

## Longevity 71

Chapter 71: Master and Disciple Nestled Together, Secrets Enter the Ear

Outside a quiet room in the Peach Blossom Courtyard, a pair of master and disciple embraced like inseparable soulmates.

The notorious Pan Hongniang, known for killing even Evil Cultivators at the Foundation Establishment Stage without hesitation, now clung to Tao Qian like a delicate damsel.

Surrounded by fluttering peach blossoms, the atmosphere was enchantingly beautiful.

However, the sentiments expressed by Pan Hongniang, while profoundly touching, also instinctively felt somewhat unsettling.

"Recently, I don't know why, but I find myself unable to stay away from Fei'er."

"Your face, your figure, completely occupy my spirit day and night. It affects my eating and sleeping, and even during cultivation, you, my tormentor, often morph into a heart demon tormenting me."

"My tormentor, even if you wanted to eat my flesh, drink my blood, I would wholeheartedly consent."

Hearing these words, no one could remain calm.

"Master..."

Tao Qian spoke as if choking up.

This was genuinely a movement of the Puppet Body, driven by emotion; the original owner of this body and their master were indeed entwined by a tragic fate, well-matched in temperament.

But the real Tao Qian behind was extremely panicked.

As an observer and half-participant in this cursed relationship between master and disciple, he sometimes felt the pressure was too much to bear.

If he failed to play his part at the right moment, given Pan Hongniang's revealed obsessive and sickly nature, it could lead to serious trouble.

This conversation made Tao Qian even more cautious; apart from essential guiding words, Tao Qian planned to let the Puppet Body act freely for the rest.

His reactions, driven by true feelings, were undoubtedly conforming to Pan Hongniang's preferences.

Yet Tao Qian had come here with an agenda, so he couldn't avoid interaction at this time.

After a thought, Tao Qian, controlling the Puppet Body, spoke:

"Master, I understand your feelings, but this cannot be done."

"Although resentful of your past greedy desires for my body, I wouldn't retaliate against you, especially now that we, as master and disciple, are here in the Iron Buddha Temple surrounded by Great Demons and Great Demons. Although your cultivation is extraordinary, it is hard to ensure no ill-intentioned individuals covet the foundation of our Peach Blossom Immortal Valley."

"Therefore, we must not lose your cultivation abilities. There is a long future ahead, and I believe given my talent, achieving a Breakthrough is only a matter of time."

Upon uttering these words, Tao Qian saw a myriad of emotions flicker through Nongyu Immortal's eyes.

Evidently, she was falling deeper.

The beloved disciple had probably become completely assimilated into her Divine Soul as a heart demon, impossible to separate.

In some ways, she might be beyond saving.

Observing this harrowing master-disciple relationship and the eerily changing temperaments firsthand, Tao Qian grew even more convinced of the correctness of his choice in following the Basic Method of Daoist.

Internally, he analyzed: "Although Daoist cultivators might also mutate and fall, they indeed do, but the likelihood is much less compared to the followers of heresy, heterodoxy, and Evil Demons and Heretics."

"Not to mention the difference in the power of Source Qi. Today's events were too many, and I haven't fully appreciated the power of the Sacrificial Sword Intent I wielded earlier. Even though it was my first attempt with little experience, the Sword Intent powered by Spirit Treasure Source Qi was immediately vast and grand, nothing like the erratic and scattered Source Qi of the Heterodox and Heretical factions."

"That leader from the Changchun Society, although a stage higher in cultivation than me, next time we meet, at my will, I might just cut him down with one sword."

"Being such a confluence of Daoist and Demon in myself, those True Cultivation Disciples that come from the Daoist and Buddhist Sects, well-versed in numerous techniques, must be truly terrifying."

After these disparate thoughts passed through his mind, Tao Qian suddenly recalled an urgent matter.

Collecting his thoughts, he embraced Pan Hongniang and headed towards the large house draped in red silk.

While walking, he softly spoke: "Master, it has been a while since we've had a heart-to-heart and enjoyed each other's company. Today we finally have some leisure time. Why not enjoy a few drinks on that red silk bed, away from the foul stench of those demons, and revel in a joyous and leisurely manner?"

Initially, because Tao Qian led her to the large house, Pan Hongniang thought her lover had 'that' in mind.

Halfway through, she realized she had misunderstood, but her emotions, already twisted, found joy in just snuggling and sharing her heart with her lover.

Thus, her rejuvenated delicate face once again flushed with excitement, her tear-filled eyes brimming with affection.

At that moment, her six handsome and robust disciples, whom she hadn't attended to in days, walked over with a look of bitter difficulty, chased by the Wild Leek Demon "Shan Jiu."

The six seemed about to report something but hadn't come close enough.

Pan Hongniang, fearful they would ruin the mood, glared and said: "Get out."

With that, the immortal waved her sleeve, and pink petals along with endless moths swept the six disciples and Shan Jiu out, rolling them like gourds out of the Peach Blossom Courtyard.

After finishing these tasks, Pan Hongniang gave a radiant smile, resembling a naive young girl beneath the peach blossom tree, still nestling in the arms of her lover.

Normally, Tao Qian would have already found an excuse to leave.

For instance, attending to Daoist friend Shan Jiu or something similar.

But now, Tao Qian also returned the smile, and then the two of them entered the big red silk house together.

Upon entering the house filled with red silk, without Tao Qian having to do anything, Pan Hongniang adeptly arranged everything.

Petals, candles, a jade table, fine wine... even a Peach Blossom Spirit to enhance the festive mood—all were completely assembled.

The two of them, as in the past, nestled together, indulged themselves, and shared their heartfelt thoughts.

Tao Qian certainly knew he couldn't deliberately steer the conversation from the start; that would give them away.

So, he did nothing and let the Puppet Body improvise.

However, this also had its drawbacks; the Puppet Body too was a party to this tragic romance, and as the two held each other, it was easy to begin undressing and let things fire off unintentionally.

Fortunately, Tao Qian was a decent person and managed to stop things several times, pulling back from the brink.

Gradually, the mentor and disciple chatted more and more animatedly.

Finally, Tao Qian began to subtly guide the conversation, and at an opportune moment, as if drunk, he leaned close to Pan Hongniang's ear and asked curiously,

"Master, didn't the Bodhisattva capture a fragrant little child a few days ago? My good friends, the Deer Demon and the Tiger Demon, are all drooling over it."

"Master, you were at the grand banquet in the main hall that night and didn't get to share any of it. How was the taste?"

Pan Hongniang, warmed by her beloved disciple's breath and their bodies pressed together, was already overwhelmed with feelings, almost disastrously so.

Were it not for her concern that her lover was quite serious about life and death, she might have already made her move.

In such a state, naturally, she was oblivious to any subterfuge.

Hearing this question, she replied directly,

"Fei'er, don't think too much. Although I have some cultivation and have accumulated some foundation over the past century or so, I'm truly not at the stage where I could covet that child."

"The Lord Bodhisattva dares to do so, as she has been from a Great Sect, the Guanyin Temple since the beginning, and after gaining an opportunity, even dared to rebel against Guanyin and received acceptance from the Demon Buddha Temple. She is a true practitioner adept in both Daoist and Buddhist cultivation, and now there are many Great Demons and Devils on this mountain, yet none dare defy her will."

"But even if the Bodhisattva really did lay hands on that child, she would never share him. That is Xiao Meiniang's offspring from the Ten Thousand Infant Sect, an Immortal Infant nourished entirely by infant mother source energy, a top-tier supplement for us of the heterodox and Evil Demons, and an even rarer treasure for Great Cultivators of the Demon Path."

"If Xiao Meiniang hadn't gone to meet Ji Xianxian first, the Bodhisattva wouldn't have found a chance to strike."

Speaking up to this point, Pan Hongniang seemed to become more intoxicated, remembering something amusing and suddenly giggled.



Her soft body, like a beautiful snake, writhed in Tao Qian's embrace, and her hot breath burst forth as she wrapped her arms around Tao Qian's neck.

Her red lips moved close to Tao Qian's ear, and with a playful tone, she whispered,

"Fei'er, I'll tell you a fun secret, but you must not reveal it."

"I heard that the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty Imperial Family, in order to win over the Ten Thousand Infant Sect, went as far as to send the Third Prince into its ranks for training. Who expected the Third Prince to fall head over heels for Xiao Meiniang, the Elder of the Ten Thousand Infant Sect, and shamelessly pursue her, even brazenly promising that if he became the Crown Prince, he would make Xiao Meiniang the Crown Princess Consort."

"That alone would have been fine, at most just a bratty imperial scion."

"But this prince is also quite the player, seeing his direct pursuits rebuffed, he even turned to recognize Xiao Meiniang as his foster mother."

"This dirty plan enraged the kidnapped child, and the Immortal Infant immediately used a Magical Treasure to hang the prince from a tree and flogged him for an entire half hour. If people from the Ten Thousand Infant Sect hadn't arrived promptly, the prince's very existence would have been brutally dismantled by the child and fed to dogs."

"Although the Longevity Heavenly Dynasty Imperial Family shows signs of decline, it is still slightly stronger than the Ten Thousand Infant Sect. Not to mention, Xiao Meiniang's status within the sect isn't high enough to simply neutralize such a disaster."

"Therefore, this beautiful female immortal had no choice but to flee with the Immortal Infant to avoid disaster, even forced to meet Ji Xianxian, a mere mortal official and the uncle of the Third Prince, who is working hard to help him ascend to the role of Crown Prince."

"With such complicated relationships, now that the Bodhisattva has captured the Immortal Infant, Ji Xianxian has one more consideration to account for."

"However, the child was unharmed. I heard that the Bodhisattva has recently acquired a Great Method and is at a critical juncture that cannot afford any delays."

"So, not only is the child safe, but also the ones previously captured by the Bodhisattva, rumored to possibly become the Great Freedom Buddha's Son, a handsome little monk named Hui Xin, are all still living well."

"Although they are locked in the Bodhisattva's Physical Body Prison, they are well cared for and fed, and while we may covet them, no one dares to touch them."

...

Pan Hongniang's gossip, shared in front of her lover, immediately caused Tao Qian, far away in the Seeking Immortal County's Star-picking Pavilion quiet room, to rapidly change his expression several times.

In just a few sentences, Tao Qian extracted more than one shocking secret.

Chapter 72 Peach Blossom Treasure Vault, Infant Mother Source Pearl

Inside the Red Silk House, petals fluttered in the air as numerous pink moths danced around a miniature, girl-like "Peach Blossom spirit," their movements graceful and their laughter joyful. The nectar they exhaled filled the room with fragrance, making even the most potent mortal medicine pale in comparison.

On the soft bed, a young boy and girl lay entwined, wearing scant clothing, their skin blushing red.

Under the hazy pink smoke, there should have been some progress between the two.

Unfortunately, there wasn't.

A tenacious willpower from the distant Seeking Immortal County intervened at the crucial moment, preventing the pair from practicing the Dual Cultivation technique.

Tao Qian wasn't without romance, but he was well aware of the importance of maintaining his "persona."

After learning the secrets he desired from Pan Hongniang, Tao Qian immediately wanted to return his spirit to find the Infant Sect Master Xiao and complete the assignment.

Just then, nestled in his arms, Pan Hongniang seemed to remember something.

Propping up her infinitely lovely body, she gazed at Tao Qian with a fascinated smile and said softly, "Fei'er, your master has a gift for you, and you'll be immensely satisfied."

As she spoke, her tender, onion-white fingers lifted gently, revealing four Peach Blossom spirits with petal wings carrying an incomparably delicate peach blossom branch from somewhere.

The branch seemed to forever radiate a pink glow, with three peach blossoms on it, all in bud form.

Only when it landed in Pan Hongniang's hand did the buds blossom, revealing three delicate and naked Peach Blossom spirits inside.

Pan Hongniang must have done something, for those three special Peach Blossom spirits awoke, stretched lazily, and unfurled their petal-formed wings.

As the pink mist rose, they lined up and each kissed Tao Qian's lips once.

In that instant, three mouthfuls of incredibly sweet and delightful nectar were transferred.

Tao Qian couldn't refuse and the nectar immediately melded into the depths of his body.

Simultaneously, Pan Hongniang's voice came again:

"This is the deputy key to my Peach Blossom Treasure Vault. What you just experienced was the recognition ceremony. From now on, besides me, you are another owner of the Peach Blossom Immortal Valley."

"Whenever you wish, the foundation that Hongniang has built up over a hundred years will all be yours."

"After all, I cultivate the 'Lifebound Scripture,' something fundamentally solid. My treasures and wealth are far beyond what that Lan Demon Lady can offer."

"Are you satisfied with this gift, Fei'er?"

After speaking, the girlish Pan Hongniang lifted her graceful, swan-like neck, waiting for her lover to show a face full of joy.

And Tao Qian did not disappoint her expectations; indeed, his face was full of surprise.

Thinking about the keepsakes of the Jade-faced Lady Lan Qing'er, it was needless to say that Pan Hongniang's collection was even more abundant.

However, this gift was for now only symbolic.

Tao Qian couldn't possibly abscond with the whole "Peach Blossom Treasure Vault," could he?

...

In Seeking Immortal County, inside the Star-picking Pavilion.

Tao Qian emerged from the quiet room and informed Master Xiao's waiting maid that there were results. She immediately became excited and began to tug Tao Qian to see Master Xiao.

At this moment, Lin Xiaohua came out leading an awakened alien creature, obstinately following despite her weak and ailing body.

With no other option, Tao Qian and the maid proceeded together to the top floor.

Originally a mundane structure, the Star-picking Pavilion had since been decorated to resemble the halls of an Immortal Palace, transcendent and refined beyond reproach.

The group quickly met Master Xiao, who was softly comforting the Taisui Baby.

Although the baby was adorable, the safety of one's own child was of even greater concern.

Seeing Tao Qian, Master Xiao immediately lost the gentle demeanor of a fairy and asked urgently, "Well? Have you found any good news?"

Tao Qian never intended to beat around the bush, so upon hearing this, he responded directly, "True Master, according to my secret informant, your child is safe for now but imprisoned in a Physical Body prison by the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva."

The news from Pan Hongniang indeed wasn't so simple.

It was explosive news that combined gossip with secret knowledge. However, after considering the sensitive information involved, Tao Qian decided to share only what needed to be said.

The rest, he silently absorbed.

As expected, upon receiving Tao Qian's report and verifying that he wasn't lying,

Master Xiao's expression immediately relaxed somewhat. Although worry still lingered in his eyes, his mood seemed slightly improved.

Quickly recalling the strange contribution of the junior before her, Master Xiao let a gentle smile emerge and then said,

"For this mission, both rewards will be attributed to your accomplishments, which are significant."

"Besides the rewards already listed on the notice, you may make a request of me. As long as it's not excessive, I will comply."

"I see that you, junior, while practicing techniques of both the Demon Path and my Heterodox methods, have chosen a Basic Method from the Spirit Treasure Lineage, clearly a Loose Cultivator with aspirations for the Daoist way."

"If you wish to join the Spirit Treasure Sect, you don't have to wait until you enter the Qi Refining Realm. I have an old relationship with Luo Daoist from the Spirit Treasure Sect and with a letter from me, I could make a recommendation on your behalf."

"Of course, how the Spirit Treasure Lineage takes disciples is subject to their rules; as an outsider, I shouldn't interfere. Whether you can truly join still depends on your talent and opportunities."

At these words, Tao Qian's face lit up with happiness.

He was almost ready to agree immediately; this was, after all, what he had always wanted to accomplish.



He had thought he'd have to wait until he advanced to the Qi Refining Realm and naturally produced the "Spirit Treasure Nine Truths Map" within himself before obtaining the route to Spirit Treasure Mountain Gate.

Unexpectedly, a shortcut had presented itself.

Tao Qian was about to agree when Lin Xiaohua's exceptionally weak voice suddenly rang out.

"Not enough!"

"Hmm?"

Not only did Master Xiao reveal a puzzled look, but so did Tao Qian.

Lin Xiaohua, who had so abruptly interjected, seemed to have had a plan all along and immediately followed up after those two words:

"Master Xiao's letter of recommendation is naturally very precious, but those bounty rewards are nothing but trash and garbage, worthless to my good friend."

"The Human-faced Worm Disaster that has caused you endless headaches and the safety of the immortal child, my friend has resolved both these issues. As a generous female fairy like yourself, Master Xiao, you should certainly offer some genuine sincerity."

Upon hearing these words, Tao Qian's eyes immediately widened.

Turning his head, he looked toward the alien that resembled a "bronze robot," made up of various strange materials, his gaze showing a look of questioning.

Tao Qian wanted to ask: Has Daoist Xiao Hua always been so brave?

If he heard correctly, Lin Xiaohua was demanding better rewards on behalf of Tao Qian from a female fairy with a terrifying level of cultivation.

Clearly, it wasn't just Tao Qian who picked up on this.

Master Xiao had heard it too, her gentle gaze turning to one of confusion and a hint of danger as she stared at Lin Xiaohua and asked:

"Oh, you make some sense. Those rewards would indeed be precious to a loose cultivator, but for a disciple of a major sect, they are truly insignificant."

"So, what reward does this rising star from the Heavenly Talisman Sect wish to ask of me for your good friend?"

Lin Xiaohua had obviously been waiting for these words.

He immediately followed up without a pause, flattering: "Master Xiao is indeed generous, truly the most beautiful and gentle fairy within the Ten Thousand Infant Sect."

Then, in a seemingly casual tone, he continued.

"I've heard that the cultivation technique you practice is the Great Innate Infant Mother Secret Manual from the Great Book, the Infant Scripture, and that you have drawn the extremely mysterious Innate Infant Mother Origin Qi into your body."

"This source energy not only allows one to enjoy longevity and eternal youth but also has many wonderful uses."

"One of them is to aid in cultivation and requires only a trivial price to pay."

"You have cultivated within the Infant Mother Secret Realm for many years and you must have an abundance of source energy."

"Look, my good friend has just set his Life Seed and is only a step away from breaking through to the Qi Refining Realm. After all, it is better to teach one to fish rather than to give one a fish. Why not bestow upon my friend some of the infant mother source energy to help him achieve breakthrough? Would that not be perfect?"

After Lin Xiaohua finished talking, the atmosphere in the room suddenly grew inexplicably cold.

Tao Qian stood innocently in place, wanting to say something, but not knowing where to begin.

Although he was still unclear about how precious the "infant mother source energy" was,

since someone of Lin Xiaohua's origins would request it, its value was likely far greater than those so-called bounty rewards.

But why?

From the moment they met, Tao Qian felt that Daoist Xiao Hua's behavior was oddly eccentric and her condition very unusual, and now even more so.

However, Tao Qian did not sense any malice and knew that Daoist Xiao Hua was indeed a rare and kind cultivator.

Just as Tao Qian was about to say something to ease the situation, Master Xiao, who had shown a cold face due to Lin Xiaohua's unreasonable demand, suddenly let out a sigh.

As though dealing with a playful child, she helplessly massaged her brow and patted her chest, then said:

"Indeed, it is not the fear of the thief stealing but the fear of the thief's covetousness."

"This object was supposed to be given only to someone of my Ten Thousand Infant Sect, but this quirky junior indeed resolved a major concern of mine, and I will need to rely on him in the future, so I can give him one."

"But you won't get the other bounty rewards."

"The letter of recommendation, however, I will still provide to you. Have you considered this thoroughly?"

The last sentence was addressed to Tao Qian.

Although he was baffled by the current situation, Tao Qian knew the proverb all too well that not taking advantage of a good deal was foolish.

Upon hearing the question, he immediately nodded in agreement.

Then, Tao Qian saw Master Xiao stretch out her fair fingers and pluck something from the void. Accompanied by a flash of milky white brilliance, a spherical object flew towards him.

Catching it reflexively, Tao Qian looked down at his palm.

The object was about the size of a pigeon's egg, completely milky white, smooth and glossy, heavy, and a bright light circulated around it.

As soon as he took it in hand, Tao Qian smelt a very strong and soothing "milky" fragrance that seeped into his nose, almost making him moan in satisfaction.

Had his spirit not been strong and his willpower firm, he would have already lost his composure.

What made his eyes wide and brought a look of surprise to his face

was the extraordinary perception that emerged with the touch, and the format information that gradually unfolded:

[Record Name: Infant Mother Origin Pearl.]

[Record Type: Alien.]

[Record: Created from the extremely pure infant mother source energy, 'Primordial Pearl,' an object that only female cultivators who have practiced the Basic Method from the 'Great Innate Infant Mother Secret Manual' can create. Within not only the Ten Thousand Infant Sect but the entire Cultivation World, it's an object worth causing large-scale strife and slaughter over, especially for those Ten Thousand Infant Sect cultivators with a lower cultivation realm—this is the treasure they dream of.]

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### Chapter 73: The Young Tiger Reappears, Xiao Hua Entrusted with an Orphan

Holding the Infant Mother Origin Pearl, Tao Qian browsed the Record that he perceived in his mind.

As annotations appeared one by one, Tao Qian's hands moved swiftly, stuffing the pearl into his Joyful Bag.

[Note 1: This object possesses various wonders and no matter how it's used, burps of milk will occur intermittently within three days, this being its only cost.]

[Note 2: If this object is obtained by a cultivator of the Ten Thousand Infant Sect, it can be used in multiple ways. If it is obtained by a cultivator of an external path, its greatest use is to aid in cultivation; this also represents its most significant effect.]

[Note 3: During cultivation, swallow this pearl into the stomach, wait for the infant mother source energy to emerge, and it will allow the cultivator to revert from Acquired back to Innate. At this time, any source Qi swallowed can skip the 'refining' process, and all impurities will be expelled from the body, allowing the cultivator to enter a pure state devoid of mixed thoughts or fetal breaths, eliminating concerns about Heart Demons or external evils invading... The chances of successful breakthrough in cultivation increase significantly when using this during a Breakthrough.]

[Note 4: This pearl can be used repeatedly, but it is ineffective for cultivators above the Foundation Establishment Realm.]

[Note 5: The cost cannot be waived!]

As this information flowed through, Tao Qian fully understood why there were such exaggerated descriptions in the Record.

Now it seemed, not at all exaggerated; indeed, it couldn't be more precise.

The effectiveness of this 'Infant Mother Origin Pearl' was simply unbelievable, and the cost was just burping milk for three days.

What kind of cost is that?

Who would mind?

Tao Qian looked at "Note 5," completely unconcerned.

Just let it be milk burps... Hmm?



Muttering to himself, Tao Qian suddenly had an association: "As everyone knows, you only burp milk when you've drunk too much of it, so this pearl... no, is it a milk ball?"

Tao Qian felt he had discovered an oversight but thought better of asking too many questions after experiencing benefits.

He did not plan to question Master Xiao, who was infinitely gentle. Silently accepting the benefits, he, along with Lin Xiaohua, took two little creatures back to their residence arranged in the Star-picking Pavilion.

Though Tao Qian owned the Chengyou Bookstore, its dimly-lit compartments clearly weren't fit for hosting guests, so they had to stay here.

Moreover, there was the issue of Xiao Hua Daoist's condition, which Tao Qian inexplicably felt was related to him.

Back in the quiet room, just as he was about to ask,

Lin Xiaohua, foreseeing this, her body frail to the extreme, barely settled down with the help of the two little creatures, looked up at Tao Qian with an unnaturally calm gaze and uttered a sentence that stunned him on the spot.

"Brother Tao, I am about to die."

...

While Tao Qian was shocked by Lin Xiaohua's sudden statement, at the Medicine King Temple in Seeking Immortal County, bustling with incense during the day and deserted at night,

the leader of the Changchun Society, who had luckily survived under the Sacrificial Sword Intent, was now slowly walking towards the back room.

Before entering, he forced himself to put away his sinister and cunning expression, his bloodshot eyes softening.

A closer look would reveal a color of fear on his face, which he tried hard to conceal.

What he feared was the figure standing in front of the Medicine King sculpture, looking around with interest.

It was a very young Daoist, disheveled with a loosely worn Daoist robe, exposing a chest full of scars, and even a large festering wound on his chest, as if his heart had been forcefully extracted at some point.

His handsome yet sinister face adorned with a "Blood Jade" like scar, faintly glowing with a disgusting halo.

The cunning leader of the Changchun Society, upon entering, directly fell to his knees with a thump, his voice trembling as he begged for forgiveness:

"I am guilty, today on the street I saw a cultivator accompanied by two enlightened alien species, one of them being a Taisui Baby. I was concerned that this person might resolve the insect calamity, ruining the plan, and I heard that the Saint Child has been needing such auspicious spiritual objects for refining recently, so I wanted to capture the baby and present it to the Saint Child."

"Unexpectedly, many mishaps occurred in between, disturbing Xiao Meiniang and neglecting the defense of the southern part of the city, thus leading to mistakes."

"I am inept at my duties, please, may you punish me."

After voicing this, the leader, prepared for what was to come, closed his eyes.

The next moment, he suddenly heard a "snap" followed by the stench of blood and burning breath, instantly feeling his left arm vanish, the severe pain causing him to shatter several teeth in his mouth as sweat poured down like beans.

Even so, he dared not emit even a slight scream or wail.

He opened his eyes blurred with sweat, indeed seeing beside him an extremely terrifying blood beast, squatting unknown when it arrived, staring at him with penetrating eyes.

It was still chewing a human arm, juice splattering everywhere, bones crunching against its sharp teeth.

Before he could harbor any thoughts of resentment in his heart, a lazy voice of the sinister young man above came:

"Feeling unjust, are you?"

"It's okay, if you think my handling was unfair, feel free to say so, I'll report it upwards for you. Perhaps the Saint Child will blame me instead, in appreciation of your devotion, and might even reward you."

"I, Hong Youhu, always conduct affairs justly."

"I dare not. The superior has handled the matter excellently. Even though I made a grave mistake today, I am still alive, which is a grace bestowed by the superior."

The leader tried to suppress his malevolent thoughts while uttering these insincere words, thinking his response was quite decent.

However, to his surprise, Hong Youhu stroked his chin and grinned, saying,

"You're right, I have indeed been too merciful. Considering the mistake you made, one arm is not enough."

"Dumb dad, are you hungry? If you're hungry, eat another one of his arms."

It was almost as if the result followed the words instantaneously.

As soon as the young man finished speaking, a flash of blood appeared, and it was the flesh monster that had instantly moved from the left side to the right.

Simultaneously, the remaining intact arm of the leader of the Changchun Society also disappeared.

In the familiar sound of a "crack," excruciating pain surged.

Finally unable to bear it, he wailed and collapsed to the ground. Seeing this, Hong Youhu suddenly burst into happy laughter and then violently stomped on the leader's head, coldly saying,

"You're lucky this time. Even though it was to fawn for merit, you did discover the Taisui Baby, and those thousands of civilians didn't escape either. Otherwise, your refined Qi and flesh would have entirely filled my dumb dad's stomach by now."

"Be sure to remember your next task clearly, and don't make any more mistakes."

"Although Lady Meii failed to get help from the provincial capital, in a few days, powerful cultivators from the Fire God Temple, Lingxi Temple, Wind Thunder Cliff, Wudang Sect, and other sects will come to assist, fighting against the group of Great Demons on Iron Buddha Mountain."

"At that time, it will be hard to find capable Great Cultivators in the other areas of Southern Yue, and we can officially start our plan."

"You need to earnestly take root in the city, monitoring the movements of Lady Meii and other cultivators. You must immediately report any changes. We need to maintain the balance of strength between both sides, keeping Seeking Immortal County in constant fear. Yet, this city must not be truly broken through, turning it into an isolated island in this chaotic world."

"As for that Taisui Baby, since it's already in the city, there's no need to worry. In a few days, when Lady Meii is overwhelmed, I will personally take care of those meddlesome Loose Cultivators and seize the baby."

"At that time, I will commend your contributions to the Saint Child."

"Yes!"

Beneath Hong Youhu's foot, the leader of the Changchun Society struggled, not daring to show any resentment in his eyes, even as blood and dirt filled his mouth.

...

"What?"

Tao Qian was suddenly stunned as he heard these words.

He had suspected that something was off with Lin Xiaohua, assuming something like a "Breakthrough failure."

While many cultivators did indeed die for that reason, Lin Xiaohua should have been different; he was a disciple from a major sect like the Heavenly Talisman Sect.

Even if a Breakthrough failed, saving his life or even his cultivation should not have been difficult.

In the quiet room, Lin Xiaohua, with a pale face, sat on the bed, the two little creatures beside him both sad but not surprised, obviously already aware of this bad news.

Lin Xiaohua, comforting the two Alien Species, did not explain why he was going to die right away, but instead stared at Tao Qian with a puzzled look in his eyes, then said,

"Master Xiao was indeed right, Brother Tao, you really are very strange."

"Knowing that I would die within a few days, I used the most precious and only Innate Great Yan Divine Number Talisman on my body. Normally, this talisman could calculate the specific appearance, birth information, and even the background of the person I was looking for."

"But this time, I got no such results, only a vague location, which is this Seeking Immortal County."

"As soon as you appeared, Brother Tao, I knew that the person the Spirit Talisman referred to had been found."

Here, Lin Xiaohua paused, his expression still calm as if he had completely accepted his impending death.

He petted the heads of the two little creatures, first pointing to the Taisui Baby and introducing,

"This is Little Age, you already know its background. It has had a hard time entering the Dao, especially because of its kind nature, suffering many calamities. Human nature is unpredictable, sometimes even more horrifying than these spirit monsters and Alien Species."

After saying this, he pointed to another creature resembling a bronze robot.

By now, Tao Qian was examining it more closely. This little thing was slightly taller than the Taisui Baby, its main body made of bronze, with joints mixed with cast iron and ancient wood, while its head was some kind of humanoid yet non-human beast skull, with two glowing rubies embedded in the eye sockets.



Seeing Tao Qian scrutinizing it, the little creature's eyes also emitted a red glow, seemingly starting to scan Tao Qian.

While scanning, it stuttered, "Human cultivator, purely flesh and blood, weak points are... weak points are... weak points are..."

Under Tao Qian's puzzled gaze, the little creature seemed to have gotten stuck.

At this moment, Lin Xiaohua's voice, tinged with a hint of a smile, came through,

"This little guy is called 'Lian Jing'er.' I picked it up in a village near an ancient ruin. It's also kind-hearted and has a mysterious fondness for the Human Clan, which has also led it to suffer quite a bit. Its eyes were almost plucked out to be sold for money, but its character is somewhat stronger than Little Age's."

Hearing this, Tao Qian vaguely understood.

Was Lin Xiaohua planning to entrust his legacy to him?

Chapter 74: Preaching to Solve Doubts, Cultivation of 9 Realms (Cultivation)

Lin Xiaohua noticed the expression on Tao Qian's face and knew that the latter had guessed the purpose of his visit.

He didn't hesitate any longer, smiled calmly, and then said,

"I, Lin Xiaohua, sincerely admire the Daoist path. Since joining the Heavenly Talisman Sect, I have diligently practiced day and night, daring not to slacken. However, there are indeed some stubborn ailments I cannot amend."

"Firstly, I have always considered myself a man who is eager to do good deeds, yet I am often misunderstood by others."

"Secondly, I have a penchant for associating with ghosts and spirits. When I first joined the sect, this little problem was accidentally discovered by my fellow disciples and was spread around, ruining my reputation. Except for my master, no one interacts with me, even the gentle and kind female disciples avoid me and refrain from conversing with me, resulting in very few friends."

"But speaking of which, these stubborn ailments are indeed fatal. This time, my breakthrough was sabotaged by an old lover, and I don't even know what method she used that not only prevented me from entering the Foundation Establishment Realm but also punctured several large holes in my Heavenly Talisman Body. My Divine Soul is dim, and the Spirit Treasure Source Qi I've painstakingly refined will completely leak out within a few days."

Upon hearing this, Tao Qian couldn't help but cough lightly, suppressing the urge to criticize.

Many words came to mind, but thinking of how miserable Daoist Xiao Hua was, he decided to hold back.

However, he couldn't completely hide his expression, and Lin Xiaohua caught on.

"If you want to laugh, go ahead. My fellow disciples and master have laughed at this ailment of mine for many years."

"But while you laugh at Lin Xiaohua for being shameless, I laugh at you for not understanding the charm of ghosts and spirits."

"Brother Tao, I see that your Primordial Yang is still intact, and you are still a virgin. This first time is very important. As your senior, I must advise you, choosing a Daoist couple who can give you the most wonderful feeling is very important."

"I previously promised to pass on my magical skill to you. This secret technique is called the 'Pure Yang Thought Control and Soul Destruction Technique,' which is said to be created by an eminent elder who defected from the Pure Yang Sect. After practicing this technique, no matter what kind of creature you mingle with, you will be incredibly strong and durable, and you won't fear methods that absorb vitality. But don't be too greedy; excessive indulgence will still lead to..."

"Moreover, cultivators from the Human Clan are too dull. I suggest you choose spirits, ghosts, demons, and other alien species; that's where the excitement lies. Back in the day, I encountered..."

"Cough, cough."

Tao Qian watched as the severely injured and dying Daoist Lin Xiaohua's complexion visibly became more rosy as he spoke of this topic, animatedly recounting and vividly describing crucial points.

Thinking to himself, "He really is a lustful old fellow," Tao Qian quickly coughed to interrupt.

This lecher, not realizing there were still two children in the room.

Thinking this, Tao Qian turned to look at the two little ones, wondering whether he should cover up some of Lin Xiaohua's words.

Unexpectedly, the two little ones had already squatted on the ground, both faces full of curiosity, listening intently to Lin Xiaohua boasting about his interactions with beautiful and alluring ghosts and spirits, occasionally nodding and clapping in admiration.

Tao Qian shook his head; it was too late—they had been corrupted.

Seeing that he could not stop the dying man's enthusiasm, Tao Qian could only listen quietly to the magical skills and divine powers described by Lin Xiaohua.

Truly worthy of being created by a Great Cultivator, it was indeed exquisitely extraordinary.

Happy times are always brief, and after finishing his glorious history, Lin Xiaohua's expression became depressed once again.

Tao Qian was about to suggest that he try seeking help from the Heavenly Talisman Sect when he saw him shake his head and say,

"Brother Tao, don't trouble yourself. I have tried various methods, and it's already determined that my lifespan will end in three days at midnight."

"I, Lin Xiaohua, stand alone, facing death,"

"The only thing I worry about are these two little ones. I have calculated their futures, and without someone to look after them, allowing them to wander again, they will inevitably fall into the hands of evil people. Not only will they suffer personally, but the myriad of calamities will also warp their nature, eventually leading to the emergence of two Great Demons who feed on human flesh and bring disaster to the human world."

"I am not trying to impose a burden on you. Considering that your cultivation level is only at the Energy-Introducing Realm, it does pain my heart."

"However, since the Da Yan Divine Talisman has pointed to you, and today you took the initiative to save me, helped those thousands of people, and even dared to risk your life to gather secrets for Master Xiao... Such a good nature is extremely rare in the cultivation world."

"Moreover, unlike me, you know how to adapt, to plan first and then act decisively like a thunderbolt, never dragging your feet."

"Just like the Sword Intent you unleashed today, although raw, it was magnificent and unstoppable."

"What you lack is merely a guide."

"This is also why many Loose Cultivators waste their lives. The path of cultivation is not only costly, but it is also fraught with traps and pitfalls. Without a qualified guide to reveal the secrets of the Basic Method, Divine Power, Source Qi, and share their experiences in cultivation, it is not an exaggeration to say that cultivators face a likelihood of nine deaths out of ten."

"Though I cannot pass on the secret techniques of the Heavenly Talisman Sect to you, I can still complete this link for you before you head to the Spirit Treasure Mountain Gate."

"Additionally, I have some possessions and private Magic Skills like the 'Pure Yang Thought Control and Soul Destruction Technique' to give to you as well, hoping only that you will protect these two little ones and prevent them from falling into the hands of evil Cultivators and villains."

"You need not worry about the rest. The Spirit Treasure Sect is known for its inclusivity. It wouldn't matter if you were to bring these two little ones, or even a bunch of female fairies; no one there would reject you."

"Are you willing to make this deal?"

As the final sentence spilled out, Lin Xiaohua's face took on a solemn and serious expression.

Though referred to as a trade, the look in her eyes clearly conveyed an entrustment.

Such an arrangement would appear highly favorable to almost any cultivator.

Not to mention the numerous benefits promised by Lin Xiaohua, the two alien beings, "Little Age" and "Lian Jing'er," were also coveted by many cultivators.

Yet, in the eyes of Tao Qian, this was indeed a responsibility.

He did not immediately agree, instead carefully considering it in his mind.

"The situation in Seeking Immortal County seems somewhat ominous; I should leave soon. With the recommendation letter from Master Xiao and my 'Innate Dao Seed's' Divine Power Talent, it should not be difficult to enter the Spirit Treasure Mountain Gate, and then I can take these two little ones along."

A thought crossed Tao Qian's mind, and a decision was formed.

Under Lin Xiaohua's hopeful and joyful gaze, he nodded.

Instantly, Tao Qian saw the middle-aged Daoist in his late thirties, a brilliant smile emerging on his pale face.

As for the two little ones, both were tear-stained.

Neither were human, one's eyes leaking crystal-clear, exotically fragrant jelly water, while the other shed pungent, searing water that resembled molten rust.

"Alright, alright, there's no feast that doesn't come to an end, and look, I'm still doing fine, aren't I?"

Lin Xiaohua hastily comforted the two little ones.

To shift the topic, or perhaps to make the most of the time,

he grabbed Tao Qian and began to impart daoist teachings and solve doubts. According to him, it was to give Tao Qian the basic cultivation of a major sect disciple.

Many secrets and essential points are unknown to loose cultivators or disciples of small sects.

As soon as they sat down, Lin Xiaohua bombarded Tao Qian with several questions, almost each one something Tao Qian was eager to know the answers to.

"Brother Tao, do you know the nine realms that are recognized by both the Daoist and Demon factions, and the Heterodox Sect?"



"Brother Tao, do you know why true cultivation disciples from major sects tend to be so powerful?"

"Brother Tao, do you understand the essence of the Lifebound Scripture, the Great Book, and the Basic Method?"

"Brother Tao, would you like to know the secret of Source Qi, and how many types of Source Qi there are under the heavens?"

"Brother Tao, would you like to know which are the Twelve Major Sects? What are the major sects of Buddha and Demon? How many heterodox sects are there like the Ten Thousand Infant Sect?"

...

With each question, a spark of curiosity lit up in Tao Qian's eyes.

And as Lin Xiaohua began to explain each one in detail, Tao Qian's eyes shone with even more excitement.

Clearly, what Lin Xiaohua was teaching was still considered basic knowledge in the cultivation world.

Yet, even these basics were not known to loose cultivators or disciples of minor sects.

For disciples of major sects, acquiring such knowledge was effortlessly easy.

The more Tao Qian listened, the deeper his immersion became. Since his cultivation journey had begun, many lingering doubts accumulated in his mind were being clarified, giving him a sensation of sudden enlightenment.

After a full hour, seeing Lin Xiaohua's body become increasingly weak, Tao Qian suggested a pause to let two youngsters take good care of him.

Before leaving, Tao Qian found a suitable opportunity.

Calmly standing up with the two youngsters, they helped Lin Xiaohua to the bed in the quiet room, his hands finally touching the sick body.

Lin Xiaohua himself had said: his former lover's casting of spells to harm him was extremely clever, turning his dharma body into a sieve, and his divine soul inexplicably dimmed. Not only had his Source Qi leaked away, but the nourishments entering his body were also futile; it was as if medicine and stones could not cure him.

From the few words of Lin Xiaohua, it wasn't hard for Tao Qian to deduce.

The so-called former lover was clearly the female ghost king he had encountered behind the mountain of the Heavenly Talisman Sect—the very reason he was expelled from the sect.

Back at the "Fairyland Fish Pond," Tao Qian had also glimpsed the entanglements between Lin Xiaohua and that female ghost.

Since the female ghost had freed herself and was still willing to bring Lin Xiaohua the superb Great Book "Primordial Spirit Secret Soul Scripture" to encourage him to turn to the Ghost Path, why would she harm him...

Boom!

A spark of inspiration flashed through Tao Qian's mind.

What if that female ghost harmed him in order to make him turn to the Ghost Path after his death?

At the same moment this thought emerged, as his hands touched, Tao Qian's mind also immediately had a perception.

But this time, unlike many previous perceptions, it was entirely different.

The triggered information flow was extremely chaotic and obscure, and unstable. While it was gradually being sorted out, it seemed unlikely that it could be comprehended in just a few breaths.

Tao Qian frowned, forcing himself to stay a bit longer in that quiet room.

Still fruitless, he had no choice but to leave.

This was the first time such a situation had occurred, filling Tao Qian with doubts as he returned to his own allocated quiet chamber.

Once inside, he sat on the cushion and waited again, his mind still sorting through the information.

This made Tao Qian's frown deepen even further, but it also sparked a guess.

"Could such a situation occur because the triggered information source is too high-level, and contains twists and secrets?"

This thought, in turn, made him more patient in waiting.

Could there possibly be a loophole? Could Lin Xiaohua's life still be saved?

While considering this, and having nothing else to do,

Tao Qian continued waiting, simultaneously digesting the cultivation knowledge he had just received.

Starting with the Nine Cultivation Realms!

Upon entering the path, a cultivator faces nine realms to ascend, respectively: Energy Introduction, Qi Refinement, Foundation Establishment, Transcend Mortality, Cavernous Mystery, Ultimate Happiness, Daoist Transformation, Tribulation Immortal, and Chaos.

Each realm has three stages, like the stages of Energy Introduction Realm: Body Refining, Blood Fusion, and Fetus Stabilization.

And regardless of major or minor realms, the essence is about embracing "Source Qi" to acquire extraordinary power.

And Source Qi itself is also classified.

Therefore, due to different Source Qi, even two cultivators with the same progress can have vastly different combat power after only a few realms.

In the beginning, there might be no difference, but as one ascends through realms, choosing the right Source Qi could even grant divine powers and exotic skills after ascending just one minor realm,

while those who choose the wrong Source Qi gain nothing.

This is one of the reasons why true cultivation disciples of major sects can overpower large numbers of loose cultivators and demons with their own power.

It is simply the principle that the strong get stronger, and the weak get weaker.

"When I first entered the path, although without the guidance of a master, relying on my unusually perceptive soul, I made the right choice at the first step."

"In the cultivation world, there are myriad Source Qi, but Spirit Treasure Source Qi is always among the top."

Tao Qian recalled the Innate Dao Seed he had obtained when he stabilized his fate, silently contemplating in his heart.

Chapter 75 No Food Ghost Country, Xiao Hua's Marriage

"Alas, choosing Source Qi is merely the first obstacle upon entering the Dao; countless life and death tribulations still lie ahead."

"This Cultivation World here is nothing like I had imagined in my previous life; its myriad brutalities, even for paths like Daoist and Buddhist righteousness, are withstood by only a few."

Tao Qian's expression turned somewhat gloomy as he seemed to recall some secret.

Lin Xiaohua indeed proved to be a qualified guide; in just one hour, the knowledge he poured into Tao Qian's head was vast and complex.

Some of it required Tao Qian to digest slowly, while some was both secretly brutal and simple to understand.

Such as the secrets of Source Qi?

No matter how many types of Source Qi existed in the world, once a cultivator absorbed and cultivated it, it essentially transformed the cultivator's body, will, and divine soul, and even everything else.

With the deepening of this transformation, the cultivator's power grew stronger, while simultaneously the cultivator became increasingly inhuman.

The higher the cultivation, the less human?

This was the result of humans learning from nature and the transcendent mysteries.

It was because of these achievements that the Human Clan could gradually rise from their ancient status as slaves and food, ultimately becoming the masters of this land.

The Basic Method and countless Divine Power Skills and Exotic Skills were all different understandings and applications of Source Qi, leading to gradual divisions within the Human Clan into different factions.

As for what one becomes at the pinnacle, what will one encounter?

Lin Xiaohua could not give an answer, and perhaps no one in the Cultivation World could for the time being.

Tao Qian was just a fledgling and it was not his place to worry about the heavens.

Now that he had entered the Dao, there was no turning back, and he did not regret it; instead, from these cruel secrets, he derived some ideas.

Lin Xiaohua said: "Cultivation is essentially about accommodating, deciphering, and using Source Qi... but no matter what type of Source Qi, it is extraordinarily dangerous for humans."

The Basic Method and many Divine Power Skills mostly aim to extract tremendous power from Source Qi while avoiding losing control of oneself; however, even so, various costs still have to be paid.

When he said this, Lin Xiaohua had warned Tao Qian, "Regarding 'Skill'—whether it's Divine Powers, Sword techniques, or Escape Skills—don't be greedy. Make choices, for every skill comes with its costs. If you accumulate too many costs, you may very likely lose control and fall into the path of Evil Demons and Heretics."



At this, Tao Qian inadvertently countered, "What if someone could ignore such costs?"

Hearing this, Lin Xiaohua, supporting his sickly body, laughed mockingly and replied, "There's no such person in the world. Even the Sect Master of my Heavenly Talisman Sect, or the legendary invincible Taishang Daoist, must pay a price after casting. If there truly were someone who could defy the first rule of the Cultivation World and ignore all such costs, they would benefit enormously from absorbing Source Qi or refining treasures. Upon encountering enemies, they could simply crush them to death, and in time, becoming an immortal and ancestor would not be out of the question."

Lin Xiaohua spoke in jest, completely unaware that within the depths of Tao Qian's eyes, a myriad of strange colors flickered.

Today, in this quiet room, if it were not for Tao Qian still awaiting that bizarre influx of information to organize itself.

He would have likely started refining techniques already.

Though he couldn't yet truly begin, thoughts in Tao Qian's mind were already taking shape.

"Now that my cultivation is still weak, and refining Source Qi to breakthrough is not a task for just one day, since my talent for exempting cost is a rare and powerful gift in the Cultivation World, why not cultivate more Divine Power Skills to protect the Dao and defeat enemies."

"I currently have the Selfless and Immortal Slaying Sword techniques, along with the Small Innate Nascent Soul Escape Technique and the Secret Demon Refining God Skill, adding one more, the Nine True Spirit Sound... As a Loose Cultivator with Energy-Introducing Realm cultivation, I'm respectable."

"But that's still not enough. That wondrous 'Secret Demon Transformation Technique' can also be practiced. Lin Xiaohua mentioned that many methods from the Secret Demon Sect have spread widely in the Cultivation World and many True Cultivation Disciples from Righteous paths practice one or two, so it's not rare."

"The 'Exotic Fire Elixir Scroll', feared by Outer Realm Heaven Demons, should also be practiced when there's an opportunity; perhaps there'll be surprises as well."

"Additionally, I must seek out another Slaughter Divine Power skill, lest I perish on the way to the Spirit Treasure Sect Mountain Gate..."

Clearly, upon realizing how rare and formidable his talent for exemption was, Tao Qian gradually became bolder in his thinking.

These thoughts flashed through his mind, just as he considered when might be the best time to break into the Qi Refining Realm.

Suddenly, his mind shook.

The stream of bizarre information regarding "Lin Xiaohua" that he had been waiting for, was finally completely organized in this moment.

Formatted familiarly, it emerged.

But the first record type that appeared made Tao Qian reveal a look of surprise.

The reason was simple, he had encountered Lin Xiaohua in that Fairyland Fish Pond before; this time the record had completely changed.

And the content of that record also made Tao Qian fully understand why it had taken such a long time this time.

[Record Name: Lin Xiaohua.]

[Record Type: Cultivator.]

[Record: Human Cultivator, a discarded disciple of Heavenly Talisman Sect, his dharma body is depleted, Divine Soul dim, scheduled to perish two days hence at midnight. At that time, his karma will be thoroughly cleansed... Hidden deep within his soul... will take over his soul. Regardless of where his body is, it will guide the arrival of 'No Food Ghost Country,' and he will be married to the daughter of the King of No Food Country as the groom. His soul has already been anchored in advance by a Supreme Treasure... Once he enters No Food Ghost Country, he can immediately convert to the Ghost Path, and his cultivation will directly enter the level of Ghost General, with the cost borne by...]

[Note 1: This person's body and Divine Soul are being watched by the King of No Food Country. Should there be any abnormalities, such as recovery from injuries, the King of No Food Country may arrive prematurely.]

[Note 2: This person has a predestined marriage tie with the Princess of No Food Country, Pei Niannu; regardless of interference from others, the two will ultimately marry. If one wishes to sever this connection, one must personally go to No Food Country and destroy the related markings in that Supreme Treasure...]

[Note 3: This person's talent highly suits the Ghost Path's 'Primordial Spirit Secret Soul Scripture,' with the potential to achieve Ghost Immortal.]

...

"Hiss"

Once more, Tao Qian felt stunned.

He had unintentionally glimpsed another great secret.

Moreover, regarding this content, Tao Qian did not immediately know how to react.

Should he be happy for Lin Xiaohua?

Or should he despise him for inadvertently sponging off such a high-level advantage?

Or perhaps, should he reveal this secret to Lin Xiaohua and see how he chooses?

Unfortunately, from the annotations, Lin Xiaohua's fate had already been sealed; she was completely unable to resist.

"Those key areas of blank space are obviously extremely high-level sources of information, such as that Supreme Treasure capable of anchoring Lin Xiaohua's soul and even forcibly arranging marriage lines."

"I don't even know the name, it is so terrifying."

"If we want to help Lin Xiaohua resist this arrangement, no matter what we do, it seems we need to confront the 'No Food Country Master'."

"According to the Record Description, this seems to be an outrageously powerful entity."

"Not to mention me, a newbie cultivator with weak arms and legs, even that Master Xiao probably wouldn't be able to compete with their strength, right?"

Tao Qian had a distressed and tangled expression, his mind incessantly murmuring.

He had read the Record Description in his mind a few times and made a rough judgment about Lin Xiaohua's situation: This was clearly a story where a mother-in-law took action on behalf of her daughter to forcefully capture a son-in-law.

"All Cultivators are frivolous, others are picking flowers and stirring up the grass, but Daoist Xiao Hua specifically challenges beautiful and enchanting ghosts."

"Who would have thought that he would accidentally provoke such a terrifying female ghost, to be forcefully captured as a husband, although the arrangements made for his future are extraordinarily enviable."

After muttering to himself a few times, Tao Qian made up his mind.

"We'll meet tomorrow, I must subtly hint a little, so it's best that Daoist Xiao Hua guesses the truth."

As for what could be done after guessing?

His cultivation was too weak, and he couldn't help much, he would just see how Lin Xiaohua decided for himself.

Once the thought was decided, Tao Qian was no longer entangled.

Seeing that the hour had already passed midnight, there was no time for refining techniques, he simply calmed his mind and rid himself of stray thoughts, then began to cultivate the Spirit Treasure Method.

With the help of the "Innate Dao Seed," Tao Qian's cultivation speed had increased exponentially.

Each time he completed a chant, the Spirit Treasure Source Qi in his body surged significantly.

He was getting even closer to the Qi Refining Realm.

During cultivation, time became the least valuable.

When Tao Qian came to his senses, the sky had already brightened. He washed up quickly; meanwhile, through the window of the high building, he overlooked the entire Seeking Immortal County.

Perhaps because the human-faced insect disaster had been resolved the day before, Sunny Immortal County finally showed some vitality.

That long-forgotten trace of fireworks finally re-entered Tao Qian's eyes.

This made Tao Qian sincerely smile, not delaying any further, he turned and headed towards the residence where Lin Xiaohua and the two little ones stayed.

As soon as he entered, Tao Qian heard the soft cries of the two small ones.

Foreboding feelings arose in his heart, and as he stepped inside, indeed, he saw that on the cot, Lin Xiaohua, who he hadn't seen for just one night, had greatly changed.

Last night, although Lin Xiaohua was frail and pale, he could still move around.

But now, he could only barely lean on several soft pillows, half-lying down, and visibly becoming thin and weak, his appearance even more withered.

Anyone who saw him would subconsciously think he was a gravely ill, dying old man, rather than a member of the Heavenly Talisman Sect in his prime at thirty-nine.

Obviously, after his dharma body leaked Source Qi, it began to leak his life essence and blood as well.

With such leakage, no wonder he calculated that he would assuredly die in two days.

Although Tao Qian knew by then that Lin Xiaohua would be fine, even if he died, his future had been arranged as a Prince Consort in a Ghost Country, possibly even cultivating up to the Ghost Immortal realm.



But upon seeing this scene, he still got a shock.

"What a ruthless mother-in-law!"

While Tao Qian internally criticized, he had already walked over.

He did not exchange pleasantries with Lin Xiaohua, just frowned, looking at his sickly body, then showing a thoughtful look, as if thinking of something, then guided by the plan in his mind, he said:

"Daoist Xiao Hua, I heard about your plight last night and after some consideration, I feel something is very suspicious."

"You and your old lover must have been deeply in love, just separated for some reason. If it was truly out of spiteful love that she wanted to harm your life, shouldn't she have met you first, attempted to reconcile something?"

"Or even met you before your death to show off her power?"

"Also, I have a Secret Technique that allows me to observe people in meticulous detail. Your dharma body is exhausted, your Divine Soul dim, but your true soul remains undamaged, even showing signs of growing stronger."

"I think after your death, you won't just descend into the netherworld, but instead, you might transform into that..."

"Boom!"

As Tao Qian spoke, each sentence struck Lin Xiaohua's mind like a bolt of lightning.

Soon, a look of surprise and realization dawned on his face.

Sitting up as if revived from serious illness, his eyes growing brighter, he then fiercely propped up his upper body, exclaiming excitedly:

"Yes, you're right, this doesn't make sense, it's too unreasonable."

"Nian Nu wouldn't harm me like this, what she wants is to, she wants to...?"

Lin Xiaohua was stuck for a moment, and soon as if he recalled some key point.

His joyful expression immediately turned to sorrow, becoming even paler, and he exclaimed:

"No, she wants to marry me."

...

## Chapter 76: Experts Gather in Qi to Attack Iron Buddha Again

In the quiet room, whether it was Tao Qian or the ones called Little Age and Lian Jing'er, all were bewildered by Lin Xiaohua's sudden exclamation.

Seeing his face turn utterly pale, his eyes filled with extreme sorrow, they thought he was about to face some great disaster.

That was it?

Observing the strange look on their faces, Lin Xiaohua seemed to find an outlet for venting. He slumped back onto the soft pillow and started to ramble to a junior and two Alien Species who had gained sentience, pouring out his grievances.

"Among the Twelve Major Daoist Sects, only a few sects prohibit the union of Yin and Yang, and most major sect disciples in cultivation would keep concubines, changing them every few decades, truly reckless and shameless."

"I, Lin Xiaohua, am ashamed to associate with them. Although I do consort with ghostly charms, after celebrating some joyous days, I always provide them with compensation, either helping them to transcend and reincarnate or bestowing various Yin Talisman Soul Treasures upon them, allowing them to protect themselves and even enter the Dao to cultivate."

"Such actions, who wouldn't call me a hero as well?"

"But who would have thought that I, Lin Xiaohua, would eventually fall. I encountered my nemesis and destroyer, Pei Niannu."

"You cannot imagine how stunning Pei Niannu was when I first saw her. She was imprisoned in the 'Kuhun Mountain', dressed in white, cold and beautifully detached from the world. Ignoring the rules and precepts of my sect, I befriended her, and later, due to mutual affection, we became involved."

"Although I sensed that she wanted to use my Heavenly Talisman Essence to escape her plight, I did not stop her, simply indulging in the merging of our souls."

"Thus, I knew her true nature was not as the verdict of Kuhun Mountain said: 'A ghost king causing chaos and misery to all living beings.'"

"Even though I was expelled from my sect because of her, I do not regret my initial choice, but later..."

At this point, Lin Xiaohua's eyes filled with tears, seemingly carrying immense grievance.

Pausing and sobbing for a moment, he then continued:

"Later, she came to me again, claiming she had wronged me, and feigningly stayed with me for a few days."

"That would have been enough, but she also said that it was not right for me to not cultivate the Heavenly Talisman Skill. She wanted me to abandon this physical body and follow her to cultivate the Ghost Path, even bringing the Primordial Spirit Secret Soul Scripture and trying to force me to cultivate it."

"That still wasn't the worst part."

"She revealed her true identity and background, turned out she was actually the Princess of the Ghost Country 'No Food Country' on the surface. She confessed her deep affection for me, her infatuation with me, and insisted that I return with her to get married."

"She said that once I entered the Ghost Country, I would be the esteemed Prince Consort, able to live and cultivate the Ghost Immortal Technique together with her."

"A true man could never suffer such an indignity. After a huge argument with her, we parted ways unhappily."

"I thought that was the end of it; although I, Lin Xiaohua, lost a perfect Daoist partner, I preserved my freedom of soul."

"But I don't know by what means she managed it, from then onwards, every enchanting ghost that met me was terrified of me. Forget about mingling with me, they would flee in panic just at the sight of me."

"Now the situation is dire, the truth finally revealed. She plans to forcefully dominate and destroy this dharma body of mine, making it a fait accompli and leaving me no chance for regret."

"Little Age, Lian Jing'er, come, help me up, I must return to the Heavenly Talisman Sect, I must admit my wrongs to my master. I certainly don't want to be dragged to that Ghost Country to be a Prince Consort..."

In that quiet room, Lin Xiaohua's cries of struggle echoed continuously.

After being reminded by Tao Qian, Lin Xiaohua's analysis partly hit the mark of the truth.

Sadly, not entirely!

Because the one who acted against him was not that Princess called "Pei Niannu," but her mother.

The King of the No Food Ghost Country, for the sake of her daughter's marriage prospects, personally intervened, even using a Supreme Treasure that Tao Qian couldn't detect.

Although Lin Xiaohua also came from a Great Sect, how could he compete with a Ghost Country monarch?

The gap was unimaginable.

Tao Qian now recalled that when Master Xiao first saw Lin Xiaohua, he muttered, "Almost misjudged."

Clearly, this Elder of the Ten Thousand Infant Sect, although not having an unusually perceptive soul like Tao Qian's, had also realized that Lin Xiaohua, an abandoned disciple of the Heavenly Talisman Sect, had already been reserved as a son-in-law by the No Food Country Master.

Anyone who dared to interfere would have to confront her.

No wonder Master Xiao, knowing that Lin Xiaohua was near death, had shown no sign of concern.

Watching Lin Xiaohua struggle desperately, too weak even to rise, Tao Qian thought for a moment but decided not to shatter his last sliver of hope.

Even Little Age and Lian Jing'er, two Alien Life forms, could tell that Daoist Xiao Hua was somewhat insincere.

From the tone of his recollections of "Pei Niannu," he truly fell in love with the female ghost.

However, his long history of a wanton lifestyle, coupled with his deeply ingrained haughty temperament, prevented him from accepting Pei Niannu's kindness.

Regardless of the information Tao Qian glimpsed or the judgement by Lin Xiaohua's mother-in-law, it all proved that Daoist Xiao Hua's talent greatly matched the Primordial Spirit Secret Soul Scripture.

If he were to seek immortality and the Dao, the path most suited for Lin Xiaohua might actually be the Ghost Immortal Technique.

Tao Qian thought about letting Lin Xiaohua keep a bit of fantasy, but soon he himself realized:

With a sigh, he slumped back, uttering with a listless tone:

"Forget it, it's no use."

"To force me to switch to cultivating the Ghost Path against my will is something Nian Nu alone would find difficult to accomplish; I, Lin Xiaohua, after all, had been intimately involved with her long enough to know her through and through."

"She must have run home to complain and then stirred up the No Food Country Master. My mother-in-law is really fierce. Back then, she had a conflict with our Heavenly Talisman Sect. Eight elders joined hands to challenge her, but she chased them all the way to the Heavenly Talisman Sect Mountain Gate with a 'Big Ghost Mother Divine Soul Sword.'"



"Although she was almost captured by the sect master of our Heavenly Talisman Sect, that battle also made her famous."

"Since it was her who made the move, I indeed had no chance to resist."

Lin Xiaohua spat out these words, causing Tao Qian to once again barely restrain his urge to retort.

Daoist Xiao Hua, you struggle so adamantly, yet inadvertently, you even call her 'mother-in-law' in advance, how polite.

Tao Qian vaguely realized that Lin Xiaohua was not so resistant to converting to the Ghost Path anymore; he just wasn't ready to end his carefree life immediately.

"Scumbag!"

Tao Qian silently cursed.

He was thinking that since there was such a sequel, perhaps the matter of entrusting his care could also be settled now.

Yet, before Tao Qian could speak, Lin Xiaohua caught hold of him again.

His expression became rather complex, a hint of reluctance fleeting across his face, but he still said,

"Brother Tao, I will die in two days, and there may be a great disturbance then, but it will be of no harm to you and others. However, I still have to entrust Little Age and Lian Jing'er to you."

"The No Food Ghost Country only allows ghosts and spirits to exist. That is a rule, absolutely intractable, even Nian Nu and her mother can't change it."

"Moreover, if my sect's records aren't wrong, after I die and transform into a ghost, that mother-in-law of mine will certainly appear to sever my karma, entrusting you to avoid her is most fitting."

"This outcome coincides vaguely with my own calculations; what was that extremely faint lifeline about? Turns out it was waiting here for me. Nian Nu, oh Nian Nu, you just wait for me."

After saying these things, Lin Xiaohua no longer talked about Pei Niannu and the mother-in-law.

Instead, he began instructing Tao Qian again, resolving his confusions.

Previously, he had said he wanted to ensure Tao Qian had the cultivation appropriate to a disciple of a great sect. Now, with his arrogant temperament flaring up again, he began to impart all sorts of secrets and profound knowledge to Tao Qian.

Compared to gossip and love matters, this knowledge was boring for Little Age and Lian Jing'er, the two little things finding it so dull they were falling asleep.

As for Tao Qian, who aspired to 'long-lasting vision,' he listened with keen interest.

A day quickly passed.

After saying goodbye to a much weakened Lin Xiaohua, Tao Qian was about to leave and planned to try and cultivate the 'Secret Demon Transformation Technique' tonight to increase his Protective Dao strength.

However, he was stopped halfway by a maid of Master Xiao, clad in yellow robes, looking pretty, and from the palpitations in his mind, obviously exceeding Tao Qian's current Cultivation Realm.

But this maid was not at all arrogant; she gently said, "Daoist Tao, the true master requests your presence."

Not knowing what it was about, but having received such a great favor, Tao Qian did not decline.

He followed the maid toward the residence of Master Xiao.

Tao Qian guessed in his heart: It must be that Master Xiao is again anxious about the safety of the Immortal Infant, wanting me to probe further.

Thinking thus, during the journey, they passed by some large rooms within the Star-picking Pavilion.

Occasionally, he could hear inside excited and enthusiastic discussions from young disciples from various sects and those Cultivators who had reached the Qi Refining Realm.

The fragmented words coming together were surprising to Tao Qian, as he had missed many exciting events in just one day.

"So it turns out, the magic duels had already begun."

"For an entire day, Master Xiao led the many cultivators inside the Star-picking Pavilion right outside Seeking Immortal City, set up against demons descending from Iron Buddha Mountain, fought dozens of times."

"During which, demons continuously used underhanded tactics, trying to instill fear similar to the 'Human-faced Worm Disaster' in the hundred thousand citizens of Seeking Immortal County."

"Strategies like poisoning, polluting, evil techniques, and demon arrays were thrown at Seeking Immortal County, but all were resolved by Master Xiao."

"Perhaps it's because of this, Master Xiao is somewhat anxious, probably afraid that the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva might vent her frustration on her own son?"

These thoughts emerged in Tao Qian's mind.

He had already followed the maid to the second to last floor, passing by many quiet rooms.

These rooms had been empty yesterday, said to be prepared for the powerful cultivators who would come to help.

Now passing by, many rooms were still empty.

But as Tao Qian walked past with the maid in those few breaths, his mind seemed to have an additional Primordial War Drum, and a Barbaric Giant wielding a battle hammer, furiously pounding the drum.

"Boom, boom, boom"

Wave after wave of terrifying palpitations throbbed through Tao Qian's mind.

With such noise, Tao Qian needed not even guess, instantly concluding,

"Fire God Temple, Lingxi Temple, Wind Thunder Cliff, Wudang Sect... The strong cultivators dispatched by these Daoist or Heterodox Sects had all arrived, currently within the Star-picking Pavilion, all kept secret, not even a trace revealed."

"Summoning me here might not be to inquire about the safety of the Immortal Infant, but perhaps to let me inform him of the true situation on the mountain; could it be that Master Xiao intends... to attack Iron Buddha Mountain tonight?"

Chapter 77: True Master Bestows Treasures, Inquiring into Secrets

Tao Qian struggled to suppress the thundering in his mind, his thoughts racing like lightning as he guessed much of True Master Xiao's plan.

Not long after, on the top floor of the Star-picking Pavilion, Tao Qian saw True Master Xiao once again.

However, different from before, the elder Great Cultivator from the Ten Thousand Infant Sect was clad in a new set of purple garments. Apart from still displaying her fair clavicle and shoulders smooth as jade, there were additional ornaments such as bells, golden rings, and jade bracelets adorned around her wrists and ankles.

Or rather, Magical Treasures.

Tao Qian discerned the stirring in his mind and came to a conclusion: True Master Xiao was fully armed.

Tao Qian doubted that any of the items casually taken from True Master Xiao's person would be extremely precious treasures to someone of the "Energy-Introducing Realm" like himself.

At that moment, Tao Qian found himself somewhat envious of the Immortal Infant Tong Dudu.

Nevertheless, this thought came and went swiftly.

In the next moment, he indeed heard True Master Xiao's voice, still gentle in tone, yet Tao Qian discerned a trace of grim killing intent.

It was no wonder True Master Xiao felt anger and urgency, considering her own son had fallen into the hands of a Great Demon of terrible renown like the "Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva."

"Junior, I have summoned you here again because there is a matter that I need your assistance with," she said.

"You must once again make use of your undercover agent to find out which Great Demon is guarding the array on Iron Buddha Mountain tonight. If you can uncover some weaknesses or gain more secrets related to the 'Hundred Demon Embryo Blood Refining Array,' so much the better."

"If that is not possible, just knowing the Great Demon's name and fundamental information will suffice."

"Since I'm asking for your help, naturally, I will give you a reward. Take this."

With that, True Master Xiao, from the generosity of her own wide bosom, produced a soft, bizarrely-shaped white jade stone, seemingly designed for children to grasp.

With a flick of her hand, the jade stone flew towards Tao Qian.

Catching it instantly, Tao Qian felt a warm, moist sensation, accompanied by bursts of fragrance that refreshed the spirit and delighted the senses.

Had Tao Qian's will not been quite strong, he might have rudely pocketed it then and there.

Seeing this response, True Master Xiao at the head of the room showed a look of approval and then gently said:

"I do not know where you, this peculiar junior, acquired our Ten Thousand Infant Sect's 'Small Innate Nascent Soul Escape Technique.' Other elders might want to reclaim the Divine Skills you have cultivated."

"But I am not so strict. Since you have managed to cultivate this skill and dispelled its cost, it is naturally your good fortune."

"I also want to help you further. This jade contains a method for converting Source Qi. It can transform various Source Qis into Nascent Soul Source Energy and store it within this jade without any significant cost. However, it is limited to converting the foundational Source Qi of a few major Daoist sects. Fortunately, the Spirit Treasure Source Qi you practice is also included."



"With this item, you will face no restrictions when using the Nascent Soul Escaping Skill in the future, just like the cultivators of our Ten Thousand Infant Sect."

"Are you satisfied?"

As True Master Xiao finished speaking, Tao Qian had just finished reviewing the transcendent information that sprang up in his mind.

It was exactly as she described, without any discrepancies.

What a treasure!

The thought of joy instantly emerged in the depths of Tao Qian's heart.

He had been somewhat worried that after using up the three strands of "Nascent Soul Source Energy" stored within his body, the effectiveness of his Nascent Soul Escaping Skill would diminish.

But unexpectedly, a pillow had arrived just as he was dozing.

Tao Qian didn't play coy; he pocketed the jade and then said, "I thank the True Master for the treasure. Now, please grant me a quiet room, so I may initiate the magic to communicate with my agent. Within thirty minutes, there should be a result."

Although Tao Qian did not expect True Master Xiao, a being of her caliber, to be unaware that his so-called "undercover agent" was probably a Puppet Body, he still tried his best to conceal it where he could.

There was no need to leave the Star-picking Pavilion, as Tao Qian accompanied by a maid, entered a nearby quiet room.

Within his heart, he silently said:

Gathering intel about the Great Demon in charge of the array, it seemed they indeed weren't planning to wait even a night. The moment I had results, I suspected that bunch from the Human Clan and the Heterodox Great Cultivators would once again embark on a campaign against the Demon Cave on Iron Buddha Mountain.

I never expected to truly become an undercover agent; doing it just once yielded such benefits, making this role of a double-crosser rather promising.

Tao Qian dispersed his thoughts while sitting firmly in a meditative pose, his spirit stirred, and in an instant, he reentered the outer puppet body situated far away inside Iron Buddha Temple.

The moment he settled in, Tao Qian first skimmed through the puppet's recent memories, confirming it indeed followed his will, engaging in a push-and-pull game with Pan Hongniang, stubbornly not breaking character or becoming intimate with her.

Feeling relieved, Tao Qian then sensed that his surroundings were as lively as ever, a blend of rank smells, meat, and lewdness... all sorts of odors mixed together, vying to invade his nostrils.

Glancing up, it was indeed that side hall again.

A gathering of Demons and Evil Cultivators were indulging in their pleasures here.

The scene before him was primal, bizarre, and savage, characteristic of this side hall.

Compared to the Buddha, Bodhisattva, and Arhat statues smeared in filth and excrement, it highlighted the absurd horror of these dark and chaotic times even more.

The only thing that made Tao Qian feel slightly less disgusted was that the roasting prey surrounded by several Pig Demons in the hall was no longer of the Human Clan.

Considering the shape of the blood and flesh turning on the spit, could it be a giant Deer Demon?

Its fur was already peeled off, tied around the waist of a Pig Demon, barely covering its shaking mass.

The meat sizzled as it was roasted, releasing a rich, fatty aroma mixed with the stench of Demons that was surprisingly mouthwatering.

At Tao Qian's side, an old Demon covered in sores and black teeth eyed that delectable deer meat; drool vile and corrosive, dotted with wriggling black maggots, dripped down.

As it dripped, he muttered discontentedly,

"We finally caught a Mutated, mad deer, and after killing it together, shouldn't we share and enjoy it? Why divide and give some away, especially those tenderest deer legs? Better send its stupid head instead, to pay lip service."

"No, no, the deer's brain is the most delicious. This old man's body is weak; I desperately need a bowl of deer brain ginseng soup to nourish myself."

His grumbling was overheard by the Pig Demons in charge of the cooking.

The Yellow-maned Pig Demon, who used deer skin as an apron, had wanted to turn around and scold, but when he saw it was the Black Maggot Demon, his shiny pig's head quickly shrank.

Nodding and bowing, he then replied very respectfully,

"Black Maggot Master, please don't give us a hard time, for although the rules up here on the mountain are loose, there are still some that must be respected."

"Those powerful Masters willing to condescend and lead a group of brothers to keep watch at night, to prevent that woman from Seeking Immortal County who lost her son from going mad. It's right for us to provide some food."

"Especially tonight, the one keeping the array is the 'giant troll baby demon' Master, whose appetite is rather large and who is fond of fine wines and foods."

"Speaking of which, had it not been for this stupid deer going mad tonight, my brothers and I would have been really worried. Those responsible for the other side halls and Zen Rooms had already carried their prepared foods and wines over, except for us."

"You, wait a moment, and my brothers will come back and cook you deer brain ginseng soup."

Having said that, he saw the Pig Demon, surrounded by a foul miasma including dung, give a signal to the other Pig Demons.

In the next instant, there was a flash of knives, and two deer legs, almost as thick as the red lacquered pillars in the hall, roasted to a golden brown and savoury smell, were promptly removed.

The Pig Demons worked together, some carrying the legs and others hefting human-height jars of wine, and they huffed and puffed their way out of the hall.

They disappeared in a cloud of dust, quickly vanishing from sight.

"Really unlucky, a bunch of slippery, deceitful little pig bastards, using the 'giant troll baby demon' to snub me."

At Tao Qian's side, the Black Maggot Demon muttered dissatisfiedly.

He was unaware that the pretty boy from the Nongyu Immortal's family beside him had a look of surprised delight showing deep within his eyes.

Hearing his muttering, Tao Qian thought it over and struck up a conversation in a seemingly casual tone,

"Old brother, you're well-informed. Do you know the strength of this 'giant troll baby demon' Master? Compared to that Naked Saintess the other day, who is more powerful?"

Chapter 78: Peach Blossom Fairy Wine, Infant Demon in Trouble

"Evil Cultivators and Demons are all chaotic and disorderly by nature, with no notion of discipline or secrecy.

Especially Tao Qian's puppet body identity, it could be said to be seamless. As long as he didn't have close contact with long-established great demons like the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, he wasn't at all worried about being exposed.

The rotting sore and black maggot old man by his side was an Evil Cultivator who loved to show off his knowledge. Tao Qian inadvertently guided him with a comment.

He he-heed with a smile and was hooked into speaking on his own initiative.

"Little brother, your master, Matchmaker Immortal, has the privilege of entering the main hall. She must know the answer to your question."

"However, such topics are indeed inappropriate to mention in bed. Let me, your elder brother, enlighten you instead."

"The lords on the mountain are all truly great demons."

"The strongest is naturally Lord Bodhisattva, and if there's no surprise, the next seat belongs to Lady of the Naked Saintess."

"Although her ladyship has not stated it openly, judging by her title and traces of her Power, her origins are probably not much weaker than those of Lord Bodhisattva. Although she can't be compared with Guanyin Temple or Demon Buddha Temple, she represents an emerging great sect within the Demon Path."

"As for the giant troll baby demon, while slightly weaker than her ladyship, the Saintess, he too is a top-notch great demon. I've heard that..."

At this point, the black maggot old man suddenly paused.

The onlookers only saw his lips move without emitting any sound.

But to Tao Qian alone, his voice came through, filled with pride and showing off.

"That infant demon claims to be a Loose Cultivator, but I know he is related to a Demon who defected from the Ten Thousand Infant Sect years ago. He's likely cultivating something like 'Infant Demon Origin Qi,' a Basic Method."

"If he confronts other Righteous or Heterodox Practitioners, his myriad Infant Demon Powers are bizarre and terrifying, making him difficult to contend with."

"But if he's unlucky and faces that woman Xiao Meiniang from Seeking Immortal County, he'll be in big trouble."

"Xiao Meiniang's combat prowess is actually average among the elders of the Infant Sect, but she specializes in 'infant mother source energy,' which specifically counters Infant Sect practitioners who have fallen or mutated."

"Thinking about it, the reason this infant demon chose to guard the Array tonight is probably to avoid that old woman. After all, Xiao Meiniang has been bustling about all day, and she should be resting now."



"Keep these words to yourself, don't let them slip, to keep your elder brother here out of trouble."

As Tao Qian listened to all this, he nodded slightly, conveying his understanding to the black maggot old man.

To show his thanks, he even pushed all the food and fine wine from his own table to the old man.

Meanwhile, in his heart, he silently replied: "Rest assured, after tonight, even if that infant demon knows you leaked his secret, he won't have the time to trouble you."

Without further thought, Tao Qian didn't continue any rash actions.

Having discovered this information was enough to fulfill his task.

From the beginning, Tao Qian never thought he could learn the secrets of the "Hundred Demon Embryo Blood Refining Array." Demons may lack discipline, but such secrets weren't something common demons would know.

Spirit transfer!

Tao Qian opened his eyes again, finding himself returned to Star-picking Pavilion.

He immediately left the quiet room and upon seeing Master Xiao, relayed the news he had just gathered.

With a "whoosh," Master Xiao, who was always infinitely gentle, suddenly became excited and repeatedly said, "Good, good, good."

"It's just that infant demon guarding the Array, which fits my plans perfectly."

"I'd have had to exert more effort had it been someone else. That ugly baby suits our purposes exactly."

After speaking, Master Xiao looked at Tao Qian.

His flawless, jade-like face showed a look of admiration and said, "This peculiar junior of mine is becoming more and more pleasing to the eye. If there's an achievement tonight, I shall credit you with another merit."

His voice had barely faded when, without waiting for Tao Qian's reply, Master Xiao looked mysteriously towards the void.

His voice suddenly turned fierce and chilling to the bone.

"Dear Daoist friends, tonight the moonlight is clear and cool, the perfect time to sweep away the group of demons."

"Boom boom boom"

Once again, in Tao Qian's mind, a series of terrifying vibrations resounded.

In front of him, Master Xiao's figure vanished without a trace, leaving only a light scent of milk lingering at Tao Qian's nose.

Following the lead of this energy, Tao Qian seemed to be able to see above the sky terrifying figures disappearing into the Void, heading straight for Iron Buddha Mountain where the demons were gathering.

A great battle between good and evil!

Another attack on Iron Buddha Mountain!

Without having to guess, Tao Qian felt as though he could already foresee the great battle that would unfold on the mountain tonight.

Almost without delay, Tao Qian immediately returned to his residence.

Afterward, his spirit transferred back to the puppet body.

To watch the battle, what better vantage point could there be, closer, more immersive?

More precisely, Tao Qian was now in for an immersive experience.

Still in that demon-filled, foul-smelling side hall, Tao Qian's puppet body, now a bit closer with the black maggot old man, were together appreciating the Enchanting God Dance performed by the nipple ring-wearing Female Mage, while also audibly commenting with appreciation.

The old Demon by his side was also greedy. Seeing that Tao Qian was in a good mood, he suddenly put forth a request:

"Little brother, I hear that your Matchmaker Immortal is most skilled in brewing Peach Blossom evil magic."

"One treasure among them is called 'Peach Blossom fairy wine,' with infinite wonderful uses, and a single drink offers Ultimate Happiness."

"You also know that your elder brother here loves indulging his palate. If it's convenient, why not fetch some for me, your elder brother would be endlessly grateful."

Upon hearing these words, Tao Qian's expression did not change, but he couldn't help but swear inwardly.

What nonsense was this old thing dreaming up? Peach Blossom fairy wine requires nearly a hundred years of fermentation to yield a few jars.

Pan Hongniang has only been practicing for a bit over a hundred years herself and had only brewed it once, cherishing it exceedingly on ordinary days.

"Now obsessed with my Puppet Body, she frequently mutters, 'Fei'er, once you achieve a Breakthrough, Red would marry you. There are many rules in the mortal world's marriage ceremonies, but we'll dismiss most of them and only hold the wedding in our Peach Blossom Immortal Valley. We'll use the Peach Blossom Immortal Brew as our wedding wine. After we drink it, we'll be husband and wife.'"

Even if it wasn't Tao Qian himself, even the Puppet Body's true nature felt a tingling on the scalp upon hearing these words.

"You old thing, you want Pan Hongniang's Peach Blossom Immortal Brew? Are you seeking death?"

Tao Qian mocked inwardly.

On his face, though, he lightly coughed a few times, intending to politely decline.

Suddenly, a thunderous noise violently erupted.

Boom!

The side hall?

No, it would be more accurate to say that the entire Iron Buddha Mountain trembled at that moment.

Before the Evil Cultivators and Magicians inside the hall could react, they heard the enraged roar of the "giant troll baby demon" lord from outside.

"Xiao Meiniang, what madness has taken you now? Aren't you afraid your precious son will be torn apart and eaten by us?"

As these words echoed, not only Tao Qian but also every Evil Cultivator and Magician, whose minds and wisdom remained intact, cursed the infant demon within their hearts.

Fools!

Indeed, as the Evil Cultivators rushed out from various places, intending to support the Array formation.

They saw, before Iron Buddha Mountain, high in the sky, the sudden emergence of over a dozen figures exuding a terrifying presence.

There were no Demon Suppression Army forces, nor the group of Loose Cultivators and young disciples that had appeared during the day.

Those who had come to subdue Iron Buddha Mountain this time were more than a dozen Daoists whose Cultivation and energy were terrifying.

Men and women, mostly middle-aged and elderly, were present.

But the leader was none other than "Xiao Meiniang," a Ten Thousand Infant Sect Elder whom nearly all the demons on the mountain coveted.

Clearly enraged by the infant demon, she did not answer but cast a deadly glance toward the infant demon, who, backed by the Array, was straining to hold its ground. She then retrieved an item from her bosom.

It was actually a small and exquisite rattle drum that could serve as a child's toy.

The next moment, Master Xiao shook it lightly several times.

Only two "dong dong" sounds were heard, and a strange sonic wave enveloped Iron Buddha Mountain.

All the Evil Cultivators and Magicians heard clear, childlike laughter by their ears, and their spirits became vague, as if they saw their own childhoods.

This effect seemed to cause no harm.

Until everyone was interrupted by the giant troll baby demon's roar, they looked up to see its huge and ugly body seemed to be compelled into a frenzy, rushing out from the side hall that served as the "Array Point."

Along the way, any obstruction, be it a building or a demon.

Was smashed to pieces by the infant demon with terrifying strength. Tao Qian personally witnessed a Bear Demon at Foundation Establishment Stage, which normally resembled a small mountain, intercepted in the infant demon's path and casually slapped into a rain of flesh by its enormous hand.

What's worse, this was not of his own volition.

While madly rushing towards Master Xiao, he shouted, "Quick, stop me, I've been caught by the old woman's 'Summoning Baby Technique'."



As he cried out, however, no one dared to intercept.

The demons were not fools; nobody wanted to become a rain of flesh, which might later be stewed into soup by a group of Pig Demons.

Except for the several great lords inside the main hall, although the incident was sudden, they were, after all, Great Demons.

Accompanied by a piercing shriek, an amazing demonic aura burst from Iron Buddha, and a Python Demon, wearing a black and red cloak, suddenly revealed its huge form. A thick python tail moved faster than the eye could see, knocking aside all obstacles, intending to wrap tightly around the giant troll baby demon.

But unexpectedly, those "dong dong" drum sounds abruptly intensified.

What followed was a scene that left all the demons speechless:

The giant troll baby demon, laughing uncontrollably, raised its round, bulging hands high, then slammed them down.

The Python Demon's tail, which could shatter mountains, turned into minced meat in an instant. Struck by this blow, everyone could see the Python Demon's eyes, as large as lanterns, bulge as though they might pop out.

The demons had not the time to mourn over this great lord, for they saw the "infant demon lord" suddenly using an extremely peculiar Escape Skill.

Truly leaving no traces, flashing Instantaneous Movement, it also evaded the interception of Naked Saintess, Wolf Demon, and other great demons.

With a "boom," he successfully broke through, leaping away from Iron Buddha Mountain.

Like an infant rushing toward its mother, with open arms, going for the rattle drum in Master Xiao's hands.

In the night sky, a sharp, piercing yet childlike voice resounded:

"I want to play with this."

"Give it to me, give it to me."

All present, including Tao Qian and the demons, felt chills up their spines upon hearing this voice.

The change had come too quickly!

But it was clear to everyone that the giant troll baby demon lord was strong, yet almost completely countered by Xiao Meiniang.

Even more horrifying was the object Master Xiao then retrieved from her bosom.

It was an exquisite, magnificent pair of scissors, made of jade and gold...

Upon seeing those scissors, the infant demon went mad.

As if suffering from a split personality, he shouted that he wanted to play, while at the same time frantically looking back at the main hall of the Iron Buddha Temple to plead for rescue:

"Bodhisattva save me, Bodhisattva, please save me quickly, this is the 'Ten Thousand Infant Life Extending Scissors,' and if I get clipped by it, my soul will scatter."

"Bodhisattva, save me, if I survive, I will be a Demon Child under your command, without any complaint."

Chapter 79: The Difference of Mountain 9, Tao Qian Picks Up a Bargain

At this moment on Iron Buddha Mountain, anyone could hear the panic in the voice of the giant troll baby demon.

They all spoke the words "Demon Child under the Bodhisattva," clearly showing he was truly facing a life-and-death crisis.

One should know that being a Demon Child meant not only offering up one's body but also entrusting one's divine soul and will into the hands of Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, with life and death completely in her control.

However, it was exactly these words that had an effect.

Looking at the sky above Iron Buddha Mountain, Master Xiao tossed the "Ten Thousand Infant Life Extending Scissors" in his hand, only to see a burst of infant spirit source qi, two extremely sharp yet life-containing beams of cutting light, entwined with each other, grinding towards the charging infant demon.

Amidst the infant demon's screams, everyone became aware.

These scissors were an Infant Sect Magical Treasure, a "True Device" of terrifying power and wondrous effect, life could be prolonged by a smooth cut, and life could be ended by a reverse cut.

Especially for an infant demon, equivalent to a Mutated Fallen Demon Cultivator, just one hit would dissolve all the Infant Demon Origin Qi inside its body, snuffing out its life in an instant.

Seeing itself about to face calamity, the giant troll baby demon deeply regretted and cursed inwardly: "I should not have been greedy, following the promise of Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, saying if I seize Xiao Meiniang, she would be given to me. I haven't seized the person, yet my life is about to be taken away first."

As the old demon cursed in his heart, suddenly a loud Buddhist chant erupted in the vast area of Iron Buddha Mountain.

In an instant, it dispelled that peculiar rattle sound, and then with a clang of colliding energies, those seemingly indestructible Ten Thousand Infant Cutting Light were blocked by a hand as pale as frost and snow.

After colliding with the bracelet on that wrist, the cutting light tumbled back into the Life Extending Scissors, cradled by the auspicious clouds of infant spirits, and returned to Master Xiao's hand.

The owner of that arm, needless to say.

Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva!

She seemed to have always been there, still lazily lying on the lotus throne; although lacking the attendant nun monks, the Buddha Light surged behind her head, and the mysterious Buddhist chants compelled one to gaze at this splendidly beautiful, sacred yet devilish Female Bodhisattva.

After casually deflecting the True Device attack, she did not even glance at Master Xiao but rather arrogantly turned her head to look towards the charging giant troll baby demon.

Her pale fingers slightly bent and flicked lightly on the forehead of the infant demon; with a "thump," the infant demon, capable of demolishing mountains, trembled and then flew back, crashing towards the Iron Buddha Temple.

At this moment, the seductive voice of Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva finally spoke up: "You wishful thinking infant demon, when did my disciples ever include such an ugly child? I'll save your life this once. In the future, find some handsome little monks to offer to me, then consider this ugly baby somewhat filial."

Upon hearing this, everyone was momentarily stunned. Reject a top-tier fighter and servant because of ugliness?

And the giant troll baby demon, now embedded in the mountain wall, showed a look of ecstatic joy on his face; it was the first time he felt grateful for his ugliness, continuously knocking his head on the ground and thanking the Bodhisattva.

It was rather strange, at this juncture.

Master Xiao along with numerous Daoists and Heterodox experts, had the opportunity to act, even possibly joining forces to attack Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva.

But inexplicably, Master Xiao made no moves.

Even the Bodhisattva herself sensed something was amiss, yet her sacred face showed no change, seemingly indifferent.

She lay within the Ten Thousand Feet of Buddha Light, high above, overlooking all beings here with absolute power, whether they were her Evil Cultists or the several Righteous experts on the other side, they seemed like mere ants in her eyes.

She even stretched languidly in public, and in that moment, the magic robe she wore slipped, revealing that beneath, she wore nothing; the world's most beautiful body was about to be exposed to all eyes.

Unfortunately, the Rainbow Robe and Jade Belt on the lotus throne seemed to have a mind of its own, and just happened to cover the key areas.

However, this partial concealment was even more fatal.

The Righteous side was still okay, but on Iron Buddha Mountain, chaos erupted instantly.

The cultivators and demons here were much wilder compared to TENGshe Town previously; stimulated by "Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva," numerous demons' clothes tore apart, revealing their true forms, screaming and howling incessantly, those Evil Cultivators too kneeled down, knocking their heads frantically, chanted "Merciful Bodhisattva, Merciful Bodhisattva, please... give us alms..."

Tao Qian amidst them, held a tempting Peach Blossom branch in his hand, using Pan Hongniang's Peach Blossom five lustful qi to fend off the lure of the corporeal Bodhisattva.

Simultaneously thinking silently: "What a perverse old demon, last time it was the same in TENGshe Town, and here it comes again."

While Tao Qian commented mockingly, the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, very pleased with the chaotic scene on the mountain, revealed a seductive smile that enchanted all beings.

Then, she turned towards Master Xiao.

Afterwards, she made a provocative gesture that nobody expected, but was very effective.

Lazily she reached into the Void, and as Buddha Light surged, suddenly she held a half-grown infant.

Wrapped in red swaddling clothes, tightly bound with her own golden rope, it was the Immortal Infant Tong Dudu.

The Beautiful Corpse, holding Tong Dudu, even deliberately weighed him, then said to Master Xiao: "Miss Xiao, you better watch closely, your son is in my hands. Whatever means you've prepared, bring them out now. Don't make me impatient, swallowing this fresh Immortal Infant might also replenish some of my energy."

At her weighing, Tong Dudu also woke up.

Immediately upon seeing Master Xiao in front, his large eyes quickly filled with tears.

Chapter 80: The Difference of Shan Jiu, Tao Qian Picks Up a Bargain



Subconsciously, she was about to call for help, but then seemed to think of something. A strong color of panic emerged in her eyes, and then she yelled towards Xiao Meiniang:

"Mom, run, don't save me."

"Du Du is really fine, I even gained some weight, don't come to save me, run away."

"This beautiful sister, she isn't human at all, she has cultivated..."

Clearly, Tong Dudu was silenced halfway through her words.

No one heard the critical part, nor did they care about it anymore.

Because the moment Tong Dudu was brought out, Xiao Meiniang could no longer contain herself and struck out in anger.

Boom!

Visible to the naked eye, a pillar of infant spirits' energy burst into the sky. The two sharp glows that seemed able to sever everything again swept through, while various luminescences lit up on Master Xiao's body, and magical treasures floated up one by one, mixed with numerous killing intents, wrapping around Master Xiao who then charged directly at the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva's lotus throne.

Such fighting stance was utterly without method.

It was just the posture of a thoroughly enraged mother, attempting a chaotic slaying in a mutual destruction.

Naturally, it was unlikely to be effective.

With a thunderous crash, the result of their collision was immediately apparent.

Although the lotus throne was bumped several miles away, Xiao Meiniang was completely "captured" by the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva.

On that throne, the only thing wearing the Rainbow Robe and Jade Belt, the Beautiful Corpse, was pressing down on Master Xiao's hands with one hand, her whole body leaning forward, a charming and eerie smile on her face, greedily sniffing the milky scent emanating from Master Xiao.

While sniffing, she even leaned in as if to kiss Master Xiao.

She also uttered phrases that could lead one into a mutated and fallen state of mind.

"Miss Xiao of the Xiao family is indeed as famous as she is reputed to be, truly too captivating."

"Although this Bodhisattva usually has a penchant for beautiful young men, trying a top human delicacy like Miss Xiao occasionally is also excellent..."

"Hmm?"

The Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva's blood-quickenning speech was interrupted.

Suddenly, those ten or so Daoists and heterodox experts who had not made a move, all appeared around the lotus throne at the same moment.

Among them, eight took out a "Sword Talisman," their Source Qi gushing forth, merging with the talismans.

Accompanied by a rumbling sound, eight extremely fearsome pillars of sword light surged skywards.

What the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva did not expect was that under her, the wide, soft bosom of Xiao Meiniang also suddenly erupted a column of sword light, flipping her over while abruptly forming a huge array, directly trapping the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva inside.

And this array was mobile, dragging the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva far away, continuously distancing her from the area protected by the "Hundred Demon Embryo Blood Refining Array."

Only then did the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva react.

For the first time, a tone of surprise appeared in her voice.

"The Lingxiao Demon-suppressing Sword Array of the Wudang Sect?"

"So you intended this, luring me away from the Blood Refining Array area to trap and kill me with the sword array?"

"But even so, are you confident you can kill me? You should know that Miss Xiao is still within the array..."

The Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva hadn't finished speaking when Xiao Meiniang's voice came through again.

This time, every single word was filled with an extremely cold killing intent.

However, it was not directed at the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva, but rather at the myriad of Evil Cultivators and demons on Iron Buddha Mountain.

"Daoist Feng, Daoist Zhou, Daoist Zhang, Xun Daoist, please do not hold back. Slay all the demons on this mountain, break the Hundred Demons Blood Refining Array, and then come back to help us refine this demon."

Just as Xiao Meiniang had spoken these words,

among the dozens of daoists, the four who did not hold sword talismans suddenly turned around and headed toward Iron Buddha Mountain.

Each of these four had an aura that chilled the heart and terrified the soul.

Leading the way was a man with a dignified appearance and thunder flashing in his eyes. He wore a blue Daoist robe and had a pair of enormous wings under his ribs. As he flew, the region around Iron Buddha Mountain began to resound with the roaring sounds of wind and thunder.

At his side was a middle-aged cultivator with red beard and hair, even his Daoist robe appearing as if made of flames. Despite the smile on his face, he looked even more terrifying to the demons, as behind him faintly emerged the phantom of a Fire God Giant that seemed to pierce the heavens and reach the earth.

The other two were an old man and a beautiful woman.

The old man wore a plain Daoist robe, his flesh aged and his eyes murky. He held a tattered iron sword and, as he flew, anyone who met his eyes felt as if their bodies were being cleaved into two. It wasn't an illusion— in that instant, several little demons were suddenly split into halves, thus meeting a terrible fate.

The beautiful woman looked mature and alluring in a pure white Daoist robe, which seemed nothing special until she raised her hand to form a Dharma Seal Daoist Mantra. In an instant, from quite a distance from Iron Buddha Mountain, the water of a great river began to surge and roll as if the Tianhe itself were pouring backwards, flooding toward Iron Buddha Mountain.

Seeing these four approaching Iron Buddha Mountain, a horde of demons was struck with terror, frozen in place.

Now they vaguely understood—had Iron Buddha Mountain fallen into a trap?

These cunning cultivators had no intention of a fair fight; they planned to slaughter all the demons first, then circle back to kill the Bodhisattva.

Sinister and shameless, yet very effective.

Only when their own Naked Saintess, giant troll baby demon, Python Demon, Yin Yang Elder, and several other major figures met them and erupted in combat did the lowly demons react.

These low-level Evil Cultivators, first instinct was to "boom" scatter and flee.

"Run, without the Bodhisattva's protection, we're going to die."

"I don't want to die, these four Daoists look too terrifying."

"Wind Thunder Cliff, Fire God Temple, Taisu Sword Sect, Tianhe Sect... and those Daoists restraining the Bodhisattva, are done for, have the Major Sects within Southern Yue allied to slaughter us?"

"Why run? Fight, we outnumber them, kill these Daoists, devour their corpses, and snatch their treasures."

...

Shrieks, screams, and the sounds of combat mixed together, throwing Iron Buddha Mountain into complete chaos.

Compared to the first time True Master Xiao led the Demon Suppression Army, this time, although the Demon Suppression Army hadn't come, nor had those Loose Cultivator disciples arrived.

But those who had come, were all high-level Great Cultivators with ruthless hearts and cruel hands.

Moreover, they had even played a "tactical" game, dazzling Tao Qian.

Watching the mountain fall into chaos, Tao Qian wondered if he should seek protection from his own master to avoid having his well-maintained Puppet Body casually destroyed by those vicious experts.

Just as he was about to make a move, suddenly a figure darted out from a corner.

The greenish hair was extremely noticeable, allowing Tao Qian to immediately recognize who it was.

This person grabbed Tao Qian and dragged him toward a secluded Zen Room nearby.

While dragging him, he leaned in and whispered mysteriously,

"Follow me, Situ Daoist, I'm taking you to a good place."

"I have a feeling that tonight there'll be plenty of treasures to find there."

"Trust me, Shan Jiu's intuition has never been wrong; I picked up all these treasures the same way."

"You're my new friend, this time each of us can pick once, it's fair and fun."