

A Man Like None Other

Novel

Chapter 6471

Taking advantage of the brief opening, he flashed forward, accelerating towards the exit at the end of the space.

Seeing this, the soul beasts gave chase. Those peak seventh-grade soul beasts were incredibly fast, relentlessly attacking him, trying to entangle him.

David desperately fled ahead, the soul beasts in hot pursuit, their black soul attacks constantly striking the golden light, each impact causing excruciating pain to his soul.

His speed gradually slowed, and the golden light dimmed. Just as he was about to be overtaken by the soul beasts, he finally saw the exit at the end of the space.

A faint white light, like hope in the darkness, guided him forward. A

resolute glint flashed in David's eyes. He mustered his last bit of spiritual power, transforming into a streak of intense purple light, breaking through the encirclement of the soul beasts behind him, and plunged into the exit.

Behind him, the soul beasts roared in despair, their cries mournful, but they were blocked by the spatial restrictions, unable to pursue him out of the exit. They could only howl madly in the space, watching helplessly as David escaped.

Having broken through the second barrier, David's soul hovered in the void, trembling violently. The purple light had dimmed to its lowest point, and the

golden light of the Great Luo Golden Scripture had also weakened. His soul was exhausted, as if it would collapse at any moment.

David could only rest for the time being. He hadn't expected that even the Great Luo Golden Scripture would be unable to withstand this barrier.

"David, have you ever considered that these barriers might be fake?" At this moment, Bei Mingyuan suddenly spoke up.

"Fake?" David was taken aback.

"The Great Luo Golden Scripture is a treasure of the Daoist patriarch, even several Golden Immortals couldn't do anything to it. How come it's struggling to withstand the attacks of True Immortal Realm soul beasts here?"

Bei Mingyuan asked.

David thought about it, and it was indeed the case. Even with several Golden Immortals, the Heavenly Extreme Venerable couldn't break through the protection of the Great Luo Golden Scripture.

How come the attacks of these True Immortal Realm soul beasts were making the protection of the Great Luo Golden Scripture weaker and weaker?

Could it be that these barriers were all fake, and everything was an illusion?

David stopped speaking and slowly closed his eyes, immersing himself in emptiness.

With only his soul remaining, he couldn't use the Origin of Illusion, unable to discern whether he was still within an illusion, and could only rely on time to comprehend it.

David's soul hovered in the void at the exit of the second trial, its purple light dim and its golden light flickering uncertainly.

Around him was a void, without heaven or earth, without direction, only endless gray-white mist slowly flowing, enveloping him.

This was a buffer zone between the second and third trials, a place for rest and a chance for those who had overcome the trials to catch their breath.

The golden light of the Great Luo Golden Scripture was slowly recovering, the residual medicinal power of the Soul Nourishing Liquid was being absorbed little by little, and David's soul was gradually warming up, but he didn't rush forward.

Bei Mingyuan's words echoed repeatedly in his mind: "These trials are all fake."

Fake.

He closed his eyes; the stinging pain from the depths of his soul brought him back to his senses, but also filled him with doubt. Even

with the combined efforts of the Heavenly Supreme Venerable and several Golden Immortals activating the ancient Soul Refining Array, they hadn't been able to harm the Great Luo Golden Scripture in the slightest.

Yet here, a mere group of True Immortal Realm soul beasts could dim the golden light of the Great Luo Golden Scripture and cause his soul to tremble.

This was illogical.

The Great Luo Golden Scripture's defense was absolute, a power surpassing the Golden Immortal level; how could it be shaken by True Immortal Realm soul beasts?

Unless—the attacks of these soul beasts weren't real at all.

The damage they caused wasn't actual injury to the soul, but a mental illusion.

It was the illusion array's technique that made his soul "think" it was injured, causing the golden light to "think" it needed to expend more power to resist, thus dimming.

David's soul brightened slightly. He recalled what Bai Qian had told him back in the Celestial Realm: the fox clan's greatest strength wasn't attack, but illusion.

A true master of illusion didn't crush you with brute force, but made your five senses, your soul, and even your Dao heart believe that everything before you was real.

If your body believed you were injured, you would truly be injured.

If your soul believed you were attacked, your spiritual power would truly be depleted.

This Primordial Soul Forest was originally the territory of the demon race.

Wasn't illusion the demon race's greatest strength?

He slowly opened his eyes; the purple halo stopped flickering, becoming steady and resolute.

He didn't rush to pass the third trial, but instead floated cross-legged, closed his eyes, and focused his mind, sinking his consciousness into the depths of his sea of consciousness.

The golden light of the Great Luo Golden Scripture slowly flowed around him, no longer expanding outwards, but contracting inwards, inch by inch, returning to his soul.

The golden light grew weaker and weaker, finally almost completely dissipating.

David's soul was exposed in the grayish-white mist; without the golden light protecting him, he felt no stinging pain.

The mist was cold, but it didn't erode his soul.

He smiled.

Just as he suspected.

The attacks of those soul beasts, the damage from those restrictions, were all illusions.

The golden light of the Great Luo Golden Scripture had never been depleted from the beginning; it was merely cooperating with his perception to create the illusion of being "attacked."

If he had continued to believe it was real, he would have truly been trapped in the illusion array, never to escape.

Bei Mingyuan's voice rang out again, tinged with a hint of relief: "You finally understand. The trials of the Primordial Soul Forest don't test your combat strength, but your state of mind.

The Soul Forest Maze tests whether you can hold onto your true self when lost.

The battle against the soul beasts tests whether you can see through illusions in dire situations.

What truly traps you is never the Soul Forest, but your own heart."

David nodded, saying nothing more.

He stood up, transforming into a purple streak of light, and flew towards the third trial.

This time, he didn't activate the golden light of the Great Luo Golden Scripture to protect himself, but instead exposed himself naked in the grayish-white mist.

The mist flowed past him, harming him in the slightest.

Just as David was comprehending the true essence of the illusion array, five golden rays of light pierced the sky above Ten Thousand Demon Ridge, like five burning meteors, trailing long flames, rushing towards the Demon Emperor's Palace.

The five golden rays were incredibly fast, tearing through the sky and emitting piercing shrieks, startling the demon beasts in Ten Thousand Demon Ridge into prostrate themselves, too afraid to move.

A powerful pressure poured down from the sky, like Mount Tai pressing down, causing the entire mountain range to tremble slightly.

Qingqiu was drinking tea in a side hall. She picked up her white jade teacup, took a small sip, her amber eyes remaining completely calm, as if she had already anticipated this moment.

She put down the teacup, stood up, her long white dress trailing on the ground, making a soft rustling sound.

She walked to the entrance of the side hall, looked up at the sky, and a slight smile appeared on her lips.

"Celestial Venerable, you've come after all."

From the moment Celestial Venerable issued the bounty, Qingqiu knew he would definitely return; it was only a matter of time.

Chapter 6472

Gui Yuanzi emerged from another side hall, his expression grave, his brows furrowed.

He strode to Qingqiu's side and whispered, "Your Majesty, the Heavenly Venerable's arrival is ill-intentioned. The young master is still undergoing trials in the Ancient Soul Forest. If they interrupt him..."

He didn't finish his sentence, but his meaning was clear.

Qingqiu waved her hand, her tone calm yet carrying an undeniable authority: "The Ancient Soul Forest is a forbidden area of our demon race; outsiders cannot enter. No matter how strong the Heavenly Venerable is, he wouldn't dare to force his way in. I will stop them. You just need to guard the entrance and not let anyone disturb David's trials."

She paused, then added, "If I can't stop them, you take David and leave. Under no circumstances can he fall into the hands of the Heavenly Venerable."

Gui Yuanzi immediately bowed: "Your Majesty, rest assured, I will not fail in my mission."

Five golden lights landed on the plaza in front of the Demon Emperor's Palace. As the golden light dissipated, five figures appeared.

Leading the group was Venerable Tianji, clad in a long golden robe, a long sword at his waist, golden holy light swirling around him, exuding an aura

of majesty. Behind him stood four Golden Immortal elders: Elder Zhao, Elder Qian, Elder Sun, and Elder Li, their powerful auras radiating oppressive force.

The demon guards on the plaza gripped their weapons tightly upon seeing the newcomer, their expressions tense, yet none flinched.

Though their cultivation was inferior to the Golden Immortal elders of Tianji Palace, this was demon territory, and they could not retreat.

Venerable Tianji didn't even glance at the demon guards, his gaze fixed directly on the direction of the Demon Emperor's Palace. His voice, like muffled thunder, echoed throughout the valley: "Qingqiu, I have arrived. Come out and greet me."

The hall doors slowly opened, and Qingqiu emerged, dressed in snow-white robes, her long hair as black as ink, her figure aloof and untouched by worldly concerns.

She walked slowly to the center of the plaza, stopping before Venerable Tianji. Her amber eyes were calm and unwavering, and her tone was equally indifferent: "The Venerable Tianji's presence is an honor to Wan Yao Ling. May I ask what brings

you here?" Venerable Tianji didn't mince words, getting straight to the point: "Is Guiyuanzi with you? Is that purple divine soul also with you?"

Qingqiu didn't deny it. "Guiyuanzi is indeed a guest at Wan Yao Ling. As for the purple divine soul you mentioned, I don't know what you're referring to.

"The Venerable's eyes narrowed. "Qingqiu, I don't like beating around the bush. Guiyuanzi brought that purple divine soul from Guiyuan Sect; someone witnessed it.

Hand it over, and I'll leave immediately. If not, I don't mind personally searching your Ten Thousand Demon Ridge."

Qingqiu's lips curled slightly, her smile cold. "Palace Master Tianji, what arrogance! Ten Thousand Demon Ridge is the territory of the demon race, not your Tianji Palace. You think you can just search it as you please? I'd like to ask, what qualifications do you have?"

The Venerable's face darkened.

He hadn't expected Qingqiu to be so assertive, much less that she would turn against the Tianji Palace for an outsider.

In his eyes, Qingqiu was merely a mid-stage Golden Immortal, a minor demon emperor, utterly unworthy to challenge him, a peak third-grade Golden Immortal.

"Qingqiu, I'm only speaking politely to you out of respect. Don't be ungrateful." The Celestial Venerable's voice was icy, golden holy light surging around him, his oppressive aura crushing down on Qingqiu like a mountain, attempting to force her to submit.

Qingqiu remained unmoved. A faint white spiritual light shone around her, the primal power of the Nine-Tailed Celestial Fox, gentle yet resilient, completely blocking the Celestial Venerable's oppressive aura.

Although her cultivation was inferior to the Celestial Venerable's, this was the Ten Thousand Demon Ridge, protected by ancient restrictions, making her combat power far superior to that outside.

"Palace Master Celestial, I'll say it again, the Ten Thousand Demon Ridge is not a place for you to run wild. I don't care if you want that purple divine soul, but you cannot search within the Ten Thousand Demon Ridge. This is the rule, and the bottom line."

Qingqiu's voice was calm, but every word carried weight.

The Celestial Venerable fell silent.

His gaze lingered on Qingqiu's face for a long time, then swept over the Demon Emperor's Palace behind her, as if weighing the consequences of his actions.

Just then, Gui Yuanzi emerged from the side hall and stood beside Qingqiu, a cyan longsword gleaming in his hand, its expression cold and stern.

He didn't speak, but his stance was clear: he stood with Qingqiu.

The Celestial Venerable sneered, "Gui Yuanzi, you, a mere sect leader of Gui Yuan Sect, dare to oppose me?"

Gui Yuanzi remained composed, his tone flat: "Your Highness, I have no intention of being enemies with the Celestial Palace. However, that soul was brought back by me, and I cannot ignore its affairs. I beg Your Highness's understanding."

"Understand?"

The Celestial Venerable laughed, his laughter filled with mockery. "You, a mere Golden Immortal who has just entered the third rank, dare to ask for my understanding? Very well, since you don't know your place, I will personally show you what it means to be outmatched."

He raised his right hand, golden holy light condensing in his palm, transforming into a massive golden sword of light.

The lightsaber was ten zhang long, its blade covered in dense runes, each rune imbued with the power of a Golden Immortal's laws, radiating a world-destroying pressure.

He slashed down, the golden sword light cleaving towards the Demon Emperor's Palace.

Qingqiu did not retreat.

She raised her right hand, fingers spread, a white spiritual light surging from her palm, transforming into a gigantic nine-tailed celestial fox phantom, baring its fangs and roaring as it charged towards the golden sword light.

"Boom—!"

The white spiritual light collided with the golden sword light, unleashing a deafening roar.

The entire valley trembled, the ground cracked, and debris flew everywhere.

Qingqiu was blasted back several steps, a trace of blood trickling from the corner of her mouth, but her posture remained upright, her eyes still resolute.

Her cultivation was inferior to that of a Heavenly Supreme Venerable; in a head-on clash, she was no match.

Chapter 6473

The Celestial Venerable gave her no chance to breathe.

He raised his hand again, and golden holy light condensed into a second sword beam, even sharper and more domineering than the first.

He didn't want to kill Qingqiu, but he wanted to at least render her incapable of resistance.

Just then, Guiyuanzi moved.

He took a step forward, blocking Qingqiu's path, his cyan longsword unsheathed, its blade shimmering with cyan spiritual light, spiritual power surging, and he unleashed a slash.

The cyan sword beam collided with the golden sword beam, producing another deafening roar. Guiyuanzi was blasted back more than ten steps, his arm numb, his tiger's mouth split open, blood flowing down the hilt of his sword.

But he had blocked it.

The Celestial Venerable's expression changed.

He wasn't shocked by Guiyuanzi's strength, but by his determination.

A mere sect leader of the Guiyuan Sect dared to attack him; this was courting death.

"Guiyuanzi, are you insane?" The Celestial Venerable's voice was cold.

Gui Yuanzi wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth, raised his head, and looked at Tianji Venerable. His voice was hoarse but firm: "Palace Master, I'm not crazy. I'm just doing what I should do. That soul is very important to me, and I won't let it fall into anyone's hands."

Qingqiu also stood beside Gui Yuanzi again. The two stood side by side, one in white and one in green, their two figures standing out conspicuously in the golden pressure.

"Your opponent is me."

Qingqiu's voice was soft, but every word seemed to be carved into stone.

"Palace Master Tianji, this is not your Tianji Palace, this is the Ten Thousand Demon Ridge. I will not allow you to run wild here."

Tianji Venerable clenched his fists.

He wanted to kill Qingqiu, wanted to kill Gui Yuanzi, wanted to rush into the Ten Thousand Demon Ridge to find that soul.

But he couldn't—at least not now.

Although Qingqiu's strength was not as good as his, with the support of the Ten Thousand Demon Ridge and the help of Gui Yuanzi, he couldn't kill them in a short time, and might even be killed in return.

And once he made a move, it would be equivalent to completely breaking ties with the demon race.

At that time, the Heavenly Palace's situation in the Seventeenth Heaven will be even more difficult.

He took a deep breath, suppressing the anger in his heart.

"Good, good, good."

He said "good" three times in a row, each word seeming to be squeezed out from between his teeth, carrying an uncontrollable rage.

He looked at Qingqiu, then at Guiyuanzi, his eyes filled with killing intent. "Qingqiu, Guiyuanzi, I will remember you. I will not let this matter rest.

I will obtain that purple divine soul sooner or later. You can protect him for a time, but not forever. Once I obtain that divine soul, Guiyuan Sect and Wanyao Ridge will pay the price."

He turned and leaped into the air, transforming into a golden streak of light and flying into the distance.

The four Golden Immortal elders quickly followed, and five golden lights pierced the sky, disappearing into the horizon.

On the plaza, Qingqiu and Guiyuanzi stood side by side, watching the five golden lights gradually disappear, remaining silent for a long time.

"Your Majesty, you are injured." Gui Yuanzi turned his head, looking at the bloodstains at the corner of Qingqiu's mouth, his tone full of guilt. "I am incompetent and have implicated Your Majesty."

Qingqiu shook her head, raised her hand to wipe the bloodstains from the corner of her mouth, and said in a calm tone, "It's nothing, just a minor injury. I have lived for tens of thousands of years, this injury is nothing. But you, you took a sword strike from the Heavenly Venerable and are seriously injured."

Gui Yuanzi gave a bitter smile, "I'm fine. It's just that the Heavenly Venerable won't let this go. He retreated this time not because he was afraid of us, but because he was afraid of provoking a joint resistance from the demon race and the human race. Next time he comes, it will probably not be so easy to deal with him."

Qingqiu was silent for a moment, "I know. But we can hold out for as long as possible. As long as David obtains the Eternal Soul Wood and reshapes his physical body, we will have hope of turning the tide. As for what happens after that, we'll talk about it later."

She turned around and walked towards the Demon Emperor's Palace.

After taking a few steps, she stopped and did not look back.

"Guiyuanzi, that divine soul—David, who exactly is he? Is he worthy of your Guiyuan Sect's desperate efforts, worthy of my clan's trust?"

Guiyuanzi thought for a moment, then said sincerely, "Your Majesty, I don't know who he is. But I know that the Great Luo Golden Scripture chose him, and the fate of the Daoist sect rests on him. I believe he is worthy."

Qingqiu didn't speak again and walked into the Demon Emperor's Palace. The palace

doors slowly closed, obscuring her figure.

Guiyuanzi stood in the square, gazing in the direction of the Primordial Soul Forest, silently praying: Young Master, you must pass the trial, you must come out alive. The Heavenly Venerable has retreated, but the time left for them is running out.

He turned and walked into the side hall, sat cross-legged, and closed his eyes to heal his injuries.

Spiritual energy slowly circulated within his body, repairing the meridians injured by the Heavenly Venerable.

His face was pale, but his eyes remained resolute.

Outside the window, three blazing suns hung high, their silver, gold, and crimson rays intertwining and scattering, dyeing the entire earth a dark gold.

In the distance, the stone gate of the Primordial Soul Forest remained tightly shut. Deep within the darkness, David's soul was undergoing its final trial.

He was unaware that he had already passed the second trial, unaware of what was happening outside, and unaware that the Celestial Venerable had just visited the Myriad Demon Ridge.

He only knew that he needed to obtain the Eternal Soul Wood as soon as possible and reshape his physical body.

Because many people were waiting for him, and many things awaited his attention.

Chapter 6474

In the heart of the Ancient Soul Forest, the afterimages of the second trial's battle against the soul beasts completely dissipated, the violent shockwaves of divine souls slowly subsided, and the entire space returned to deathly silence.

A thin mist, interwoven with black and white, slowly surged and flowed, like smoke and haze, shrouding the path ahead. The mist was neither cold nor fierce, neither harsh nor malevolent.

It lacked the bone-chilling coldness of the first two trials, which devoured divine souls, and the bewitching chaos of illusionary arrays; it was eerily calm.

David's purple divine soul concealed all its sharpness, withdrawing the golden light protecting him with the Great Luo Golden Scripture, carrying neither defense nor vigilance.

Naked and light, he floated along the direction of the flowing mist, slowly flying towards the inevitable entrance to the third trial.

This was a choice he had carefully considered.

The first two trials—one a mentally devastating array, the other a battle of soul beasts—were both externally locked down, their killing intent exposed. He had only survived by relying on the Great Luo Golden Scripture's protection, his agility, and his tenacious will to the death.

The more outwardly dangerous the obstacle, the easier it is to overcome; the truly deadly trials are never the obvious clashes of swords or the impact on the soul, but rather the silent, intangible tests of the mind.

The third trial, placed last, is certainly different from the head-on battles of the first two. If one still clings to a defensive, brute-force approach, one is more likely to fall into the trial's hidden traps, causing one's mental defenses to crumble first, one's soul to become chaotic, and one to collapse without a fight.

It's better to let go of all defenses, go with the flow, face the trial with one's true nature, and connect with the Dao through one's soul.

Wisps of warm mist brushed across David's soul, cool and moist to the touch, like the lingering dew of a deep mountain morning, gently adhering to the texture of his soul, without erosion, tearing, or disturbance, without a trace of malice.

Instead, it exuded a distant and ancient aura, as if the peaceful essence accumulated over countless ages, encompassing all the past and accepting all joys and sorrows.

There was no stinging, no tremors, no hallucinations, no whispers of inner demons, only tranquility.

David traveled at a steady pace, unhurried and unhurried, his divine soul suspended in the center of the mist, drifting gently with the current, allowing the ancient aura around him to nourish his severely depleted divine soul essence.

He flew onward, his mind empty, not dwelling on the deep-seated hatred, not worrying about rebuilding his physical body, not anxious about the future, only quietly appreciating the unique serenity of this mist.

About the time it takes to brew a cup of tea passed, when the surging black and white mist ahead suddenly parted, like tides yielding to a king, revealing a gentle, warm gate of light at the edge of his vision.

This gate was not grand or tall, only about ten feet high, its entire body formed from pure, pale golden light. The halo flowed softly and restrainedly, neither dazzling, domineering, nor intimidating, but warm and soothing, gently permeating the mind and spirit.

Compared to the oppressive darkness of the first labyrinth and the bloodthirsty killing intent of the second soul beast space, the entrance to the third level seemed like two completely different worlds, a stark contrast that instantly relaxed his tense nerves.

Without hesitation, without testing, without wariness, David's soul stirred slightly, transforming into a condensed and gentle purple light, plunging into the pale golden light gate.

The next instant, the world spun, light and shadow shifted, and the surrounding space instantly changed.

The scene before him suddenly opened up, completely transformed.

The third level was neither a complex and captivating underground labyrinth, nor a closed and cramped trial chamber besieged by soul beasts, nor a perilous place filled with killing intent and restrictions, but rather a quiet and peaceful forest retreat, untouched by the world.

The entire forest was not large, only a hundred feet in circumference, with gently undulating terrain, soft and fertile soil, lush green grass, and countless tiny spiritual flowers blooming quietly, their fragrance subtly permeating the air. The trees in the forest were sparse and scattered, not dense or crowded, their branches spreading out, lush and green, showing no trace of the eerie, withered trees and chilling atmosphere of the outer perimeter of the Ancient Soul Forest.

Warm sunlight filtered through the gaps in the tree canopy

, scattering like scattered gold across the ground, dappled with light and shadow, swaying gently in the breeze, gentle and pleasing. There was no murderous aura of soul battles, no bloodthirsty stench of soul beasts, only the pure fragrance of grass and trees, the delicate scent of spiritual flowers, intertwined and refreshing, nourishing the soul.

From afar, the occasional clear, melodious birdsong echoed from the forest, its gentle notes resonating and adding a touch of life to this tranquil woodland.

This was no dangerous trial ground; it was clearly a secluded paradise hidden in a chaotic world, far from the killing, a perfect secret realm for quiet cultivation.

David's purple divine soul hovered silently in mid-air at the edge of the forest. With a slight thought, the protective golden light of the Great Luo Golden Scripture subconsciously shone forth, illuminating only a three-foot radius around him. It wasn't for defense, but solely to probe the surroundings, guarding against any hidden attacks.

His gaze swept across the surroundings, meticulously examining every inch of woodland, every tree, every inch of air.

The forest was calm and still, the vegetation growing peacefully. There were no hidden restrictions, no concealed illusion arrays, no lurking soul beast pressure, not even the slightest hint of hidden killing intent or sinister schemes.

Quiet, too quiet.

Peaceful, too peaceful.

The tranquility felt unreal, the gentleness unsettling.

David pondered silently, speaking to himself with a cautious tone: "The first three trials are progressively more difficult. The first two are life-or-death battles, extremely dangerous, yet the final trial is completely devoid of any killing intent or warning. This anomaly is definitely not a good thing.

The safer something seems, the more dangerous it may be. The test of this trial is not in the fighting, but elsewhere."

Deep within his sea of consciousness, the remnant soul of Bei Mingyuan slowly awakened, its voice carrying the wisdom and understanding accumulated over countless years, echoing softly: "You're right. The Soul Tree takes wood, the Soul Tree takes wood. People all think they're taking wood, seizing treasures, seeking the opportunity to reshape their physical bodies, but that's not the case.

This final trial is never about taking wood, never about refining cultivation, never about protecting the soul, but about protecting your heart."

"Heart?" David's soul stirred slightly, asking in confusion.

"Yes, it's the heart."

Bei Mingyuan explained slowly, his tone solemn. "On the path of trials, external forces can be overcome, but the inner demons are the hardest to conquer. No matter how strong your combat power, you can fight head-on;

no matter how high your wisdom, you can see through illusions; but the obsessions, love, hate, grudges, and severance of the human heart are the hardest to understand and the hardest to let go of.

Follow the guidance of my divine sense and look towards the center of the forest. That is your destination on this journey, and also the source of your inner demons in this tribulation.”

David did as he was told, looking up in the direction indicated by Bei Mingyuan’s divine sense. His gaze pierced through the sparse trees and reached the very center of the forest.

In the core of the clearing, an ancient tree stood quietly, all alone, neither leaning nor relying on anything, neither humble nor arrogant, standing at the very center where the spiritual energy of the entire forest converged.

Chapter 6475

The ancient tree wasn’t particularly towering or thick, only about the size of two people’s embrace. Its trunk was straight and upright, neither bent nor broken, its dark brown bark rough and thick, covered with a dense network of fine, varying shades of natural veins.

These veins meandered and intertwined, their shapes bizarre and varied; some twisted and contorted like distorted faces of people struggling in agony and wailing in despair; others stretched out like rivers of time, flowing ceaselessly across the ages.

Wisps of dark light emanated from beneath the bark’s veins, neither menacing nor malevolent, yet exuding a profound aura of antiquity and the weight of time.

The ancient tree was lush with leaves, their deep green hue warm and smooth, each leaf like a carefully sculpted piece of natural jade, its veins clear and its luster subtly understated.

Bathed in the warm sunlight, they shimmered with layers of soft, warm light, vibrant with life, a stark contrast to the dark, ancient trunk.

An ancient, soul-stirring tree.

The three essential treasures for reshaping the physical body, the core foundation upon which David had traversed the wasteland, braved three trials, and survived countless near-death experiences, were now within reach, right before his eyes.

David's purple divine soul suddenly glowed faintly, the hope suppressed in his heart for many days quietly surging forth. The desire for revenge, returning to his homeland, and seeing his old friends again instantly welled up in his mind.

However, he forcibly suppressed his agitation, still not rashly stepping forward to seize them. Instead, he stopped in place, carefully scanning the surrounding forest again, repeatedly confirming whether there were any hidden guardian soul beasts, deadly restrictions, or fatal illusion arrays.

He probed again and again, sensed again and again, but the result remained the same—no danger, no killing, no protection, no restriction.

The entire forest was only peaceful, only ancient, with only the ancient soul trees standing silently, nothing else.

Bei Mingyuan spoke again, his tone calm yet revealing an unwavering certainty: "No need to search anymore, searching more is useless.

This third trial has no traps, no restrictions, no illusion arrays, no guardian soul beasts—all external killing intent is gone. The trial is never about external things, but only about your heart."

"It doesn't test your combat strength, your intelligence, or your speed; it only tests three things."

"First, whether you dare to take this heaven-defying opportunity, and whether you dare to bear the endless karma behind it." "Second

, whether you are willing to let go of your obsessions and resonate with the essence of the Soul Wood with your pure soul." "Third

, after you take the Soul Wood, whether you can withstand the backlash of the obsessions of countless losers, never forgetting your original intention, never changing your true nature, and never going astray."

David remained silent for a long time, his soul fluctuating, a thousand thoughts flashing through his mind.

He carried the burden of a blood feud, the debt of blood owed to his fellow disciples, the unwavering desire to return to the Sixteenth Heaven, and the mission to revitalize the Daoist sect and continue the legacy of his ancestor.

His obsessions were deep, his heart heavy, love and hate intertwined, entangled in grudges—how difficult it was to achieve a mind free of distractions and pure innocence!

But he had no other choice.

For his physical body, for revenge, for all those who had perished, no matter how difficult, he had to do it.

Without further hesitation, David transformed into a soft purple light, slowly flying to the trunk of the Eternal Soul Wood, hovering steadily.

He concentrated his mind, his divine soul power condensing into a semi-transparent, illusory palm, which he gently extended and firmly placed on the rough, cold trunk of the Eternal Soul Wood.

The touch was cool, yet the texture was smooth, like touching ten-thousand-year-old jade, a delicate and unique sensation. A faint, ancient divine soul aura slowly emanated from his palm, peaceful and profound, neither agitated nor fierce.

David exerted a little force, attempting to uproot the Eternal Soul Wood and forcibly take it away. The tree trunk remained motionless, as stable as Mount Tai, rooted firmly in the void, unmoved by an inch.

He added three more points of his divine soul power, fully activating his primal force, but it was still useless. The ancient tree remained rooted, as if it had merged with this world and this void, unshakable in the slightest.

David frowned slightly, puzzled: "What's going on? Ordinary spiritual wood can be easily uprooted with divine soul power, but this soul wood seems to have no protection, so why can't it be moved by brute force?"

Bei Mingyuan gave a low, bitter laugh, slowly explaining: "You still don't understand.

The Eternal Soul Wood is not an ordinary plant. It doesn't take root in the soil, nor in the mountains, nor in the spiritual veins. It takes root in the origin of the void of all heavens, in the obsession of countless ages, and is one with the Primordial Soul Forest, sharing the same origin and coexisting."

"You try to pull it up with external force, to seize it with brute force. Don't even mention your remnant soul; even if a fourth or fifth-grade Golden Immortal came in person, it wouldn't budge an inch."

"To obtain it, one need not force, nor coercion, nor robbery, but resonance.

When the soul merges with the soul tree, and the heart harmonizes with time, it will recognize your heart, your path, and your convictions. Without your intervention, it will naturally bestow itself upon you.

If it does not recognize you, you may search every mountain and forest, destroy the void, but all in vain." Upon

hearing this, David instantly understood. He abandoned his brute force, withdrew his illusory hand, slowly closed his soul eyes, concealing all sharpness and eliminating all distracting thoughts.

He immersed all his divine consciousness deep within the trunk of the ancient soul tree, rejecting all external interference, emptying his mind, and eliminating all restlessness.

He did not think of the excruciating pain of his destroyed body, the overwhelming grief of his tragic death in Freedom Valley, the deep-seated hatred for the gods, the grand scheme of battle after reshaping his body, or the perilous road ahead and the surrounding enemies.

With no thought arising, all thoughts vanished; only his true heart remained, quietly comprehending.

At first, his divine sense sank into the Soul Wood, finding only boundless darkness, deathly silence, and utter emptiness.

There were no fluctuations in energy, no echoes of time, no lingering attachments; it was as if he had fallen into an endless void, a silence

so profound it was unsettling. David remained patient, neither arrogant nor impatient, calmly and attentively waiting, silently sensing, steadfast and unwavering.

He didn't know how much time had passed—perhaps a fleeting moment, or perhaps countless ages.

Deep within the boundless darkness, a faint light slowly began to flicker, tiny as a bean, dim and weak, like a candle in the wind, teetering on the verge of extinction, as if it would vanish completely at any moment.

David's heart stirred slightly. He cautiously activated his divine sense, slowly approaching, gently touching it, daring not to disturb it in the slightest.

Buzz—

A deep, ancient, and profound Daoist sound suddenly resounded deep within his sea of consciousness.

The voice, its origin unknown, its age unknown, traversed countless ages and spanned countless realms, carrying endless sorrow, regret, and obsession. It echoed within David's soul, causing it to tremble slightly and his heart to surge with turmoil.

Immediately following the final note, a vast, boundless, and intricate flow of information, like a burst dam, surged into David's mind, overwhelming and sweeping across his consciousness.

David instantly understood: the primal power of the Eternal Soul Wood was never about killing techniques, cultivation principles, or unparalleled spiritual energy.

It was the essence of the souls of countless challengers over hundreds of thousands of years, the unfulfilled obsessions of countless seekers of the Dao, and the dying regrets of countless dream chasers.

Each wisp of soul essence contained a person's entire life. Each lingering obsession was etched with a tale of joy and sorrow.