

## Rise 185

### Chapter 185: Shock

This old Taoist even went to great lengths to fully embody the demeanor of a divine charlatan...

Zhu Ping'an watched as the old Taoist floated away with an air of superiority. At that moment, he felt that if the old Taoist were to suddenly shout, "Bald thief! Let go of that nun, come for me instead!"—

That scene would be so dramatic it would be a masterpiece.

Only after the old Taoist disappeared beyond the woods did Zhu Ping'an finally withdraw his gaze and shift his attention to the book that had been forcefully stuffed into his hands. The topmost book had yellowed pages, and its text was written in vermilion ink, making it particularly striking.

Zhu Ping'an's first reaction to the book's title was disbelief. Isn't this just a Taoist scripture? Does this book even suit me? What nonsense! You might as well have just said, "Young man, I see you have a destiny with the Tao!" What a swindling old Taoist!

Beneath the title was a line of small characters:

"Appendix: Lingxiao Shangqing Tonglei Yuanyang Miao Yi Feiyuan Zhenjun Qingteng Lüzhang."

Upon seeing this, Zhu Ping'an couldn't help but complain again. This Taoist title is ridiculously long—almost as long as that of a certain Ming Dynasty Taoist emperor recorded in history...

Then, all of a sudden, Zhu Ping'an felt as if he had been struck by lightning. He quickly reread the small characters beneath the book's title—no, he read them again just to be sure. Lingxiao Shangqing Tonglei Yuanyang Miao Yi Feiyuan Zhenjun... Wasn't this the very title that the current Emperor Jiajing had given himself? The famous Taoist Emperor from historical records?!

Jiajing had conferred upon himself three Taoist titles over time. Lingxiao Shangqing Tonglei Yuanyang Miao Yi Feiyuan Zhenjun was the first one he gave himself. Later, he bestowed two additional titles upon himself, the second one being even more exaggerated: "Jiutian Hongjiao Pujishengling Zhangyinyang Gongguo Daosi Ren Zijixianweng Yiyang Zhenren Yuanxu Xuanying Kaihua Fumo Zhongxiao Dijun." The third and final title was even lengthier: "Taishang Daluotianxian Zijichangsheng Shengzhi Zhaoling Tongsanyuan Zhengying Yuxu Zongguan Wulei Dazhenren Xuandu Jingwanshou Dijun."

Zhu Ping'an then carefully examined the book's title once more. Suddenly, knowledge of classical Chinese studies from his past life surfaced in his mind. Zhajiao—also known as Zhajiao Rituals—were Taoist ceremonies. Qingci

(also written as Qingci in another form) and Lüzhang in the small characters beneath the book's title referred to the same thing: Taoist petitions submitted to the heavens during rituals. These petitions were talismans written in vermilion ink on green vine paper, hence the term Lüsü (green scripts).

Recalling historical records, Zhu Ping'an remembered that Emperor Jiajing was devoted to Taoism and the worship of spirits. He indulged in Taoist practices throughout his life. Because of his passion for Qingci (Taoist petitions), those skilled in writing them gained favor. In the Ming Dynasty, ministers competed to please the emperor with their Qingci. The notorious Grand Secretary Yan Song, for instance, rose to power due to his expertise in writing these petitions and was even nicknamed the Qingci Prime Minister.

According to The Ming History: Table of Grand Secretaries, after the seventeenth year of Jiajing's reign, out of the fourteen Grand Secretaries, nine of them had started their careers by writing Qingci. Notable figures included Yan Song and his son, as well as Xu Jie.

A famous saying from the Ming Dynasty stated: "Baguwen gets you into the court, Qingci gets you the prime ministership." This meant that while mastering the Four Books and Five Classics could earn someone a position in government, true political success required proficiency in Qingci.

At that moment, Zhu Ping'an felt uneasy. He instinctively looked in the direction where the old Taoist had disappeared.

Could this be a coincidence?

His expression turned strange. After all, he had already experienced the unexplainable phenomenon of transmigrating into this world...

Carefully placing the first book into his bag, Zhu Ping'an shifted his attention to the second book. This one was written in regular ink, and its title shocked him even more.

Gripping the book tightly, Zhu Ping'an felt as if he had been struck by lightning. Once again, he looked in the direction where the old Taoist had disappeared, his face full of disbelief as he muttered:

"Could that old charlatan just now have been Lan Daoxing...?"

As for why Zhu Ping'an suddenly suspected that the old Taoist was Lan Daoxing, it all stemmed from this second book.

Perhaps most people hadn't heard of this book before. However, if one were to come across it now and manage to comprehend even a third of its content, then congratulations—

If you were a civil servant, you might not immediately soar through the ranks, but at the very least, you would navigate bureaucracy with ease.

If you were a businessman, then congratulations again—you might not make fortunes overnight, but you would certainly achieve financial success.

In short, if you could decipher even a fraction of this book, regardless of your profession or status, from that moment on, you could look forward to promotions, wealth, marrying a rich and beautiful wife, and ultimately reaching the pinnacle of life.

Not for any particular reason, but simply because the author of this book is an extraordinary figure—someone who has achieved greatness in deeds, virtue, and words. Even those who manage to grasp just a fraction of his wisdom become remarkable themselves, whether in ancient or modern times, in the East or the West.

Decades after him, a man surnamed Xu learned a portion of his philosophy from one of the author's unnamed disciples and eventually became the Grand Chancellor. Meanwhile, across the ocean in a certain island nation famous for producing adult films, a man named Tōgō Heihachirō read this book in modern times and, as if he were on stimulants, went on to crush two of Russia's great fleets...

That's right—the author of this book is none other than Wang Shouren (courtesy name Bo'an), known to the world as Mr. Yangming. This book is a collection of his recorded sayings and letters on learning.

In his previous life, Zhu Ping'an had read Ming Dynasty Tales while in school and had been deeply fascinated by Wang Yangming. He had looked up related materials and even came across the title of this book. He had planned to borrow it from the library to read, but at the time, he had been too busy preparing for exams and eventually forgot about it. He never expected that the book he had once longed to read would now fall into his hands in this life.

Fate truly works in mysterious ways.

Wang Yangming was a formidable man—his intellect rivaled Confucius and Mencius, while his military prowess surpassed that of Sun and Yue. There was no need to elaborate on his literary achievements—this man founded the School of Mind (Xin Xue), emphasizing practical application. In the officialdom of the Ming Dynasty, mastering this philosophy meant you could walk with unparalleled confidence; countless people had already proven its effectiveness.

As for his military abilities, they were even more astonishing. As a teenager, he had boldly petitioned the emperor, requesting command of thousands to sweep across the northern deserts, only to be severely scolded and beaten by his father, who called him an unfilial son. But as time would prove, his father had been

wrong to doubt him. He truly was a fearsome figure. When Prince Ning led over a hundred thousand troops in a grand rebellion, Wang Yangming crushed the uprising and personally captured the prince alive in just thirty-five days...

This book could be considered the culmination of Wang Yangming's lifelong insights. Zhu Ping'an held the book in his hands, barely able to believe that he had managed to obtain a copy of it in the Ming Dynasty, even if it was just a handwritten copy.

As for why Zhu Ping'an suspected that the old Taoist priest from earlier was Lan Daoxing—it was because, in the Ming Dynasty, the most famous mystic who followed the School of Mind seemed to be none other than that man.

Of course, it wasn't certain. It could have been Lan Daoxing's master, senior, junior, or even someone else entirely.

But that wasn't the main point.

The key issue was that if Zhu Ping'an succeeded in the imperial examinations, these two books in his possession would be of immense help to him when navigating the court, playing political games, and outmaneuvering the wily old foxes of the bureaucracy.

They would allow him to comprehend Qingci (imperial poetic decrees) and better understand the current emperor, Jiajing. After all, Jiajing frequently used Qingci to communicate with his ministers, believing it elevated his intellectual superiority. By mastering this book, Zhu Ping'an would essentially be able to

translate the emperor's thoughts. The saying goes that serving an emperor is like serving a tiger—knowing its moods and temperament makes survival much safer.

Furthermore, if he could truly understand and internalize the book's teachings, it would be of great benefit to his future path in life.

No matter what, after putting the two books into his bag, Zhu Ping'an turned toward the direction in which the old Taoist had left and gave a deep bow.

Whether a mystic or a sage, whether fate or coincidence—

In any case, he expressed his gratitude.