

Longevity 491

Chapter 491: Duobao's Poisonous Plan, Diverting Trouble Eastwards_2

But the initiative was all in Duobao's hands; it wasn't up to Tao Qian to decide.

Master and disciple sometimes did not see eye to eye, and Duobao never knew to hold back; he would unilaterally silence his beloved disciple and give him a lecture.

It was unclear if the message was too shocking or if Duobao was just busy at the time.

Usually, when Tao Qian sent a message, it didn't take long to get a response.

This time, Tao Qian had waited a full 15 minutes, just as the mana he had used up during the day had been restored.

From within the token, Duobao's voice came through, tinged with some complexity:

"My good disciple, after the Yang Sui incident, I knew your troublemaking ability was extraordinary, but I still underestimated it."

"Did you really think you could provoke the 'Outer Realm Yellow Robe'?"

"You're lucky you were clever enough not to recklessly invite Xuu Xun, or your Aunt Bai Yin or Aunt Yunhua to help you; otherwise, because of you, a great war could have erupted between our Spirit Treasure Sect and those of the Yellow Robe lineage."

"Though we are not afraid and might not necessarily lose, right now, your master, the old Sect Master, a host of second-generation ancestors, even the Heavenly Venerate himself, everyone is busy. Who has time to join a great battle? Don't let Master Yuan trap you; he died early and even when alive, he was just some eccentric homebody, unaware of how terrifying the Yellow Robe lineage can be."

"You should stop staying at that damned Ancestor Dragon Society. Come back to the sect; if not, the peaches on your Ascending Immortal Island will soon be gone."

"I heard that Aunt Pan Si loves to eat and she even moved her Pan Si Dojo next to your house. When you come back, make sure you don't walk into the wrong cave."

At this point, Duobao True Monarch paused.

Then, somewhat reluctantly, he gave Tao Qian a piece of advice:

"I know you have a kind heart and can't bear to see New Moon Province fall into the hands of demons."

"Solving this issue is simple, if you had known earlier, you could have taken out this 'Evil God's Offspring' called 'Ying Qingdi' with a single sword strike."

"It's a bit late now, but still not difficult. You don't need to bother with the Secret of the Toad Sect. Just go directly to the National Salvation Congress, reveal your identity as the Spirit Treasure True Inheritor, invite those unorthodox old folks from the Primordial Sect to New Moon. With your human Dao destiny, they will definitely fall for it. Then you can slip away."

"Let the Primordial Sect and the Yellow Robe lineage fight among themselves. Unlike us in Spirit Treasure, the Primordial Sect, now large and influential, can't easily start a great war. Those old monsters have been preparing for years, and Heavenly Venerate Yuanshi Tianzun can't sit still. Even if not only the Yellow Robe but also a few more Evil Gods joined in, the Primordial Sect wouldn't be afraid."

"Perhaps even that Descendant will end up being enlightened by the Primordial Sect."

Tao Qian knew that whenever Duobao True Monarch gave lengthy lectures, it also meant that the situation was grim.

Especially this time, his benevolent master had even remotely suggested a strategy.

It's just typical of Duobao, casually uttering a word, and resolving Tao Qian's worries.

Not only him, upon hearing this, the Master Yuan sculpture in his arms trembled, and red mist wafted out.

Master Yuan appeared and immediately blasted angrily at the Golden Radiance Token:

"Ptui! Shameless Duobao, talking bad about people behind their backs and looking down on me."

"Earlier I heard that the Primordial Sect and Spirit Treasure Sect seem amiable on the surface but are not at heart. Now it seems it's true."

"The next generation Sect Master of the esteemed Spirit Treasure Sect is actually encouraging his own disciple to sabotage people from the Primordial Sect, haha. If those old monsters from the Primordial Sect knew, they would probably all rush into Penglai Sea to drag you out of Golden Radiance Island and take you to Lingbao Heavenly Venerate for a judgment."

As expected from two old rivals, skilled in provoking each other after many years of squabbling.

After speaking, Master Yuan didn't wait for Duobao's response but turned to Tao Qian and said:

"Although Duobao is shameless, he has always been adept at scheming."

"His method of diverting disaster elsewhere undoubtedly works wonders."

"You might as well try it to avoid truly harming your fellow disciples from Spirit Treasure."

Seeing Master Yuan speaking up for him, Duobao, unusually, didn't retort.

At this point, Tao Qian should have followed the plan.

But inexplicably at that moment, Tao Qian felt an impulse and the mana inside him began to circulate the "Scripture of Salvation."

A moment of enlightenment related to his cultivation emerged.

He didn't conceal it and spoke to both Duobao and Master Yuan:

"I came to New Moon Province, presumably by the will of Heavenly Venerate."

"Just now a premonition arose in me; this place, and this person Ying Qingdi, are both my calamity and my blessing."

"Here, I shall step into Cavernous Mystery and may even find the opportunity for my Daoist Transformation."

"In the future if I wish to ascend to the Daoist Transformation Realm, I cannot leave this place, nor can I use this cunning method of diverting disaster."

After these words were spoken, Master Yuan and Duobao fell silent together.

After a while, Duobao's voice finally came from within the Golden Radiance Token again:

"I almost forgot, you've been transmitted the 'Scripture of Salvation'."

"If it's a directive given by Heavenly Venerate, then it must be correct."

"You just wait, I'll perform a calculation for you before I teach you."

"Truly, it's tough being your master, kid. Last time in Demon City, I went wielding a sword to help you chop down an old demon of the Evil Sect, then did calculations for alchemists on your behalf, and now I still have to predict the movements of the Outer Realm Evil Gods... Had I known it would be this exhausting, I should have handed you over to Junior Sister Yunhua; she's the one born to worry."

As his voice faded, the Golden Radiance Token became still, clearly indicating Duobao True Monarch had turned to perform a calculation of the Heavenly Mechanism for Tao Qian.

Master Yuan seriously looked Tao Qian over, burst into red mist, and returned to the statue.

About 15 minutes later, the Golden Radiance Token suddenly trembled.

A voice, much more tired yet more surprised, emanated from the token:

"This time's prediction holds both good and bad fortunes."

"The good lies in the fact that the Outer Realm Yellow Robe cannot invade the current world anytime soon, nor can it project its avatars. At most, it can use its malignant power to fulfill the wishes of its descendants."

"The bad part I cannot share with you; it's a matter of great peril. If I were to tell you, I fear it might claim your life."

"My good disciple, you must seek blessings for yourself."

"You practice the 'Scripture of Salvation,' meant to save others as well as yourself."

After the last sentence, the Golden Radiance Token went quiet.

Clearly, Tao Qian's makeshift master was ready to wash his hands of it.

Just as he thought this, suddenly, a truly final sentence rang out from the token:

"An unexpected gain from the calculation!"

"In ten breaths, someone will come to assassinate you."

"They are mere chickens and dogs, not worth mentioning."

This abrupt tip caused Tao Qian to immediately become alert.

Duobao mentioning they're not worth it but still mentioning it implied that the assassin must carry some significance.

Knowing that in a few breaths, someone would come to kill him, Tao Qian intended to immediately seek a secluded territory, convenient for the assassin and himself.

It would prevent the impact on the Secret Realm's flag officers and food delivery officers during a potential grand battle.

However, such actions would unavoidably leave traces, and since his palace was already quite remote, he was prepared, and a mind catching another off guard could handle it, even if the opponent were a cultivator at the Perfection of Cavernous Mystery. If he seized the opportunity, a swift conclusion could be possible.

"This new disguise of mine, brand new, has had no time to arouse enmity."

"Those coming to assassinate me must be from the Seven Evil Sects, as Lin Bujue and others had warned."

"Indeed, they say the position of a grain officer is dangerous, and true it is."

With these thoughts in his mind, Tao Qian did not hesitate to take out the Nine Toad Bead and the Toad God Tile.

While he considered himself the Spirit Treasure True Inheritor, his methods of combat were more intricate.

But wearing this Toad Sect disguise, everything was simple and crude.

Use the Toad Bead to protect the body!

Use the Tile to smash foes!

Unless the assassin was from the Ultimate Happiness Realm,

they would surely faint upon encountering him.

Sending an Ultimate Happiness Realm cultivator to assassinate a grain officer?

Haha, not even the Spirit Treasure Sect would be so extravagant, let alone the Seven Evil Sects, a local evil path of the New Moon Province?

...

Ten breaths passed in a flash.

Just at the tenth breath, a sudden throb transmitted through Tao Qian's mind.

But the Dutian Divine Thunder Flag concealed in his arms showed no signs of activity.

Apparently, the Seven Evil Sects assassin also had some tricks up their sleeves, managing to silently elude the Great Prohibition of the Secret Realm.

To facilitate their actions, Tao Qian simply summoned a Substitute Demon, transformed it into his likeness, and let the Demon pose as if deeply "Concentrating and meditating" in strenuous cultivation.

His true self, however, hid nearby.

His eyes developed double pupils as he activated his spiritual vision.

Following the heartbeat sensation, he looked toward the origin, curious to see what sort of chickens and dogs the Seven Evil Sects would send to assassinate him.

Chapter 492 - Seeing Qin Wuxiang Again, Fortunes Change

After his Cultivation Tribulation, Tao Qian had acquired many Divine Abilities.

Double pupils were one of them.

Not only could he activate High Spirit Vision at will, but it was also comparable to having x-ray vision or Thousand-Mile Eye, ordinary mundane objects couldn't obstruct Tao Qian's sight at all.

From this, one could see the huge gap between the inheritors of a Great Sect and a Loose Cultivator. It's known that many people in the Cultivation World practice "Pupil Skill" Divine Skills, but few succeed in mastering them. Not to mention a gift like High Spirit Vision, even reaching the level of Thousand-Mile Eye usually takes decades for most people.

For Tao Qian, it was just a small perk from his Cultivation Tribulation.

At this moment, his gaze pierced through the doors, over the palace corridors, and quickly spotted two figures silently breaking through the "Dutian Divine Thunder and Fierce Fire Ban" and heading directly towards the palace area.

He wondered what treasures the two of them were using.

Their figures were hidden and their aura was completely absent, no wonder no one had detected them.

A pity, they encountered Tao Qian, who was like a cheat character.

With High Spirit Vision coupled with the Extraordinary Power of double pupils, he could directly see the true forms of the two individuals.

The person in the lead, though hiding his body, was quite flashy, adorned in bright, colorful silks and satins, with a Pearl hairpin on his head, a slender figure, and pale skin. Even though it was clear that he was a male cultivator, his attire seemed very harmonious. Moreover, his cold and slightly harsh face also had its charm.

Although Tao Qian joined the Ancestor Dragon Society later, he had become an absolute core member and could naturally read the society's precious intelligence.

Since the Seven Evil Sects were mortal enemies, the ruthless characters within their ranks were naturally recorded by the Ancestor Dragon Society, and a cultivator at his level could remember all such information after just one glance.

Thus, at this moment, Tao Qian instantly found the corresponding person in his mind,

"Son of the Supreme Elder of the Seven Evil Sects, the current True Inheritor, Zhou Yingchun, who calls himself 'Master Baihua', is known for having mastered a Divine Ability called 'Baihua Evil God Gang' and has quite a reputation outside."

Perhaps Master Baihua was too dazzling which caused Tao Qian not to realize something was amiss at first.

That was until his gaze landed on the second person.

Double pupils immediately shrank.

The man was clad in white as snow, with a handsome face and a cool demeanor, resembling an earthly Banished Immortal who was untouched by the slightest dust.

Anyone seeing him would not be able to help but praise.

But when Tao Qian saw him, a mix of shock, disbelief, and other complex expressions quickly surfaced.

Even his mouth couldn't help but silently exclaim in astonishment,

"Qin Wuxiang!"

Tao Qian could never have imagined.

That in New Moon Province, in the territory of Hidden Dragon Mountain, he would continuously encounter acquaintances.

He had seen Yin Susu before and had taken their private feud public, striking rather hard with a Wa Dang.

And now, he had unexpectedly come across another old nemesis.

Back in Southern Yue, he had given Tao Qian a hard time, an almost insurmountable opponent, Alchemist Saint Child, Qin Wuxiang.

"What is this?"

"A Southern Yue old enemies' gathering?"

"If this keeps up, could it be that I might also see Master Xiao? Or the Palace Master of the Daughter Palace?"

Just as Tao Qian had this thought, he suddenly remembered something.

Clearly, the 'chickens and dogs' that Duobao said would come to assassinate Tao Qian were none other than Qin Wuxiang and Zhou Yingchun.

"It fits the saying, 'Enemies often cross each other's path'. That Alchemist is the backing of the Seven Evil Sects, and Qin Wuxiang shows up as the Saint Heir."

"Surprising, yet reasonable."

"But this fellow's situation seems more and more pitiful now. Back then, he was a strong figure who stirred up strife and caused a great calamity in the way of the people of Southern Yue. Now, he has become a running errand assassin."

"The Seven Evil Sects also seem to value me, sending two Cavernous Mystery strong persons to assassinate me, and carrying significant treasures as well. It seems they won't rest until I'm dead."

When Tao Qian's thoughts settled,

Zhou Yingchun and Qin Wuxiang had already successfully reached the palace area. During the process, the terrifying and powerful "Dutian Divine Thunder and Fierce Fire Ban" had no reaction—neither Divine Thunder striking down nor Fierce Fire burning them.

Master Baihua patted his chest and took out a dull Treasure Bead from his bosom, sending a voice transmission to Qin Wuxiang,

"Brother Wuxiang, this 'Concealing God Treasure Pearl' you gave is truly extraordinary, capable of avoiding such a terrible Great Prohibition."

"I've heard that this place is protected by the Dutian Divine Thunder and Fierce Fire Ban, whose might is terrifying. If we really triggered that Array, even if we are not killed, we would have to lose a layer of our skin."

Zhou Yingchun, true to his appearance, even had a coquettish voice.

Yet, it wasn't off-putting for some reason.

Qin Wuxiang wanted to be angry, but still couldn't bring himself to yell out loud and silently thought, "The Evil Sect's Secret Technique does have some tricks."

Even though he couldn't get angry, Qin Wuxiang could ignore the involuntary eerie Flower Slaughter Charm emitted by Zhou Yingchun, and he replied indifferently,

"Master Baihua, don't dawdle."

"Though the Treasure Bead can conceal our aura, as soon as we take action, it will immediately lose its effect."

"We only have one chance; you start with the 'Baihua Enchanting Evil Formation' to plunge everyone here into a daze."

"'Lin Runiu' is a tough Secret of the Toad Sect and will not be fooled. At that time, you and I will strike together, and we must kill this person here."

"The rumor is that the person is of Cavernous Mystery Realm with unparalleled combat power, able to fight one against four and has successively defeated Yin Susu, Xu Wenkai, and other four Cavernous Mystery strong people... What the Ancestor Dragon Society says might not all be true, there might be some exaggeration."

"Even so, he will not be easy to kill."

"If we don't succeed with the first strike, don't get entangled, destroy the local supplies and just flee... without these military supplies, the Ancestor Dragon Society's campaign will immediately slow down, and in a few days, they won't be able to stir any trouble."

"Also, I heard that this person possesses three treasures: one is the Nine Toad Bead, the second is a strange Wa Dang, and the third is the Valley God Gui."

Chapter 493 - Meeting Qin Wuxiang Again, The Wheel of Fortune Turns_2

"If we succeed in killing him, according to the previous agreement, I will take the Wa Dang and the Valley God Gui,"

After Qin Wuxiang finished speaking, Zhou Yingchun immediately pinched up his orchid fingers.

A pair of phoenix eyes glanced over and rolled his, and she retorted sweetly,

"Brother Wuxiang really doesn't understand romance. It's rare for us to come out, yet you speak to me of these mundane matters."

"I, Zhou Yingchun, do not care for treasures; if it weren't for the Sect's agreement, I would've given you the Nine Toad Bead as well."

...

Tao Qian used a secret technique to quietly eavesdrop on their conversation.

The reaction of Master Baihua, Zhou Yingchun, was not unexpected.

But Qin Wuxiang, however, made Tao Qian revise his past perceptions.

Back when they had dealings in the Southern Yue, he wasn't like this at all.

At that time, he assisted Ji Xianxian, always sparing with words, haughty like a solitary immortal in the moon.

Now, he seemed like this petty merchant, very cautious.

His appearance hadn't changed, but his tone had aged a lot.

Seeing this, Tao Qian was quite surprised, but he couldn't help but burst into laughter from deep within,

"Could this fellow have changed his temper after being brutally beaten by the cruel encounters in Southern Yue?"

"Perhaps because he failed to support Hidden Dragon into power, his position within the alchemists plummeted, after being demoted, he barely managed to snag a decent job and, fearing mistakes, he is now meticulous and overly cautious."

Tao Qian, of course, didn't know that his guess was spot on.

Being one of the Saint Heirs, Qin Wuxiang had a high status among the alchemists.

Who would've thought, despite having taken so many resources, even borrowing the Great Lifebook Scripture such as the Emperor's Shocking Book, he still failed to elevate Ji Xianxian and seize the crucial province of Southern Yue.

After that failure, Qin Wuxiang was sidelined.

Now, on his second good posting, he himself couldn't afford another failure.

Tao Qian, from his hidden spot, listened to their plan and knew temporarily there wouldn't be any casualties, so he continued to remain concealed.

"Let these two make their moves first, and wait until they get closer."

"When the time is right, I'll take down the Wa Dang."

Just as he had resolved this, over there Zhou Yingchun and Qin Wuxiang had already started.

It was the delicate Master Baihua first. She abruptly shed her magic robe, embroidered with at least a hundred types of exotic and vibrant strange flowers and herbs, and then tossed it toward the palace where the flag officers and food delivery officers were resting.

"Qi!"

As Zhou Yingchun shouted lowly,

The magic robe suddenly swelled up, quickly enveloping the entire palace.

The many strange flowers on it immediately turned from embroidered images to real ones.

Extremely intense, and with a nigh irresistible foul fragrance, filled the area instantly.

At that moment, whether cultivating or engaged in other activities, everyone in the vicinity, upon smelling the fragrance, quivered violently, their faces turning a flush red, eyes becoming empty, falling into a state of dazed helplessness, subsequently losing all sensation, not to mention the ability to use any Forbidden Techniques against their adversaries.

Only two were spared from this calamity.

First was naturally Tao Qian; as he smelled the fragrance, a record in his mind burst forth: [Experiencing the invasion of Baihua Evil God Gang's Secret Technique... exemption granted!]

The second was Wei Ziyuan, this Yellow Robed Seductive Spirit, but for some reason, she also pretended to be affected, neither raising an alarm nor coming to aid Tao Qian.

At this moment, Zhou Yingchun and Qin Wuxiang made a fierce move against Tao Qian.

The now robe-less Master Baihua, not only unharmed in combat prowess, seemed as if freed, her face instantly reddening, the skin exposed on her body densely covered with intricate patterns, each representing a type of flower possessing extraordinary power. As each bloomed, the territory was rendered anew.

The atmosphere transformed, a surge of evil energy rolling.

Billions of vibrant flowers, on the surface of Corpse Mountain, above the Sea of Blood, on glazed tiles, and sticky soil, materialized from the ether and blossomed forth.

Within less than two breaths, this dark, foul-smelling secret realm transformed, in the blink of an eye, into a realm resembling that of Immortal Fairy Bai Hua's Daoist Field.

If any of the Mortal Human Race were here, or a low-level cultivator, they might think they had mistakenly entered the cultivation field of the Immortals.

Only Tao Qian in the shadows, with one glance, a surge of rage and killing intent welled up within him.

These flowers, indeed were flowers.

But what nourished their bloom was not soil, nor mana, but resentful souls.

Countless, innumerable resentful souls.

Tao Qian was momentarily unable to count how many people had been tormented and killed by this person to master such an Evil Technique.

Further counting was unnecessary once the Baihua Evil God Gang was released.

The palace he was in was crushed instantly, a sea of ghastly evil flowers rolling toward him, each flower opening into a gaping maw, wriggling what seemed like tentacular roots, with over a hundred thousand resentful souls extending their hands trying to drag him, screaming to devour him.

This beautiful yet eerie scene immediately captured Tao Qian's attention,

Especially within the sea of flowers, Zhou Yingchun voluntarily revealed her true form, holding a Baihua Evil Immortal Sword in hand, smiling coyly as she approached Tao Qian.

As they made eye contact, this true inheritor of the Seven Evil Sects spoke,

"I am Master Baihua, Zhou Yingchun."

"I have long heard that Mr. Lin Daoist is a secret of the Toad Sect, and now serves as the Ancestor Dragon Society's grain officer aiming to challenge my Seven Evil Sect."

"I have come here specifically to seek your advice!"

"If you defeat me, I, Zhou, will immediately defect from the Seven Evil Sects and join your Ancestor Dragon Society to undertake a great endeavor together."

Zhou Yingchun's words, naturally, were to be taken by fools only,

But it must be said, they were enough to draw attention,

Especially with this oppressive air she held, as though ready to strike fatally. Any normal cultivator would instinctively retaliate and fight Zhou Yingchun.

Who could have expected?

The real deadly move was hidden behind Qin Wuxiang.

Chapter 494 - Seeing Qin Wuxiang Again, The Wheel of Fortune Turns_3

The person clutching the "Concealing God Treasure Pearl" circled around to Tao Qian's back, silent and without utterance, pointing a finger straight at Tao Qian's occiput.

That finger, white as jade.

Yet it surprisingly revealed not a hint of radiant light nor did it betray any killing intent.

But Tao Qian saw it clearly, this was unequivocally a formidable Divine Skill that directly assaulted the soul.

"If I were to be touched by this scoundrel at the back of my head, even with the Nine Toad Bead protecting me, I fear I would still be injured."

"This scoundrel, indeed still so insidious."

With this thought, Tao Qian also rose and circled behind, appearing behind Qin Wuxiang.

Holding the Toad God Tile, he showed not the slightest courtesy, smashing it toward the back of his head.

The two men, one in front and the other behind, launched their attacks almost simultaneously.

"Die!"

Qin Wuxiang's finger solidly connected, and he was about to reveal a pleased expression.

But at the next moment, the scene that unfolded caused both his and Zhou Yingchun's expressions to drastically change.

The figure known as "Lin Runiu," from the Secret of the Toad Sect, when touched by his killing move, simply went "pop" like a bubble shadow, dissipating into nothingness.

"Not good!"

"We've been tricked."

Both their souls trembled as they cried out in unison, immediately attempting to flee.

Alas, it was already too late.

Qin Wuxiang was the first to suffer, he aimed for the back of others' heads, and someone struck his as well.

"There!"

Accompanied by that sound was the crisp noise of a fractured skull.

Though Master Tao was not readily willing to admit it, he indeed was rather petty, his little black book filled with numerous enemies, with the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva of Southern Yue topping the list, followed by Qin Wuxiang.

Bearing grudges in his heart, his moves were naturally ruthless.

After the muffled sound, Qin Wuxiang's figure, clad in garments whiter than snow, immediately appeared, and then his eyes rolled back as he promptly fainted away in pain.

Upon seeing this, Zhou Yingchun showed no intention of rescuing his "Brother Wuxiang."

Her face paled, and as she formed a seal with her fingers, she merely exclaimed, "Explode!"

Before Tao Qian's eyes, a sea of flowers erupted, and the tens of thousands of resentful souls began to self-detonate. Amid the dance of flowers, the dense resentment transformed into a terrifyingly lethal Divine Gang... Had Tao Qian not used casting to prevent it, his Spirit Treasure Sublime Body would be unharmed, but all the Flag Officers and Food Delivery Officers here would have been utterly annihilated.

Zhou Yingchun made this ruthless move, yet she did not dare spew any contemptuous words lest she delay her chance to escape.

Her face twisted with pain, she turned to flee.

Sadly for her, Tao Qian's actions were just a fraction faster.

In the instant he knocked Qin Wuxiang unconscious, not only did the "Toad God Tile" leave his hand in a flash, but he also threw out the Nine Toad Bead.

The Toad Pearl shot swiftly, and just as Zhou Yingchun turned to flee from her self-detonating Divine Gang, it struck her in the back.

As a True Inheritor of the Seven Evil Sects, she had no shortage of protective treasures, but none could withstand the Nine Toad Bead—an exceptional treasure colliding with her.

Stumbling, she suffered heavy injuries and spewed out a mouthful of blood.

Before she could struggle, real danger surged forth.

The Toad God Tile, ever eager to hit someone when given the chance, followed closely behind the Toad Pearl, cunningly falling right onto the skull of the Master Baihua.

With a "bang," her skull also shattered into pieces, and she too fainted away in agony.

At the same time!

Tao Qian had just summoned the [Dutian Divine Thunder and Fierce Fire Ban], bringing down many Divine Thunder and Fierce Fire, which incinerated those tens of thousands of Flower Slaughter resentful souls entirely clean, elevating their existence beyond.

An assault that should have been a rapid battle with a quick resolution!

The process was indeed swift, yet the outcome had suddenly reversed.

The Seven Evil Sects had originally thought that by sending a True Disciple from the Cavernous Mystery Realm, coupled with an Alchemist who was a Saint Heir, to assassinate a Cavernous Mystery Realm grain officer, it would be an easy catch.

Unfortunately, not only did their two people fail to kill their target, but they also ended up as captives themselves.

Tao Qian looked down at Qin Wuxiang lying on the ground, recalling the scene at Meiling where his life nearly fell into the latter's hands, and couldn't help but remark sentimentally,

"Back then, you were unattainable, your arrogance akin to an exiled Immortal, but who would have thought that fortunes could turn like this, and now your life is in my hands."

Chapter 495 - The Fall of the Second Pearl, the Scheme for Eternal Life

Master Baihua Zhou Yingchun, Alchemist Saint Child Qin Wuxiang.

Both of them, wherever they were, could be considered top-tier cultivators, excellent in both their cultivation realms and Divine Power.

One would think that these two teaming up to assassinate a Grain and Grass Officer, especially through a sudden ambush, would undoubtedly succeed.

Unfortunately, they chose the wrong target.

This Grain and Grass Officer, was actually a monster disguised in horse armor.

With double pupils spiritual vision revealing their actions first, possessing the unparalleled protective Nine Toad Bead, able to use the techniques of the Secret Demon Sect, and finally resorting to a stealth attack with the Toad God Tile, how could there be any chance of survival for them?

In an encounter, they both fell to the ground.

Zhou Yingchun was struck down, and the grand disturbance he caused naturally vanished instantly.

As the Flag Officers inside the palace awakened, just as they were about to cry out in alarm, Lin Shangguan's voice came through,

"No need to panic; the Seven Evil Sects sent a True Inheritor called 'Master Baihua' to assassinate me, but I have captured him."

"I will interrogate him first before sending him to Hidden Dragon Mountain."

"You all just activate the Forbidden Technique and guard the quarters."

"Yes!"

The Flag Officers obeyed the order, responding one after another.

They woke up from the daze, still smelling the foul stench of Baihua evil spirits in their noses, some even showing symptoms of resentful soul invasion like pale faces, finger marks on their skin, and unstable Divine Souls.

Having heard the situation, they all murmured, cursing, "The brats from the Seven Evils indeed dare the heavens, suffering retribution now. Without knowing Lin Shangguan's techniques, how foolish of them to think they could kill with such a weak attempt," and praised Lin Runiu to the skies.

Tao Qian didn't pay much attention to them, arranging things afterward.

He waved his hand, restoring the protective Forbidden Technique, intending to do something else when,

suddenly, ripples next to him distorted the air, and the female ghost dressed in a gorgeous robe with a golden ring suspended behind her head squeezed out.

Her name was "A Cuo," although a ghost, she had a noble status, being one of the children born from the Nine Sons Ghost Mother.

Free to move between the tangible and intangible,

Tao Qian could neither stop her nor kill her.

Since she had come, clearly, there was going to be a gathering.

A Cuo was innocently carefree, curious about worldly things, somewhat similar in temperament to Tao Qian's disciple, the Crystal Demon Zhong Doudou.

Once she revealed herself, she instinctively tried to drag Tao Qian's Divine Soul towards the inner world of the Nine Sons Ghost Mother.

But she quickly realized she couldn't move him and was about to urge him on,

when she saw Tao Qian waving his hand to produce some food beloved by ghosts, asking her to wait a while.

"Although the gathering is urgent, there's something more pressing right now; let them wait for a few dozen moments."

Having said that, Tao Qian immediately got to work.

Having captured a True Inheritor from the Seven Evil Sects and an Alchemist Saint Child, how could he let them go so easily?

Before sending them off to Hidden Dragon Mountain, Tao Qian naturally decided to act first, digging out all their secrets.

A single finger, pointed at the foreheads of both Zhou Yingchun and Qin Wuxiang.

Given their status and cultivation realms, they naturally had defensive techniques which exempted them from Soul Searching.

Unfortunately, Tao Qian still had a way to cheat.

Upon touching them, a great amount of records burst forth in Tao Qian's mind.

Whether it was Zhou Yingchun or Qin Wuxiang, their life stories, the secret techniques they practiced, or even some personal secrets known only to themselves that could not be exposed, were all seen by Tao Qian at that moment.

Of course, Tao Qian didn't care about those dirty and filthy matters, focusing only on the secrets.

He was particularly intrigued by Qin Wuxiang's tragic circumstances within the Alchemist community.

"So it turns out this guy really is a son of the millennium-old Qin Family; he's actually a relative of Uncle Qin Jiao."

"His name, too, relates to Uncle Qin Jiao. Although after the Alchemists defeated Uncle Qin Jiao, they erased all information related to him, the Qin Family internally knows of an ancestor called 'Master Wuxiang' who almost overthrew the entire Alchemist community."

"After Uncle died, the Qin Family submitted to the Alchemists to preserve themselves, sending their young talents to become Alchemist Saint Children."

"Those old monsters know the origin of Qin Wuxiang's name and his desire to emulate Uncle Qin Jiao... but none of them care, providing whatever is needed for their assurance, letting him serve the Alchemists, making it all the more ironic and cruel."

As Tao Qian mumbled these thoughts, his fingers slowly withdrew.

If one were to view it from "Qin Wuxiang's" perspective, this young talent of the Qin Family was a man who endured hardships to revive his ancestor's glory.

Sadly, he took a wrong path.

In this world, those who emerge unscathed are few.

There was nothing wrong with Qin Wuxiang's ambitions.

But his methods, how different were they from those dirty, stinking, rotten ones of the Alchemists?

"If not too many from Southern Yue had died because of you, I might have actually wanted to help you, quite a pity."

After saying another sentence, Tao Qian began to meddle inside Qin Wuxiang's body.

After some arrangements, he bound his Divine Soul and Mana.

Then, he awakened him.

As Qin Wuxiang regained consciousness, he immediately realized his predicament, understood that his life and death were in the hands of another, and that he couldn't even self-destruct or undergo Corpse Disintegration.

Even if he could, he would not.

Upon seeing Lin Runiu focusing on him, shocked and hateful, he immediately calculated:

"Where did this kid come from? Although Toad Sect is one of the top three Side Door powers, since when did they cultivate such a terrifying secret disciple? And how did he inexplicably enter Ancestor Dragon Society?"

"He captured the two of us and didn't immediately send us to that monstrous scion, Ying Qingdi—could it be he wants to interrogate us first to claim the credit?"

"If that's the case, there might just be my chance to escape; I must lure him."

Chapter 496 - The Fall of the Second Pearl, the Scheme for Eternal Life - Part 2

The thought settled in an instant.

Qin Wuxiang still maintained that exiled Immortal's grace, addressing Tao Qian loud and clear without a pause,

"Daoist, you must be the true Master of Secret of the Toad Sect, Lin Runiu."

"My name is Qin Wuxiang, a nameless minor, inferior in skill to Bai Hua. It is only right that I have fallen into your hands, and I have no complaints."

"It is just that I am not from the Seven Evil Sects, but rather, I owed a debt of karma to the master of Master Baihua, which compelled me to unwillingly betray and attempt to kill you. I have also heard of the aspirations of the Ancestor Dragon Society, and I deeply admire them."

"Now that my assassination attempt has failed, I consider the debt of karma repaid."

"If you, Daoist, would grant me my freedom, once I make arrangements for my family and resolve my mortal attachments, I would return to Hidden Dragon Mountain and join the Ancestor Dragon Society to undertake a great cause together with other devotees."

"To demonstrate my sincerity, I'll first offer you a benefit that relates to your sect's secret treasure, the Nine Toad Bead."

At this point, Qin Wuxiang paused.

Seeing Lin Runiu looking at him expressionlessly, Qin Wuxiang assumed that Lin Runiu was just maintaining a facade while his heart must be greatly stirring. Therefore, he immediately continued,

"Next to the New Moon, in Tiannan Province,"

"There is a territory called 'Immortal Crane Mountain.' Within the mountain is a temple named Wutong Temple, the temple master self-titled Wutong Master, who claims to practice the orthodox Daoist scriptures from the Great Book. In reality, he practices Evil Techniques, commanding three hundred disciples who are all devils and ghosts in human form."

"He claims to protect the region but secretly uses the mortal human race as nourishment to refine various Evil Techniques."

"Several Daoist and Buddhist sects have discovered the details, and when they visited to ask for teachings, they were all killed by him."

"To let you know, this 'Wutong Master' is actually a low-ranking loose cultivator of Evil Techniques. One day, he fortuitously came upon an incredible exotic treasure in a desolate mass grave, which led him to gain the influence he has today."

"That treasure is actually one of your sect's Nine Toad Beads."

Having said all this, Qin Wuxiang looked at Tao Qian expectantly.

As far as he knew, Lin Runiu was an honest cultivator.

Having first clarified the reasons for the assassination and then revealing his own aspirations, and openly offering this beneficial secret,

With Lin Runiu's honesty, he might just be released immediately.

While Qin Wuxiang thought this, Lin Runiu indeed showed a smile.

Though he did not release him immediately, Lin Runiu asked eagerly, "Is there more?"

Qin Wuxiang knew that what Lin Runiu asked about was the location of the other Toad Beads.

Indeed, there was more, but how could he reveal it so easily?

"This man is truly naive and foolish."

"So easily deceived; perhaps I can still trick him and snatch the bizarre Wa Dang."

In Qin Wuxiang's heart, this thought delightfully arose.

Just as he was about to act, in the next moment,

His face suddenly froze, and his eyes showed horror and anger as an unexpected event occurred.

Unwilling though he was, he directly answered Lin Runiu's question quite straightforwardly.

"There are indeed more, let me tell you about them."

"In Changbai Province of the Northern Land, there is a territory called 'Emerald Waves Lake,' where many members of the Water Clan reside, with many powerful beings. Cavernous Mystery realm Devils are not rare, and even some from the Ultimate Happiness realm exist."

"There is one devil self-titled 'One-Horned Thousand-Year-Old,' sounding grandiose but actually it's an alien species of water beast, a Single-Horned Toad as well."

"Originally flaunting and vain, accustomed to holding banquets and abducting mortal women to serve as singers and dancers... however, from one day, this devil changed its behavior. No more banquets, no kidnapping of mortal women, just staying focused within its Water Mansion, claiming that it had arrived at a critical moment to refine its method for a breakthrough."

"In truth, this creature had fortuitously obtained one of the Nine Toad Beads, realizing it was the only chance in its life to attain the Dao, and it is now desperately refining the treasure."

As Qin Wuxiang spoke these words, the look on his face turned extremely grim.

He glared at Lin Runiu where he then realized he had been played,

The Toad Sect's Secret was by no means an honest one.

On the contrary, it was a cunning ruse.

"What have you done to me?"

"What kind of Devil's Sorcery is this?"

"Shut up!"

Qin Wuxiang had no time to shout more, as Tao Qian immediately silenced him.

At that time, Master Tao felt extremely delighted.

He had used the "True Word Secret Decree" originally to interrogate Qin Wuxiang about the many secrets related to the Seven Evils Sect, the Alchemists, and Yang Longxi.

Unexpectedly, even before he started, he came across some unexpected gains and received two benefits.

"Including the news given to me earlier by Chen Xiyi, the locations of the Toad Pearls in Qiantang Province's Yellow Cloud Mountain, Tiannan Province's Immortal Crane Mountain, and Changbai Province's Emerald Waves Lake... thus, I now know about the whereabouts of three Toad Pearls."

"Once I'm free, I'll make a trip to each, and can collect three treasures, the Great Dao is hopeful indeed."

Time was pressing, and Tao Qian just thought of this and let it go.

Without any further delay, he used the True Word Secret Decree again to start the real interrogation.

Despite Qin Wuxiang's utter reluctance, how could he withstand the supreme sublime dharma of the Spirit Treasure Sect?

If his realm were higher, such as the Ultimate Happiness Realm, then it would be difficult for Tao Qian to interrogate him.

Ask a single question, and he might risk getting his mana drained completely.

Unfortunately, his cultivation growth was far slower than Tao Qian's, in Southern Yue he was in the Cavernous Mystery Realm, and he remained in that cultivation when they met again.

Unable to overpower him, he confessed everything.

After hearing this, Tao Qian felt considerably less tense.

"One of the thirteen old monsters of the Alchemist, the Founding Emperor of the Yang Dynasty, Yang Longxi, was exceedingly close to descending to the mortal world cleansed of corruption through a Daoist Transformation Embodiment. He just needed to consume a huge quantity of the [Ten Thousand Spirit Demon Elixir]."

"However, the Ancestor Dragon Society suddenly incited a rebellion, smashing sixty percent of the blood and flesh factories. The Seven Evil Divine Mechanisms suffered from this as well, and the supply of demon pills for Yang Longxi immediately fell short."

"Without any mishaps, it would be very difficult for Yang Longxi to descend again."

This information immediately brought joy to Tao Qian.

To be extra cautious, he even woke up Zhou Yingchun.

Proceeding by the book, he obtained the same information.

At that point, Tao Qian intended to use the "Toad God Tile" to patch it up again, making the two faint once more until the gathering was over, then make further plans.

But at this moment, Tao Qian saw a slight change in Qin Wuxiang's expression.

This fellow had intended to deceive the honest man Lin Runiu, only to be counter-interrogated with a secret technique, humiliating in defeat, and furthermore losing precious information. He should be extremely furious, like Zhou Yingchun, wishing but unable to glare Tao Qian to death.

Initially, it was indeed the case, but now he slightly lowered his head, seemingly trying his utmost to suppress his anger, yet to Tao Qian's perception, it gave off a certain feeling.

"This fellow still has secret information, perhaps now he's relieved I'm not asking anymore?"

Upon this thought, Tao Qian immediately waved his hand, signaling the female ghost A Cuo to wait a moment.

Shortly after, as if struck by a thought, his eyes brightened, and facing Qin Wuxiang, he once again deployed the True Word Secret Decree and asked:

"Is there any unusual movement from that group of old monsters, the Alchemists?"

This question from Tao Qian, like a thunderclap, directly hit Qin Wuxiang's heart soul.

He immediately turned pale, his eyes full of struggle.

Seeming to resist too fiercely, pus and blood oozed from his seven apertures.

Regrettably, he still couldn't resist.

A few breaths later, as if resigning himself to fate, he opened his mouth and revealed another secret:

"One of the saintly ancestors, the Founding Emperor of the Li Dynasty, the Old Ancestor Li Wanshou."

"After Old Ancestor Yang Longxi found the Descent Technique, he too obtained a secret technique, wishing to descend to the mortal world through a Daoist Transformation Embodiment."

"I also do not know what this secret technique specifically is?"

"I only know that it is related to the [Immortal Fish Technique], that magic skill originally used by the old ancestor to fish for cultivators in the cultivation world. Although refining it can bring great benefits, life and death will also fall into the hands of the old ancestor."

"Recently, across the seventy-two provinces, numerous sects, numerous cultivators, numerous talents, because of cultivating the Immortal Fish Technique, have died violently, and those who mutated into demons have begun to sky-rocket."

"Old Ancestor Wanshou himself also seems to be having a tough time, I often heard the old ancestor's lamentations while I was in the secret realm."

"He kept shouting, 'Soon I will return to the Mortal World,' 'I want to slaughter up Penglai Sea, kill that little beast,' 'I want to butcher Yang Sui,' and other hateful words."

"Daoist friend, you might not know, but the little beast in the old ancestor's t

Chapter 497 - Zhong Ziyang's Emotional Wound Affects His Dao Heart, He Vows to Kill Ying Qingdi

Regarding his grudge against Tao Qian, Li Wanshou should be the first.

Yet Qin Wuxiang was also a victim, and now he cursed Tao Qian without any courtesy, describing him in each sentence as a little beast who had stumbled upon good fortune and comparing Duobao True Monarch to a blind old man, even belittling his own sect's venerable ancestor.

A cultivator of the Daoist Transformation Realm had suffered a setback at the hands of a little cultivator, a great loss of face.

Normally, with Qin Wuxiang's prudence, he would never speak such words.

Unfortunately, he had been struck by the "True Word Secret Decree," and once he started speaking, he seemed unable to stop.

It was only when he noticed that the expression of Lin Runiu, who possessed the secret teachings of the Toad Sect, had darkened and the murderous aura emanating from him seemed to solidify, that he slowly paused and, after he stopped speaking, felt as though he had walked between life and death.

"Could this man have a past with that little beast?"

Qin Wuxiang kept silent and muttered to himself.

The reason he did not associate Lin Runiu with Tao Qian was not due to a lack of perception.

First was the mystery of the Secret Demon Transformation Technique.

Second was the influence of Human Dao Destiny.

To see through Tao Qian's true form, apart from needing great Divine Power, one also had to be a possessor of great fortune.

Qin Wuxiang was not among them.

As he stopped talking, Tao Qian also silently suppressed the urge to kill.

This man was an Alchemist Saint Child, and having finally caught one, how could he kill him so readily without squeezing out every last bit of utilitarian value?

With that thought, Tao Qian made no move but regarded Qin Wuxiang seriously.

He then deliberately sighed, shook his head, and said with a disappointed face,

"I had heard that every Saint Child among the alchemists is a talent of their time, with divine powers and mana not inferior to the true inheritors of the great sects."

"Seeing today, I realize rumors cannot be trusted."

"Daoist, do sleep for a while, let me think it through before I deal with you."

Having said that, Tao Qian did not give Qin Wuxiang a chance to respond.

He raised the Wa Dang in his hand, and with a "bang," a handsome face suffered misfortune.

When the treasure was activated, the hit person immediately fainted.

With another bang, Zhou Yingchun followed suit.

Tao Qian, having made such a ferocious move and holding the Wa Dang, revealed an expectant look on his face.

Clearly, he was waiting for a reward from the Toad God.

However, this time, there was none.

The Toad God, perhaps recalling his previous refusal, completely ignored him.

Seeing no benefits coming, Tao Qian felt greatly disappointed and silently ceased his thoughts of smashing.

"Sinful, sinful."

"This treasure is indeed marvelous, but it has led me into many bad habits, truly a blessing entwined with calamity."

Tao Qian was used to pretending ignorance, but unfortunately, there was only one bystander here.

The female ghost transformed into "A Cuo," lively and lovely, full of curiosity about everything, saw Tao Qian striking and not only lacked fear on her face but seemed eager to try.

From the look of it, she clearly wanted to ask Tao Qian for the Wa Dang to wield it as well.

Tao Qian was not a stingy person, but he worried that if he lent the treasure and there was no one else to smash, the girl might target him, Master Tao.

He hastily waved his hand to collect the two into the Holy Embryo Bag, and coughed, saying,

"A Cuo, didn't you say we were pressed for time earlier? Why are you still dallying?"

"Quick, take me to the gathering, let's not keep your young master waiting."

Upon hearing this, A Cuo indeed did not dare to delay.

Reluctantly glancing at the stored Wa Dang, she immediately came forward and dragged Tao Qian's Divine Soul towards a mysterious void.

...

Inside the Inner World of the Nine Sons Ghost Mother, in the Senluo Treasure Palace.

Lin Bujue, Zhong Ziyang, Chen Xiyi, Qi Daozhen, Shen Ruolan, Shazhei Monk, Qin Ming, Dai Feipeng, Liu Yuying—all nine were seated and had been discussing for an hour.

While conversing, they suddenly felt something and turned their attention towards the eerie chair in the center.

With a flash of light, A Cuo appeared dragging Tao Qian.

All nine knew the importance of Lin Runiu's position, and they were concerned about his delay.

Seeing him arrive, they all looked over with concern.

Tao Qian didn't bother with small talk and directly stated,

"I've just been the target of an assassination attempt!"

"The perpetrators are one of the true inheritors of the Seven Evil Sects, Master Baihua Zhou Yingchun."

"Another was Alchemist Saint Child Qin Wuxiang."

"These two were unaware of my methods, and although they found my whereabouts, their attempt to assassinate was turned, and they were captured by me."

Hearing this, all nine were shocked and pleased.

Lin Bujue, who oversaw the Ancestor Dragon Society's intelligence, knew the most secrets.

After hearing this, he immediately responded,

"I know of Zhou Yingchun, his Divine Power Cultivation is indeed formidable; I didn't expect that this time he would fall into Mr. Lin Daoist's hands."

"He is the son of Zhou Chunming, the great elder of the Seven Evils Sect, who must be privy to most of the sect's secrets, a great asset."

"Capturing him is another great achievement for Mr. Lin Daoist."

"As for Qin Wuxiang, although I have heard some about him, I know not much; he is one of the inner saints of the alchemists, possessing a notable position. Unfortunately, he attempted to incite a major disaster in Southern Yue, supporting the ambitious Ji Xianxian to ascend, which was thwarted by Daoist Tao from the Spirit Treasure Sect, resulting in a significant fall in his status. I didn't expect him to resort to the dirty work of an assassin."

"He might also be of some use, perhaps employing some Secret Techniques to peer into the secrets of his Divine Soul."

After Lin Bujue finished speaking, the other eight were delighted.

That was normal!

Even among cultivators, there were distinctions between the strong and the weak, and killings often decided life and death.

But "capturing" was difficult.

Especially those disciples from powerful backgrounds and major sects had numerous life-saving Divine Powers. Even at the very last moment, they would mostly choose to self-destruct or undergo Corpse Disintegration, methods impossible to stop, to avoid falling into the hands of enemies, resulting in a fate where they could neither live nor die.

Chapter 498 - Zhong Ziyang's Emotional Wound Affects His Dao Heart, He Vows to Kill Ying Qingdi

Because of these reasons, everyone knew that killing a Cavernous Mystery Cultivator might not be difficult, but capturing one was nearly impossible.

Who expected that someone like Lin Runiu, an exception, would appear.

Even Qi Daozhen and Chen Xiyi, heroes of such origin, each sighed at this moment,

"Mr. Lin is truly extraordinary; that Toad God Tile is also an exceptional treasure."

"Though it can only strike people and lacks lethal capability, causing fainting with a single hit is extremely rare in the Cultivation World. Perhaps someday, if I find an enemy displeasing, I could borrow this treasure from Mr. Lin, find an opening, and throw it at the back of their head, wouldn't that be satisfying."

After saying this, Zhong Ziyang couldn't help but laugh out loud, adding another comment.

"You don't know, but it was I who went to request Mr. Lin's help, and he obtained this tile during our journey."

"Now I think about it, it must have been left there intentionally by that Toad God, just waiting for Mr. Lin to take it."

"What is unparalleled blessing? This must be it."

At this moment, the atmosphere inside the Senluo Treasure Palace was very good.

But all present were not ordinary cultivators; they were acutely perceptive and soon saw that Lin Runiu seemed to be burdened.

After a few laughs, their expressions became serious.

It seemed they wanted to say something, but didn't know where to start.

Just when everyone was puzzled, Tao Qian sighed and finally looked towards Zhong Ziyang.

Inside the Ghost Mother's belly, these nine individuals were core members relied upon by Ying Qingdi, the "Future Emperor", and were the first batch of disciples from Major Sects supporting him; each had dedicated much for that shared aspiration.

But truly speaking, it was Zhong Ziyang who took the lead. He was the first Talent to support Ying Qingdi, and he contributed greatly, even using his status as a disciple of Taishang True Inheritance to recruit like-minded heroes.

Ancestor Dragon Society!

With the current influence, Zhong Ziyang's achievement was tremendous.

Seeing Tao Qian's expression, everyone already knew something had happened, but at such a moment, what could happen that would cause such a reaction from Daoist Lin Runiu?

The next moment, the answer was revealed.

"My fellows, when I went to the Demon Trap Pit to take the position of Grain and Grass Officer, Ying Qingdi sought me out."

"Unable to probe my true intentions, he suddenly employed a honey trap, sending a female cultivator named 'Wei Ziyuan' to accompany me."

"This woman claimed to be a disciple from the neighboring province's White Cloud Temple, but her true form was that of an Outer Realm Evil Spirit, nothing more than a Yellow Robed Seductive Spirit."

"Ying Qingdi intended to use this woman as a medium to corrupt my Heart Soul, but unexpectedly I used a Secret Technique on her and discerned her true identity."

At this point, Tao Qian paused, seemingly to give Zhong Ziyang and the others time to buffer.

After a pause, he continued to speak, revealing all of Ying Qingdi's deliberately hidden lineage, life experiences, one by one.

As he spoke, Tao Qian clearly saw.

Even Qi Daozhen, a cultivator with a tough mentality, or Shen Ruolan, a ruthless character unparalleled in slaughter, their expressions gradually changed.

Initially, they were only surprised, but as they listened, fear filled their eyes.

Obviously!

Like Tao Qian initially, they also felt they encountered inexplicable, cognition-surpassing bizarre events.

The nine, all being talents, wouldn't ask superficial questions.

In their hearts, the same thought emerged:

"What kind of world does Ying Qingdi perceive? What exactly has he encountered?"

Tao Qian couldn't understand, nor could he imagine, and neither could the others.

Until the next moment, they were all interrupted by a heartbreakingly sorrowful cry.

The group looked over and indeed, it was Zhong Ziyang.

At this very moment!

This man of extraordinary dignity and great ambition, a disciple of Taishang True Inheritance, was now bent over the table, crying bitterly.

He could no longer care about anything else, only pounding on his chest and abdomen, crying miserably:

"Brother Fang, Brother Feng, Brother Guo, Brother Xu, my four Daoist brothers, I, Zhong Ziyang, have let you down."

"In the past, I made a great vow to seek a future Human Emperor, a Bright Lord, to save this corrupt world. The four of you, considering our brotherhood, joined me in supporting Ying Qingdi, this beast."

"Afterward, this beast claimed he would occupy a territory, stockpile food, and train troops, and asked me to return to the sect to fetch a treasure to help. Before leaving, he swore that there would be gains from this action, I went back to the sect according to his words, but when I returned, the four Daoist brothers, along with dozens of other heroes, had accidentally encountered the Evil Sect due to this action; except for a few of that beast's confidants, all others were utterly destroyed."

"Instead, that beast advanced to the Cavernous Mystery Profound Realm."

"I originally thought he was a hypocrite with ambitions of a wolf cub, but who expected such a real truth? How do you explain this? Is this person mad? Does he also share my aspirations that led me to help him, am I also mad? The more I help him, the more people die because of it..."

"I, Zhong Ziyang originally wanted to save the world and the people, but now, I have become an accomplice to a beast."

Including Tao Qian, no one expected Zhong Ziyang to break down and weep bitterly.

It must be known, he was a Taishang True Inheritor, a powerful Cavernous Mystery Cultivator.

Not only was his mentality perfected without flaws, but he also refined 160,000 Yin-Yang Micro Dust Needles, an invincible Divine Skill.

If it really came to a fight, Tao Qian himself doubted he was his match.

Such a being, and yet now he was beating his chest and weeping over his desk.

Everyone was shocked, but after hearing his cries, they all came to realize.

The internal struggle was indeed something others could not comprehend.

Zhong Ziyang believed that Ying Qingdi was a Bright Lord, a Human Emperor, and went to assist with a group of like-minded Daoist Brothers... During the process, all but Zhong Ziyang perished, and at this moment he could comfort himself that those Daoist Brothers died for their ambition to save the world, still worth it... Later, Tao Qian revealed Ying Qingdi's true nature, at this point, Zhong Ziyang's mind almost collapsed, yet he still had support; he wanted to use the might of the Ancestor Dragon Society to ensure the success of the reform uprising, and afterwards kill Ying Qingdi for revenge.

Who could have expected?

Tao Qian at this moment revealed another layer of truth, seemingly no different, yet Ying Qingdi was still a disaster.

But for Zhong Ziyang, it was a profound difference, instantly devastating his mental state.

Just as people were beginning to understand some of this, suddenly, Tao Qian, Chen Xiyi, and Qi Daozhen's expressions changed drastically.

Almost at the same time, all three rushed towards Zhong Ziyang.

This Daoist, originally dignified, anyone who saw him would praise him as a True Practitioner.

Yet at this moment, he appeared dispirited and distorted, the Pure Spirit Immortal Qi around him gradually showing signs of turning into Demonic Qi.

With his Divine Soul like this, there was no need to mention his physical body.

If someone were at Zhong Ziyang's residence at this time, they could see.

His true form was mutating and falling.

His body surfaced with numerous face-shaped tumors, some weeping bitterly, some laughing madly, some wailing miserably, others arrogantly proud... If it continued for another 15 minutes, an extremely terrifying Great Demon would be born.

"Not good!"

"Mr. Zhong Daoist's Dao Heart is troubled, he is about to fall into demonhood."

When Lin Bujue and others exclaimed,

The three who reacted fastest made their move.

Tao Qian pretended to form a Toad seal and struck towards Zhong Ziyang's forehead while shouting, "Mr. Zhong Daoist, do you still remember your great ambition? Wake up quickly, do not entangle with the Heart Demon."

Before his words fell, the seal had already struck.

Instantly, it showed its Spiritual Effect.

The collapsing Zhong Ziyang, indeed, appeared stunned for a moment, and a hint of clarity emerged in his eyes.

Simultaneously, Tao Qian's Mana inside was depleted, and his Divine Soul dimmed a bit. The Toad seal was false, what took effect was the "True Word Secret Decree" he expelled using the Nine True Spirit Sound, all Supreme Methods of the Daoist Sect, used to save a True Practitioner of the Daoist sect, naturally the effect was extraordinary.

The latter arrivals, Chen Xiyi and Qi Daozhen, seeing this were overjoyed, each also applying their techniques.

The former formed a Wisdom Seal and chanted scriptures, also striking toward Zhong Ziyang's forehead, shouting, "Foolish child, wake up quickly."

The latter was straightforward, raising his hand to summon the Purple Mansion Heart Flame, infiltrating Zhong Ziyang's body, burning all the impurities and turbidities clean.

At this time, the others also gathered around, all ready to apply their techniques.

Especially Shen Ruolan, who was especially anxious, had already summoned the "Yue Girl Demon Slaying Sword"; if any remnants of the Heart Demon persisted, she was ready to strike them down.

Fortunately, at this moment, Zhong Ziyang finally broke free from the Heart Demon's entanglement and came to his senses.

Though much weakened, everyone could see that he was likely unharmed.

Only his expression was still very unsightly, after getting up, he saluted everyone, first sorrowful and aggrieved, then with a firm tone, he surprisingly made another vow:

"Ziyang, thanks for the help of all Daoist friends."

"Before the foundation of the Ancestor Dragon Society, many disasters were brewed, many died or were injured, the source of all this although not my, Zhong Ziyang, but my fault is significant, it can't be covered up."

"At this time, I ask all Daoist friends to witness, I, Zhong Ziyang, even if it costs my life and my Dao disappears, must kill that Ying Qingdi."

The last sentence, although the others did not sense any Demonic Qi, they could feel the overwhelming killing intent bursting from inside Zhong Ziyang.

A vow made by a disciple of the Taishang Dao is completely different from those of other Cultivators and Sects.

Once the vow is made, the Great Dao responds.

If he fails to achieve it, Zhong Ziyang will undoubtedly die.

Chapter 499 - Tao Qian Voluntarily Accepts Karma, Secures Secret Demon Magic from the Outer Realm

Inside the belly of the Nine Sons Ghost Mother, Zhong Ziyang made a great vow.

Among them, including the weakest in cultivation Lin Bujue, not one was an ordinary cultivator; each came from a Great Sect with extraordinary backgrounds.

Naturally, their insights were not ordinary either.

Even though Zhong Ziyang showed no other signs, all the talents present could see it.

"Mr. Zhong Daoist, it seems that you're prepared to die."

Once this thought arose, yet no one spoke further.

They silently agreed not to mention it, exchanging glances that conveyed a shared thought.

"Once the New Moon rebellion succeeds, we must immediately act to kill Ying Qingdi."

"With this fiendish creature's death, Mr. Zhong Daoist's life can be saved."

Having settled on this, everyone quickly steered the conversation elsewhere.

Tao Qian did not expect that his revealing of secrets nearly ruined Zhong Ziyang's Dao Cultivation and couldn't help but feel some regret; even though he did nothing wrong, on reflection, he realized that his consideration was somewhat lacking.

After making his vow, Zhong Ziyang completely came to his senses, once again the image of a True Practitioner.

He instantly saw what was on Tao Qian's mind and spoke up:

"Mr. Lin Daoist, I must thank you this time."

"Speaking the 'truth' to me now, to me, it's no less than saving a life. The grace of Protecting Dao to me, and to the entire Ancestor Dragon Society, is immense."

"If I had only realized this at the very last moment, I, Zhong Ziyang, would have likely mutated out of control on the spot and fallen into the Demon Path... It's no wonder that bastard Ying Qingdi never made a move against me—apart from being wary of my Taishang Secret Technique and not being fully confident, his true aim was probably waiting for this moment."

"Think about it, everyone—if I mutated at the last moment, how many in the Ancestor Dragon Society could stop me?"

"Hiss"

Soon as Zhong Ziyang finished speaking these commanding words,

The other nine all inhaled sharply.

He wasn't a bit wrong or boastful.

Each one present knew the horrors of Zhong Ziyang better than Tao Qian; if he mutated during the ultimate battle, the Ancestor Dragon Society would suffer heavy losses.

"That beast Ying Qingdi, so vicious and malicious. No wonder Brother Zhong never used Evil Techniques on him, just waiting here. Brother Zhong's Yin - Yang Micro Dust Needles' power is known to all; if he succeeded, apart from Mr. Lin Daoist, Daoist Chen, and a few others who could survive, we poor souls wouldn't withstand a single encounter."

"How close a call, if not for Mr. Lin Daoist, we might have perished in Mr. Zhong Daoist's Yin - Yang Micro Dust Array."

"What a deceitful bastard, one day soon, I, Shen Ruolan, will cut him down."

...

Although Zhong Ziyang's words helped to alleviate the guilt in Tao Qian's mind, it had to be said, this might just be the truth.

On careful thought, if Zhong Ziyang suddenly mutated and began a killing spree,

Even Tao Qian himself wasn't confident he could survive.

After this incident, all the talents hated Ying Qingdi even more and became even more cautious.

They exchanged information and discussed strategies.

As much as everyone hated Ying Qingdi, the first and foremost task was still the "New Moon rebellion", which many fellow heroes had sacrificed for, and it was now time to reap the rewards—no one could afford to disrupt it.

"Now, in New Moon Province, most territories have already fallen into our hands."

"The Blood and Flesh Factory and those Seven Evil Divine Machines have been destroyed, with six or seven-tenths gone. The great momentum of the Evil Sect has passed, and if nothing goes wrong, even the Daoist Transformation old monster Yang Longxi won't be able to descend into the world again."

"The only remaining trouble is Shangyang City."

"The spirit ghosts sent by Brother Bu Jue have found out that many powerful figures from the Seven Evil Sects have gathered there, most likely to protect the origin mechanism of the [Seven Evil Divine Machine], which is our last trouble. Once we take down Shangyang City, we can announce to the whole country that New Moon Province now belongs to the Ancestor Dragon Society."

Chen Xiyi took on the role of the brains-like military advisor, and although Ying Qingdi had not smirched him with Evil Techniques, he wasn't kept in the dark about many secrets.

He knew all the details of the uprising, like the back of his hand.

As soon as he finished speaking, Lin Bujue, Qin Ming, Dai Feipeng, Liu Yuying, and several others started adding their points.

"Fellow Daoists, don't let your guard down; our enemies may be more than just Ying Qingdi."

"Because of Ying Qingdi's insistence, the Ancestor Dragon Society nearly set no threshold when it recruited members—though it grew quickly and strong, it also included a mix of good and bad, righteous and evil members, such as those unrestrained princesses from the Devil God Army or those Taiping Army remnants like Xu Wenkai with hidden ambitions, as well as other Evil Demon forces lurking in the shadows."

"We know their intentions without asking—they're likely thinking of doing a Cuckoo Occupies the Sparrow's Nest, attempting to steal the fruits of the rebellion's victory."

"It matters not; we still have a significant advantage. Our enemies are all in the open, while we remain in the shadows... Don't reveal the slightest bit, let Ying Qingdi and the Seven Evil Sects, the Alchemists, and these Evil Spirits fight to death. We won't act until the last moment."

"To deal with these cunning Evil Demons, we have to be more cunning than they are."

"Excellent!"

"Brilliant insight!"

...

Despite some disruptions, the gathering ended perfectly, and many strategies were decided upon before everyone dispersed.

Tao Qian bore the role of the Grain and Grass Officer and did not need to participate in the killing.

But capturing Zhou Yingchun and Qin Wuxiang allowed him to take the opportunity.

For instance, turning the two into puppets.

This would allow him to infiltrate both the Seven Evil Sects and the Alchemists, each with a mole; wouldn't that be excellent?

Normally!

Turning other cultivators into puppets, such actions are not something that True Masters like Zhong Ziyang, Chen Xiyi, Qi Daozhen would do.

But now was a different time; when the talents claimed they would be more cunning than the Evil Demons, they meant it.

Each of them supported Tao Qian's idea, but there was a problem here.

Chapter 500 - Tao Qian Voluntarily Assumes Karma, Obtains Secret Demon Magic from the Outer Realm_2

Ordinary puppets and human control techniques, like when Tao Qian was young and weak, used an alien object to control an avatar called "Situ Fei."

Such methods were of no use to beings of Zhou Yingchun and Qin Wuxiang's caliber. Even the Heavenly Demon Pill and Evil Worm that Tao Qian later acquired were equally ineffective.

Even if he miraculously succeeded, he would certainly not be able to conceal it from the old monsters within the Seven Evils Sect and the alchemists.

Tao Qian temporarily had no solution and after asking around, the other Talents didn't either. It was Lin Bu Jue's cultivation method that had a Secret Technique which might work, but that required Lin Bu Jue to advance to the Cavernous Mystery Realm, which was presently unachievable, even to assist Tao Qian.

They were all ready to give up, but Tao Qian seemed to think of something, and after saying, "Let me try something," he parted ways with the others.

In his quiet room, Tao Qian woke up, and then closed his eyes again, spending half an hour to recover the mana he had previously exhausted.

After contemplating for a few moments, instead of acting immediately, he communicated telepathically with the Yuan Gong Statue in his arms.

"Master Yuan!"

"If I remember correctly, in our All Heavens Secret Demon Scripture, there is a Secret Technique called 'Secret Demon Buddha Corpse Transformation Technique.' It mimics the Dharma Cakra Temple's secret magic skill of converting all demons. Once applied, it can enlighten and transform Immortals and Buddhas into beings similar to the Three Corpses Incarnation."

"Using this method, if I am to refine it, if I am to apply it, can it enlighten a cultivator from the Cavernous Mystery Realm?"

No sooner had Tao Qian finished speaking than the statue began to tremble.

A red mist wafted around, and Master Yuan appeared.

His crimson eyebrows soaring into his hairline were raised, his face showing surprise. Soon recalling that this youngster had just captured two minor thieves, he understood the reason and immediately replied:

"Indeed!"

"Although in the Buddhist Sect, Great Freedom Temple seemed to have the strongest presence, if one was to speak of the most detestable monks, they were surely from the Dharma Cakra Temple. They always claimed not to be proficient in slaughter, but in truth, they specialized in attacking the Heart Soul, often enticing the powerful who fell to demons into their temple to serve as protectors. Perhaps Bai Qin learned this path as well but did not master it, eventually being exploited by you for your benefit."

"One of our ancient predecessors from the Secret Demon Sect despised such sordid affairs and thus spent a hundred years creating a Buddha's Salvation Technique. Its depths are no less than the Dharma Cakra Temple's Buddhist Law, but the effects are contrary."

"You wish to refine it?"

"Yes, please teach me, Master Yuan."

Tao Qian was very straightforward, standing up immediately and bowing respectfully to Master Yuan.

If someone else was in Tao Qian's position, having titles like "Spirit Treasure True Inheritor," "Duobao Disciple," "First Heavenly Pride," they certainly wouldn't bow so politely to a demon of the Secret Demon Sect, let alone ask to be taught the Secret Demon magic.

Such actions, in the eyes of many cultivators, were tantamount to destroying one's Dao Path.

But for Tao Qian, there were no such restrictive rules.

He even suspected that Duobao True Monarch, his cheap master, had this in mind all along.

Allowing his only true inheritor, besides the identity of Spirit Treasure True Inheritor, to also obtain the Secret Demon True Inheritor would be better.

Usually, when Master Yuan heard Tao Qian wanted to refine a Secret Demon technique like the Sacrifice Sword Skill, he was pleased, saying something like "You can indeed be taught."

This time, however, it was different.

Master Yuan even stepped aside to avoid Tao Qian's bow, saying:

"Wait, if you wish to learn the Sacrifice Sword Skill, I could certainly feign ignorance and drink your Enchanting Soup."

"But the 'Buddha's Salvation Technique' is different; it is a core method of our Secret Demon Sect, not to be taught to outsiders."

"You may learn, if you wish."

"But you must accept the identity of a Secret Demon Disciple, not just use it as an outward avatar."

"Think carefully, once you take on that identity, you also take on its consequences. You know the current plight of our Secret Demon Sect—it isn't exaggerating to say it's the Cultivation World's most fallen household, far worse off than Primordial Sect. Being a direct inheritor of Secret Demon won't bring any glory, it may even provoke deadly disasters."

Master Yuan spoke his last and said no more.

Standing with hands behind his back, he faced away from Tao Qian, not revealing his true thoughts, nor issuing any demands, leaving the choice to Tao Qian.

Tao Qian was not annoyed at hearing these words. In fact, he didn't seriously consider them.

The reason was simple, he had long been aware, no need for Master Yuan to elaborate.

He had even already made up his mind, so at this moment when he heard the words, he couldn't help but show a smile.

He circled around and then faced Master Yuan again, bowing formally:

"Master Yuan, do not look down upon me, Tao Qian. I may love to engage in schemes, but I never deceive those who are sincere."

"Between Master Yuan and me, there already exists a bond of master and disciple."

"When I was cultivating in Southern Yue, people often called me the Secret Demon Child."

"Now, what harm is there in taking on that title officially?"

"As for troubles? I, along with my master, have already attracted many. A few more will hardly make a difference."

"Please, Master Yuan, teach me!"

Tao Qian's words began resonating, at first impacting Yuan Gong, but soon his speech was choked by the next few sentences.

Indeed, when it came to attracting enmity and mortal foes, there really were few in the world who could compare to the master-apprentice duo of Tao Qian and Duobao.

Let's not mention the enemies that Duobao True Monarch had all over the world; just his disciple, who began as a Loose Cultivator, had already been very adept at causing trouble—Demon Buddha Temple, Devil God Army, Great Freedom Temple, Alchemist, Evil Sect, Taishang Demon Sect, the Xiu Family... Just counting the list of enemies would leave one aghast and tongue-tied.

Upon this thought, Yuan Gong couldn't help but show a smile.

Without any delay, he raised his hand and pointed at Tao Qian's forehead, his voice filled with anticipation as he said:

"Once you have received this inheritance, you will be my disciple, the Secret Demon True Inheritor."

"After you benefit, when it's time for the reconstruction of the Secret Demon Sect, you must contribute; I have no doubts about you."

"Although I'm but a prematurely departed ghost, as a lingering wisp of a soul, I managed to take you as my disciple for my Secret Demon Sect; the old ancestors of All Heavens Secret Demon should be grateful for my contribution."

Before Yuan Gong had finished speaking, Tao Qian's Primordial Spirit, through this single point from Yuan Gong, unexpectedly connected to the Outer Realm.

The sensation was somewhat similar to when he had first practiced the Summoning Demon Technique and the Refining God Technique.

The scene before his eyes shifted wildly, and numerous Heavenly Demon phantasms flashed by.

In a daze, Tao Qian felt as though he had passed through the "Ten Thousand Demon List," catching a glimpse of many incredibly rare and bizarre Heavenly Demons.

Without the luxury to look further, the Primordial Spirit quickly entered a secret realm in the Outer Realm.

Inside, it appeared to be a Heavenly Demon Kingdom.

The many fierce Demon Lords became subjects, became slaves.

The sovereign resided deep in an oddly-styled palace, towering above, with All Demons guarding around him—seemed like an Upper Heaven Demon, a Demon Lord?

The other Heavenly Demons did not notice the presence of Tao Qian's Primordial Spirit.

But the Demon Lord seated behind the curtain, upon the throne, with a body as large as a mountain, suddenly looked towards where Tao Qian was.

Yet strangely, in that gaze, there was no trace of anger, no killing intent.

What was present was an inexplicable fear.

"Could it be that the Secret Demon Inheritance is with this Demon..."

The thought had just arisen in the depths of Tao Qian's mind.

Master Yuan's voice, laden with killing intent, already echoed through the Demon Palace.

"I am a man of the Secret Demon Sect, here to retrieve the entrusted item."

"Do not resist, and you shall not suffer."

"Boom!"

At that moment, in an instant,

Tao Qian witnessed a sword intent erupting unimaginably, truly annihilating a Heavenly Demon Kingdom like pulling down rotten wood.

The "Demon Lord" he had no time to see clearly even acquiesced very obediently to his words, allowing that Sword Intent to destroy everything.

His vast Demon Body turned into a stream of Demon Light amidst the tide of Sword Intent, flowing upstream and suddenly burrowing into Tao Qian's Primordial Spirit.

Once more, a somewhat familiar sensation emerged.

Tao Qian felt as though he had returned to the time he was bestowed with the "Spirit Treasure Savior Scripture," with a surge of Secret Techniques and Divine Skills.

In just a few moments, his Primordial Spirit swelled.

Fortunately, this was after all only a portion of the Secret Demon Inheritance, not its entirety.

After a fleeting period, Tao Qian completely assimilated the Demon Light, absorbing it deep within his Primordial Spirit.

Returning from the Outer Realm, his original body regained consciousness.

Yet the first thing he did was not to immerse himself in the inheritance to search for that one Secret Technique, the "Secret Demon Buddha Corpse Transformation Technique,"

Instead, he lifted his head, searching for the silhouette of Yuan Gong.

"Master Yuan!"

"Are you still here..."

Until the next moment, that already much fainter red misty figure appeared in his eyes, and Tao Qian's expression could not help but soften.