witnessing the goddess-like female Bodhisattva mingling with a crowd of demons, their illusions shattered, and fear struck.

The civilians became restless, with the majority wanting to escape.

But as the demonic aura shot into the sky, terrible oppressive power descended, and the mere mortals were suppressed in their places. Although they could still move, it was only enough for them to crawl back into their houses. Escaping the city, however, was impossible.

Immortal Infant Tong Dudu and the dozen or so disciples saw this congregation of Great Demons and monsters descend and confine the entire population, but did not immediately take action.

They wondered--was there room to maneuver?

Immortal Infant Tong Dudu's chubby face became solemn at this moment. He scratched his behind under the red fabric and summoned clouds to move forward, looking directly at the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva. His cheeks squeezed out a smile that was very "sincere," and he complimented her:

"Wow, what a beautiful Bodhisattva sister."

"Tong Dudu, who has lived for two years, three months, and five days, has never seen such a beautiful Bodhisattva."

"Beautiful Bodhisattva sister, why have you brought these ugly freaks here? What are you going to do?"

Although the notion of an Immortal Infant was a recent fabrication by the elders of Seeking Immortal County,

This Infant Cultivator called "Tong Dudu" indeed possessed an innocence that involuntarily endeared others.

Tong Dudu originally thought that his words might at least glean some information.

But little did he know, the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva and the host of demons had come with a specific purpose.

Seeing the Immortal Infant come forward and being flattered, the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva let out a charming laugh while covering her red lips, and then her fair hand seemed to reach out casually.

"You little thing, you do have a sweet mouth, but you shouldn't have been so cruel."

"This Bodhisattva was enjoying a feast with a group of Daoist friends when suddenly we heard that you and a bunch of junior disciples took advantage of the daylight to brandish Magical Treasures and play the bully, cutting down the junior disciples of us and our Daoist friends."

"Boom!"

Before the words had fully settled, the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva made her vicious move.

Suddenly, an immense divine hand formed out of the Void, without any warning, viciously scooping towards that area.

The abrupt turn of events caught all the disciples off-guard, but the plethora of Magical Treasures they carried reacted autonomously, each triggered by their will.

However, whether it was sword light, divine fire, wind, or thunder, or even the Immortal Infant's golden rope, upon encountering that vast, golden shimmering Buddha hand that obscured most of the sky, they all became ineffective.

Just as the several disciples seemed sure to be swept away, suddenly, a figure appeared out of thin air in the sky.

It was an elderly man with disheveled hair, but although he seemed old, his skin was as tender as a baby's, and his eyes were full of clarity, without a trace of turbidity.

The clothes he wore were also incredibly fanciful, with a gaudy mix of all sorts of colors.

As this eccentric cultivator made his appearance, he immediately let out a strange cry:

"Guanyin's Big Handprint?"

"Oh my goodness, why is the lovely nun from Guanyin Temple grabbing my little brother? Could it be that her maternal instincts are kicking in, and she wants to cultivate the 'Conception Guanyin Dharma Image'?"

"No way, this little thing is too sweet-tongued, skilled at flattering those stupid and clumsy elders. If you take him, I'll be the one getting a thrashing later."

In the midst of speaking, the cultivator unexpectedly produced a small wooden sword from his bosom.

With a casual toss, the wooden sword split from one into two, two into three, and three into ten thousand swords.

Tens of thousands of sword lights, seemingly capable of leveling mountains, shot forth to meet Guanyin's Big Handprint.

Upon collision, a series of massive booms was heard.

Each wooden sword shattered, but they also sheared off a great deal of golden splinters.

Golden sparkles scattered in all directions, and suddenly, ten thousand golden lotuses sprang forth, blossoming within the halo. From each lotus bud, a "Heavenly Girl" emerged, exuding motherliness and majesty, resembling a Bodhisattva.

These Heavenly Girls, silently layered upon one another, surged toward the eccentric cultivator.

During the process, the chanting of Buddhist scriptures suddenly intensified, the volume increasing by more than tenfold.

Above the sky of Seeking Immortal County, it seemed as if a wondrous Buddha Country had truly appeared.

The odd cultivator clearly did not anticipate this turn of events, and his weird screams unexpectedly revealed a hint of fear:

"Corpse Buddha Heavenly Girl Slave Refining Technique!"

"Are you that damned Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva?"

"Hey, hey, hey, I'm warning you, don't lay a hand on my brother, or even the Demon Buddha Temple might not be able to protect you, aaah..."

Before the flower-clothed old cultivator could finish speaking, his entire being was engulfed by an endless tide of Heavenly Girls.

Oddly, his cries were not those of agony, but rather shouts resulting from an excess of comfort.

The Guanyin Big Handprint also swept successfully over that area.

The remaining junior disciples were directly knocked aside.

Yet Immortal Infant Tong Dudu was snatched by the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva herself.

Holding the red cloth pouch, suspended in mid-air.

It was only then that the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva let out a playful laugh and slowly said, "Others may fear you, Ten Thousand Infant Sect, but do you think I would be afraid too?"

"Little thing, do you realize that among the group of people you've slain, there was a monk called 'Yuan Tong'? He was ranked among the Eighteen Blood Arhats and also happens to be my most beloved brother."

"Since you've killed one of mine, you might as well pay with yourself."

No sooner had she uttered these words than the previously dispirited Tong Dudu, as if stepped on, leaped up.

In his childlike tone, he strenuously argued:

"You're talking nonsense!"

"I used the Infant Spirits Soul-searching Technique during the day; if I really did kill that 'Yuan Yi,' wouldn't I, Dudu, know about it?"

"Wow, you're framing me, Mom was right, pretty sisters are the most deceiving, you're a liar, Dudu doesn't want to be your good little brother."

These words amused the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva anew.

She laughed until she shook, taking Tong Dudu into her arms, and with the throne amid ten thousand feet of Buddha light and chanting, she retreated toward the outskirts of Seeking Immortal City.

At the same time, she uttered words that caused the complexion of all the citizens in the city to change drastically.

"Fellow Daoists, the dead cannot be revived."

"However, if you wish to vent a bit, feel free to unleash some subordinates and indulge yourselves in this city."

"I find that temple atop Iron Buddha Mountain, just outside the city, quite appealing. It's perfect for taking over as a temporary Daoist field to continue the unfinished feast. Let's all head there together."

"As for you lot from the Ten Thousand Infant Sect and all you juniors, if you do not submit, feel free to seek reinforcements to challenge me in magical combat at the Iron Buddha Temple. I'll wait for you for three days, how's that?"

With the departure of the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, although she took with her that group of terrifying Great Demons,

She also abandoned a significant number of Little Demons and several Evil Cultivator magicians, summoned from god knows where, amounting to dozens in number.

Suddenly, demonic miasma directly turned Seeking Immortal County into a Demon Realm.

The monstrous roars of Demons erupted in the next moment.

All manner of Demons and Evil Cultivator magicians instantly stormed into Seeking Immortal County.

Just at that time, the old cultivator from Ten Thousand Infant Sect, who was bound by a multitude of "Corpse Buddha Heavenly Girls," was the only one who could resist. The only other potential resisters were those dozen or so junior disciples.

But they had been injured by the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva's attack, their power weakened, and they could not withstand the swarm of Demon Magicians at all.

The valiant young woman holding the Magical Treasure "Divine Fire Stone Cover" faced several Demons while shouting:

"Hold on for the equivalent of thirty minutes, the army stationed outside the city must have noticed the disturbance and are on their way."

"Once they arrive, we will form an Array and grind these Evil Cultivators to ashes."

She did not conceal her voice, perhaps also intending to intimidate these groups of Little Demons and Evil Cultivators.

Inside Chengyou Bookstore on Vegetable Market Street, Tao Qian had been observing the whole scene and heard her words.

He couldn't help but shake his head, thinking to himself, "It's futile, this is obviously prearranged."

"What, your dear brother has been killed, and you've come for revenge?"

"Last night I saw it clearly, after the Eighteen Blood Arhats were sent back by Tang Xianzong, each of them was as docile as a Chicken, staying close to that Beautiful Corpse's side, not daring to stray into Seeking Immortal County."

"Moreover, during the day, tens of thousands of county residents witness that Tong Dudu's wanted criminal did not include any devil monk named Yuan Tong."

"False charges upon false charges!"

"The Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva must have reached some agreement with that Tang Xianzong. The scent of conspiracy is truly overpowering."

Chapter 48: The Might of Spirit Sound, Peach Blossom 5 Enchantment

In the dead of night, not a single place within Seeking Immortal County was at peace.

Although the number of demons and evil cultivators that had invaded the city was only fifty to sixty, their strength was clearly greater than that of the water beasts like Ruan Du'er and the Three-headed Monarch, and the Gourd Immortal who had been sent over as cannon fodder during the day.

When they banded together and attacked the city, the demonic qi they stirred up swept through the greater part of the county.

The only ones standing in their way were a dozen or so young cultivators who had been injured.

Although these youngsters from the "Forbidden Immortal Hall" had exerted all their effort, they had only managed to stop half of the demon and evil cultivator intruders.

The rest had successfully entered the city.

Laughing maniacally and howling, they began to torch, kill, and loot, causing cries of misery to rise everywhere.

The usually brash constables, local thugs and gangsters, and the black marketeers were all so terrified that they ran away, voiding their bladders and bowels in fear, without even putting up the slightest resistance.

The only comfort seemed to be that the actions of these demonic invaders were so outrageous that they spawned sporadic resistance in some parts of the city.

Evidently, as one of the major transportation hubs, Seeking Immortal County, besides having official cultivators, also harbored some wild cultivators.

But their numbers were too few, and their efforts amounted to nothing more than trying to put out a burning cart full of firewood with a cup of water.

Everyone knew that the only hope for Seeking Immortal County was the "Provincial City Army" that was currently rushing towards the city from the outside.

That army, reputed to be equipped with special gear, according to what the fairy said, would turn these demons and evil cultivators to ash if only the city could hold out until they arrived.

But how long could they last?

The answer was that no one could hold out. Common folk had no power of resistance at all when faced with any demon or evil cultivator.

Even as commoners picked up pot lids, kitchen knives, stones, and poles to protect their wives, children, and parents, the power disparity between humans and creatures on the path of cultivation was just too great.

Crushed with a single blow, the casualties were devastating.

And so, in less than half an incense stick's time, the entire Seeking Immortal County had descended into utter chaos and despair.

Demons ran rampant!

Evil cultivators were outrageously violent!

What was once a scene one might expect only in myth and legend was now playing out in reality.

As a bustling hub, how could Vegetable Market Street avoid such a fate?

Yet, curiously, it was not some strong and ferocious demon that fought its way to this spot but rather a somewhat exceptional evil cultivator.

When Tao Qian, holding an unmarked black-painted longsword and wearing a mask, appeared in a dark alley of Vegetable Market Street,

he happened upon the main street where several buildings and shops had already collapsed. Cries and wails came from amidst the debris as a stone wall was smashed, and through the dust emerged a figure, laughing wildly.

This person was a male cultivator with a strikingly robust physique and handsome features, which were somewhat effeminate, enhanced by his wearing a moon-white robe.

If it weren't for the deep dark circles under his eyes and the look of excessive debauchery, one might mistake him for a dashing young noble.

However, this was an evil cultivator saturated with a repugnant aura.

As he laughed and smashed the wall, a pink miasma, like a fog, roiled around him, teeming with vivid pink moths in pairs, fluttering and coupling amidst suggestive sounds. The miasma sporadically burst into delicate peach blossoms, seemingly with the power to bewitch the mind and captivate the soul.

Atop the pink peach blossom miasma, a net made of some unknown material was hoisted up high.

Inside the net, eight young women were wrapped, all of them in a state of unconsciousness. As they breathed, the miasma seeped into their bodies, plunging each one into unspeakable dreams. Their skins flushed with a rosy glow, beads of sweat appeared, attracting the pink moths to land and suckle on the sweet sweat of the young women.

The scene was such that anyone who watched would find it hard to keep their composure.

Having spent some time in the cultivation world, Tao Qian had acquired some fundamental knowledge.

Seeing such a sight, how could he not know that this evil cultivator must be practicing some sort of "Absorb" method?

And surely those, within the magical treasure net, were none other than the daughters of his neighborhood neighbors back in his true form. If they were truly to be swept away in one fell swoop by this evil cultivator and taken back to the Iron Buddha Temple, how could any good fate await them?

In the blink of an eye, Tao Qian made a concerted effort to sense his surroundings.

Based on the intensity of the "pulsation" that surged in his mind, he immediately assessed the disparity of strength between them.

"This scoundrel must be at most at the Energy-Introduction Realm, the stage of Fetus Formation."

"Since he's been sent by those great demons as laborious underling, aside from the net, he likely has no other magical treasures."

"It's not a big deal if there are; if he were any other evil cultivator of the same realm, I might have some reservations."

"But since he practices the way of Absorb..."

With a plan set, Tao Qian immediately took action.

In his current guise, clad in tight-fitting clothes and masked, holding a sword, he might have passed for innocuous at any other time or place.

At this moment, however, he seemed anything but a good person.

And in the next second, Tao Qian took out a pouch of blood of unknown origin from his incense bag, dousing his body in it. The rising stench quickly transformed him into a cultivator who gave off a powerful non-human aura but also seemed severely wounded.

As this cultivator used his longsword as a makeshift crutch, he stumbled out of the alley.

Upon seeing the pale-faced evil cultivator, Tao Qian's "eyes lit up" with delight, and he reached out a trembling hand while pleading weakly:

"Daoist, quick, I've encountered a beautiful and fierce disciple of the Righteous Path. We exchanged blows, and both suffered serious injuries."

"Please help me, and I promise a grand reward for leaving this place."

Seeing Tao Qian suddenly jump out, the pretty boy was startled at first, ready to make a move.

But then, he heard Tao Qian's words.

Especially the key phrase "injured beautiful Righteous female disciple," which immediately triggered the scoundrel's excitement.

He reached out to grab the gravely wounded Evil Cultivator, then inquired about the whereabouts of the beautiful female disciple.

But as their palms contacted, he sensed something was amiss.

The person in front of him, far from being filled with sinister Demonic Qi, did not even have a trace of impurity; his inner energy was as clean and natural as that of a true Daoist Practitioner.

"Not good!"

The pretty boy Magician's heart skipped a beat, and he was about to strike with all his might.

Alas, it was too late.

In his ears suddenly resounded a sound that made his Spirit and Soul freeze, unable to circulate.

"Nine Heavens Truth, the Secret of the Great!"

By the time he truly heard these eight characters of the mnemonic, he was already ensnared.

Nine True Spirit Sound!

By a lucky coincidence, while Tao Qian was first cultivating the "Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Diagram" and refining his Source Qi, he stumbled upon a Daoist Divine Skill, unintendedly obtained when he washed away his original Divine Skills of the Bo Dragon Sound.

This technique directly affected all aspects of Life, including Essence, Blood, Spirit, Soul, Consciousness, Intelligence, and so on.

Once heard, there was no escape; one could only passively receive its effect.

If it were a true Daoist Practitioner, listening to Tao Qian's chanting of the "Nine True Spirit Sound" without malice could even be beneficial.

But once Tao Qian harbored the intention to attack, the moment the Spirit Sound was released, the listener would also be at risk of their Divine Soul being shaken.

For an Evil Demon or an individual from a Heterodox Sect with numerous misdeeds, the consequences would be even graver.

Especially for an Evil Cultivator who practiced techniques like Absorb, Yin Demon, or Soul Refining, which made their Divine Souls and Essence Blood unstable—if they suddenly heard this Daoist Spirit Sound and their Cultivation Realm was not high enough, they would instantly forget themselves and become unable to even move.

Thus, at this second when Tao Qian released the Spirit Sound,

The pretty boy immediately became stunned, his Source Qi ceased to circulate, and the Pink Peach Blossom Miasma around him instantly dispersed, causing the strange net Magical Treasure to also fall down.

Tao Qian stepped forward, using a gentle force to lay him aside.

At the same time, he swiftly swung his treasure sword.

Even though he could see that the pretty boy had lost his ability to resist, Tao Qian's instinct to survive still kicked in.

His abundant experience from past life's TV dramas also told him that forgetting to deliver a finishing blow to a defeated enemy often leads to being killed in retaliation.

On the night streets of Vegetable Market Street, the sword light flashed.

With a ripping sound, a fine head was swiftly decapitated, blood spurting all over.

After all, Tao Qian was an Energy-Introducing Realm Cultivator. Even though he had shed the Bo Dragon Driving Origin Qi, he still retained immense strength. It seemed reasonable that he could sever a head with a treasure sword.

With "thump, thump," the head and body of the pretty boy Cultivator both hit the ground.

At this point, Tao Qian should have been relieved.

But he wasn't!

He stood still for several breaths, Source Qi surging inside him, ready to release the "Secret Demon Sacrifice Body Sword" at any moment.

After waiting for a while, until his perception confirmed that there was no trace of life in the corpse on the ground,

Tao Qian then crouched down, still in a position convenient for drawing his sword, and touched the corpse.

Immediately, his Extraordinary Perception was triggered.

The special formatted information was slowly sorted out and surfaced.

Ignoring the other Records, Tao Qian quickly skipped ahead until he saw the words "Deceased", finally allowing himself to relax a bit.

To prevent their fight from being noticed by other Evil Cultivators or Demons, Tao Qian quickly dragged the net along with the pretty boy's severed head into an alley.

At the same moment, he began to formally review the slightly complex information.

Initially, there was nothing special, only the backstory of an Evil Cultivator's birth.

[Name: Situ Fei]

[Record Type: Cultivator]

[Record: This person was born in Ancient Yue Sanfeng County, exceptionally handsome since childhood, eventually displaying an androgynous beauty. He developed the Power to Charm those around him, which led to being abducted by a tyrant from the county. Situ Fei, in preserving his purity, fought back and accidentally killed the tyrant. He fled the county overnight, but by accident, encountered an Evil Cultivator who called herself "Nongyu Immortal", Pan Hongniang. That night, he lost his purity and then became a disciple of Pan Hongniang, following her in cultivating the "Secret Book of the Five Lusts Enchanting Immortal Scripture".]

Chapter 49 Filth Blood Reincarnation, Outer Puppet

From this record, the evil cultivator who went by the name "Situ Fei" had a rather bumpy first half of his life.

It wasn't until he met his mentor and fully entered the Cultivation World that he started practicing—not just heresy and heterodoxy, but the evil demon path known for absorbing others' essence.

Tao Qian had originally thought that he was just an ordinary evil cultivator.

That suspicion remained until subsequent information emerged one by one.

[Note One: Situ Fei's practice of the "Five Luster Enchanting Immortal Scripture" was an impressive Lifebound Scripture, combined with his exceptional talent, he should have experienced surging cultivation. Regrettably, he was the favorite of Pan Hongniang, who drained him nightly, leaving his cultivation stagnating in the Energy-Introducing Realm, and thus breeding resentment.]

[Note Two: Pan Hongniang had a good friend called "Jade-faced Lady Lan Qing'er," who had coveted her friend's business, the Peach Blossom Immortal Valley, for many years. Discovering Situ Fei's mental state, she deliberately lured and seduced him, ultimately succeeding. She instructed Situ Fei to covertly switch to her clan's secret technique, the "Jade Demon Chaos God Skill," and during their intimacy, use it to control Pan Hongniang's spirit, seize her foundation, and then turn her powerful physique into a puppet.]

[Note Three: To accomplish this, Lan Qing'er found an exotic treasure called "Corpse Mother Blood Pearl" and entrusted a strand of her spirit to the pearl. Once inside the opponent's body, it instantly allowed her to seize all the opponent's memories, habits, and even cultivation, with full control over their spirit and soul. However, there were prerequisites: the opponent's spirit must first be controlled, or the opponent must be dead. Meeting the former condition allows for a permanent change in the opponent's mental will, complete submission, without affecting their continued growth, and the ability to seize the body at any time. Meeting the latter condition equates to refining a puppet outside one's own body, which although can continue to grow, requires extra heart power to achieve anything.]

...

When this secret information emerged, Tao Qian was slightly startled.

Clearly, he hadn't expected that assassinating an evil cultivator would involve such dark and secretive dealings.

"Plastic sisters, plus plastic mentor and disciple, all little matters of fate," he muttered unconsciously.

At the same time, he reached out, planning to quickly search the corpse for any treasures and take care of the aftermath.

However, the moment his palm touched Situ Fei's body, a bolt of lightning flashed through his mind—a dangerous inspiration took hold.

To confirm that inspiration, Tao Qian's hand didn't halt in the slightest, he even employed both hands.

Soon, he had stripped Situ Fei inside and out.

Apart from the net that still entangled eight young women, all the treasures, books, and alien items owned by this debauchee lay before Tao Qian.

His first glance, however, skipped past the books and settled directly on a bloody, muddled bead.

The bead, seemingly carved from some kind of jade, was saturated with a crimson color in its core.

Its surface was covered with a layer of murky aura that made one dizzy and nauseous at a glance.

A longer look suppressed the vile desires welling up from the depths of one's spirit.

This bead, Tao Qian had extracted it forcibly from deep within Situ Fei's chest, from his heart.

At the time of touching it, he had already had an Extraordinary Perception.

[Record Name: Corpse Mother Blood Pearl.]

[Record Type: Exotic Treasure.]

[Record Description: Legend has it that royal noble ladies were buried with special spherical beads and jades in their mouths. By some accidents, princesses or Empress Dowagers gradually became zombies, and the beads soaked in filth blood for years, thus acquiring Abnormal Traits that could taint a person's spirit, soul, and mental will.]

[Note One: To make this treasure effective, one must first refine it with their own heart power, which also risks being tainted by the Filth Blood and gradually falling into the Demon Path.]

[Note Two: A puppet refined with this treasure, though extremely covert to the point that even high-level cultivators or demons can hardly detect it, shares sensory experiences with the original owner due to the shared spirit, which is one of the costs.]

[Note Three: If the refined puppet dies, the original body suffers backlash, becoming weak for at least forty-nine days, which is the second cost.]

[Note Four: Exemption from Filth Blood contamination cost, partial sensory sharing cost, and partial weakness cost.]

"Hiss,"

Tao Qian's inspiration had now been completely verified as feasible.

But at the same time, Tao Qian found himself hesitating.

In the depths of his mind, thoughts churned like a tempest.

His idea was simple: Situ Fei had colluded with the Jade-faced Woman, intending to refine his own master into a puppet and usurp her foundation, Peach Blossom Immortal Valley.

On the other hand, Tao Qian wanted to use this inspiration and the "Corpse Mother Blood Pearl" to refine the Situ Fei who had come to his doorstep, into an outer puppet.

Frankly, this was an art of devilry and heresy.

However, Tao Qian had no such misgivings. After all, hadn't he survived beheading at the vegetable market by relying on a demonic technique?

The rotten stench he felt when reciting the fragmented formula didn't seem righteous at all.

Moreover, Tao Qian's unusual spirit could exempt him from many of the penalties.

With that, why not refine a puppet?

Once the idea took hold, the mental storm ceased abruptly.

Tao Qian almost immediately began to take action, first taking down the net binding the eight young women, then wrapping Situ Fei's corpse in it.

After waking the women one by one, while they were still dazed, Tao Qian grabbed the corpse and in the blink of an eye, slipped back to his bookstore.

Bang!

He carelessly threw the corpse and various books and Magical Treasures on the floor; these could wait for later.

Time was of the essence, and if he could refine a puppet, there would be plenty of time to look through them later.

Tao Qian first cradled the "Corpse Mother Blood Pearl" in his palm, ready to entrust his spirit to it and begin the refining process.

But then he seemed to remember something and reached into the Joyful Scent Pouch, rifling around for a moment. When his hand emerged, he held a pill as large as a date.

All prepared, Tao Qian immediately began the refining process.

Projecting one's spirit onto an object was tricky, but not overly so.

He had only to see whether the object would resist.

If it would not, it could be accomplished in the blink of an eye.

The trouble was, this "Corpse Mother Blood Pearl" happened to have a stubborn disposition. As soon as Tao Qian's Divine Thought attached itself to it, the wretched pearl immediately began to thrash about, fiercely resisting Tao Qian and almost flying away.

Tao Qian let out a cold laugh at the corner of his mouth, increasing his output while whispering, "Floating Corpse, aid me!"

As this mnemonic left his lips, the previously motionless Corpse Blood Elixir suddenly leapt up, wrapped in a red light, and violently struck the Corpse Mother Blood Pearl.

Upon collision, the Corpse Blood Elixir's glow dimmed instantly, falling to the ground and shattering into powder.

But at the same time, this impact also scattered the resisting force of the Filth Blood Pearl.

In the mere fifteen seconds it took, to the delighted eyes of Tao Qian, the refining was complete.

"Go!"

Following Tao Qian's command, the pearl, which had become vibrantly blood-red and dazzling without anyone noticing, transformed into a streak of light and fused into the now still heart within Situ Fei's chest.

Afterward, Tao Qian began to wait.

It wasn't long before a horrifying change occurred abruptly.

Situ Fei, who was thoroughly dead, suddenly began to convulse, visibly covered with a dense, spiderweb-like pattern of fresh red lines.

The next second, his headless body inexplicably sat up, grabbed his severed head from beside him, and fumbled to place it atop his neck.

Once positioned correctly, he took a medicine bottle from Tao Qian's spoils and poured out some pitch-black powder, applying a pile to both the severed and wounded areas.

A miraculous scene unfolded: even the wound from the severed head seemed to blend and vanish without a trace.

The newly revived "Situ Fei" slowly opened his eyes and smiled, saying:

"Daoist Tao, I fear I've made myself look foolish. This is Black Jade Skin Regeneration Powder, which I filched from Jade-faced Lady Lan Qing'er."

"Of course, you already know this, for you are me, and I am you."

After uttering these somewhat awkward words, both Tao Qian and Situ Fei smiled.

It was done!

Tao Qian felt as if his luck had returned.

Everything went extraordinarily smooth, a puppet refined just like that.

The puppet itself and the refinable materials were all presented by Situ Fei himself, deserving of the title of great benefactor.

Within seconds of Situ Fei being refined into a puppet by Tao Qian, all his memories began to be absorbed by Tao Qian.

After a quick perusal, Tao Qian's pupils shrank slightly, and a look of shock crossed his face.

Seeing the encounter between the Devil God Army General Tang Xianzong and the "Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva" last night, with a group of demons appearing in Seeking Immortal County, Tao Qian already had an inkling of something inauspicious.

Now, extracting relevant memories from Situ Fei's mind, Tao Qian immediately knew more.

"The Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva and a group of Great Demons had summoned a bunch of Evil Cultivators and low-level demons, including Situ Fei's master Nongyu Immortal, before coming to Seeking Immortal County. Their number and strength far surpassed the likes of the Three-headed Monarch and the Selling Chestnut Woman."

"Before inciting a confrontation, they had already occupied the Iron Buddha Temple, planning to use that mountain and temple as a base to stand against the court, Forbidden Immortal Hall, and even other Major Sects?"

"At least outwardly, for the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva and the demons, slaughtering the entire Seeking Immortal County would not be difficult."

"The so-called Provincial City Army posed a significant threat to demons and Demon Magicians like Situ Fei at the Energy-Introduction Realm, but facing the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, the army numbers would need to surge into the tens of thousands, and they would also need to practice Demon Suppression Arrays given by the Great Sects year-round."

"The task for Situ Fei and the others was not to slaughter the city, as they did not have that kind of strength. These lower-rank Demon Magicians were instructed to cause chaos within the city, and as soon as the army entered, they would retreat immediately, heading back to the Iron Buddha Temple to make other plans."

"Nongyu Immortal had told Situ Fei before returning to the Iron Buddha Temple with the Bodhisattva that upon her return, there would be a grand feast waiting, and the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva would announce a huge secret?"

...

Inside the bookstore, Tao Qian and Situ Fei sat opposite each other, the atmosphere eerie.

In reality, Tao Qian was busy digging through Situ Fei's memories, engrossed in the secrets of the Cultivation World to the extent that he hadn't even checked the spoils of war.

But there was no need, for all the spoils had belonged to Situ Fei.

And this debaucher was now Tao Qian's outer puppet.

Just as Tao Qian was happily excavating, suddenly within Seeking Immortal County, a particularly shrill scream echoed throughout.

What followed was a demonic message audible only to Situ Fei:

"Fellow Daoists, the Demon Suppressing Soldiers have arrived."

"They are forming Arrays; quickly join me on my devil body. I'll wait only for ten breaths; any later, and no one will be able to leave."

This messaging rang out in his mind.

Tao Qian's expression changed slightly, and without delay, he immediately controlled Situ Fei to stand up, grabbed the pile of spoils, as well as the net-like magical treasure.

Gliding quietly through the shadows, he slipped out of the bookstore.

Just as he emerged, he saw a giant black centipede, whose outer form rivaled an airship, approaching from afar in the night sky.

Already, several Evil Cultivators and demons were mounted on its back, each controlling magical treasures to fend off ten or so severely injured young cultivators.

Seeing this scene, Situ Fei stamped his foot hard, and once again, pink Peach Blossom Miasma and a large number of pink moths arose, supporting his body as he ascended into the air.

While descending onto the centipede's back, he shouted lowly, "Situ Fei is here, comrades, make room for me."

Chapter 50: In front of the Iron Buddha Temple, skeletons fill the trees

Chengyou Bookstore, Tao Qian was sitting cross-legged in a dark room, watching through the narrow window as the evil cultivator Situ Fei escaped onto the back of the centipede.

A group of demon magicians fought and retreated, and, after suffering some casualties, they actually managed to escape Seeking Immortal County the moment the provincial town's demon suppressing soldiers entered the city, by taking advantage of the centipede demon's ability to leap into the sky.

As the giant black-backed centipede took flight, a putrid, stinking black mist swirled around it.

It seemed like a reckless dark cloud, heading straight for the "Iron Buddha Mountain" outside the town.

While still in mid-air, a crazed laughter echoed from its dark rotten mouth:

"Hahaha... Although we lost a few daoist brothers this time, we have perfectly accomplished the task set by the Bodhisattva and the masters. We will surely be rewarded upon our return."

"Though the mortal human race is aware of our existence, they have never experienced what it's like to be invaded by us. If it weren't for those cultivators from various sects obstructing us, we would have had a grand feast tonight."

"That's enough for now, tonight was quite exhilarating."

"Brothers, stop laughing for a moment. Can anyone save me? My body was burned by that Fire God Temple lass. Without some ointment, I might end up being the meal you brothers eat—my flesh is sour and not tasty."

...

Situ Fei, or rather Tao Qian, was also sitting cross-legged on the back of the centipede.

Listening to the boasting of the demon magicians, he clenched his fist inside his sleeve and thought to himself: "Forbearance in minor matters upsets grand schemes. I shall blend in and then make my move."

As Tao Qian harbored these thoughts, a deer demon approached him. The half-man, half-deer creature was covered in revolting bone tumors, and its withered human face bore a lecherous grin. The stench mixed with the scent of blood was enough to make one want to vomit.

It nudged Tao Qian and asked in a lewd tone:

"Brother Situ, how was your haul this time? Could you spare a beauty for your brother to sate my craving?"

"You know that inside the Iron Buddha Temple, nothing but smelly monks can be found. One can consume them, but to truly enjoy oneself, one must have those delicate-skinned beauties."

"I had intended to find a nice catch myself tonight, but who could have expected to encounter a wild cultivator proficient with the sword. Damn it, his sword light was so fierce I was nearly flayed alive."

With each nudge and word from the deer demon, Tao Qian was nearly sick.

However, remembering that he was now assuming the identity of the high disciple of Nongyu Immortal, "Situ Fei," he had to suppress his disgust, show a sullen face, and after matching his memories, he followed the deer demon's lead and complained:

"Brother Deer, don't remind me of my heartache."

"I had already captured eight beauties tonight, only for some wild cultivator to pop up out of nowhere. Not only was the bastard a sword cultivator, but he was also a shameless and sly old fox."

"Had it not been for my quick escape recognizing the opportunity, I wouldn't be alive right now."

After saying these three sentences, Tao Qian's eyeballs swiveled.

He then showed an ambiguous expression, saying to the deer demon: "Brother Deer, if you really can't wait, come with me later to see my master. She may not have much, but there are still hundreds of peach blossom spirits in the Five Lustful Peach Blossom Banner. I can beg my master to give you one to serve you well all night long."

Upon hearing this, the deer demon shook its head full of bone tumors energetically as if it were a rattle drum, its eyes shifting from lewdness to fear.

"Brother Situ, don't scare me. If I really were to meet with the Nongyu Immortal, all the deer blood and essence in me would be surely sucked dry."

"That exquisite body of the immortal should be left for Brother Situ to enjoy."

As the deer demon said this, it turned around with a sullen face and walked away.

Other demon magicians who had also wanted to come over and share in the beauty heard their conversation and wisely chose not to approach.

Tao Qian inwardly cursed and also took the chance to check the information related to the deer demon.

[Name: Lu Sanliu.]

[Record Type: Demon.]

[Record: This demon was originally a human, surnamed Lu, a young hunter, who found a "Deer Transformation Technique" in a cave in the mountains. Although this skill is of the heterodox path, it also leads to the Qi Refining Realm. If one could strictly adhere to the precepts during cultivation, there was a promising future. However, the hunter had a terrible nature, and as soon as he entered the path, he committed all manner of atrocities using his newfound extraordinary power, raping and pillaging widely. Within a few days, he had mutated into his current appearance. For every new bone tumor on its body, it moved closer to complete madness...]

"Heh, another demon on the brink of death."

Tao Qian sneered secretly after estimating the death date of the deer demon.

However, his heart also trembled slightly.

It seemed that there were not too few in this world who encountered the opportunity for cultivation, yet how many could not hold onto their inner truth and mutate into such a horrible and detestable demon form?

With a slight sigh, Tao Qian stopped reflecting on such matters.

Knowing that Brother Situ Fei was not in a good mood, for the time being, no demon magicians bothered him.

Tao Qian was quite content with this, as it gave him the perfect opportunity to organize his gains:

First of all, there was Situ Fei's puppet body, at the Energy-Introducing Realm, Fetus Formation Stage.

Then there was an array of treasures on him, all stored within the Peach Blossom Sachet, whose space was several times larger than Tao Qian's "Joyful Bag."

Most eye-catching was the pink rope net called the "Five Lustful Moth Net."

This treasure, given by Nongyu Immortal Pan Hongniang to her disciple, was not only known for its exceptional defense against blades and swords and immunity to water and fire.

Its true usage was to induce those caught within it to instantly enter a soul-stirring dream, their bodies secreting fragrant sweat, drawing dream moths to suck and enhance the net's power.

Over time, those trapped inside would be completely consumed.

The more beauties the net captured, the more formidable its power became.

Although there were other alien items in Situ Fei's satchel, none of them compared to this treasure net.

The "Black Jade Skin Regeneration Powder" was indeed not bad, and Tao Qian intercepted it at the bookstore.

Having examined the magical treasures, it was time to look at the cultivation manuals.

Situ Fei carried the "Five Lustful Peach Blossom Scripture" as his Cultivation Technique, but only the Energy Introduction spell was present. The Qi Refining Realm's spells were absent.

Furthermore, there was a volume of the "Jade Demon Chaos God Skill." This was not a Basic Method but a Demon Secret Technique used to disrupt people's spirit and control their minds. Its power could be considered substantial, but its limitations were immense. It could only possibly succeed if cast at a moment of mutual joy when both parties forgot themselves.

Besides these two, Situ Fei also cultivated several Magic Skills and Divine Skills such as "Peach Blossom Coating Body Escape Technique," "Peach Blossom Yin Sha," and "Confusing Heart Five Yin Qi," among others.

Clearly, he was a qualified disciple of the Peach Blossom Sect.

It was just that he harbored thoughts of rebellion because he had been harvested excessively by his own master.

"According to memory, Nongyu Immortal Pan Hongniang has reached the Foundation Establishment Realm, lived for a full 150 years, yet her appearance remains that of a teenage girl, delicate and endearing."

"And it was such a girl who laboriously established the Peach Blossom Immortal Valley, with dozens of disciples and even more servants."

"Such an existence, could she have failed to notice the resentment growing in the heart of her most beloved disciple, plotting to harm her?"

"If that Jade-faced Lady Lan Qing'er had a higher cultivation and was more ruthless, then it could be considered understandable. However, according to memory, although Lan Qing'er was also in the

Foundation Establishment Stage, she was one stage behind Pan Hongniang and far behind in combat techniques. They had several fights when they first turned against each other, ending with Lan Qing'er's defeat every time."

"And for some unknown reason, the two old ladies later became close confidantes, which is rather puzzling."

Tao Qian scoured his memories and analyzed the situation from an observer's viewpoint, immediately sensing something awry with the covert operation about to be launched.

In fact, Situ Fei himself had his doubts.

As a disciple, he knew all too well how formidable his master was.

Seemingly a delicate beauty, she was in truth a ruthless and cruel old witch.

"Perhaps the plan needs more thought. Although losing this Puppet Body isn't a big deal and won't harm my actual body."

"However, it would be a shame if I didn't manage to gather any intelligence."

"Besides, wasting resources is disgraceful."

Just as Tao Qian racked his brain, the ground beneath him trembled slightly.

The voice of the Black-backed Centipede Demon came through: "Fellows, we have arrived."

Almost instantaneously, the Demon Magicians cheered.

Some of them even smacked their lips, spouting foul words.

"Old Black, descend to the temple quickly; I can already smell the delicious scent of human flesh, I'm barely containing myself."

"I've heard that the masters have invited several Pig Demon butchers to prepare a feast for us. We'll be able to eat our fill for the next few days."

"Hey hey, I've heard that these good days will become more frequent."

"From now on, we don't need to be overly cautious of the Daoist and Buddhist Sects anymore. Times are changing."

"Quick, let's go meet the Bodhisattva. Tonight she caught a child, and it smells so incredibly good. If I could just get a leg..."

...

Tao Qian listened to this demonic babble, planning to also check the details of the centipede demon below.

He looked down inadvertently and his face suddenly froze.

Beneath was a mountain called "Iron Buddha," topped with the Iron Buddha Temple, previously thriving with incense and offering a pleasant scenery.

But at that moment, what Tao Qian saw was:

On the Martial Arts Training Square before Iron Buddha Cliff, skeletons hung from pine trees. There were not only monk robes like Kasayas but also clothes of worldly pilgrims scattered on the ground, trampled by plump, big-eared Pig Demons in filthy aprons, their tusks protruding, their manes dark.

They brought large iron pots, built stone stoves, held shiny bone-cutting knives, and threw suspiciously acquired meat into the steaming pots.

They tossed in seasoning from time to time...

Tao Qian turned his head rigidly away; he did not dare to look anymore.

He feared he wouldn't be able to restrain himself and would forsake this outer puppet just to slaughter those Pig Demons.

The situation was evident without further discussion.

That group of Demons had taken over the Iron Buddha Temple before their operation had even begun, during the daytime. Besides the monks, there were likely many pilgrims in the temple who also met a tragic fate.

"The Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva and other Demons had long ceased to be human, and committing such atrocities still had a sort of logic... The Devil God Army, though, rising up against the tyranny of the court, naturally could be justified since, in both original memories, the court was rotten to the core. Rebellion was inevitable, but colluding with Demons to slaughter the Human Race, such acts are unbearable."

"That person called Tang Xianzong, what the hell is he, and what kind of scheme does he want to pull off?"

Tao Qian's mind replaced his internal fury with surging thoughts.

If his stroke of Spiritual Resonance at the bookstore had resulted in turning Situ Fei into a puppet, now Tao Qian was earnestly engaged.

Although he didn't know what the Devil God Army and Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva were planning to do, he instinctively guessed it would undoubtedly be disastrous for the Human Clan.

And the ones to suffer first would likely be the tens of thousands of living civilians in Seeking Immortal County, not far below the mountain.

Since he had infiltrated their ranks, how could Tao Qian miss the opportunity to investigate thoroughly?