

Longevity 421

Chapter 421: Eighteen Righteous Armies Excavate the Imperial Mausoleum, the Centipede Dies But Never Falls Stiff

Tao Qian, trapped by the Divine Light, had already calmly accepted the extraordinary price he had to pay.

High above the sky, he watched over the vast territories below, observing all kinds of turbulent scenes unfolding.

"On the third day of hanging the Heavenly Lantern, which province, which Talent will it be today?"

Having muttered to himself, Tao Qian soon found his answer.

Indeed, not much time had passed, just half an hour later.

It seemed like an auspicious time had arrived once more, as a majestic fortune surged through the void, filling his body.

Tao Qian not only heard the cheers of all people but also glimpsed the process within.

"Hong Province, although not much of a presence within the seventy-two provinces of the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty, has always been a land where great figures are born since ancient times."

"As the world decayed, life in this province became increasingly difficult, thus giving birth to many heroes. However, the court's control over the province was extremely strong. Therefore, the heroes went to nearby provinces such as Fumin, Southern Yue, Xiangxi, and other major provinces to carry out their activities, until after the Yang Sui Uprising erupted. Two farmer-born heroes called out from a high place, and in a short time, called back many aspiring heroes."

"Six hours ago, they first captured the second-largest city in the province, Chai City, gathered the mortals, and after turning the stationed army, they took over the Capital City half an hour later and announced their independence from the court. They refused to be governed or recognize the imperial system and title, determined to completely remove the blood-sucking pests lying atop the people."

"One of the former members of the Zhu Royal Family, the Fifteenth Prince Zhu Yang, who held the title Prince Gu, attempted to resist and was executed."

"In the process of independence, institutions within the province such as the Gezao Sect, Dragon Tiger Dao, Yunmeng Mountain, Ghost Valley Sect, Yuxu Temple, True Hidden Sect...and other Daoist and Buddhist side branches provided assistance, sensing the destiny of all people."

"The leader of the rebel army is called 'Sun Buqun', a Talent and prodigy who is neither Daoist nor Buddhist nor from a millennium family, nor belongs to heresy and heterodoxy. As a Loose Cultivator practicing the magic skills of various sects, he ingeniously used the principle of offsetting costs to achieve the realm of Cavernous Mystery."

"By his side was a sworn brother named Lu Shilin, who was later confirmed to be one of the Saint Heirs of the Alchemist Organization. When he tried to entice Sun Buqun to restore the empire and proclaim himself emperor, Sun Buqun personally subdued him and hung his body outside the provincial city, warning the Alchemists."

Such Record seemed to be very detailed.

It appeared there was nothing amiss, but now that Tao Qian knew many secrets, he immediately guessed something after a few glances.

"The entire Cultivation World is probably going to enter the world."

"The shattering of the Ancestor God Forbidden Technique was just a small trial for those Great Sects and Cultivation powers. Now with the emergence of the Yang Sui Uprising, the perfect excuse and opportunity have presented themselves. But, the more direct reason is probably the confirmed evidence that pieces of the Ancestor God Forbidden Technique could be transformed into Exotic Treasures, leaving no more apprehensions for the sects."

"And that person called Sun Buqun, is likely a hero among men, who must have received many benefits from the Alchemist Saint Child Lu Shilin previously. However, realizing that the Alchemist Organization would be despised by billions, he ruthlessly took action to sever all ties."

"It was time and fate that allowed him to easily become the master of Hong Province."

Tao Qian analyzed thus far and did not seem to have much dislike for Sun Buqun.

After all, he was neither a moral saint nor a fool who could only see things in black and white and could not tolerate shades of grey.

Moreover, good people are hard to find in this era.

He had dealt a severe blow to the Alchemists, which, though satisfying, would surely deal another heavy blow to the already precarious order of the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty.

At this time, a "strong personality" is needed to stabilize the situation, which Sun Buqun fits perfectly.

It is a well-known saying that what cannot be destroyed cannot be established, but destruction followed by establishment also requires time and process.

What truly delighted Tao Qian was a conjecture he made:

The Alchemist Organization!

It was going to suffer.

This judgment from Tao Qian was somewhat baseless.

To know that not long ago, he, Master Tao, had nearly been captured and taken back by thirteen Ultimate Happiness Realm masters sent by the Alchemists.

Such formidable strength would seem incredibly difficult to weaken.

Alas, times have changed.

"Considering even not-so-strong sects like Yunmeng Mountain and Ghost Valley Sect dared to step on the Alchemists, and their consecutively dispatched Saint Heirs have been put down..."

"Certainly, when the time comes to push down the wall everyone does so, for more than two thousand years, the Alchemist Organization, taking advantage of convenience, sucked the marrow from bones, enjoying all the benefits. Apart from households like Taishang Dao and Spirit Treasure Sect, others have probably been green with envy for a long time."

"Probably the current situation is the entire Cultivation World is rushing in, everyone keen and eager, with blades in hand—knives entering white and exiting red—relentless until they have cut off every piece of flesh from the Alchemists."

Tao Qian thought to this pleasant point and could not help but laugh out loud.

From Southern Yue, since he came in contact with that worthless Saint Heir Qin Wuxiang, Tao Qian found the Alchemist Organization particularly distasteful.

Yet, in comparison, his power was far too inferior to that of the Alchemists.

But who could have expected?

Such a significant force would be taken down by Tao Qian, who seized the opportunity for a ruthless strike.

But after a serious consideration, indeed, Tao Qian was an extraordinary person doing extraordinary things.

The Mountain and River Map!

Such an Exotic Treasure, anyone with it in hand would cherish it dearly.

Yet Tao Qian willingly shattered it.

After analyzing, he continued to be suspended, with time slowly trickling away.

In the following days, his body received the fortune of the Human Dao, and his mind surfaced with streams of Record information:

"After the governing Ninth Prince of Demon City died, the National Salvation Congress announced that it would take over the government, and at the same time, follow the trend to abolish the state title and imperial system."

"During this period, there was a 'Great Battle between Immortals and Demons'. The Ninth Prince Zhu Qizhi's biological father, an Elder of the Taishang Demon Sect, Master Lingwa, rushed back from the Secret Realm. On learning the bad news, he went mad, intending to kill at least millions of the Demon City population to accompany his son in death. In a critical moment, the other two Immortals of the Three Immortals of the Great Wilderness came back, and together, they drove away the Demon Master Lingwa."

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"After the event, the National Salvation Congress announced that they would invite the Hidden Sect of Ancient Daoist, which once stood alongside the Taishang Dao and Spirit Treasure Sect, to protect Demon City while also calling for independence in all seventy-two provinces. They invited each to send a representative to Demon City to discuss the great matter of saving the country and the world through Human Dao."

...

"Following closely behind, Qiantang Province declared independence. Its governor, the Great Governor Cheng Arhat, who was appointed by the court, was a great warlord controlling hundreds of thousands of formidable troops, many of whom were trained by the significant Buddhist Sect, Han Mountain Temple, and had remarkable combat capabilities."

"This man, aware of the Yang Sui Uprising, executed twenty-one princes of the current dynasty, King Qiantang Zhu Xian, and expelled thirty-one thousand individuals bearing the surname Zhu from the province."

"Upon declaring the independence of Qiantang, he did not abolish the imperial system but declared he did not recognize the national title and intended to establish a new 'Earthly Buddha Country' where he would rule as king. He planned to govern the millions of people in the province with Sublime Dharma from the Buddhist sects."

"Perhaps for the sake of gaining momentum, Cheng Arhat, besides broadcasting nationwide, also sent messages to large Buddhist Sects such as Great Freedom Temple, Great Reincarnation Temple, and Vajra Temple, requesting their profound monks to come to Qiantang and assist him."

"All the temples refused this man."

"Unexpectedly, on that day, a monk visited, claiming to be a senior monk of the Demon Buddha Temple, Kongchan Arhat, and swiftly persuaded him."

"The Earthly Buddha Country remained established, only the national religion was changed to that of the Demon Buddha Temple."

"Feeling abandoned, Han Mountain Temple attempted to assassinate Cheng Arhat, but Demon Buddha Temple mobilized overnight. Within a few hours, they repelled the monks of Han Mountain, forcing this five hundred-year-old Buddhist Temple to permanently relocate from Qiantang Province."

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"Bai Yue Province responded to the call of the National Salvation Congress and declared independence."

"Its governor, called Shen Longting, was not a warlord but an official appointed by the court."

"This man, after learning about the shocking events and secrets in both Demon City and Yang Sui, was extremely angry with the actions of the Zhu Dynasty. He declared a revolt on the spot and, under the persuasion of a Hidden Cultivator from the Primordial Sect, joined the National Salvation Congress, requesting the Primordial Sect to send heroes and cultivators to discuss the approach for saving the country and the world."

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"Southern Yue declared independence, now governed by the Infant Sect."

"Originally trapped outside, part of the 'infant spirits' returned overnight and slaughtered all the devils and ghosts within Southern Yue."

"They also declared unwelcome any member of the Zhu Dynasty or previous imperial families, with trespassers facing death without mercy."

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"Fumin Province declares independence!"

"This province saw the emergence of three new armies of righteous heroes who swiftly conquered the province, each backed by significant forces such as the Shexiao Sect, Daughter Country, and Guanyin Temple."

"Each force was immensely powerful. Initially intent on conflict, they decided to unite and co-govern after mediation by Daughter Country."

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While there were many significant events he was informed of one by one,

The true state of being confined in the sky couldn't be changed by knowing the world's affairs without leaving home.

Fortunately, he had his own source of entertainment—watching his enemies' misfortune.

The heart of Master Tao was never big.

"On the fifth day of hanging the sky lantern, a total of twenty-one provinces had abolished the imperial system and national title."

"The forces under the alchemist such as the Changchun Society, Peddler Sect, and Thousand Tomb Sect, which were all lower-class powers, were almost entirely eradicated."

"Loss of eleven Saint Heirs."

"This feeling is truly indescribable, hehe."

Tao Qian burst into laughter with this thought, and that laughter caused trouble.

The extreme joy led to sorrow, as for the entire next day, no more provinces followed.

Contrarily, the next morning, a shocking piece of bad news suddenly arrived.

Accompanied by a tremendously majestic surge of Human Dao Fortune, what Tao Qian heard wasn't some new province abolishing the imperial system.

It was another matter, quite bizarre but utterly rational upon closer thought.

"Urgent news! Urgent news!"

"A national urgent report, all seventy-two provinces must be informed."

"Just last night, in Fengtian Province, the great warlord Zhang Mazi, in alliance with the Great Governor of Desert North Province, Yelü Lushan, the great warlord of Ancient Yu Province, Song Tiecheng, the warlord of Qilu Province, Wu Shaozu, the Great Governor of Youliao Province, Ma Xiaoning, the warlord of Wujiang Province, Guo Zhanlong, and others totaling eighteen armies, attacked the Imperial City together."

"Despite the terrifying foundation of the Zhu Dynasty, and the horrifying Forbidden Techniques, the defense of the Imperial City was still breached overnight."

"The Eighteen Righteous Armies first captured the entire Zhu Royal Family within the Imperial City and then stormed into the Imperial Mausoleum, encountering a terrifying attack within the Zhu Imperial Mausoleum."

"As mentioned in the Yang Sui Uprising, Emperor Zhu Shizong, also known as Zhu Rizhao, had Mutated into a Demon God-like existence, devouring hundreds of thousands of troops and killing tens of thousands of Daoist and Buddhist Practitioners. Only after the selfless battle waged by the rebel soldiers was the Fallen Demon Zhu Rizhao finally eradicated."

"From this, the truth emerged."

"After all, everything was due to Zhu Rizhao."

"In his early years, he obtained a Demon from the Outer Realm called 'All Techniques Dharma True Demon Devouring Fortune Treasure Pearl.' By relying on this treasure, Zhu Rizhao was able to murder the Founding Emperor of the Zhu Dynasty and then leech off the blood of all the people in the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty from that day on, thereby continuously experiencing prosperity and longevity."

"The so-called Alchemist was also an organization established under his command, intentionally taking the name of the organization founded by the Ancestor Emperor in ancient times."

"At its root, this disaster was caused by the ambition of Zhu Rizhao and that Demon, irrelevant to the dynasty name or the imperial system."

Tao Qian only learned of these reports, which had spread throughout the seventy-two provinces, thanks to the convenience afforded by the Human Dao Destiny."

"And within these seventy-two provinces, the billions of people received even more direct information."

"The so-called Eighteen Righteous Armies, their process of attacking the Imperial City, the Imperial Mausoleum, the truths they unearthed, and the horrific scenes of battling 'Demon God Zhu Rizhao,' were meticulously recorded and then spread to each province, each city through various transcendental means."

"It was divided into nine chapters and eighty-one episodes, being broadcast repeatedly everywhere."

"The foundation of the Alchemist Organization was thus revealed unmistakably."

"Shaken?"

"Yes, at least half, that is, two to three billion people, were compelled to waver in the face of 'irrefutable evidence.'"

"Originally, public sentiment had been boiling in rage."

"But it oddly cooled down."

"Even from his high position in the sky, Tao Qian was able to faintly hear discussions and arguments from various provinces, cities, taverns, or high council chambers due to the mysteries of the fortune within him."

" 'So, that's the truth, how abominable Zhu Rizhao is. He deserves to die.'"

" 'This lines up, that Heavenly Destiny Emperor Zhu Yong must have been deceived by his own ancestors. To really believe, as he did, that previous emperors didn't die and could achieve everlasting life and prosperity by leeching off of all people under the name of the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty? That's quite an astonishing and incredible assumption.'"

" 'Hmm, if it was just Zhu Rizhao's lone monstrous ambition, that would make much more sense.'"

" 'If that's the case, then our insistence on abolishing the dynasty name and the imperial system is baseless. These two structures have sustained our nation for over two thousand years, left by the Ancestor Emperor. How could they be dismissed as trivial, to be easily abolished?'"

" 'That makes sense, that makes sense. Those twenty-one provinces are being ridiculous, we [Dingzhou Province] should not follow.'"

" 'But, gentlemen, don't forget, what if what Zhu Yong said is true? To continue upholding the dynasty name and imperial system carries risks.'"

" 'The evidence is as firm as a mountain. What more is there to say? When that Demon Pearl was excavated, it immediately transformed into a mountainous form, fleeing into the heavens, only to be shattered by eighteen Immortals. That night, a [Demon Corpse Rain] fell over the Imperial City, and those ferocious eunuchs, palace maids, and soldiers were all proven to be people from the Taizong Dynasty.'"

" 'In my view, since the chief culprit has died, all is well. The ancestral legal system absolutely cannot be altered, lest we ruin the fortune of our Shen Zhou Holy Land.'"

" 'Since it was merely Zhu Rizhao's scheming alone, unrelated to the dynasty name or the imperial system, we [Qingyun Province] will still follow the ancestral legal system. If not the Zhu's, then appointing the Qin's would be suitable, as currently our province's Great Governor, Qin Lianshan, belongs to the Qin Clan, whose noble lineage traces back to the thousand-year-old Qin Dynasty, making him rightly qualified as the new emperor.'"

" 'We [Fengcang Province] will follow the talented clan leader of the Li, Li Siming, to start a new dynasty. The Li Family also once founded a prosperous royal dynasty.'"

" 'Most excellent!'"

" 'Excellent. Aside from the Zhu's not being eligible, trying new dynasties for the remaining families is feasible, to continue the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty, upholding the legal dignity of the Shen Zhou Holy Land.'"

...

" 'Ha, such an old bunch, actually using such a clumsy method.'"

Above the sky, Tao Qian suddenly spoke.

Though his tone was full of scorn, he knew well that the method employed by the Alchemist Organization was effective.

Let alone others, the sudden cessation of the Human Dao Fortune infusion was clear evidence.

Fortunately, Tao Qian did not expect his strike to completely obliterate the Alchemist Organization; that would be unrealistic.

Inflicting severe damage on the Alchemist was already not an easy feat.

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"The centipede is large yet not Undying, dead yet not rigid."

"Already let the twenty-one provinces abolish the imperial title and system, which is tantamount to cutting off most of the foundation of the Alchemists."

"Add to that the many Great Sects of the Cultivation World brandishing blunt knives to cut flesh... After that, even without me, the Alchemists will surely perish."

"Speaking of which, those who chose to follow the Yang Sui Uprising seem to be from the Southern provinces, alas, they're not planning an Otherworld version of a Northern expedition, are they?"

Tao Qian sat cross-legged within the Divine Light, muttering about the major events of the Mortal World.

The counterattack of the Alchemists was indeed quite effective.

During this period, Tao Qian's gain of Human Dao Destiny had been incredibly immense, an enormous volume indeed.

But after the incident of the "Eighteen Righteous Armies excavate the Imperial Mausoleum" occurred, the infusion of destiny abruptly ceased.

The almost frenzied series of province independences also came to an abrupt halt.

Divine Light had suspended Tao Qian for four days, but the scene he had hoped for of "seventy-two provinces all independent" still did not materialize.

That number remained just that—a number.

For a full four days, it did not increase by one.

A total of twenty-one provinces had abolished the imperial title and system, leaving fifty-one provinces that were gradually moving toward restoration.

The Alchemists were cunning too, hanging the Zhu's high as a target.

As a result, families other than the Zhu's saw the arrival of their spring.

The previous "tide of self-proclamation as Emperor" reached its peak directly.

Not to mention those fifty-one provinces unaffected by the Yang Sui Uprising, even within the already independent twenty-one provinces.

In some more remote counties or large mountains, often some bandits would coerce tens of thousands of civilians, raise a few thousand soldiers, or join forces with Evil Cultivators, feeling a bit of power and

all wishing to have a taste of being an Emperor. Usually, such cases could be easily swept clean by any Great Sect's Disciple and were not a concern.

The real trouble was with the large provinces.

Once proclaimed emperor, they immediately built up momentum.

Unfortunately, Tao Qian could do nothing but watch helplessly.

Fortunately, the achievements are now quite remarkable, those twenty-one provinces, plus Demon City alone, still continuously transmitted fortune over.

From this, Tao Qian intermittently saw both good and some Abnormal changes.

During this period, Tao Qian observed many Great Sects of the Cultivation World and gradually came to a conclusion:

"There is likely a vague agreement between the Great Sects and the Alchemists, something like non-interference with each other."

"So even now that the Alchemists have suffered heavy hits, the Great Sects only make moves through indirect and complicated methods, and there isn't one that stands out directly with the full Sect mobilized."

"But there is one Sect that is an exception."

"The National Salvation Congress!"

"Or rather, the Primordial Sect."

"This Hidden Sect which disintegrated early in the Ancient Era, now has no reservations, with many Hidden Cultivators like the 'Three Immortals of the Great Wilderness' appearing in the seventy-two provinces, revealing a vast force overnight, unabashedly starting to take over the fruits of victory."

"The Alchemists were furious, but they were too heavily injured to provoke the Primordial Sect, and could only let those Hidden Cultivators do as they pleased."

"However, in public, it was still under the banner of the 'National Salvation Congress,' gathering the good people of the Mortal World or generous heroes during the rallying calls, always using saving the nation and the world, the calamities of Human Dao as slogans."

"It seems, not bad after all."

"Only hope that Daoists like Yu Yanshi, Li Wenyan, Shi Yingqiong, and Yang Li, do not forget their original intention."

Tao Qian himself was suspended high, still sighing about the changes in the present world in his heart.

As Human Dao Fortune came over, indeed, he also caught glimpses of what these Daoists look like now.

Although only a short time had passed, the members of the National Salvation Congress, now, each seemed to be on their own path.

With the drive of the Primordial Sect, the organization's size exploded with terrifying speed.

Among them, Yu Yanshi and Shi Yingqiong stood out the most.

The former, as the chairman of the National Salvation Congress, went back and forth between more than a dozen provinces such as Southern Yue, Fumin, Heavenly Mansion, Qiantang, Bai Yue, Yundian, and Sanjin. Miraculously, he accomplished a major feat, persuading these provinces to agree to the National Salvation Congress. In half a month, they would each send an envoy to Demon City to discuss the important matter of national salvation.

The latter returned to her own Sect, one of the Twelve Daoist Sects, Shaoqing Sect. With great effort and charm, she managed to persuade an Ultimate Happiness Realm Elder to leave seclusion, along with a group of Shaoqing Disciples. Afterward, she met with Great Sects in the Cultivation World such as Taisu Sword Sect, Iron Sword Sect, Sword Tomb, and so on, adept in the art of slaying, and actually convinced these Sects to join forces.

On that day, they formed a slaying alliance, sweeping across the world with Magic Swords in hand, purging all Demons and Evil Cultivators, as well as strange spirits and charms.

Starting from the already independent twenty-one provinces, they killed through each province, one by one, wiping out all the Demons and Evil Cultivators that caused chaos.

With this feat accomplished, Shi Yingqiong's reputation soared, known for her handsome appearance and naturally surging killing intent, she quickly earned the title of "Shaoqing Witch," a name rightfully earned atop a pile of Demon bones.

Aside from these two, Li Wenyan, Wen Ruyue, and Yang Li also each had their own endeavors, growing increasingly renowned under the support of the Primordial Sect, truly formidable.

Seeing these scenes, Tao Qian harbored no envy.

When it came to reputation, although he, Master Tao, did not have much in the Mortal World—only one or two pseudonyms were well-known.

But in the world of Cultivation, the name Tao Qian was extraordinary.

Ever since he was hung in the sky, his own cheap Master often teased him through the token.

Incidentally, he also painted a picture for Tao Qian of his current reputation in the Cultivation World.

Of course, Duobao being Duobao, his words were inevitably sarcastic and peculiar.

Tao Qian could imagine, at that time, his Master must have been incredibly lazy, lying atop the Observatory Hall on Golden Radiance Island, rolling dirty mud balls, swinging his big hairy legs, through the token, taking malicious pleasure in Tao Qian's misfortune:

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"Good disciple, hanging there again, is the view pleasing?"

"You mustn't hold a grudge against the Heavenly Venerate, he's not petty. It's not because you bad-mouthed Him or owed a huge debt of mana that he's had you hanging for so long; it's just to facilitate your receipt of benefits."

"Human Dao destiny!"

"This thing is quite mystical and has great uses; it might even help you glimpse the Great Dao, but it doesn't quite fit with our Spirit Treasure Dao. That bunch of old turtles from the Primordial Sect loves this stuff the most, and they're also the best at playing with it... But who made you such an anomaly? To snatch such a large portion from the hands of the Primordial Sect, of course, we can't give up. What if because of this ordeal you find the Dao in the future, become a Tribulation Immortal? Maybe one day, your Master will have to rely on you, you slippery kid."

"Speaking of anomalies, what exactly were you thinking with your last move? Since I started cultivating the Divination Technique, I've only slipped up once, and you, lad, have caused me this second fall."

"I originally arranged for you to go to Demon City, calculated you could kill the disciple of the Evil Sect, Lian Yulou, win the favor of the little fox slave, and then connect with the line of Jade Ring Mountain in succession, to get that 'Mountain and River Map', and effortlessly pass the calamity. I just didn't calculate that you would be willing to destroy such an Exotic Treasure just to step on an Alchemist."

"That move of yours was ruthless too. Xiu Zhonglin, that old cabal, is now spreading your fame everywhere to pass the buck; he's just short of lifting you up to the skies. Plus, Li Wanshou, that rotten fish and shrimp, also took a beating at your hands... tsk, tsk, Daoist First Heavenly Pride, does that title weigh heavy on your head?"

"Ha ha ha, it's also thanks to Xu Xun and Taishang Daoist King Zen, these two juniors both have that non-competitive temperament; otherwise, just any one of them coming for you would be enough to give you trouble."

"But it's fine, just keep hanging there, and come back to visit your Master when you have free time."

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Tao Qian wanted to retaliate, but his discount Master was quick with his eyes and hands, sealing the token every time after speaking, never giving Tao Qian a chance to utter a word.

The back and forth made Tao Qian too lazy to bother, letting the Master deride him.

Although Duobao didn't mention it, Tao Qian had already caught a glimpse while previously in Demon City.

When he was killing Lian Yulou before, it would have summoned that True Inheritor of the Evil Sect, Zhuge Qingyi, but his discount Master put on a disguise and took the hit for him.

The Master is a good Master, so let him enjoy some verbal advantage, Tao Qian comforted himself.

It had been a long time since any Human Dao destiny had come in, so naturally, there were no grand events to behold.

Suddenly, Tao Qian seemed to think of something.

He looked down upon the vast earth below and then spoke:

"Treasures Divine Light, Divine Light treasures, it's about time."

"It's the ninth day already; the Human Dao destiny has all entered my body with no new income. Isn't it time to let me down? Hanging here like this isn't a solution..."

Tao Qian mumbled and negotiated with the Divine Light without any preparation, thinking it would be like the past nine days, where he could speak and the Divine Light would still not release him.

This time, perhaps it felt his words made sense.

Without any struggle, this frightful but one-use Innate Spiritual Treasure Divine Light suddenly shattered.

Master Tao instantly gained his freedom.

If that were the only good news, it would be a happy moment, but the Divine Light seemed to have ideas of its own.

Simultaneously with the shatter, it sent a massive force his way.

Not giving him a chance to resist, it hurled him towards the ground, throwing him into a corner.

The experience was decidedly unpleasant.

Halfway through the air, Tao Qian had misgivings: What is Heavenly Venerate's intention? If you were to send me flying with such force, shouldn't you have thrown me in the direction of Penglai Sea? I still need to go back to Ascending Immortal Island to caress cats.

It wasn't too long, nor did he make a big crater on the ground as he had imagined.

Completely against Tao Qian's expectation, as soon as the Divine Light flashed and disappeared completely, he found himself transported inside a city within a province.

Looking at the direction, it was not among the twenty-one independent provinces in the Southern.

But the Northern Land, where Demon chaos still thrived, and the craze of claiming the throne was still surging, within one of those Fifty-One Provinces.

Without the time to make a careful distinction, about a dozen breaths later, Tao Qian's feet firmly met the ground. Glancing around, he immediately realized he was in a strange place.

There were refugees all around, roughly counting, there were at least a hundred thousand, each with yellowed faces and emaciated bodies, full of sores, some lying, some sitting, completely oblivious to the rotting mud and maggots on the ground, with lice and other pests hopping around, clouds of flies and mosquitoes gathered, packs of wild dogs roaming at a distance, occasionally digging out bodies from the yellow mud to feast upon...

For a moment, Tao Qian felt as though he had returned to the Refugee Zone outside of Demon City.

No, it was even worse, even more tragic.

This place saw no one serving porridge, and aside from the foul stench, there was an unshakable scent of contamination and mutation hanging in the air.

Tao Qian could see, with his naked eye, strands of either crimson or dense yellow smoke continuously billowing out from a grand but gloomy city ahead.

The name of the city was quite bizarre.

It seemed to be written purely in blood, and the writer appeared to have no real skill, carelessly smearing it across.

It could faintly be made out as three characters, called [Gao Ren City].

Tao Qian recognized the script but couldn't fathom its meaning.

Stranger still, all the refugees here seemed to have adapted to the stench, numbly allowing their bodies to slowly decay in the foul air like walking corpses.

And when this miasma touched Tao Qian's body, the Record immediately activated:

[Currently under assault by the demonic breath... Immunity granted!]

"Demonic breath?"

Tao Qian was momentarily stunned by these two words.

Suddenly, the city gates ahead burst open, and the ground began to shake with a thunderous roar. What followed were two demon creatures emerging, each towering several meters tall and reeking to high heaven.

One was half-wolf, half-human, and the other half-elephant, half-human.

The Wolf Demon held a serrated greatsword in its hand, while the Elephant Demon carried a wrought iron staff.

Both were extremely ferocious, with beastly faces and tusks, their pupils brimming with malice.

Covered in filth, there were fresh strands of meat and curly hairs stuck in between their teeth, making for a profoundly disturbing sight.

Ordinarily, the sight of these two evil and ruthless demon creatures would instill fear in the surrounding refugees, who should be scattering in terror.

But here, the opposite was true.

Every refugee's eyes lit up at this moment, swarming towards them like zombies smelling fresh blood.

However, those who approached first were quickly driven back by several shouts and lashings.

Tao Qian looked closely and saw seven or eight evidently healthier, ruddy-faced youths in short outfits, each wielding a short whip. They darted under the demons' limbs while ruthlessly lashing at the encroaching refugees.

Once some order was restored, a sharp-faced, middle-aged man stepped forward.

He held a copper gong in his hand, which he struck repeatedly, then he screeched out,

"Stand in line, all of you, line up now."

"You mangy dogs and rotten sheep, your luck's finally turned."

"The great lord in the city has a birthday coming up and needs a thousand Meat Pigs. Before the slaughter, there'll be plenty of fish, meat, and grains, sure to fatten you up nicely in ten days. Who's willing to go?"

"Me, I want to go."

"And me, my whole family will go."

"Master, look at me, I'm sturdy, disease-free, and I eat a lot."

"Master, take a good look at me, I have a big mouth, a hearty appetite."

...

Just as Tao Qian confirmed the meaning of "demonic breath," he witnessed this scene and his expression immediately changed.

Meat Pig... Ten days... Tao Qian even had to confirm whether he had misheard.

Chapter 425: Ten Birds Hundred Herbs Thousand Corpse Soup, the Entire Gao Family Are Beasts

Outside Gao Ren City, a tide of refugees surged.

Originally, each of them resembled walking corpses, numb and listless, but upon hearing the unimaginable offer proposed by the middle-aged man standing in front of the Elephant Demon and Wolf Demon, clearly a willing accomplice to the beasts, the refugees seemed to come back to life, stretching

their necks, green light flickering in their eyes. Some raised their hands to signal, some shouted desperately, others simply handed over their children.

Tao Qian completely failed to comprehend this scene.

If he was not mistaken, those so-called Meat Pigs were destined to be eaten by the Demons inside the city.

"So it's to say, the refugees would rather enjoy ten days of good life and then be eaten as Meat Pigs, than to keep clinging to existence here."

"Which province is this, and to what depths has the world decayed?"

Tao Qian originally thought the offer was horrifying enough.

But he was wrong once again.

The middle-aged man, squinting, banging on the gong, whipped around with a whip to beat back the hands of the refugees touching his body, while he continued to say:

"What are you fighting for? What are you all fighting for?"

"The great master's birthday celebration is upcoming, and of course, Gao Ren City will hold a carnival, presenting plenty of opportunities."

"Apart from the Meat Pigs required for the great master, there are some other side tasks."

"The young lady desires new clothes, needing five hundred quality hides, stinking men can keep away, only women needed, within three days. During this period, you will be pampered with fragrant nectar and allowed to bathe and burn incense, to ensure you indulge in fairy-like luxury before death. Those willing, go to the side for inspection. If your skin is without scars or birthmarks, you can enter the city."

After uttering this, the man didn't stop, but rather summarized all the tasks at once.

"The second young lady wants to string a necklace out of jade bone, sizes must be standard. Those willing, go there for bone measurement. If the size is right, you can enter the city, with a term of seven days. Apart from ample fish, meat, rice, and noodles, you can consume an additional immortal elixir called [Jade Bone Powder], which after consuming, can make your skull glow, extremely beautiful."

"The third young lady has ordered a plate of stir-fried human hearts, must be tender and fresh. A hundred people needed, with a deadline of twenty-four hours, under eighteen can join. You can enjoy a meal made completely from all kinds of Heavenly Materials and Earthly Treasures and precious medicinal herbs, a delicacy not even we can enjoy. Those willing, go to the side and line up."

"The fourth young lady recently lost her appetite, ordering us to cook a pot of [Ten Birds Hundred Herbs Thousand Corpse Soup], needing over a thousand people, with a period of forty-eight hours. Each person can wash themselves clean and will receive a Marrow Cleansing Elixir, which cleanses you thoroughly and makes you feel completely refreshed. Afterwards, you can drink immortal dew and eat precious medicinal herbs during each meal, including liquor, leading a life like that of Immortals."

...

Upon reaching this point, the man paused, then continued to speak:

"The real grand opportunity is coming now, listen up, everyone."

"The young master recently wants to play a hunting game, needs at least tens of thousands of people, no restrictions on gender or age, and no set time limit. You'll just be thrown into the Cannibal Forest behind the city walls, intermittently, various delicacies will be thrown in. The young master only fancies the hunt in the evening, and after hunting dozens of people, he'll be satisfied... Those willing, line up to enter the city."

After the man had said everything, the copper gong sounded Dong Dong Dong resoundingly.

Then, the more than ten thousand chosen people began jubilantly entering the city.

The remaining refugees, although full of regret, didn't dare to resist, and once again became like walking corpses, reverting to their original state.

At this moment, Tao Qian suddenly understood the meaning behind the name "Gao Ren City."

To exploit and discard, there was no better way to phrase it.

The anger and killing intent in Tao Qian's eyes began to climb wildly.

Upon descending to this place, Tao Qian immediately concealed his presence.

The two Demons' bodies seemed horrifying, but they were merely Little Demons at the peak of Qi Refining Realm.

And those humans serving as accomplices, were merely in the Energy-Introducing Realm.

Naturally, none could detect him.

However, as he was new to the province and unaware of the local details, Tao Qian suppressed his anger for the time being.

He took out the Demon Gourd, shook out a Heart Demon, and commanded it to gather some relevant memories from the minds of the many refugees around, and report back.

Before long, Tao Qian got his answers.

"This place is Tiannan Province, one of the larger provinces of the Northern Land."

"The many provinces of the Northern Land are in chaos, Demons are rampant, and the world has decayed. Not only is Tiannan one of them, it is also the most chaotic and horrific of the provinces. Even the wandering refugees from other provinces dare not approach Tiannan Province, preferring to take detours. There's still a chance for life that way, but once you enter this province, it's a fate worse than death."

"The refugees from other provinces can flee, but those from this province can only struggle to survive in Purgatory, or otherwise... seek a swift death."

"Gao Ren City, formerly known as Ganyue City, is a small transportation hub. Many surrounding mountains produce medicinal herbs, and the city thrived on the resources. The city itself had a population of three or four hundred thousand, and if you include the surrounding villages, the total reached about six hundred thousand."

"Until the Gao Family arrived, this family, this clan, they're all beasts."

"They began with massacres in the city and the villages, slaughtering the population down to only two hundred thousand. Aside from those who turned their backs to join them as minions, the rest were driven out of the city, becoming homeless refugees."

"The Gao Family is a Cultivating family, perhaps due to their Cultivation Techniques, the Gao family, from those young ladies and young masters to servants and guards, each one has a Demon body, vile and Fallen."

"Only the City Lord, what you might call the 'great master' Gao Wan, still maintains a human form."

"The Gao Family treated the remaining two hundred thousand refugees as stockpiled provisions, grouping and raising them outside the south and north city gates, in filthy marshlands, setting up a Group Demon Arrow Qi Enchantment Array. It bewitched the minds of the two hundred thousand refugees, corrupting their bodies, to prevent them from escaping or committing suicide."

"When the time came to use them, they sent out a swarm of Chang Ghosts under their command to 'enjoy' them under various pretenses."

Learning this, Tao Qian's brows immediately furrowed.

A thought came to mind.

"Previously, Xiu Zhonglin from the Xiu Family boasted about his experiences in front of me."

"He pointed to a grotesque, maggot-like creature of the Ultimate Happiness Realm, referring to it as Gao Daoist."

"In the over two thousand years of history of Longevity Heavenly Dynasty, there indeed was a short-lived Gao Dynasty. Could these people occupying Gao Ren City... be the descendants of the bloodline from the Alchemist Gao Family?"

At this thought, Tao Qian immediately knew.

The truth is likely not far off.

With his current Cultivation Realm, an impulse must mean it's the real deal.

At the same moment, Tao Qian silently passed through the city gate. Those Forbidden Arrays and similar setups might work against other cultivators, but detecting him proved difficult.

Although he hadn't started a fight yet, this one move by Tao Qian already showed the unique abilities he gained after advancing his realm.

Even without using mana or activating divine skills,

his body was like a vessel to which all techniques were unstained, clearing all impurities and in an instant, he was inside the city.

Outside the city already smelled foul, one would assume it would be somewhat better inside, but soon he noticed that the stench inside the city was ten times worse than outside. The scene before his eyes almost made Tao Qian unable to suppress the burgeoning killing intent.

Before him was a bustling cityscape, streets lined with teahouses, taverns, lodgings, butcher shops, and pastry shops... All kinds of buildings were present.

Every aspect familiar to the mortal world such as markets, trade, loitering, drinking, conversing, fighting, and so on, were all here in full.

The only difference was that the "people" here were not actually people.

All were demons, roughly thousands in count, and most couldn't even be considered cultivators.

Rather, due to the power flowing in their veins and the cultivation techniques passed down through their families, these people of the Gao family all had the ugly, ferocious forms of demons.

There were not only Wolf Demons and Elephant Demons but also snakes, sheep, dogs, tigers, pigs, and the like—it truly encompassed everything.

If it weren't for the absence of any energy detection, Tao Qian would have almost thought this was another "Tuo County," another place in chaos because of Bai Qin.

What was both laughable and chilling

was that they regarded themselves as the Human Clan, as citizens.

They worked from sunrise to sunset, conducted petty trades, and led simple lives.

In the morning, they'd step out of their houses, eat a basket of two-legged sheep meat buns, rinse with a bowl of finely brewed sheep blood, meander to East Street to buy small toys made of sheep bones and skins like rattles, kites, and masks to entertain children, and then to the fabric stores in West Market to fetch a few yards of smooth sheep wool fabric for clothing...

If one didn't observe the dense yellow fog hovering over the city, or see the crimson ghost clouds that had solidified in the sky,

they might just think it was an ordinary city that was well-organized, and where the residents lived and worked in peace and contentment.

Even Tao Qian was momentarily stunned for half a breath.

Before this, he had been pondering another matter in his mind:

"Was it the Heavenly Venerate's intention not to send me back to Penglai Sea, but to cast me here instead?"

"Is something big going to happen in this Gao Ren City?"

"Or perhaps, is it related to my cultivation?"

If he considered these, what Tao Qian should be doing right now would be to discreetly explore the entire city for clues.

But Tao Qian didn't wish to do so.

He couldn't restrain himself for even a moment, especially when the scene unfolding at the luxurious and majestic City Lord Mansion entrance suddenly entered his sight, igniting the anger and killing intent that had been simmering deep within Tao Qian, erupting violently out of control.

Right in front of that luxurious City Lord Mansion, a whole family was showing off their close bonds.

A middle-aged couple decked out in fine clothes was sending off their youngest son to hunt along with their four daughters.

If they were human, then this scene could have been captured in a beautiful painting, a perfect depiction of "Lord Gao Sending His Young Son on a Hunt".

But though they were originally human, they were no longer so.

In that procession, every one of them was a demon, a ghost, or a devil, all decked out in full armor, fierce and menacing with an aura of death.

Look at the City Lord's wife, a fine figure of a large female vixen, with a big pale face, dark circles under her eyes, a yellow brow, a stench so foul it spread for miles, yet still she insisted on rouging her cheeks and layering her body haphazardly with various silken garments.

Then look at the four City Lord daughters; the eldest miss was a sharp-mouthed monkey-faced Rat Demon, the second young miss featured a long-necked and long-faced Horse Demon, the third young miss had pointed-mouth green eyes of a Wolf Demon, while the youngest miss sported double horns on her forehead, a Cow Demon.

In their midst was a small Pig Demon, corpulent with oily skin.

This Pig Demon sat atop a carriage carried by eight cultivators who were shackled at the hands and neck, their spirits crushed.

The chubby little Pig Demon, impatient, gestured with a wave of his hoof—for his mother and sisters to stop their prattle.

With his trotters, he gave a formal courtesy to the only member of the Human Clan in front of the large red door—an adult dressed in imperial robes with an imposing stature and a face full of lewdness.

In a deep and throaty voice, he said,

"Father dear, I'm off to have some fun."

"Don't go sneaking into my room to play with my concubines while I'm away."

"If you do that, when I succeed your position, I shall surely pay you back."

Even for Tao Qian, who had seen countless absurd things and been through many experiences,

at this moment, in this city, he felt as though his entire worldview was being reshaped, the world turned upside down, unbearable to witness, and unwilling to acknowledge directly.

Killing intent?

No, not just that, Tao Qian at this moment only had one idea, which was to destroy everything within this city, all those demons, this perverse order, wipe them out completely.

Chapter 426: The Female Bodhisattva Wipes Her Body with Light Silk, The Fierce Hand Destroys the Demon Tao

At this moment, Tao Qian's feelings towards the "Gao Ren City" in front of him were similar to his initial impressions of the Fragrant Meat Collection.

However, the situation had escalated considerably.

The Pig Demon that had cultivated the "Cannibal Scripture" had set up a market, establishing preliminary order and flourishing trade. But now, the Gao family had outright taken over a city, first slaughtering hundreds of thousands of people, then rearing two hundred thousand as food and playthings. In comparison, that Pig Demon seemed rather petty.

Furthermore, the background of the Gao family seemed to be much more significant than that of the Pig Demon.

However, as for the specifics, Tao Qian could only guess roughly.

If he wanted to know the whole picture, he still had to delve into it.

It was just that Tao Qian did not want to touch the Gao family, whether it was the human family head, the mother fox, the daughters, or the Pig Demon young master.

Even if he went to touch them quietly, he disliked dirtying his own hands.

Fortunately, there were ways to get around this without resorting to direct contact.

As soon as he entered the city, Tao Qian had discovered that there were temples within and the incense offerings were extremely prosperous.

The temple was called the Dharma Cakra Bodhisattva Temple, and it enshrined a Female Bodhisattva holding a Dharma Cakra, dressed provocatively.

The worshipers coming and going were all demons.

With bodies full of filth, brutal and cruel, yet all showing a devout demeanor, it seemed utterly ironic.

After watching a few times, Tao Qian made a judgment:

"The Gao family, a short-lived dynasty indeed, no more than a hundred or so years."

"Although the ruling emperors are each brutal and disregard human relationships, paradoxically, they hold Buddhism in high esteem, especially favoring the Great Reincarnation Temple among the Buddhist Temples."

"Now it seems likely that the founding emperor of the Gao family was once a Buddha's son at the Great Reincarnation Temple."

"The Gao family must still have connections to the Great Reincarnation Temple, but openly, as a Righteous Great Sect, the temple would certainly reject the fiery tributes of these demons."

"I don't know how other members of the Gao family would act, but the demons in this city of Gao Ren have some talents, actually setting up a new Bodhisattva Temple themselves and enshrining a Buddha statue they modified on their own after one of the Bodhisattvas at the Reincarnation Temple."

"Half dignified, half debauched, truly living up to the name 'Gao Wan,' they really know how to play."

After muttering in his mind, Tao Qian suddenly took action.

He gently stamped his foot, casting his thought magic.

"Divine Spirits of this place, come swiftly at my command."

After calling out three times,

An eerie scene unfolded before Tao Qian.

First, the sudden sound of Dharma Cakra was heard, then a woman appeared with the image of a Bodhisattva but dressed provocatively, resembling a courtesan, and showed herself leisurely.

This woman was none other than the newly born Incense Fire Divine Spirit of this city of Gao Ren.

Dharma Cakra Female Bodhisattva!

Such a mighty and domineering name was actually for a fragile little god.

Any slightly stronger Cultivator could easily crush her.

Let alone for Tao Qian – the Spirit Treasure True Inheritor, Great Master Tao, who was proficient in the techniques of "Communicating with Ghosts and Driving away Gods."

The woman summoned had an exceedingly ugly look on her face.

Yet, she couldn't resist at all.

Following the order, she bowed and respectfully said,

"Little God, Mu Huang'e, pays respects to the Great Master."

"May I know what commands the Great Master has for summoning me?"

Tao Qian had originally thought this woman would claim to be a Bodhisattva, but she surprisingly also had her own mundane name.

Glancing at the Gao family still posing affectatiously, Tao Qian didn't bother with pleasantries and directly commanded,

"This idol and the incense offerings are all given by that person."

"The Gao family doesn't have the phrase 'human relationships' in their view; they likely wouldn't care about differentiating between mortal gods, you must also be a concubine pet of that person."

"Quickly speak of the Gao family's secrets and hidden details, do not delay."

Although Tao Qian's art of Driving God was newly acquired,

This art had come through a Cultivation Tribulation, mastered instantly like a True Word Secret Decree, and could be called proficient.

This weak Incense Fire Divine Spirit was utterly unable to resist him, so Tao Qian didn't even bother proposing any exchange conditions.

In fact, it indeed was so.

Reluctantly, the Female Bodhisattva still bowed again, then opened her mouth to speak,

"The Gao family that occupies this city of Gao Ren is a side branch of the main Gao Family, with 'Gao Wan' as their leader."

"His practiced Magic Skill is 'Little Reincarnation Body Bodhisattva Secret Dharma,' which sounds as if it came from the Great Reincarnation Temple, but actually, it isn't; this Sorcery was originally created by the Gao Family's Ancestor. After cultivation, it rewards one with a strong physical Dharma Image, but the lower the Cultivation, the harder it is to maintain a human form."

"Only after ascending to the Cavernous Mystery Realm can one return to human form."

"In the city of Gao Ren, only Gao Wan is capable of this."

"Apart from this Lifebound Scripture, he has also cultivated some close-combat Divine Skills, and he has refined a Poison Sack within his body, capable of spewing a hundred types of plagues, while his weapon is a Dharma Cakra Vajra Pestle, adjustable in size, powerful enough to demolish mountains and cut off rivers."

"He also possesses a life-saving Divine Skill, called the 'Great Liberation Clone Technique,' capable of instantly creating thousands of clones for escape..."

As Tao Qian listened, he couldn't help but raise an eyebrow and look at the Female Bodhisattva in astonishment.

Good lad!

Initially, he had merely summoned a minor Incense Fire God to probe some details before taking action.

Unexpectedly, with this inquiry, all of Gao Wan's secrets were laid bare.

Tao Qian even felt that even if he went up now to touch the person, he would not get such detailed Records.

Noticing the surprise in Tao Qian's eyes, the Female Bodhisattva gave a bitter look and once again solemnly bowed, saying,

"The Great Master's Dharma Eye is penetrating, and you must have seen the current state of this little god. This little god was born just seven days ago, forced night by night to mingle with Gao Wan's Divine Soul. Though through this, I glimpsed many of his secrets, my Divine Soul was completely tainted and mutated, leaving me no hope of achieving Dao; rather, I am very close to Falling Demon."

"All that I have, despite being given by Gao Wan, including the name 'Mu Huang'e,' which was the favorite concubine of his father, had this name."

Chapter 427: The Female Bodhisattva Wipes Her Body with Light Silk, The Fierce Hand Annihilates the Demon Tao Clan - Part 2

"Gao Wan had an affair with Mu Huang'e, and for this, he was cast out to this place by his father."

"Gao Wan is cruel, lascivious, and sadistic. Although as a Little God I lack a physical body and need not suffer the pain of flesh, being constantly subjected to the malign influence of arrow qi and demon souls has become unbearable, and it won't be long before I degrade into an Evil God."

"Venturing a guess with the utmost temerity, one such as Yourself who has achieved True Cultivation would have been better off not setting eyes upon this situation. However, having already come to Gao Ren City, I fear that all the devils therein, myself included, are doomed to be eradicated."

"Since I cannot resist, I am resigned to my fate. I only hope that when You act, You will do so ruthlessly. Do not spare a single one of the Gao family. The Gao family controls the majority of Tiannan Province. Should one escape, You, True Master, may well become the subject of their manhunt... After dealing with Gao Wan, if You could see to the welfare of the remaining two hundred thousand refugees in this area, it would not only make my sufferings worthwhile but also honor the quiet prayers of the city's citizens."

Upon hearing this, Tao Qian actually gave Mu Huang'e a proper look.

Suddenly, he reached out a finger and touched it to her forehead.

His double pupils and Record validated the truth.

It was both true and false.

Her words were true, but if Tao Qian were to show compassion or pity for this woman as a result and release her, she would immediately warn Gao Wan.

The seeming contradiction made sense, as a demon influence Little God lacks any logical consistency.

With a cold smile, Tao Qian detained the woman right there.

Contemplating in his mind, he thought:

"As the woman said, the ones here are the collateral Gao branches and several thousand servants. Killing them is possible, but I must not act recklessly. If even one is overlooked and manages to send a warning, I could quickly face a Demon from the Ultimate Happiness Realm, a confrontation I'm not yet ready for."

"However, it isn't difficult. It's just a hunt. First I'll cut off their retreat, then encircle and eliminate them."

As the thought settled, Tao Qian immediately sprang into action.

If he still had the Mountain and River Map in hand, it would have been simple: cast the Absolute Spirit Forbidden Zone and eradicate all the Gao family in the city.

But that was no trouble; even without treasures, Tao Qian still had other means.

With a wave of his hand, he released Yunrong, Little Age, Lian Jing'er, Shan Jiu, and a whole host of little devils from the Demon Gourd.

Then he took out the Holy Embryo Bag and handed it to Yunrong, instructing her and the others:

"Relocate the two hundred thousand refugees into the bag."

"Trap all the Gao family demons in the city, not letting a single one escape."

"Monitor the city, interfere with Forbidden Arrays, and prevent any external communication."

"Investigate every corner of the city for hidden secrets."

Unbeknownst to himself, Tao Qian had amassed a formidable entourage.

Yunrong's strength and background were not much different from Tao Qian, the Master Tao.

With her mana, she could fit all two hundred thousand people into the Holy Embryo Bag, though not for long—only about half an hour.

That would be enough time.

Lian Jing'er and Shan Jiu had already been a great help to Tao Qian in Demon City.

Here, their tasks were even simpler.

As for the little devils, there was even less to say. They went from crying and demanding to return to the Outer Realm to sweet-talking and calling him "generous Master," as they consumed a lot of Demon Pills. In particular, the Alien Demons concocted by Lingwa Master in Demon City ended up benefiting these little demons.

Each of their powers surged.

Now, they were all content to stay inside Tao Qian's Demon Gourd, unwilling to leave even if it meant death.

Upon hearing their Master's command, they shouted their agreement.

As his subordinates began to scatter to their tasks, Tao Qian also pondered the method he would use to execute the killing.

Little did he know, he had too many options to choose from.

Though he was only at the Perfect Transcend Mortality level, the depth of his mana was substantial. He could use a "Binding Immortal Technique", the Big Handprint to capture, the True Word Secret Decree to shatter souls and the Silent Divine Thunder to bomb the body. It would not take long to eliminate Gao Wan of the Cavernous Mystery Realm.

The gap in Cultivation Realm was clear, but the victor must be Tao Qian.

No other reason but that the Spirit Treasure True Inheritor should be so domineering, suppressing others with mana and Divine Skills.

Yet, Tao Qian did not intend to proceed in that fashion. Firstly, he was reluctant to reveal his identity as a Spirit Treasure True Inheritor; he had many disguises, and his true identity should remain a closely guarded secret, not to be exposed lightly.

And the second reason was the true motive.

Tao Qian did not want the Gao family in the city to die too quickly, too comfortably.

Torturing and playing was not Tao Qian's style.

But he was familiar with the punishment of death by a thousand cuts.

With a flip of his palm, he took out a longsword, the Red Dust Sin Sword from the Lian Yulou, coated with Red Dust Poison. Those who suffered its thousand cuts would experience excruciating pain in both body and soul.

"The sword is from the Evil Sect, but the swordsmanship must be from the Secret Demon Sect."

"Gao Wan's cultivation is of the Buddhist Law, displayed in a devil body, yet fundamentally that of a demon."

"Fortunately, I have yet to practice techniques such as Destroying Buddha and Demon Suppressing. However, my practice of Demon Cleansing Sword Intent is commendable."

With his mind made up, Tao Qian once again looked at the woman known as Mu Huang'e, the Female Bodhisattva.

He nodded with a smile, signaling that it was her turn to perform.

The next moment, the two revealed themselves without any concealment, directly appearing on the bustling street crowded with demons and ghosts.

Tao Qian used the Ten Thousand Transformation Technique to appear as an inconspicuous black-robed cultivator.

However, the Female Bodhisattva, in light gauze that clung to her body, with thin silk draped over her, decided to be more convincing by stripping away her already scant clothing, which immediately caused a commotion.

Gao Wan, who had just finished beating up the Pig Demon's son and was about to return to his mansion during the day, seemed to have felt something and abruptly turned to look.

In an instant, his gaze met with "Mu Huang'e".

The Female Bodhisattva, bound by Tao Qian's spell, immediately looked sorrowful and panicked, stretching out her hand and shouting,

"Mr. Gao, save me!"

"This Daoist is a Demon Cultivator who, upon discovering the wonders of my body, intends to kidnap me and use me as a furnace for his cultivation, absorbing me day and night."

"He even said that an idiotic and ugly thing like Mr. Gao is utterly unworthy of me."

"When I resisted, he... he did this to me, wuuu wuuu."

Mu Huang'e, under the spellbind, performed flawlessly.

Gao Wan wasn't the kind of discerning and cunning overlord capable of reading expressions and hiding his true intentions.

Seeing his favorite concubine about to be taken away, Gao Wan suddenly bellowed, "How dare you, scoundrel?"

With a thunderous boom, Gao Wan revealed his true form.

Accompanied by a surge of dense yellow vapor, a one-legged giant emerged in front of the City Lord Mansion, resembling a huge gorilla with a human face and long arms, covered in black and hard hair, sores oozing pus all over his body, spurting out thick juices, holding a Dharma Cakra Vajra Pestle in his hand.

With a flash of shadow, Gao Ren City immediately trembled.

In his rush to save his beloved, Gao Wan didn't even notice that in the process of lunging towards Tao Qian, he accidentally sent his four daughters flying, resulting in one dead and three injured. The heavily made-up mother fox immediately began wailing in grief.

Of course, he failed to see that changes were unfolding both inside and outside the city, with the entire Gao Ren City gradually becoming sealed off, turned into a prison from which not even a fly could escape.

And those two hundred thousand calamity-stricken commoners were disappearing piece by piece.

"As the heart is, so is the form!"

"It turns out, you fool, that you've become a rotting mountain demon."

"Me taking a fancy to your concubine is a blessing for you."

"If you're not convinced, I will fight until you are."

Before his words fell, Tao Qian, playing the role of the Demon masterfully, raised his hand and launched a sword strike.

This was his first fight since his promotion.

Moreover, no longer burdened by debts, he didn't skimp on releasing his tremendous mana.

"Demon Cleansing!"

A thick, dark sword light burst forth in an instant.

This sword light almost split half of Gao Ren City, with the most terrifying aspect being the killing intent against the Demon Path penetrating deep into bones, severing the Divine Soul.

If Gao Wan had been a Buddha, a devil, or even an Alien Species,

This sword would not have hurt him.

But, he was a Demon who had practiced Buddha's law in a twisted way and mutated, falling into Demonic status.

There was a loud "clang", relying on the strength of his divine Vajra Pestle, although Gao Wan was struck flying backwards, only one ear was cut off, and there were no injuries elsewhere on his body.

"What a fierce Demon Path! Come on, keep fighting."

"If you beat me, not only will Mu Huang'e be yours, but my wife and daughters too. They will all belong to you, to play with as you please."

"Bang!"

Before he could finish, Tao Qian struck him flying again.

This time, another ear was taken off.

At the same time, he teleported instantly above Gao Wan's head and contemptuously stepped on his face. Without a glance, he swung his sword towards Gao Wan's wife and daughters. As the dark beam of light swept away, one heard a "whoosh" sound, and Gao Wan watched helplessly as his wife, together with his four daughters and his son, the fat-headed Pig Demon who had come back at some point,

A whole family was bisected at the waist, their intestines and innards spilling messily on the ground.

They were all demons, with tough bodies. Struck by that sword, they didn't die, but were instead split in two, writhing in agony on the ground.

At that moment, Gao Wan had no doubt whatsoever about the identity of the cultivator before him.

A Demon Lord!

One even more vicious than himself.

Chapter 428: The Zhu Royal Family Carries the Exotic Treasure, 100,000 Gao Ren Also Feed on Demons

Gao Wan, being of the Gao Family, had witnessed and experienced an unimaginable number of strange and eerie things since he was young.

He was no longer part of the normal Human Clan; it was fair to say he had become a pervert, and calling him a madman was equally fitting.

Yet at this moment, Gao Wan still felt he did not understand.

This did not prevent him from falling into a furious rage, a sensation he could fully perceive.

This Demon was humiliating him.

"I granted you the victory to defile my wife and daughters!"

"And yet, you murdered them first. In Gao Wan's mind, there was nothing more humiliating in the world.

"Thief, you've got guts."

"How dare you bully the people of my Gao Family within the bounds of Tiannan Province."

"Thief, you're as good as dead. I, Gao Wan, guarantee it—no matter who you are or where you come from, you will endure every torture and punishment that exists in this world."

"Ah ah... I'm going to kill you!"

Amidst his furious roars, Gao Wan finally entered a state of mad frenzy.

His pair of Mountain Demon eyes turned utterly blood red.

Visible to the naked eye, mutated Demonic Qi roiled and steamed.

His body, which was already like a small hill, began to swell frantically; with a roll, his fist sent Tao Qian flying, and his mouth, full of sharp tusks, opened wide to spew a cloud of dull gray fog at Tao Qian, tinged with a grievously potent plague.

But that was not all. Accompanying the "bang bang bang" sounds, lumps of flesh bulged from under Gao Wan's ribs and back and then instantly burst open, releasing at least a dozen stout arms that wildly pummeled the ground where Tao Qian had landed.

The Vajra Pestle was raised high, and intense black Buddha Light illuminated thousands of miles, then exploded.

In the next moment!

Half of Gao Ren City was reduced to ruins.

All life within that region suffered the impact, with heavy casualties.

Fortunately, Yunrong had earlier taken the "Holy Embryo Bag" and collected all 200,000 disaster victims.

Now, within Gao Ren City, aside from the thousands of Demon slaves of the Gao family and some colluding members of the Human Clan, there were no others.

These Demons had intended to come and help, but before they got close, many were mistakenly slain by Gao Wan.

He was certainly perverse and absurd, but at the same time a skilled killer.

His terrifying physical strength, obtained through the cultivation of the "Physical Body Bodhisattva Method," could level mountains; and the origins of that plague were no minor matter—using the Gao Family's resources, he collected one hundred types of plague from various plague-ridden areas within the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty. Even High-level cultivators, if carelessly exposed, would have their cultivation destroyed and become entangled by the illness.

Afterward, he cast "Twenty-Armed Great Strength Demon Fist" and "Dharma Cakra Earth Demolition Mallet Technique."

A set of Divine Powers unleashed, Gao Wan was convinced that even if his opponent were at the Cavernous Mystery Realm, they too would perish.

Indeed, it was so!

If Tao Qian had been a typical Cavernous Mystery Realm Demon Cultivator.

Caught off-guard by Gao Wan's combination of moves, he would certainly have died without question.

Unfortunately for Gao Wan, Tao Qian was not such a Demon Cultivator.

He was brandishing the Evil Sect's sword, and although he pretended to be from the Secret Demon Sect, he was actually always maintaining the Golden Light Divine Spell. Plus, his post-Transcend Mortality Spirit Treasure Sublime Body had an effect of being "Immune to All Techniques," which combined with the rest ensured that Gao Wan's attack did not breach even a hair of Tao Qian's defenses.

In the midst of Gao Ren City, Gao Wan had transformed into a colossal Mountain Demon, standing with a Vajra Pestle.

Surrounded by dust and corpses, one third was pulverized by his pounding, one third vanished in Buddha Light, and the remainder were infected by the plague, their bodies twisted and howling in agony.

Among these were his own wives and daughters.

But he didn't care at all, his mutated and fallen Divine Soul sweeping the entire city, seeking to find that Demon Cultivator, even if only a corpse remained.

Unfortunately, after searching time and again, he found nothing.

Just when he furrowed his brow in confusion,

Suddenly, he discovered his quarry.

The Demon Cultivator somehow had come to stand atop his head.

And he had been completely unaware of it until that moment.

"Nice moves; you've actually saved me some trouble."

"Now, all I need to do is to flay you alive, and this endeavor will be perfectly complete."

The moment these two sentences reached his ears, Gao Wan's Spirit trembled with fear and panic.

It was at this moment he realized, despite his stupidity, that this mysterious cultivator, possessing both Evil Sect and Secret Demon Means, with Mana and Divine Power far surpassing his own,

Plus the "swordsmanship" that extremely countered him, he had no chance of winning.

Once his own life was in danger, Gao Wan immediately came back to his senses.

Transforming from the brutal and mad City Lord of Gao Ren, into a sniveling creature begging to survive.

He made no further moves, but instead relaxed his hands, astonishingly dropping the terrifyingly powerful Dharma Cakra Vajra Pestle.

Like toppling a Golden Mountain or a jade column, amidst the thunderous noise, his servile voice came through:

"Daoist, hold on!"

"I, Gao Wan, have been reckless, ignorant of your prowess, and foolish enough to think of contending with you."

"I see that you hold the Evil Sect's Magic Sword and practice Secret Demon Sword Skill. Truly, your Divine Power is astounding, and your means are exceptional. I, Gao Wan, admit defeat."

"I come from the Tiannan Gao Family, and though I might not be worth much, I do have numerous powerful ancestors, including a grandfather in Ultimate Happiness Realm and an ancestor in Daoist Transformation Realm, surely qualifying to offer apologies and redemption on my behalf."

"You seem to appreciate beauty, so I offer a hundred great beauties to redeem my life. How about it?"

In this speech, there was both threat and flattery.

And indeed, his background was extraordinary.

But Gao Wan also knew in his heart:

"The Evil Sect and Secret Demon Sect are lawless, heretical sects of Demons. This scourge, belonging to either, is likely not to care about my background. Once he's in the mood, he'll kill me and have done, alas."

While lamenting in his heart, Gao Wan, still maintaining his Mountain Demon form, suddenly raised a pair of giant palms.

On the palms, fifty beauties were presented.

There were ravishing mortal women and stunning female cultivators,

As well as Banana Spirits, Wedding Dress Ghosts, Chicken Spirits, Fox Spirits, Tree Devils... and many other heavyweight Mountain Spirits and Ghosts, one could say they covered all bases.

This scene strangely reminded Tao Qian of his good friend Xiao Hua Daoist whom he hadn't seen in a long time.

If he were here, seeing this scene, he would surely feel joy.

But when Master Tao heard and saw this, he scoffed in his heart:

"If I truly wish to enjoy the Yin Yang Dao, aren't Sister Yunrong and Aunt Bai Yin far better than these?"

No sooner had his snide remark finished when suddenly, a commotion arose within Tao Qian's body.

First was a Record triggered by touching the Mountain Demon's body.

Second was the immensely majestic Human Dao Destiny within him that abruptly provided a hazy directive at this moment.

Record matched with directive, clear and obvious.

"There are treasures!"

Tao Qian had previously thought that the Female Bodhisattva, formed by the incense offerings, had spied all of Gao Wan's secrets during their divine soul interchange.

Clearly, he guessed wrong.

It was still his unique soul that was truly useful.

As the abruptly triggered Record emerged, combined with the surge of Human Dao Destiny, Tao Qian immediately understood something.

Why did the Heavenly Venerate cast him to this place?

It was not small-minded revenge; the real meaning was still to let him reap benefits.

Moreover, it was a benefit that had been lost and was about to be regained.

[Name: Gao Wan.]

[Record Type: Cultivator.]

[Record: This person is a descendant of the Gao Family, and a direct-blood relative of the short-lived Gao dynasty in the history of Longevity Heavenly Dynasty, traceable back to an Alchemist leader of the Daoist Transformation Realm, who cultivated the "Little Reincarnation Body Bodhisattva Secret Dharma," with a brutal temperament, fond of debauchery and murder. Due to an illicit affair with his father's favored concubine, he was despised by his father, but also because he looks and character are similar to his ancestor, possessing Ultimate Happiness Realm cultivation and having been an Emperor named Gao Zhan, not only was he not put to death but was instead exiled, an opportunity that led to a very important task.]

[Note One: Not long ago, the representatives of the Seventy-two provinces spread the news of the Demon City battle and the Ancestor God's Forbidden Technique Fragment turning into scattered exotic treasures, causing a treasure-hunting frenzy. However, divine treasures are elusive, and unless they choose a master willingly, even deploying hundreds of thousands of troops to dig three feet into the ground would not uncover a single one.]

[Note Two: The Alchemist Organization, due to some connections with the Ancestor God Forbidden Technique, thus had an advantage in treasure hunting. The Gao Family's Ancestor deduced that a complete set of Ancestor God Treasures had been split into parts, taken by the surviving members of the Zhu Royal Family as they fled the Imperial City, one of which had entered Tiannan Province... To avoid alerting other powers, and with Gao Wan being exiled, Gao Zhan assigned him the task of capturing the Zhu Royal Family and seizing the treasures.]

[Note Three: Gao Wan was privy to the escape route of the Zhu Royal Family in advance, ambushed and slaughtered them in Gao Ren City. To his surprise, this branch of the Zhu Royal Family was unaware of the circumstances and thought they were merely fleeing disaster, oblivious to the treasures they carried. Gao Wan, having heard of the power of the Ancestor God Treasures, was greedy and did not inform his ancestor immediately. Instead, he privately tortured the Zhu Royal Family day and night, trying to find the treasures.]

[Note Four: With life at stake, Gao Wan dared not delay any longer and was in the process of using the Bloodline Secret Method to contact his ancestor...]

...

As the fourth Record came to light, Gao Wan was still energetically hawking those hundreds of beauties of various shapes and sizes.

At this moment, Tao Qian suddenly spoke out.

"Stop using the Bloodline Secret Method!"

"Wait, how do you know...?"

Hearing this, Gao Wan's mountain demon eyes immediately bulged in shock.

What terrified him even more was that he truly heeded the other's words and stopped casting.

Mouth Containing Heavenly Constitution!

Saying and Following!

How is this possible?

I am a High-level cultivator of the Cavernous Mystery Realm; even if it were a word spirit spell, unless this scourge is a Demon from the Ultimate Happiness Realm, it could not possibly take effect.

Gao Wan was both shocked and terrified, about to roar and question.

But what met him was a voice, cold and commanding.

"Kill!"

In an instant, the vast Gao Ren City finally faced its catastrophe.

First was Tao Qian's Red Dust Sin Sword, which suddenly split from one into two, two into four, four into eight... Hundreds of thousands of Red Dust Swords rained down like a mad storm, relentlessly, one sword after another, carrying out the punishment of lingering death on Gao Wan, along with the remaining demons in the city.

Horrific screams of extreme agony echoed throughout the city.

As time passed, the screams grew weaker and then fell silent.

When Yunrong released the two hundred thousand walking corpses from the Holy Embryo Bag,

as these two hundred thousand people entered through the city gates,

what they saw was a purgatory-like scene:

Mounds of flesh and puddles of blood and brains.

Flesh and blood piled into hills, and blood and brains formed rivers.

At the previously bustling City Lord Mansion, there was now an enormous monster, cut into pieces of fine flesh, heaping over there, with the stench of blood permeating the entire Gao Ren City.

Atop that pile of carcasses stood a young Daoist.

Sword in hand, head bowed.

Seeming like a god of slaughter, and also a scourge.

Any normal person would have their courage shattered upon witnessing this scene, dying of fright as a common occurrence.

But at this moment, the two hundred thousand people who had been numb, began to come to their senses, one by one, the first being a skinny middle-aged man with reddened eyes, staring at the ground covered in chunks and pieces of flesh, feeling not the slightest disgust but instead showing an extremely excited expression, his face flushed, mouth wide open, seemingly wanting to say something but with a hoarse throat, unable to utter a single word.

Finally, as if reverting to his beastly instincts, he suddenly knelt down and without hesitation started kowtowing "bang bang bang" to Tao Qian.

At the same time, his mouth opened wide, he scooped up a piece of flesh, not knowing which demon it belonged to, and stuffed it into his mouth. Then he began to chew and bite frenziedly as if tearing at a sworn enemy.

But in the end, he did not swallow it.

Instead, he spat it out with a "ptui" and then turned to the next piece.

This act seemed to be infectious.

Two hundred thousand people followed suit.

The already quieted Gao Ren City suddenly filled with noise again, resounding with the sounds of chewing flesh.

Just like not long ago!

That night, when the Gao Family massacred tens of thousands of people in Ganyue City, the sound of demons chewing on human flesh also lasted all night long.

The cycle of cause and effect had finally come full circle.

Chapter 429: Nine Provinces' Twelve Treasures, Great Freedom Buddha's Son

Gao Ren City, or rather, the once Ganyue City.

Twenty thousand survivors, like walking corpses, were seeking revenge, venting their anger.

Though they were gnawing, they were not truly swallowing.

Still, to prevent any accidents, Tao Qian had his Demon lieutenants and the likes of Little Age and Shan Jiu carefully watch over them.

In this eerie atmosphere, Tao Qian began to examine a poison sack he held in his hand.

That thing, called the "Hundred Plagues Bag".

It was an organ inside Gao Wan's body, but also a magical treasure, and could even be used for storage.

At this moment, Tao Qian, following the guidance and records, soon pulled out a special object, also a magic artifact, named "Red Corpse Hundred Punishment Umbrella".

The moment he touched it, Tao Qian knew its secrets.

This treasure was a true demon object.

Not to be used in battle, nor for defense.

Its only purpose was for punishment.

Within, it had over a hundred cruel punishments set: skinning, bisecting, quartering, along with the Five Punishments, death by slow slicing, hanging, boiling, castration, foot amputation, needle insertion—all imaginable tortures. Commoners couldn't withstand it for even a moment before confessing everything. Even cultivators, if thrown into the umbrella, their Divine Souls restrained, unable to use their powers, would not last long.

"The remnants of the Zhu Royal Family who had fled here were tortured for seven days and were nearly wiped out, yet still they revealed nothing."

"Even Gao Wan himself knew that these people likely had no idea where the Ancestor God Treasure Fragment was, but he chose to continue the torture."

"There was no other reason; Gao Wan was a brute; mere killing could not satisfy his desire for cruelty, only personally administering torture could relieve him."

With this thought, Tao Qian casually opened the large umbrella with a black background and embroidered with blood flowers.

Along with a flash of blood light, three surviving members of the Zhu Royal Family were flung out.

No surprises, they were all women.

A mother and two daughters, all with good looks and figures.

Despite being covered in scars and fainting amidst the blood mist, they were still quite enticing.

Tao Qian pointed at the forehead of the older, beautiful woman.

At once, a record emerged.

"So it's the consort of one of the Imperial City's Zhu princes, the consort of Gui King, Wanrong, and her two daughters, Zhu Biyin and Zhu Jinchun."

"Before the great change in the Imperial City, the Emperor had summoned all his royal kinsmen to the palace, and the Gui King was one of them."

"After the Zhu Dynasty was surrounded and destroyed by eighteen armies, the royal kinsmen scattered and fled, with this branch of the Gui King choosing Tiannan Province."

"Only to fall victim to the Gao family upon entering this province."

"The entire family of the Gui King was tortured to death by Gao Wan, leaving only the best-looking mother and two daughters."

"How pitiful that the Gui King indeed did not know the whereabouts of the Ancestor God Treasure."

Muttering this, Tao Qian's gaze fell directly onto the mouth corner of the consort of Gui King, Li Wanrong.

There, was a mole.

"Divine treasures conceal themselves!"

"If a treasure does not want to be found, unless compelled by a powerful cultivator with mana, or summoned by secret technique, no amount of effort will secure it."

"Having said that, this treasure has chosen quite a tricky hiding spot."

After saying this, the mole on the corner of Li Wanrong's mouth detached itself.

With a flash of faint light, it transformed into an object that landed in Tao Qian's hands.

This object was cast in bronze.

With a round opening, double handles, a deep belly, and a ringed foot.

The surface was even engraved with ancient runes, proving to be an ancient and simple bronze gui.

In the Ancient Era, it was a container for cooked food, used to hold grains like millet, sorghum, rice, and barley.

The moment the treasure was in his grasp, marvelous scenes unfolded.

Though the gui was empty, Tao Qian could still smell an extremely strong fragrance of grains which whetted his appetite.

It should be noted that Tao Qian was now "Perfect Transcend Mortality," having entirely shed his mortal body and now a Taishang No Leaking, Spirit Treasure Sublime Body, he no longer needed any common food for longevity.

Just this sign told him it was a good treasure.

Indeed, in the next moment, the record that had intrigued Tao Qian burst forth:

[[Record Name: Valley God Gui.]]

[[Record Type: Magical Treasure.]]

[[Record: One of the Fragments of the Ancestor God Forbidden Technique, upon falling into the realm of Tian Chao, it transformed into an Exotic Treasure among the "Nine States' Twelve Treasures." This treasure is part of a complete set of twelve components; when assembled, it has a power not inferior to the Mountain and River Map, and possibly even greater. This is one of the components, the Valley God Gui, containing the wonders of the Five Grains and agriculture. Holding and refining it can save All People from famine.]]

[[Note One: This treasure possesses the ability to hide divinely. Unless it acknowledges its owner, even cultivators of the Ultimate Happiness Realm can only predict its vague location, and even if they arrive in person... due to being recognized by Human Dao Destiny, it can be refined in a moment.]]

[[Note Two: Although this treasure does not possess offensive power, it has many wonderful uses: defense, array formations, alchemy. Yet its true great use is in cultivating the Five Grains foodstuffs, spirit seedlings, and holy seeds. Besides that, any lifeform or dead thing can be thrown into it, refined by the treasure to remove impurities, yielding pure foodstuff.]]

...

Upon reading the second note, Tao Qian pondered for a moment, then immediately started to act.

He who hesitates in taking what heaven offers will reap only regret.

This treasure was meant to be the good fortune that Tao Qian had lost but now regained.

"Having lost the Ancestor Spirit and the Mountain and River Map, but compensated with a Valley God Gui, I suppose I can reluctantly accept it,"

Tao Qian got a bargain yet played coy, muttering this to himself.

Then, immediately, an unforeseen new complication arose that he had never anticipated.

The record hadn't gotten it wrong; this treasure that had driven Gao Wan mad with his inability to find it, Tao Qian was able to refine in the blink of an eye.

But what it didn't mention was that there would be changes during the refining of the treasure.

As the dazzling radiance churned on top of the pile of corpses, Tao Qian instantly refined a new Ancestor God Treasure, and at the same time, a blurry map flashed through his mind.

On the atlas, eleven light spots twinkled, each spot representing one Ancestor God Treasure.

Together, they formed the so-called "Nine States' Twelve Treasures."

When Tao Qian contemplated it, each light spot even transmitted detailed location information and ways to obtain the treasures.

With the Valley God Gui in hand, Tao Qian couldn't help but freeze, blinking his eyes, his pupils brimming with astonishment:

"Well, I'll be!"

"What happened to the divine treasures hiding their essence? Could it be they only conceal themselves from everyone but me?"

"Moreover, this development, why does it feel so much like the treasure-hunting games of my previous life, 'fragment plus one, fragment plus one, and another plus one...' "

Overwhelmed, Tao Qian criticized and did not even spare himself.

At this moment, he also realized that this was probably the profound intention of the Heavenly Venerate.

The gains after transcending the tribulation, are they still not over?

Human Dao destiny, is just one aspect.

What followed was the Ancestor God Treasures.

Such as, this Valley God Gui.

Now aware of the situation, Tao Qian found himself struggling with difficulty.

"I was influenced by the Nine Toad Pearl, my original plan was to immediately return to the Penglai Sea."

"Wandering outside, one encounters tribulations from time to time, not to mention my disciple and I have too many enemies. One careless step could mean the destruction of my life and cultivation, while going back to Ascending Immortal Island and petting cats feels like paradise."

"Yet now, these Ancestor God Treasures that can rival the Mountain and River, the 'Nine States' Twelve Treasures,' are right in front of me, just awaiting a little effort to be easily obtained."

"Wouldn't it be a pity to miss this opportunity?"

"Keep in mind that treasures like the Buddha Bird Relics, Nine Toad Pearl, and Holy Embryo Bag can be called Protecting Dao Treasures, and the Nine States' Twelve Treasures are evidently even stronger."

"What should I do?"

Just as Tao Qian was racked with indecision,

Suddenly, a serene radiance flashed in the air in front of the pile of corpses, and it was Lian Jing'er, with a Treasure Wheel hanging behind his head, who appeared abruptly.

He swung his hand, and the Treasure Wheel behind his head immediately projected a series of scenes.

In the images, it was conspicuously shown that four groups were approaching Gao Ren City from different directions.

And each group was composed entirely of cultivators and demons.

The reason was simple to discern: these people all travelled using Evasion Light, rushing over like arrows of streaming light.

At the same moment, Tao Qian heard Lian Jing'er's mechanical voice explaining,

"From the southeast, northwest, all four directions of Gao Ren City, people are coming."

"Detection of qi energy has been conducted, and comparisons with the Primordial Human Record have been made."

"Conclusions are being drawn..."

Others would find Lian Jing'er's actions at this time rather abnormal.

Could this Mechanical Species really determine the information of these four groups coming this way solely by remote observation?

In fact, it could, even determining the cultivators' realms was not difficult for Lian Jing'er.

This was one of his Innate Divine Abilities.

And the other information was obtained with the help of the "Primordial Human Record," which belonged to the National Salvation Congress, but really was a painstaking collection by the Primordial Sect from within the seventy-two provinces of the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty.

It recorded the renowned figures, whether populous humans or those in the Cultivation World, and was stored within the Secret Realm of All People.

In short, the Primordial Sect's database.

Back in Demon City, Tao Qian got on good terms with the National Salvation Congress and even cooperated closely, eventually allowing Lian Jing'er to represent him in the database search.

However, what even the National Salvation Congress didn't know was how formidable Lian Jing'er's talent for carrying information was; not only the record was completely noted by him.

Of course, those worthy of the Primordial Sect's attention could never be ordinary people.

Even someone like "Gao Wan" was not listed in the records.

Tao Qian had not originally thought that these four sudden visitors had the credentials, until the next moment, Lian Jing'er's mechanical voice again spoke:

"There are fifteen people heading towards the East City Gate, all cultivators, mostly at the Foundation Establishment Realm, with one at the front at the Perfect Transcend Mortality Realm. Through comparison, this person's identity has been confirmed,"

"Yang Tingjian, one of the Great Freedom Temple's Buddha's sons, has entered the world.

"Rumors say that although he is a Buddha's son, he had the ambition to enter the court and save the country. After stepping into the world, he has visited more than a dozen provinces and was ultimately thoroughly disappointed with the court. He once denounced the then governor of the Ancient Yu Province, Huang Gongzhao, during a Daoist and Buddhist convention, claiming he would find a Bright Lord to assist and must overturn the Zhu Dynasty to establish a new one."

"Upon uttering such treacherous and heretical words, Huang Gongzhao did not pursue his rebellious intentions. Instead, he instructed those present not to disclose the information, saying that since Yang Tingjian had great ambition, he should be allowed to demonstrate it."

"After several years of scrutiny, indeed, he chose a small warlord from the Ancient Yu Province, Si Xixin, to support, allegedly from the extremely ancient Si Family that dates back a thousand years."

"A Hidden Cultivator from the Primordial Sect evaluated him, saying he had grand talent and breadth of vision, destined for greatness."

"As of the Demon City incident, Si Xixin's influence still accounted for less than one-tenth of Ancient Yu Province, with under his command, only tens of thousands of valiant soldiers."

Chapter 430 Talents from All Sides Gather in Gao City, Demon Flesh as Provisions

Halfway through listening, Tao Qian formed a general impression of Yang Tingjian and Si Xixin.

Without a doubt, both came from significant backgrounds.

Especially the latter, he was almost certain that the rumors about Si being from the Si Family must be true.

The era of great strife!

Even the Primordial Sect had chosen to make a comeback in this era, and all factions in the Cultivation World wanted to get involved. How could ancient families like the Xiu Family and the Si Family miss such an opportunity?

Since Yang Tingjian was the Great Freedom Buddha's Son, it certainly wouldn't be an arbitrary choice to select someone to assist him.

Without any surprises, the junior warlord known as "Si Xixin" must be one of the so-called Hidden Dragons, and her development potential was much greater than that of Song Tiecheng, the major warlord currently occupying Ancient Yu Province.

But he wondered if there was also a Saint Heir from the Alchemist Organization by her side?

Just as this thought flashed through Tao Qian's mind, the mechanical voice of Lian Jing'er suddenly confirmed it.

"Though Si Xixin's forces only number tens of thousands of soldiers, her established 'Xixin Mansion' not only gathers notable figures like Yang Tingjian, the Great Freedom Buddha's Son, but also Liang Yifu, the son of the Sect Master of the Heterodox Wealth God Sect, Xu Miaoniang, Elder from the Ten Thousand Flower Sect, Qu Beihai, a True Disciple of the Fungus Sect, and Gu Wutian, a True Disciple of the Heavenly Mechanism Building."

"Xixin Mansion may not be well-known, but it has already entered the surveillance range of many Great Sects."

"The Primordial Human Record contains an assessment of those with the potential of Hidden Dragons to rise and possess great fortune, and Si Xixin has been listed among the top contenders; we've sent comrades from the National Salvation Congress, like Lin Qiushui, to connect with her and discuss potential cooperation."

Hearing this, Tao Qian immediately raised his eyebrows.

His assessment of Si Xixin rose once again.

Good grief!

A Hidden Dragon?

This was clearly a True Dragon already favored by many Great Sects who had united and placed their bets in advance.

However, be it a True Dragon or a Hidden Dragon,

why would such a prominent figure suddenly send a major general to this Gao Ren City? It couldn't possibly be a coincidence, could it?

"Is it also for the Valley God Gui?"

No sooner had Tao Qian entertained this doubt than the projected images from Lian Jing'er's Treasure Wheel showed that the four groups of people seemed to have noticed the presence of the other three parties and quickly started to accelerate.

In no more than a couple of breaths, they were all about to converge at Gao Ren City.

Lian Jing'er simply stopped reporting each detail and instead transmitted all the results directly into Tao Qian's mind.

"From the direction of West City, a total of dozens of people are coming, all Cultivators, with each person riding unique beasts with special bloodlines such as Mixed Dragon Beasts, Winged Snakes, Devil Horses, and Cloud Dogs."

"The leader has reached the Perfect Transcend Mortality; among his subordinates, there are two more Transcend Mortals, and the rest are all Foundation Establishment. After identification, the leader's identity has been confirmed."

"Li Fulian, this person is one of the True Disciples of the largest Heterodox Sect in the Eastern Four Provinces, the Star Leader Sect. Apart from the Sect's Divine Skills, this person has also had a fortunate

incident, being taken as a registered disciple by an Elder of the Sword Dao Major Sect, Shaoqing Sect, and was taught profound swordsmanship. Thus, although he has only reached the realm of Perfect Transcend Mortality, he can fight above his level against Cavernous Mystery Cultivators, and even defeat them."

"Li Fulian is known for his chivalry. Owing to an incident, he accidentally became well-acquainted with Zhang Mazi, the largest warlord in Fengtian Province, was persuaded by him, and agreed to assist Zhang Mazi in the Mortal World for sixty years."

"Shaoqing Sect Elder Song Qingshan holds Li Fulian in high regard, believing that he is more suited to Sword Dao. If he can switch to Shaoqing before entering Cavernous Mystery Realm, he may eventually advance to Ultimate Happiness Realm, and even has a faint hope for Daoist Transformation."

"The Primordial Human Record records that Zhang Mazi is also regarded as one of the Hidden Dragons among the top rank, under his command are several Great Sect disciples, and he has already gained support from the largest force within Fengtian, Youliao, Wujiang, and Changbai Four Provinces, the Five Immortal Demon Clan. The various Major Sects believe that, sooner or later, he will defeat opponents like Ma Xiaoning, Guo Zhanlong, and take the lead to rule the Eastern Four Provinces."

"As of the Demon City incident, Zhang Mazi has begun preparations to send troops to Youliao to conquer Ma Xiaoning first."

"The National Salvation Congress believes Zhang Mazi is thick-skinned and cold-hearted, highly cunning, can be cooperated with on the surface, but should not be entrusted with significant matters. Comrade Zhao Sanyan has already been sent to negotiate cooperation with him."

...

"From the direction of North City, a total of seven female cultivators are coming."

"The leader is of Cavernous Mystery Realm, followed by two Transcend Mortals, and four Foundation Establishment. After identification, the leader's identity has been confirmed."

"Xie Lingzhu, this person is from the thousand-year-old Xie Family and is also a lay disciple of Guanyin Temple. She practices both her family's Great Book and the Buddhist Law of Guanyin Temple; she is a strong contender even among Cavernous Mystery Cultivators."

"Xie Lingzhu and her sister Xie Lingji are born of the same mother, both daughters of the Xie Family Master. However, since their early years, her sister Xie Lingji's brilliance has far outshone hers. Later, a significant incident erupted: the leading female fairy of the Spirit Treasure Sect, Yunhua Immortal, came knocking on the door, forcibly taking her sister Xie Lingji away from the Xie Family. This event was considered a humiliation by the Xie Family."

"Because of this incident, Xie Lingzhu left and joined Guanyin Temple."

...

"Hmm?"

Unexpectedly, a piece of information flowed through that caused Tao Qian's expression to change.

He could not have imagined encountering the sister of Senior Sister Lingji here.

The secret incident that occurred when his Master took on Lingji as a disciple was also told to Tao Qian, only without mentioning that the Xie Family considered it a humiliation.

Now revisiting the event, Tao Qian couldn't help but murmur in his heart:

"Aunt Yunhua was indeed too heavy-handed back then; no wonder the Xie Family bore a grudge."

"Had it not been for the later incident, with Senior Sister Lingji mediating between the two sides, relations might still have been mended."

"But who would have thought that Senior Sister Lingji would run into trouble, thus this matter has probably turned into a bitter feud."

"Alas, I have to keep my identity as the Spirit Treasure True Inheritor hidden later. If Ling Zhu Daoist sees through it, she might just attack me."