

Struggling to Survive with Regression Power in the Primordial Saint Sect

- Chapter 1: Book of a Hundred Lifetimes

[1,747 words]

Demon Sect, Primordial Saint Sect.

A vast sea of clouds churned like raging waves, and countless majestic peaks stood like islands scattered across the sea of clouds, arranged like pieces on a chessboard.

On the very outskirts of this chessboard, there stood a mountain noticeably shorter than the others, as if its peak had been sliced off, leaving a flat summit.

On the flat mountaintop, flying boats landed and took off, while the newly admitted registered disciples were lining up in a row.

Lü Yang was among them.

He had just transmigrated here, and upon opening his eyes, found himself in this place, with lingering memories in his body telling him that his current situation was quite dire.

According to the memories of his body's previous owner, under the rule of the Primordial Saint Sect, there was a nation called "Chen".

Every three years, the Kingdom of Chen would send a batch of registered disciples to the Primordial Saint Sect, while the sect in return would ensure the kingdom's favorable weather and the royal family's stability.

At first glance, this sounded like being accepted into an immortal sect and gaining the great fortune of achieving eternal youth and longevity.

However, in reality, none of the dignitaries or nobles of Chen were willing to come; only impoverished commoners like Lü Yang were sent as "Blood Offerings".

After all, despite thousands upon thousands of registered disciples being sent into the Primordial Saint Sect every three years, the number of official disciples never seemed to grow noticeably, while registered disciples simply vanished one after another, as if they were not entering a sacred place of cultivation, but plunging into a bottomless abyss.

Just thinking about it sent chills down one's spine.

“No wonder I feel so weak, like my body’s been hollowed out.”

Lü Yang pinched his arm, finding only soft flesh, without a single firm spot, feeling even worse as pain surged through his chest the moment he tried to get up.

“The original owner of this body seems to have been sick too... Damn it!”

Lü Yang cursed under his breath a few more times, realizing this was not merely a case of weakness, but a terminal illness, with only a few days left to live.

Just as Lü Yang was despairing, feeling that he would speedrun death right after transmigration—

A small point of light suddenly appeared before his eyes, then rapidly expanded in the wind, turning into a screen visible to the naked eye!

【Name: Lü Yang】

【Lifespan: 18】

【Cultivation: None】

【Talent: None】

【Cultivation Technique: None】

【Divine Ability: None】

【Treasure: None】

At this moment, looking at the system interface before him, Lü Yang almost wanted to cry.

Had he not heard that heaven never seals off all paths?

As long as he wished to walk, there would be a road beneath his feet!

System, add points for me!

Then, Lü Yang was dumbfounded.

Because no matter how he searched, up and down, left and right, he simply could not find the plus sign he was dreaming of in the skills section.

Not even a minus sign!

“Come on, system, where’s my stat-adding function?”

After a long, fruitless search, Lü Yang was forced to accept a cruel reality: the personal panel before him apparently had no add-point function.

In other words, if he wanted to improve, he would have to rely entirely on his own efforts.

Lü Yang: “...”

Damn it, before awakening the system, you wanted me to work hard.

Now even after awakening the system, you still want me to work hard?

Then what’s the point of my system awakening at all?

System, your mom is dead—

【Current remaining pages of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes: 100】

【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes: Upon death, return to the initial point in time and restart a new lifetime】

【After restarting, you can choose one of the following to inherit from your previous life: treasure, cultivation, or lifespan, or you can abandon all previous gains to awaken a new talent.】

Daddy, it’s fine now.

Lü Yang suddenly became excited.

A hundred cycles of rebirth—what an immense fortune!

As long as he made good use of it, it could absolutely help him soar to the heavens in one leap!

“Those whose names are called, step forward.”

At this moment, a black-robed Taoist appeared before the crowd, holding a register in his hands, a candlestick floating beside him, his expression sinister and gloomy.

“Drip your blood into the life lamp beside me and ignite the life fire. From then on, you will be registered disciples of the Primordial Saint Sect.”

Upon hearing these words, no one present showed any joy.

This was because most of those who had been sent here had heard of the Primordial Saint Sect's infamous reputation, knowing that being a registered disciple was more a curse than a blessing.

However, the black-robed Taoist paid no heed to the crowd's thoughts and continued calling out names one by one.

"Chen Liang."

"Here!"

The black-robed Taoist called out a name, and beside Lü Yang, a young boy with rosy lips and white teeth stood up and hopped over to the Taoist.

The little boy was extremely good-looking, with bright eyes that seemed almost able to speak, and more importantly, there was an aura of spiritual energy between his brows so obvious that even mortals could sense it.

Judging from his expression and demeanor, he appeared clever and precocious—undoubtedly a prodigy whom the great academies would have fought over in the mortal world.

Sure enough, the black-robed Taoist revealed a look of amazement upon seeing him:

"What a naturally gifted spirit child!"

"Thank you for your praise, Taoist brother." The little boy bowed respectfully, his tender voice making it hard not to feel a sense of affection.

The black-robed Taoist smiled even more joyfully.

"Very good, very good, our Primordial Saint Sect needs talents like you!"

As soon as he finished speaking, the black-robed Taoist lightly stroked a brush across the register, striking out 【Chen Liang】's name.

Thud!

The next second, without any warning, the little boy who had just been brimming with spiritual energy rolled his eyes upward and collapsed to the ground, completely lifeless.

After doing all this, the black-robed Taoist casually ordered:

"Send his blood and flesh to the Pill Refinement Hall, his bones and soul to the Treasure Refinement Hall, and his internal organs to the Beast Taming Hall. Do not waste such an excellent talent."

In just a few short words, he left the gathered registered disciples staring in shock.

The black-robed Taoist cackled upon seeing this:

“Fellow disciples, do not misunderstand.”

“Our sect has always valued ‘worth’, and thus a disciple’s excellence is judged solely by the value they can create for the sect.”

“That fellow disciple just now was a naturally gifted spirit child with strong bones and vigor. Only by dying could he create the greatest value for the sect. That’s why he had to die.”

“As for you all, being of mediocre aptitude, you can only create value by living, so there’s no need to worry about such things.”

“Next one.”

The black-robed Taoist continued calling names, while the people below looked terrified but dared not disobey, fearing they would follow the little boy's fate and lose their lives.

“Lü Yang.”

“Here.”

Lü Yang answered and stepped forward respectfully.

The black-robed Taoist’s gaze first landed on Lü Yang’s delicate and handsome face, showing a flash of delight, but then began examining his bones and physique.

Soon after, the Taoist shook his head in disappointment.

Clearly, in his eyes, Lü Yang had nothing going for him aside from his good looks.

“Send him to the Pleasure Hall.”

Lü Yang dared not ask any questions and quickly replied, “Yes.”

After the allocation was completed, Lü Yang received a jade token.

The token was nearly transparent, engraved with his name, and seemed to have a flame sealed within it.

In addition, he was given a cultivation technique manual.

The cultivation technique was named 《Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss》, the signature cultivation method of the Pleasure Hall to which Lü Yang was assigned, said to help cultivate true qi and step into the Qi Refining stage.

The old servant leading the way casually explained as they walked:

“The life flame inside your life token must be carried with you at all times. The sect’s formations, spirit plants, and spirit beasts recognize the token, not the person. If you go out and forget it, don’t blame me if you die within the sect.”

Before long, the group arrived in front of a hall.

Standing before the hall was a voluptuous and seductive woman dressed in a long skirt slit up to the top of her thigh, her every glance and gesture oozing charm and allure.

“Gulp...”

Lü Yang clearly heard someone beside him swallow hard.

Seeing the reaction, the beautiful woman did not shy away. Instead, she giggled, covering her mouth with a hand, while with the other, she teasingly lifted one side of her skirt.

Underneath, a jade token dangled, swaying lightly above her soft, creamy-white thigh.

The name engraved on the token: Yu Suzhen.

“This is the Pleasure Hall. I, Yu Suzhen, am also considered your senior sister.”

The next second, Lü Yang noticed Yu Suzhen’s eyes light up, her gaze locking onto him unabashedly, staring intently.

“This little junior brother is so handsome; he must surely belong to our Pleasure Hall.”

Yu Suzhen chuckled softly, then twisted her waist like a water snake and, with her skirts fluttering, sauntered over to Lü Yang, the sight making his head spin.

“I think you look quite good. Come with me, and I’ll introduce you to the Pleasure Hall.”

Lü Yang hurriedly cupped his hands respectfully:

“Thank you, Senior Sister Yu.”

“Why so polite?”

Yu Suzhen gave Lü Yang a coquettish glance, then turned around, swaying her plump hips from side to side, igniting the burning desires of everyone around.

Lü Yang, however, dared not look too much and followed silently.

“In our sect, disciples are divided into outer and inner gates. The outer gate has four halls: Treasure Refinement, Pill Refinement, Beast Taming, and Pleasure. These are where registered disciples are assigned.”

“Only after passing the tests of the outer halls can one enter the inner sect, receive true transmission, and become an official disciple.”

“You’re lucky to have entered our Pleasure Hall. Compared to the other three halls, there’s no suffering or hardship here. Our tests are much easier.”

As she spoke, Yu Suzhen suddenly leaned close to Lü Yang’s ear.

“Want to know what the test is?”

The next second, Lü Yang felt a warm breath against his ear, and a sweet fragrance filled his nostrils. Turning his head, he saw an exquisitely beautiful face close at hand.

“Please enlighten me, Senior Sister,” Lü Yang said, lifting his head.

“That would be dual cultivation.”

A soft, tender voice whispered in his ear, like a lover murmuring sweet nothings, and before the words were fully spoken, a slender jade hand gently rested on Lü Yang’s head.

Delicate and full~

Lü Yang couldn’t help but suck in a sharp breath.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 2: Following Heaven is Easy, Defying Heaven is Hard

[1,353 words]

Go up, or not go up, that was a troubling question.

However, very soon, Lü Yang was no longer troubled.

Because he had no right to refuse at all, under the bright daylight and clear sky, Yu Suzhen directly laid her hands on him, tore off his clothes, and took a bite.

“Hiss!” Lü Yang’s teeth trembled, and he struggled, saying, “Senior Sister, wait, at least let’s change to another place.”

“No need, just here!”

Lü Yang found himself utterly unable to refuse, and thinking of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes as his backup, he simply lay down and stopped resisting.

In an instant, a fierce battle unfolded.

One was a true demonic witch of the Demon Sect, the other was a transmigrator dog hanging on for dear life.

After the time of one incense stick.

Yu Suzhen frowned discontentedly.

“Just this?”

“Truly useless.”

Yu Suzhen cursed angrily when she saw the situation: “You clearly have such a good-looking face, yet you hardly have any primal yang, and you can’t even last a moment.”

“A pretty but useless small fry, small fry!”

Almost at the same time, Lü Yang’s face turned pale.

Immediately after, he discovered that his remaining vital energy had all flowed into Yu Suzhen’s body, and his already thin body became even more withered.

“Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss?”

In his mind flashed the cultivation method distributed during assignment, and Lü Yang suddenly understood: the so-called test of the Pleasure Hall was probably to have registered disciples mutually harvest and supplement each other through the Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss, like raising gu worms, with only the last survivor being able to ascend to a formal disciple.

“Congratulations, Senior Sister Yu!”

At the same time, several registered disciples around them walked over with fawning faces: “After harvesting this last person, Senior Sister should be able to reach the Qi Refining stage.”

“Once reaching Qi Refining, no longer a mere mortal!”

“We hope Senior Sister will take care of us in the future, we are willing to serve at your beck and call.”

Watching this scene, Lü Yang suddenly laughed.

“Hehe.”

A wasted medicinal dreg suddenly laughing instantly attracted everyone’s attention, and Yu Suzhen also glanced at Lü Yang before saying blandly:

“Junior Brother, why are you laughing?”

“I am laughing for Senior Sister.” Lü Yang said sincerely: “I was initially worried about Senior Sister’s health, but now it seems I was overthinking.”

“Worried about my health?” Yu Suzhen was stunned.

“Yes.” Speaking of this, Lü Yang sighed with emotion: “Before entering the sect, I lingered too long at the Entertainment Department and caught syphilis. Senior Sister acted too hastily just now, I didn’t have time to mention it. But since Senior Sister is about to reach Qi Refining, a mere syphilis shouldn’t be a problem, right?”

Yu Suzhen: “...”

【An enraged Yu Suzhen beat you to death.】

【Current remaining pages of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes: 99】

【Restarting a lifetime, you may choose one of the following gains from the previous life:

One: Treasure.

Two: Cultivation.

Three: Lifespan.

Four: Give up all gains and randomly awaken a talent based on your previous life's experience.】

“Those whose names are called, step forward to me.”

Lü Yang opened his eyes and saw the black-robed Taoist on the platform, only then realizing he had returned to the square where newcomers were assigned upon first entering the Primordial Saint Sect.

Clearly, the previous experience was real, the taste of the demonic witch still vivid in his mind, yet now it had all restarted, the past events like a fleeting dream.

Such a huge contrast left Lü Yang stunned for quite a while before he came back to his senses.

Feeling both emotional and secretly delighted, he thought, his Book of a Hundred Lifetimes was indeed a wondrous treasure!

Steadying his mind, Lü Yang lowered his head to look at the options in the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes.

He skipped the first three options directly.

After all, he had not even formally started cultivating before being harvested to death by Yu Suzhen, so the only real choice was the fourth one.

【Settling the experiences of your previous life.】

【After harvesting you, Yu Suzhen had indeed broken through to the Qi Refining stage, but unfortunately contracted syphilis, her true qi unable to expel it, bedridden for several months, and ultimately died from the illness.】

【Since ancient times, following Heaven is easy, defying Heaven is hard.】

【Martial arts are no match for divine abilities, and the gap between mortals and cultivators is greater than that between Heaven and Earth.】

【Yet you stepped into the game with your mortal body, cleverly using dual cultivation techniques, slaying a cultivator while being a mere mortal, an act worthy of defying Heaven — such defiance is no more than this!】

【You have awakened the white talent · Dual Cultivation Prodigy.】

【Dual Cultivation Prodigy: Your comprehension of dual cultivation techniques is extremely high, no cultivator of the same realm can harvest you, and any forced harvesting will only be reversed onto them.】

Immediately after, the glowing text on the panel changed again.

【Name: Lü Yang】

【Age: 18】

【Cultivation: None】

【Talent: Dual Cultivation Prodigy (White)】

【Cultivation Method: Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss (Introductory)】

【Divine Abilities: None】

【Treasure: None】

【Pages of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes: 99】

Lü Yang exhaled deeply, only feeling a surge of blood and qi rushing into his dantian, instantly replenishing his strength, vigorous as a dragon and fierce as a tiger, and his previously frail body gradually restored.

“Syphilis... it seems not yet healed, only that I can last longer now.”

Lü Yang carefully sensed his condition.

Aside from the physical recovery brought by the talent, Lü Yang had also gained much deeper insights into the dual cultivation method issued by the Pleasure Hall, the "Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss."

After all, compared to pure theory, practical experience was far more important, not to mention the bonus from his talent.

After that, everything developed as before.

Because of his naturally handsome face, Lü Yang was once again assigned to the Pleasure Hall, and once again encountered Yu Suzhen at the entrance, who picked him at first glance.

“What a marvelous Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss!”

This evil harvesting technique not only allowed harvesting of primal yin and yang but also could harvest knowledge — even experience from cultivation methods and divine abilities could be extracted!

Thinking of this, Lü Yang became even more diligent.

One day, two days, three days...

As time passed, Yu Suzhen's expression gradually shifted from enjoyment to terror, and her previously flat lower abdomen slowly began to swell.

"Enough, enough! Stop for now!"

"I, I really can't, ah!"

"I'm sorry, it's my fault, please wait a moment..."

Turning a deaf ear to Yu Suzhen's pleas, Lü Yang continued tirelessly to operate the Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss, his mind completely immersed in the joy brought by cultivation.

And during this process, he felt the existence of "Qi" for the first time.

This "Qi" was inside Yu Suzhen's body, and if not for their closeness at this moment, Lü Yang might not even have sensed it.

"This thing should belong to me!"

Thinking of this, Lü Yang did not hesitate at all, immediately operating the Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss to forcibly extract all of the "Qi" from Yu Suzhen's body.

"No!!!"

Almost at the same time, Yu Suzhen let out a miserable scream, then tilted her head to the side.

In the next second, Lü Yang only felt his spirit, energy, and essence merge with that "Qi," and then a tremendous shock occurred, as if an invisible gate had been flung open.

Lü Yang instantly experienced a flash of enlightenment: "I have broken through!"

The union of spirit and qi was called "Qi Refining"!

Yu Suzhen, as an old registered disciple of the Pleasure Hall, had been just one step away from reaching Qi Refining.

In the previous life, she had harvested him and completed the final step, successfully reaching Qi Refining.

In this life, however, she was counter-harvested by him, and her accumulated resources ended up benefiting Lü Yang.

From this day forth, he was a cultivator at the first layer of Qi Refining!

One breakthrough, ascending to a formal disciple, was akin to reaching the heavens in a single leap.

It sounded simple, yet had blocked countless registered disciples over the ages.

"How delightful. Senior Sister Yu, I will probably never forget you for the rest of my life."

Lü Yang stood up, looking at the now lifeless Yu Suzhen lying on the ground, and could not help but sigh with emotion.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,753 words]

When Lü Yang walked out of the meditation room, he discovered that someone was already waiting outside.

Lü Yang was startled and saw that the visitor was wearing a black Daoist robe, his expression sinister—it was precisely the black-robed Daoist who had previously assigned him to the Pleasure Hall!

"Greetings, Senior Brother." Lü Yang quickly saluted.

"You are quite good, a real talent."

The black-robed Daoist said with a smile, "I originally heard that Yu Suzhen had lured a very capable young lad into her room, and a breakthrough in Qi Refining was just around the corner."

"Unexpectedly, that venomous woman actually failed."

As he spoke, the black-robed Daoist looked at Lü Yang with a peculiar gaze.

Three days, a full three days!

Yu Suzhen's cries could even be heard outside the meditation room, and even though the black-robed Daoist considered himself experienced and knowledgeable, he could not help but feel a bit of admiration at this moment.

If this boy did not die, he would surely become a pillar of the Primordial Saint Sect in the future!

"Come with me."

The black-robed Daoist's name was Liu Xin, an official disciple of the Mending Heaven Peak, one of the Four Inner Peaks, responsible for guiding newly promoted registered disciples and conveying sect affairs.

"The Four Outer Halls and the Four Inner Peaks correspond to each other."

On the way, Liu Xin introduced with interest, "Apart from the Sacred Fire Cliff where the Sect Master resides, our sect mainly revolves around the Four Inner Peaks."

"You came out of the Pleasure Hall, so naturally, you must join my Mending Heaven Peak. I will first take you to update the roster."

Having someone to guide him was exactly what Lü Yang needed, so he quickly said, "Thank you, Senior Brother Liu."

"It is merely part of my duty."

Liu Xin said indifferently, "After updating the roster, I will take you to the other three halls. There are quite a few benefits for official disciples—think of it as welfare from the sect."

"According to the rules, each official disciple can only receive it once." Speaking of this, Liu Xin showed a hint of regret, "After entering the Inner Sect, if you want similar items again, you must complete missions issued by the sect and earn contribution points to exchange for them."

Lü Yang frowned and asked, "Contribution points?"

"They are the currency issued by the sect." Liu Xin explained, "After you update the roster, you should be able to view them through your disciple token as well."

Curious, Lü Yang immediately followed Liu Xin to update the roster.

The process was very simple—basically moving the Life Lamp he lit when he joined the sect from the Outer Sect area to the Inner Sect area.

Then Lü Yang injected a strand of Qi into the token at his waist, and immediately a line of text floated up:

"Official Disciple, Lü Yang."

"As an official disciple, the sect gifts you 50 contribution points free of charge, which can be used to exchange for spirit stones, techniques, magical tools, cultivation caves, etc."

"After entering the Inner Sect, you must pay contribution points to rent a cultivation cave, with rent at 30 contribution points per month. Of course, you can also choose to purchase a cave. As a newly promoted Inner Sect disciple, if you buy within ten years, you enjoy a 20% discount on the down payment."

—Introductions like these filled over a dozen pages.

After carefully reading through them, Lü Yang came to a conclusion: "This Inner Sect runs entirely on money!"

With contribution points, one could traverse the world, gaining access to techniques, pills, and treasures.

Without contribution points, one could not even afford a cave, let alone anything else.

At the same time, Lü Yang learned what kind of welfare Liu Xin had mentioned.

Every registered disciple, upon promotion to an official disciple, could use their disciple token to choose one magical tool, one pill, one companion spirit beast, and one dual cultivation furnace from the Treasure Refinement Hall, Pill Refinement Hall, Beast Taming Hall, and Pleasure Hall respectively—without spending any contribution points.

"Looking at it this way, it truly is welfare."

Lü Yang, with a thought, opened the list of redeemable items through his disciple token, and immediately rows of corresponding text appeared.

The cheapest techniques, magical tools, pills, spirit beasts, and dual cultivation furnaces all cost at least 100 contribution points.

In comparison, the rewards for sect tasks were miserably low, most only single-digit contribution points, and very few even reached double digits.

It could be seen that the four-piece free set given after promotion to official disciple was worth at least 400 contribution points—a considerable sum for any official disciple.

While contemplating, Lü Yang had already followed Liu Xin to the Treasure Refinement Hall.

The one responsible for receiving them was named Chen Hao, a steward of the Treasure Refinement Hall, who was also said to be an official disciple himself—the role of steward was one of his sect-assigned tasks.

According to Liu Xin, tasks with fixed positions like this in the Inner Sect were the most profitable.

Not only did they offer a lot of contribution points—one task alone could support an official disciple—but they also provided stability, making them a veritable iron rice bowl.

Unfortunately, there were too many monks and too little meat—without connections, one could not get such a task at all.

"Senior Brother Liu? It has been a while."

Upon entering the Treasure Refinement Hall, Lü Yang noticed that Chen Hao first gave him a once-over, then turned to Liu Xin with enthusiasm and said, "Bringing in a new disciple again?"

"Indeed."

Liu Xin grinned meaningfully, and said with a hint of implication, "Since you know, hurry up and bring out the finest magical tools from the Treasure Refinement Hall for Junior Brother Lü to have a look."

"Got it!"

Chen Hao nodded eagerly, then led them into the inner courtyard of the Treasure Refinement Hall.

However, as they walked, Lü Yang frowned in surprise:

"Isn't this... a disciple's cultivation chamber?"

Shouldn't the place for collecting magical tools be some kind of storage warehouse?

Upon hearing this, Chen Hao first looked puzzled, then suddenly realized, and laughed heartily: "Junior Brother Lü, you might not know this, but the finest magical tools are kept here."

Before his words even fell, the three of them stopped in front of a cultivation room.

"The disciple inside this room has been a registered disciple in the Outer Sect for three years. Unfortunately, he is a bit stubborn and went astray in his cultivation technique."

With that, Chen Hao directly pushed open the door.

Then Lü Yang saw that, right in the center of the room, a Daoist was sitting cross-legged on a meditation mat, eyes tightly shut, muttering to himself as if in a dream.

"Success... I'm about to succeed..."

Right after that, Chen Hao pinched a hand seal, and the Daoist inside the room suddenly opened his eyes.

The previously dull face instantly lit up with ecstatic joy:

"Hahaha! I've succeeded!"

Boom!

Before his voice had even faded, his entire body exploded with a loud bang, blood and flesh scattering everywhere before being sucked back in, completely merging into the skeleton left in place.

In no time, the living man disappeared completely.

In his place was a "Bone Sword", crystalline and jade-like, segment after segment perfectly orderly, gently falling onto the meditation mat, still radiating dazzling magical light.

Chen Hao stepped forward, picked up the "Bone Sword," and handed it to Lü Yang, then said with satisfaction: "The magical tool 'Bone Jade Sword' is considered top-grade even in the 『Book of a Hundred Treasures of True Grotto』. This Junior Brother was truly a talent—years of bitter cultivation have refined his power; otherwise, the magical light would not be so pure."

Lü Yang: "..."

Staring at the Bone Jade Sword in Chen Hao's hand, and thinking of the tragedies of his past life, Lü Yang felt a chilling cold spread through his bones, gaining a deeper understanding of the Primordial Saint Sect's style.

Summed up in eight words: survival of the fittest, everything put to use!

The sect expended resources to nurture registered disciples; therefore, they had to create value for the sect.

If they could not create value, then the sect would help them create it!

If they broke through and became official disciples, everyone would be happy.

If they failed, the sect would not keep them alive for nothing—they would recover every bit of resource spent to ensure no losses.

Thus, in the eyes of the Primordial Saint Sect, disciples were either clouds or water—different forms, but all still useful; there were no wastes.

"This really is... a sect true to its name."

Lü Yang closed his eyes and exhaled a deep breath of foul air.

Thinking of the 『Book of a Hundred Lifetimes』 he had as backup, he reopened his eyes, already regaining his composure.

"Junior Brother has good temperament, truly a fine talent!"

On the other side, seeing Lü Yang recover his emotions so quickly, Liu Xin's eyes flashed with a hint of surprise, then his smile grew even more radiant.

After that, Lü Yang followed Liu Xin to the Pill Refinement Hall and the Beast Taming Hall.

There, he respectively collected a "Qi Supplementing Pill" and a "Human-Faced Owl."

The former could nourish true Qi when consumed, while the latter was like a carrier pigeon—official disciples usually used it to send messages among themselves.

It was not until they came to the last item, the dual cultivation furnace, that Liu Xin ran into trouble.

"Junior Brother, you broke through too quickly."

Liu Xin shook his head and said, "You just joined the Outer Sect and spent merely one day in Qi Refining—it was too fast. The dual cultivation furnaces the Pleasure Hall reserved haven't even arrived yet."

"Why don't you wait a few more days, Junior Brother?"

As for the dual cultivation furnace, Lü Yang naturally did not care in the slightest.

He immediately cupped his hands and said, "I'll leave it all to Senior Brother's arrangement."

Liu Xin laughed heartily, then took out a jade slip and handed it to Lü Yang: "This is a secret transmission manual from our Mending Heaven Peak. Take it and cultivate well."

Lü Yang received the jade slip and immediately activated his spiritual sense to examine it.

The next second, an extremely complex cultivation method appeared in his mind.

『Innate Dao Book』

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 4: Guard Against the Unexpected

[1,719 words]

"Man is formed by innate Qi; refining Qi is refining oneself, purifying oneself, reversing the innate, to refine the perfect result of innate Qi where form and spirit are both wondrous."

After a long while, Lü Yang opened his eyes, his face showing joy.

Compared to the 『Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss』, the 『Innate Dao Book』 seemed to possess more of the complete heritage it ought to have.

The entire Dao Book started from mortal level, beginning with a set of innate exercises to temper the physique, even accompanied by a matching martial art called Innate Great Grappling.

Once the body was thoroughly refined, the cultivator must then begin to "reverse the innate," first refining the five viscera and six bowels, then the flesh, skin, tendons, and bones, until finally the entire physical form was completely refined into a strand of innate true Qi, thus becoming impermanent in form, immune to the harm of magic, and standing undefeated when fighting others.

Apart from this, the Dao Book also recorded many spells that could be used in conjunction with the innate true Qi.

Such as Heaven's Net Dust Mist, True Will Qi Sword, and Spirit Breath Gathering Techniques; the variety of spells and their diverse functions truly broadened Lü Yang's horizons.

However, just at this moment, Lü Yang, who had been reading with rapt attention, suddenly froze:

".Why is it gone?"

Instinctively, Lü Yang raised his head to look at Liu Xin, only to discover that the 『Innate Dao Book』 in his hands only contained the upper half, and the contents ended abruptly.

"Junior Brother, the Dharma must not be lightly transmitted."

Liu Xin chuckled lightly: "The second half of the 『Innate Dao Book』 involves the secrets of Foundation Establishment, and it is not included in the sect's welfare benefits; it must be exchanged with contribution points."

Hearing this, Lü Yang could only shake his head helplessly: "So that's how it is. It was Junior Brother's moment of rudeness."

"No matter, half of the Dao Book is enough for you to cultivate for now."

Liu Xin kindly patted Lü Yang on the shoulder: "Come, I'll take you to Mending Heaven Peak to choose a cave dwelling. Find a good place so we can interact more in the future."

Lü Yang nodded: "Thank you, Senior Brother."

Half an hour later, at Mending Heaven Peak.

In a secluded cave dwelling at the foot of the mountain, Lü Yang officially settled in, and the original furniture and items inside the cave dwelling were swept out as trash.

Watching this scene, Lü Yang had a multitude of thoughts surging in his heart.

"Seems like being a formal disciple isn't that easy either."

Mending Heaven Peak wasn't very large, and every year the Primordial Saint Sect had so many named disciples; even if the promotion rate was only one in ten thousand, it should have been enough to fill Mending Heaven Peak.

But in reality?

Along the way, Lü Yang found that Mending Heaven Peak was far from overcrowded — it was even a bit empty, with many cave dwellings left unused and without any disciples inhabiting them.

Where had all those formal disciples gone? Surely it wasn't because they couldn't afford to rent a cave dwelling?

Lü Yang shook his head, not dwelling on it further, and instead fetched a meditation cushion to sit down, lying with five hearts facing the sky, beginning his first cultivation session inside the cave dwelling.

Cultivation was fine before, but as soon as he started, Lü Yang immediately felt that compared to the outer sect, the density of spiritual energy here had nearly doubled, surging into his dantian, then circulating throughout his meridians, finally step by step integrating into his five viscera and six bowels, his flesh, skin, tendons, and bones.

The efficiency was so high that Lü Yang was visibly astonished.

In the same amount of time and using the same cultivation method, the amount of true Qi he could refine in a day at the outer sect, he could now refine in just one hour inside the inner sect's cave dwelling.

"No wonder it costs money to rent a cave dwelling in the inner sect."

It was easy to move from frugality to luxury, but hard to return from luxury to frugality; once one experienced the speed of cultivation inside a cave dwelling, it would be very difficult to endure cultivating elsewhere.

The next day, Lü Yang did not go out, instead staying cooped up in the cave dwelling, cultivating while reading the 『Innate Dao Book』 .

"Although cultivation in this world also values talent, there is no such thing as a spiritual root; basically, as long as one is determined, anyone can embark on the path of cultivation."

Even so, cultivation was not any easier because of this.

Because although mortals had no spiritual root restrictions when embarking on cultivation, the grade of the true Qi they refined still determined their future potential.

This was the role of "Dharma."

The higher the grade of the cultivation method, the higher the grade of true Qi refined, and the greater the chance of reaching higher realms in the future; conversely, the lower the grade, the more likely one would encounter bottlenecks.

True Qi was divided into nine grades and thirty-six ranks, with lower grades being superior and higher ranks being stronger.

Generally speaking, true Qi below seventh grade had no hope of reaching Foundation Establishment, while those below third grade would find forming a Golden Core nearly impossible, and without first grade true Qi, condensing a Nascent Soul would be ten deaths without one life.

"Rogue cultivators really have no way to survive."

Lü Yang couldn't help but sigh, compared to the great sects with complete inheritances, rogue cultivators had no choice in picking cultivation methods — they could only practice whatever they happened to find.

Under such circumstances, no matter how high one's talent or comprehension was, one would still lose at the starting line and end up regretting it for a lifetime.

The difficulty of cultivation was evident from this.

Thinking of this, Lü Yang gradually furrowed his brows.

"The 『Innate Dao Book』 refines 'Innate True Qi' which ranks at sixth grade, first rank, giving the cultivator hope to achieve Foundation Establishment; strictly speaking, it's already not considered weak."

However, it still did not meet his expectations.

If he were just an ordinary cultivator, he could have accepted it.

But now he possessed the Mysterious Treasure 【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】 , a treasure with limitless potential for the future, and a cultivation method that stopped at Foundation Establishment could no longer satisfy his ambitions.

"If only I could obtain one of those peerless true heritages ranked at first grade..."

Lü Yang fantasized for a moment, then sighed: "Forget it, the road still has to be walked step by step. If the stride is too big, crack, you might tear something important."

"First, cultivate the 『Innate Dao Book』 and become a great cultivator of the Foundation Establishment Realm."

Once the foundation was built, one could live for three hundred years, almost equivalent to an entire dynasty of mortal history, and would be recognized as a "great cultivator" even within the cultivation world.

Once he had enough strength, he would then seek even higher inheritances, and upon obtaining them, immediately start anew.

Repeating this cycle again and again, one day, his dreams would surely come true.

As long as he remained patient and did not act recklessly, time would always be his best ally — this was the confidence the 【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】 had given Lü Yang.

Ten days later, inside Lü Yang's cave dwelling.

A surge of white Qi rose and swirled, at times transforming into rolling black smoke, at times into an invisible Qi sword, and finally into a drifting, fairy-like human figure.

"I succeeded!"

Although the 『Innate Dao Book』 was profound, it was not difficult to cultivate; within just ten days, Lü Yang had successfully refined away his physical form and transformed his body into pure true Qi.

【Name: Lü Yang】

【Lifespan: 18】

【Cultivation: Qi Refining Stage One】

【Talent: Dual Cultivation Prodigy (White)】

【Cultivation Methods: 『Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss』 (Perfected), 『Innate Qi Refining and Body Shedding Technique』 (Perfected)】

【Divine Abilities: None】

【Treasures: None】

【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes Pages Remaining: 99】

Looking at the updated information on the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes, Lü Yang stepped on empty air, feeling his state had reached its peak; even the venereal disease from his original body had been cured without medicine.

"Hmm?"

Suddenly, as Lü Yang was basking in his success, his brows furrowed and he abruptly halted his movements, once again looking at the 【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】 and falling into deep contemplation.

".Something's wrong."

It felt as though he had overlooked something.

Lü Yang subconsciously recalled — in this lifetime, he had not encountered any significant difficulties, smoothly became a formal disciple, and smoothly received the 『Innate Dao Book』 .

In the next second, Lü Yang finally realized what he had missed.

【After harvesting you, Yu Suzhen had broken through to the Qi Refining Stage, but due to her deeply rooted venereal disease, the true Qi could not eliminate it. After being bedridden for several months, she eventually succumbed to her illness and died.】

In his past life, why did Senior Sister Yu die?

Since she was a formal disciple, she must have also received the 『Innate Dao Book』 . If she had successfully refined it, shedding her body and transforming it into Qi, how could she have died from a venereal disease?

She didn't complete the cultivation?

"Impossible!" Lü Yang shook his head.

The 『Innate Dao Book』 was not particularly difficult to cultivate, and since Yu Suzhen had the capability to break through to the Qi Refining Stage, no matter how poor her talent was, it should have been impossible for her to fail within a few months.

"Unless, she didn't practice the 『Innate Dao Book』 at all!"

At that moment, Lü Yang felt as if he had plunged into an ice cellar.

The sound of his heart pounding had never been so clear, and his breathing grew rapid. The excitement on Lü Yang's face swiftly faded away:

"The 『Innate Dao Book』 ... was it specially prepared by Liu Xin for me?"

Lü Yang thought of the scene he had witnessed at the Treasure Refinement Hall.

That named disciple of the Treasure Refinement Hall, thinking he had achieved the Great Dao, only to realize he had walked straight into death — not only did he fail to break through, but he refined himself into a magical tool.

That scene then, and this moment now, were they not the same?

At that moment, a familiar and friendly voice suddenly called from outside the cave dwelling:

"Junior Brother Lü, are you there?"

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[1,642 words]

"Senior Brother Liu? He came looking for me!?"

Hearing the voice coming from outside the cave residence, Lü Yang's pupils suddenly contracted, and his expression instantly turned extremely gloomy.

Not only did he not respond, but he also restrained his aura.

"..Junior Brother?"

The voice rang out again, but Lü Yang still did not respond.

Although there was no evidence, he had already firmly believed that there was a problem with the contents of the 【Innate Dao Book】 he had been cultivating!

"I really suffered due to lack of experience, I didn't even suspect it before."

"The Pleasure Hall and Mending Heaven Peak are closely related, so the cultivation methods should also involve dual cultivation, yet the 【Innate Dao Book】 had nothing to do with dual cultivation."

"He tricked me!"

"But why would he harm me?"

"Although the Primordial Saint Sect follows the demonic path, it still has sect rules."

"Formal disciples are strictly forbidden from private fighting, once discovered..."

At this thought, Lü Yang suddenly slapped his forehead.

"How could I have trusted the wickedness of the Demon Sect!"

"Once discovered, once discovered... if not discovered, then it's not considered private fighting?"

The more Lü Yang thought about it, the uglier his expression became.

Ultimately, it was due to inertia.

Liu Xin's previous words and actions had all faithfully fulfilled the duties of welcoming new disciples.

Not only had he introduced the internal affairs of the Inner Sect, but he had also explained the benefits disciples should receive: magical tools, pills, spirit beasts, and more.

He seemed to have done everything wholeheartedly without hiding anything, ensuring that Lü Yang lacked nothing.

Especially at the Treasure Refinement Hall, Liu Xin had even instructed the stewards there to give Lü Yang the best items.

But all of it was an illusion!

Everything before had been to set the stage for finally handing over the 【Innate Dao Book】 , making Lü Yang completely drop his guard and wholeheartedly trust his goodwill!

"Thinking back now, he probably even intended to embezzle."

"After all, if he killed me, the magical tools, pills, and spirit beasts I had received would naturally become his... no wonder he specially emphasized taking the best!"

Beast!

At this moment, another voice rang out from outside the cave residence.

The next second, with a "crack", the defensive formation of Lü Yang's cave residence exploded with a thunderous roar, and the door was forcibly torn apart by a flash of sword light!

With the door wide open, Liu Xin, with fluttering sleeves, strolled in.

Upon seeing Lü Yang, Liu Xin's face immediately showed a harvest-like joy, and he nodded in satisfaction.

"Junior Brother is indeed a talent."

Boom!

Before Liu Xin's words even finished, Lü Yang erupted!

A surge of overwhelming innate true qi wrapped around the 【Bone Jade Sword】 , transforming into a sharp sword light, slashing fiercely toward Liu Xin with unstoppable momentum.

However, the next second, the sword light froze abruptly.

"A dying struggle."

Liu Xin neither dodged nor evaded, simply formed a hand seal, and Lü Yang's body instantly lost all control, as if he had become a puppet manipulated by another!

"This 【Innate Dao Book】 is truly a treasure."

Seeing this scene, Liu Xin could not help but laugh heartily.

"The cultivator refines his body and primordial spirit into a strand of innate qi, which can be used as medicine, refined into a treasure, or even to boost cultivation."

"With this miraculous treasure, reaching the late stage of Qi Refining should be within my grasp!"

"Being able to assist me in breaking through, Junior Brother, you can consider your death worthwhile."

As his words fell, Liu Xin immediately began changing his hand seals.

Lü Yang suddenly felt his consciousness gradually fading, as if it was being forcibly wiped out!

At this moment, Lü Yang was struck with a sudden epiphany.

"This is the second half of the 【Innate Dao Book】 !"

"The first half was a trap for cultivation, while the second half was the true method, waiting for others to cultivate the first half and then become offerings!"

Rather than calling it a cultivation method, it would be more accurate to call it a method of refining.

Only, it was not refining objects, but refining people, and it made the person refine themselves, with the real cultivator hiding behind the scenes, saving effort and trouble.

It was called a Dao Book, but in truth, it was a demonic technique!

"You are truly capable, this lifetime, I'll let you have it."

Thinking thus, Lü Yang no longer resisted.

He let his consciousness dissipate, and after the initial shock and anger, he instead regained a calm and indifferent demeanor.

"A setback now will be wisdom later."

"You can trick me once, but I still have countless chances."

"I will remember this grudge!"

The next second, Lü Yang's consciousness sank into darkness.

In the void, only the sound of flipping pages remained, rustling softly.

【You were refined by Liu Xin, your consciousness completely transformed into a strand of innate true qi, and you died.】

【Current remaining pages of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes: 98】

【Upon restarting a new lifetime, you can choose one of the following rewards from your previous life:

One: Treasure.

Two: Cultivation.

Three: Lifespan.

Four: Abandon all rewards and randomly awaken a talent based on your previous life's experiences.】

"Those whose names are called, step forward."

A familiar voice came from the stage.

Lü Yang gritted his teeth to suppress his emotions, did not lift his head, and focused his attention on the panel before him.

Treasure, cultivation, lifespan.

If possible, Lü Yang of course wished to choose cultivation.

But he worried that it would be too suspicious and he would not be able to explain where his cultivation came from.

As for lifespan, he skipped over it directly.

"Can only choose treasure then..."

Lü Yang frowned deeply.

Speaking of treasure, he barely had the 【Bone Jade Sword】 to show for it, but without cultivation, he could not even activate it.

Just at this moment, Lü Yang's eyes suddenly paused.

Because just now, the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes gave him a sudden feedback.

"This... can also count as a treasure?"

Lü Yang was first stunned, then showed a thoughtful look, and finally gritted his teeth and made a decision: choose one, preserve one treasure obtained from the previous life.

The next second, an unexpected change erupted!

Without alerting anyone, all the anomalies were confined within Lü Yang's dantian.

Tracing the source, it was astonishingly a misty, surging mass of white qi.

Innate true qi!

In his previous life, Lü Yang had refined away his five internal organs, flesh, skin, tendons, and bones, finally forging innate true qi, and it actually counted as a treasure, now redeemed by him!

"Incredible."

Lü Yang lowered his eyelids, covering the delight flashing in his eyes.

Because he discovered that he could not only manipulate this mass of innate true qi like moving his own limbs, but also use it to cast spells from his previous life!

"Normally, this should have been impossible."

"Because to control innate true qi, one must know the secret method from the second half of the 【Innate Dao Book】 ."

"But I am different, because this strand of innate true qi is myself!"

The two were originally one.

To Lü Yang, it was equivalent to gaining an extra clone at the first layer of Qi Refining.

"Moreover, before I died last lifetime, I even heard Liu Xin say that this innate true qi, when used as medicine, could assist in breaking through realms... this strand of true qi will have great use in the future!"

After sorting out his gains, Lü Yang began his actions for this new lifetime.

First, he was again assigned to the Pleasure Hall.

Then, he drained Yu Suzhen to death.

But this time, to avoid attracting attention, Lü Yang did not use Senior Sister Yu's yuan yin to break through the Qi Refining Realm.

Instead, he fed it all to the innate true qi.

"This lifetime, I must survive, no reckless moves!"

Sure enough, when Liu Xin, who was waiting outside the door, saw that Lü Yang had not broken through after draining Yu Suzhen, he immediately lost interest in Lü Yang.

Next, Lü Yang patiently waited.

A dozen days later, a disciple from the Pleasure Hall named Qin Yu broke through.

Lü Yang saw Liu Xin rush over in excitement and happily take Qin Yu away.

A few more days later, Liu Xin announced that he would enter seclusion, and the Senior Brother responsible for welcoming disciples was replaced by someone new.

However, Lü Yang still did not show himself.

"Who knows what kind of person this new Senior Brother is... what if he is just like Liu Xin... hmm, better not be the one who sticks out."

"To be safe, I'll wait another month."

Thus, another half month passed.

Until another outer disciple successfully broke through to become an inner disciple, and remained safe and sound, Lü Yang finally chose to break through.

With the aid of innate true qi, Lü Yang actually did not need dual cultivation to break through.

However, to cover his tracks, he casually drained a few outer disciples.

This time, the formal disciple responsible for welcoming him was much more perfunctory, nowhere near as passionate as Liu Xin, and even showed a trace of disdain in his expression.

"This is the Library Pavilion."

After receiving his benefits, the Senior Brother casually brought him to a building and said, "Take the token, go in yourself, and exchange contribution points for whatever cultivation method you want."

After speaking, the Senior Brother turned and left without another word.

Seeing this, Lü Yang actually felt much more at ease.

Small figures had their own advantages — not being valued meant he could move unnoticed, exactly what he wanted.

Thinking of this, Lü Yang turned to look at the distant Mending Heaven Peak.

"Liu Xin... hmph!"

A few days ago, Liu Xin had exited seclusion, officially reaching the late stage of Qi Refining, and had even become a personal disciple of the Mending Heaven Peak's Peak Master, riding high on success.

Lü Yang snorted coldly and withdrew his gaze, striding into the Library Pavilion.

Although he harbored thoughts of revenge, he was still too weak now, without enough power.

Thus, his top priority was still to cultivate diligently.

Everything would be decided after he grew strong.

A gentleman's revenge, even after ten years, is not too late.

Temporary patience was no loss!

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Chapter 6: The Cultivation Method of the Demon Sect

[1,534 words]

Upon entering the Library Pavilion, Lü Yang immediately saw an elderly man with graying hair, lying listlessly on a rocking chair, basking in the sun while earnestly flipping through a Taoist scripture.

As soon as Lü Yang stepped through the door, the old man looked over at him.

"Another newcomer?"

The old man said indifferently, "Go inside and pick for yourself. Remember to follow the rules written inside, or if you die, don't blame me for not warning you."

"Thank you for your guidance, Senior."

Lü Yang cupped his fists in salute and then walked toward the bookshelves.

Sure enough, as soon as he approached, the disciple token hanging at his waist seemed to sense something, faint light emerging, before transforming into lines of text floating in midair.

"Lü Yang, disciple of Mending Heaven Peak."

"Eligible to receive the secret manual of Mending Heaven Peak 『Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss of Dragon and Tiger Intercourse』 for free. Additionally, first-time exchange of a cultivation method can be done through a zero-down payment loan."

Without hesitation, Lü Yang accepted it directly.

In the next moment, the content of the cultivation method appeared on the disciple token, and Lü Yang's consciousness quickly immersed itself within.

Only after a long while did he return to his senses.

"This cultivation method, why is it like the 『Innate Dao Book』 , also divided into upper and lower parts?"

Recalling the ending of his previous life, Lü Yang's expression turned somewhat ugly: " 『Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss of Dragon and Tiger Intercourse』 , when perfected, can cultivate a Yin-Yang Dragon Tiger Qi, ranked as a fifth-grade art, theoretically also a method pointing straight toward Foundation Establishment."

"But, what they gave me is only the Qi Refining part!"

Having learned his lesson from his previous life, Lü Yang was extremely wary of such half-finished cultivation methods and even harbored thoughts of giving up on cultivating it.

However, after pondering for a long time, he sighed once more: "I still have to practice it!"

If he cultivated it, there might be hidden dangers in the future.

If he did not cultivate, he might not even have a future!

Moreover, this 『Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss of Dragon and Tiger Intercourse』 was indeed profoundly mysterious, not only able to harvest the target's vital energy, but also able to harvest their knowledge!

Cultivation methods, divine abilities, experiences — he could harvest them all!

"Furthermore, cultivators who had been harvested by this method would gradually have their thoughts controlled by the practitioner, becoming utterly devoted and unable to extricate themselves, ultimately degenerating into puppets willing to die for the practitioner. Truly a devil art reaching the peak of treachery."

Lü Yang studied the cultivation method, silently comprehending it.

Just like that, another half an hour passed before he attempted to circulate his energy, two streams of true qi flowing at his fingertips, constructing the dragon and the tiger, faintly about to merge into a brand new form of true qi.

"Mm!"

In the next second, Lü Yang's face turned pale, and the true qi at his fingertips dissipated.

"Failed? Well, that makes sense. Although I have grasped the theory, I have not yet practiced it in actual combat. A dual cultivation method is, after all, not meant to be practiced alone."

Still, Lü Yang was not discouraged and turned his gaze toward the dazzling bookshelves before him.

According to the rules of the Library Pavilion, as a newly initiated formal disciple, he still had one more opportunity to exchange for a cultivation method or divine ability with a zero-down payment loan.

What surprised Lü Yang was that the Library Pavilion did not only house demonic arts.

There were also many cultivation methods obviously originating from righteous sects, covering an extremely broad range, from divination, sword techniques, five elements magic, and more — almost everything imaginable.

" 『Minor Heaven Severance Art』 , 『Upper Taiyi Five Elements True Method』 , 『Longevity True Explanation』 , 『Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula』 ..."

Lü Yang browsed for quite a while before finally making his choice.

" 『Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula』 , price: 1000 contribution points."

"Detected that you are redeeming for the first time. You may take a zero-down payment loan, with an annual interest rate of thirty-six percent, to be repaid over ten years. Do you wish to exchange?"

How much???

Lü Yang almost cursed out loud.

Thirty-six percent annual interest meant that he would have to repay 460 contribution points every year, totaling 4600 points over ten years!

Borrowing 1000 and repaying 4600?

Bleeding someone dry to the bone!

"Wait... I'm different!"

Lü Yang's eyes suddenly lit up.

For others, the zero-down high-interest loan might be a deep pit, but for him, it was completely irrelevant.

At worst, he could restart — what did debts from a past life have to do with him?

Thus, as long as he wished, he could freely exploit the Library Pavilion's cultivation methods and divine abilities!

Since he had no intention of repaying, Lü Yang became much more composed.

With a grand gesture, without even blinking, he took the loan and purchased 『Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula』 .

Then something unexpected happened to Lü Yang.

When he previously received 『Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss of Dragon and Tiger Intercourse』 , the content of the cultivation method was provided directly.

However, this time, Lü Yang only received a message:

“The cultivation method is being dispatched and is expected to arrive at your cave residence within three days.”

“Please wait patiently.”

Looking at the message on the disciple token, Lü Yang was somewhat puzzled.

What did it mean that the cultivation method was being dispatched?

Could it be that this cultivation method was a lone copy, without any transcriptions?

That said, Lü Yang still believed that the Primordial Saint Sect wouldn't just swallow up his cultivation method like that.

Before leaving, he once again sought out the old man at the entrance of the Library Pavilion.

“Senior...”

Just as Lü Yang was about to bow, the old man on the rocking chair spoke, “I'm not really a senior. I'm also a disciple of the sect, just a bit older than you.”

Hearing this, Lü Yang was briefly stunned, then corrected himself: “Senior Brother, do you know whether the sect provides cauldrons suitable for dual cultivation methods like ours?”

In the Demon Sect, Lü Yang naturally had no intention of staying morally pure or avoiding dual cultivation.

Anything that could make him stronger, he would use.

“Cauldrons, huh...”

The old man glanced at Lü Yang and suddenly asked, “Did you take a loan to purchase a cultivation method?”

Lü Yang was momentarily dazed, then nodded.

“Then you don't need to worry about this matter.”

Saying this, a subtle and meaningful smile appeared on the old man's face: “Though those cultivation loans are infuriating, they do come with perks.”

“Just go back and wait!”

Still puzzled, Lü Yang returned to his cave residence.

But very soon, he understood why 『Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula』 required time to be delivered, and what exactly the old man meant by “perks.”

Three days later, a box was delivered to the entrance of Lü Yang’s cave residence.

Lü Yang carried the box inside and opened it.

Then he saw a tall and curvaceous woman with sharp, phoenix-like eyes exuding a heroic aura, bound hand and foot and stuffed into the center of the box.

Although she couldn’t be called an unparalleled beauty, she was undeniably born attractive.

Her bare face wore no makeup, yet radiated an ethereal elegance.

And because she had stayed too long in the hot and stuffy box, her body was covered in glistening sweat, droplets rolling down her fair neck into her chest.

“Demonic Sect!”

The woman looked at Lü Yang, her gaze filled with hatred as if she wished to slice him into a thousand pieces.

At the same time, she seemed to realize her fate, and despair appeared on her delicate face.

Lü Yang frowned at the sight: “You are... a disciple of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion?”

“So what if I am?”

The woman closed her beautiful eyes, and two lines of clear tears slowly slid down her pale cheeks: “Just kill me!”

Only then did Lü Yang come to a realization.

『Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula』 was a secret divine ability of the righteous powerhouse in the south — the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion.

He had previously wondered how the Primordial Saint Sect had gotten their hands on it.

Now he understood.

『Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss of Dragon and Tiger Intercourse』 could extract the target’s knowledge and experience.

And the sect had directly delivered to him an official disciple of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion.

In other words, if he wanted 『Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula』, he just had to extract it from her.

“In this way, not only is the cultivation method passed on, but the problem of the disciple needing a cauldron to cultivate is also solved. Killing two birds with one stone — truly maximizing value.”

Making full use of everything — that was indeed the style of the Primordial Saint Sect.

Compared to the righteous sects who endured bitter cultivation through winter and summer, this was the true cultivation method of the Demon Sect.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,443 words]

A few days later.

Inside the cave residence, Lü Yang sat cross-legged on the meditation cushion, pinching a sword seal with his right hand, condensing a spot of spiritual light at his fingertip, which eventually turned into a white bone flying sword as thin as a cicada's wing.

The sword was blue-white in color, and when it moved, it roared with thunderous sound.

"Go!"

Lü Yang flicked his finger, and the white bone flying sword instantly turned into a magnificent streak of light several zhang long, soaring out, its sword light howling like heavenly thunder rolling across the sky!

"Good sword formula!"

Seeing this scene, a look of delight immediately appeared on Lü Yang's face, and then he switched his sword seals, causing the white bone flying sword to split into two in midair.

The next second, Lü Yang's figure disappeared from where he stood, as if teleporting, directly appearing at the place where one of the sword lights was.

With the change of sword seals in Lü Yang's hand, his figure seemed to transform into a bolt of lightning, freely shuttling between the two sword lights.

Just like this, after a long time, Lü Yang finally stopped moving, his face filled with excitement.

"Good! What a marvelous Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula!"

This sword formula was actually very simple; after mastering it, the practitioner could split off sword lights and then instantly move into one of the sword lights.

The higher the mana, the farther the movement distance.

If the Sect Master of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion personally took action, he could even sit within the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion and with one sword, teleport thousands of miles away, casually taking the enemy's head.

And this was merely the basic transformation of the sword formula.

It was said that at higher levels, the sword light could even manifest the might of Divine Firmament thunderbolts, but sadly that part of the cultivation method was not something Lü Yang could touch.

It was not that he could not acquire it, but that Yun Miaoqing herself did not know it either.

But that was understandable, after all, if it were the complete version of the 『Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula』, it would definitely not be purchasable for a mere 1000 Contribution Points, even 10000 Points might barely suffice.

"Hmph, so foolish and incompetent!"

A sneering voice came from behind.

Lü Yang turned his head and saw the female disciple from the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion looking at him with a face full of disgust, disdain, and contempt.

After several days of interaction, Lü Yang had come to understand her quite well.

The girl's name was Yun Miaoqing, an inner disciple of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion, a disciple of the Divine Firmament True Person, primarily cultivating the 『Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula』, and had once reached the sixth layer of Qi Refining.

Lü Yang looked at Yun Miaoqing curiously and said, "Did I use the sword formula incorrectly?"

Hearing this, Yun Miaoqing turned her head away and said, "Do you think I would tell you? You demon, even if you stole my sword formula, you are only imitating superficially like a cat drawing a tiger!"

"Is that necessary?"

Lü Yang shook his head and walked to stand in front of Yun Miaoqing, wearing a helpless expression.

"Are you sure you don't plan to tell me? Or do you want me to use that again?"

"That..."

A flush of red instantly spread across Yun Miaoqing's delicate face.

Her beautiful eyes became momentarily misty, but she quickly regained clarity, glaring at Lü Yang with hatred.

"Isn't it just that demonic technique? You think I will submit?"

"Although you say so... but you have already submitted once, you know." Lü Yang pointed at the emblem on Yun Miaoqing's chest and said, "You haven't forgotten, have you?"

"You are spouting nonsense!"

Seeing the mark on her own body, Yun Miaoqing pursed her lips in humiliation.

"That time was just you taking advantage of my weakness!"

After speaking, she tightly grasped the pendant at her neck.

It was a delicately crafted small white jade sword, a magical sword only possessed by disciples of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion, serving a similar purpose as Lü Yang's disciple token.

"I am a disciple of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion and sworn enemies with the Demonic Path, that will never change!"

"No matter how powerful your demonic technique is, a person's heart will not be changed by the temptations of these evil ways."

"My loyalty to the Sword Pavilion will never waver."

"I swear upon my magical sword!"

As her voice fell, Yun Miaoqing clenched her silver teeth tightly and looked at Lü Yang with determined eyes, like a pure lotus unstained even when trapped in muddy waters.

Another day passed.

Inside the cave residence, Lü Yang sat cross-legged on the meditation cushion, his five hearts facing the heavens.

After a long time, Lü Yang finally let out a heavy breath of turbid air, while Yun Miaoqing also lifted her swan-like fair neck and let out a leisurely sigh.

"Actually, you have already mastered the Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula quite skillfully, there are no major problems, and even if there are, they lie in external things..."

Yun Miaoqing's face was flushed red, and she spoke weakly.

Under Lü Yang's severe interrogation, she eventually surrendered and begged for mercy.

When Lü Yang questioned her again, she only snorted coldly, and then obediently said:

"Our Sword Pavilion's disciples, as long as they enter the Qi Refining Realm, will use a secret method of the sect to extract a metallic essence object and refine it with various external medicines to produce a Sword Pill."

"All the sword techniques in the Sword Pavilion require the assistance of a Sword Pill to exert their full power, and the higher the quality of the Sword Pill, the greater the power of the sword techniques."

Through Yun Miaoqing's explanation, Lü Yang finally understood.

He was currently cultivating the Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula, and could only split out two sword lights, and the effect was limited to teleportation, improving speed but lacking in attack power.

However, once he had the blessing of a Sword Pill, the number of sword lights Lü Yang could split would at least double.

At the same time, he could merge with the Sword Pill, and while shuttling through the sword lights, he could unleash astonishing slashes, gaining overwhelming advantages when dueling.

In direct combat, Lü Yang only needed to control the Sword Pill, then split sword lights around him, and once the opponent was surrounded, it would be like falling into his trap.

After that, no matter what means the opponent used, he could easily evade and then launch an attack from another direction, making the opponent exhausted from defending.

After dragging on for a few rounds, the opponent would naturally reveal a fatal flaw, and then Lü Yang could deliver a powerful slash to completely finish him.

"That is why our Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion disciples are number one in combat across the south of the river!"

When she said this, a proud expression instantly appeared on Yun Miaoqing's face.

However, the very next second, with Lü Yang's sudden movement, the pride on her face immediately disappeared, replaced by a blush, and she could not help letting out a nasal sound.

Yun Miaoqing closed her beautiful eyes tightly and silently waited for a moment, but found Lü Yang not moving anymore.

Feeling uneasy, she twisted a bit, then opened her eyes:

"Devil, you..."

Lü Yang stood up and changed his clothes.

"So the problem lies with the Sword Pill, and now I know the method of refining it... Hmm, you're done here, go rest."

Yun Miaoqing: "???"

Suddenly separated, the only emotion left on Yun Miaoqing's face was confusion.

Are you kidding? It ended just like that?

What about the dual cultivation?

The next second, she suddenly regained her senses and instinctively grasped the magical sword hanging around her neck.

"No, this is good... I am a disciple of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion after all."

"I need to start making money."

Walking out of the cave residence, Lü Yang began to ponder his future.

"I currently only have 50 Contribution Points, and after deducting 30 Points for this month's cave residence rent, if I don't make money, next month I'll have to move back to live in the Pleasure Hall."

In the Primordial Saint Sect, there were many ways to earn Contribution Points.

Including but not limited to salaries from various sect positions, selling personal items, rewards after completing bounties, and sect missions, etc.

"But someone like me, with no backing, no property, and no strength—an all-round 'three no's' disciple—has no connections to get sect jobs, personal items are mostly worthless, I can't complete high-paying bounties, so I can only choose sect missions and work for the sect just to barely make a living."

The more Lü Yang thought about it, the angrier he became.

I'm already cultivating immortality, and I still have to work like a laborer?

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Chapter 8: The Tale of an Ox and Horse Cultivator

[1,605 words]

"Fine, I'll just work!"

Lü Yang quickly adjusted his emotions.

"Strictly speaking, I could actually commit suicide and restart now, but the pages of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes are limited. Restarting like this would be too wasteful."

Although he had now become an official disciple, Lü Yang still had little understanding of the Primordial Saint Sect, and his knowledge of the entire Cultivation World was limited to what he had read in books. Even though he already had the idea of restarting, to accumulate advantages for his next life, he should live a bit longer in this life.

Within Mending Heaven Peak, there were countless caves, but only two places stood out. One was naturally the cave of the Peak Master, and the other was a tall building.

The building had nine floors and was named "Merit".

Official disciples conducted transactions, posted bounties, and even accepted sect missions mostly in the Merit Building, where they could receive the protection of the Holy Sect.

Lü Yang walked into the Merit Building and approached a counter.

“Senior Brother, may I ask if sect missions are received here?”

“Of course, you... hmm?”

As the words fell, the young Daoist at the counter glanced at Lü Yang indifferently at first, but upon seeing his handsome appearance, his eyes lit up.

In the next moment, a friendly smile appeared on the young Daoist's face.

“No need to call me Senior Brother. My name is Zhao Xuhe, a deacon disciple of the Merit Hall. You must be a new disciple, right? I haven't seen you before.”

“I am Lü Yang. Greetings, Senior Brother.”

Lü Yang hurriedly saluted and activated his disciple token to verify his identity.

Zhao Xuhe looked at the token, his expression becoming even more gentle, and his smile even more radiant: “Not bad, not bad. Junior Brother Lü is quite the talent, very impressive.”

Zhao Xuhe then looked at Lü Yang with a gaze that made him feel uncomfortable, and suddenly said: “Junior Brother Lü, since you're looking for a sect mission, I happen to have one for you, or rather, an opportunity for wealth. If it works out, your path to immortality will be vast in the future.”

“Really?”

Lü Yang appeared interested on the surface, but in his heart, he became vigilant.

“Absolutely! Couldn't be more real!”

Zhao Xuhe grinned and pointed to the top of Mending Heaven Peak: “The current Peak Master intends to find a son-in-law for his daughter. I see that you have a dignified appearance...”

Lü Yang: “???”

I came to find a sect mission because I wanted to earn money through my own hard work and diligence, and now you want me to live off a woman?

“What, you're not willing?”

Seeing Lü Yang's stiff expression, Zhao Xuhe became even more enthusiastic in his persuasion: “This is a tremendous opportunity for wealth. If you can enter the Peak Master's cave, from then on, you'll be a Foundation Establishment disciple, with contribution points, cultivation methods, and resources all at your disposal. Taking this step correctly can save you sixty years of detours.”

Despite Zhao Xuhe's eloquence, Lü Yang remained unmoved.

Actually, if it were truly about living off a woman, Lü Yang wouldn't mind.

But where was this? The Primordial Saint Sect! The orthodox path of the demonic way!

With Liu Xin's previous example, how could he possibly believe Zhao Xuhe's so-called son-in-law proposal?

There must be something wrong!

Thinking of this, Lü Yang simply sighed and said: “Senior Brother Zhao, it's not that I don't want to be a son-in-law, but I have an unspeakable difficulty.”

Zhao Xuhe was taken aback: “Unspeakable difficulty?”

“To be honest,” Lü Yang looked embarrassed, “I am afflicted with a venereal disease.”

Upon hearing this, the eagerness on Zhao Xuhe's face immediately faded.

Venereal disease wasn't a big deal; he had ways to cure it.

The problem was, why did he contract it? The reason behind it was the key.

“Ah, what a pity.”

Zhao Xuhe shook his head.

No matter how handsome Lü Yang was, the Peak Master would never allow his daughter to become a Dao companion with a man who could make himself sick.

Lü Yang respectfully said: “Thank you for your concern, Senior Brother.”

Not hitting a smiling face, Lü Yang's respectful demeanor made Zhao Xuhe's expression improve slightly: “In that case, I'll pick a good mission for you.”

“What kind of mission are you looking for?”

Lü Yang said, “High contribution points, relatively safe.”

Zhao Xuhe’s smile didn’t change, clearly expecting this—after all, every new disciple wanted this kind of task. “I really do have one.”

As he spoke, he handed Lü Yang a jade slip.

“Yin-Yang Immortal Bloom, requires a Qi Refining Realm cultivator to nurture it with blood essence and true qi to grow. Mending Heaven Peak purchases it at the highest price, 150 contribution points per flower.”

Zhao Xuhe said kindly, “This task was issued by the Peak Lord himself. No quantity limit. However many you grow, they’ll buy them all. And you don’t need to have any herbal cultivation skills. The Yin-Yang Immortal Bloom is extremely adaptable. As long as it’s planted in your cave dwelling, it won’t wither easily.”

Lü Yang was tempted at first, but soon shook his head.

Zhao Xuhe frowned at this. “What’s wrong?”

“Thank you for your guidance, Senior Brother,” Lü Yang said bitterly, “But I still need to pay next month’s rent for my cave dwelling. I really can’t afford to buy the Immortal Bloom seeds.”

“I see.”

Zhao Xuhe also sighed. “I’ve been through this stage myself, I know it’s not easy. Fine, let me help you.”

Then he reached out his hand. “Give me your disciple token.”

Lü Yang obediently handed it over, and moments later, he was shocked to see an extra 500 contribution points appear on it out of nowhere!

Zhao Xuhe smiled slightly. “This is your reserve contribution points from the Three Rivers Association. You can use them anytime you need. Go buy the Immortal Bloom seeds.”

Lü Yang frowned deeply. “Senior Brother, isn’t this just like a cultivation method loan? I’m afraid...”

“The Three Rivers Association is a major power within the inner sect of the Primordial Saint Sect. New disciples borrowing can even enjoy thirty days of interest-free terms, which is much cheaper than the sect’s method loans.”

“And didn’t you want to buy Immortal Bloom seeds?” Zhao Xuhe said kindly, “We have a Senior Brother in the Three Rivers Association who specializes in selling these. Since you’ve borrowed from us, I’ll put in a good word for you—he can sell you the seeds at cost price.”

“Is there really such a good deal?” Lü Yang looked overjoyed.

“Isn’t it because I felt a connection with you, Junior Brother?” Zhao Xuhe also laughed. “If it weren’t so, I wouldn’t even tell most people about this kind of opportunity!”

With that, Zhao Xuhe took out another jade slip and handed it to Lü Yang. “This is that Senior Brother’s communication jade slip. Wishing you early wealth and success, Junior Brother.”

“Thank you, Senior Brother!”

Lü Yang left with endless gratitude.

But as he watched Lü Yang’s departing back, Zhao Xuhe curled his lips into a cold smile and immediately began searching for his next prey in the Merit Hall.

Lü Yang didn’t rush to find the “reliable Senior Brother” Zhao Xuhe had introduced to buy the Yin-Yang Immortal Bloom.

Instead, he returned to his cave dwelling first and did some calculations.

“A loan of 500 contribution points can buy ten Immortal Bloom seeds. The annual interest rate is the same as the method loan—36%.”

“Getting up early and working late every day, watering with blood essence, nurturing with spiritual energy—it’s estimated it will take a full year for them all to mature, earning 1500 contribution points.”

“After paying rent, I’ll have 1140 contribution points left.”

“Repaying the method loan principal and interest costs 460, leaving 680 contribution points, and then the Immortal Bloom seed loan of 500 plus 180 interest will come due...”

“Nothing left!?”

Where’s my money?

With this doubt in mind, Lü Yang recalculated once more, then stared blankly at his hands, only snapping out of it a long while later and bursting out laughing in anger.

Good grief, they really calculated it down to the last copper—didn't even leave me food money!

No wonder it's the Demon Sect!

As a disciple of the Primordial Saint Sect, the start was to carry debt, then be yanked to the limit along the funding chain by the sect.

The contribution points earned from taking tasks were just enough to cover expenses.

If he wanted to earn more, save money, he had to work overtime and take on more tasks.

Otherwise, with the slightest misstep, if the funding chain broke, the several massive loans he carried would instantly become the final straw that broke the camel's back.

As long as you're willing to suffer, you'll never run out of suffering.

To put it bluntly, they were dangling rigid necessities over low-level disciples, forcing them to work themselves to death, all to lay bricks and mortar for the glory of the Primordial Saint Sect.

"Animals!"

Thinking of this, Lü Yang couldn't help cursing out loud, then tried to comfort himself:

"I work for the Primordial Saint Sect, the sect gives me contribution points, then takes them back through loans and rent—it's self-produced and self-sold by the sect, and I get to enjoy the process from the middle!"

Immediately after, Lü Yang recalled the warm and diligent Zhao Xuhe, looked again at the extra 500 contribution point loan on his disciple token, and sneered internally.

"And since you're being ruthless, don't blame me for being unjust."

"Usury? I'll be a deadbeat!"

Though he said that, the harsh life of a sect disciple still made Lü Yang feel stifled, the more he thought, the more upset he got, and a nameless fire surged within him.

"...Demonic scum?"

Just then, the curtain lifted—it was Yun Miaoqing, who had heard Lü Yang's loud cursing and got out of bed to check on the situation.

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[1,495 words]

“Demon, are you in a bad mood?”

Yun Miaoqing spoke as she looked up at Lü Yang, who was resting with his eyes closed.

“A little.”

Lü Yang sighed and casually recounted the predicament he was facing.

“This is the Demon Sect, treating its disciples as expendable resources, devoid of any humanity,” Yun Miaoqing gently parted her red lips.

“Demon, Fellow Daoist Lü, you possess commendable talent and an excellent disposition. Why subject yourself to such grievances in this Demon Sect?” Yun Miaoqing said, “If you lift the restriction on me and help me escape the Demon Sect, I can recommend you to become a disciple of our Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion.”

Yun Miaoqing wanted to seek death, but he had no interest in accompanying her.

When impoverished, one should maintain their integrity; the immediate priority was to enhance oneself.

After careful consideration, Lü Yang decided against purchasing the Yin-Yang Immortal Flower.

Instead, he spent all his wealth to acquire ten Vital Energy Great Pills that could increase his cultivation.

“This lifetime has essentially reached a dead end.”

“After all, I neither intend to repay the loan nor am I willing to waste decades of time as a beast of burden. Once the loan term ends, I will undoubtedly die without a burial place.”

“Therefore, I must seize this period to improve myself as quickly as possible!”

Lü Yang had already made up his mind.

In the next life, he would choose cultivation, and for that, he needed to elevate his strength to a higher level as soon as possible.

“If my cultivation is too low, Liu Xin, who was present at the time, might notice. So, at the very least, I must reach the same realm as he was then,” Lü Yang pondered, “At the very least, I need to reach the mid-stage of Qi Refining and pair it with a technique to conceal my breath. Only then might I be able to deceive him.”

Lü Yang dared to think this way because he had confidence.

This was because the Qi Refining Realm had ten levels: early, mid, late, and perfection stages.

Within these minor realms, there were generally no bottlenecks; one could break through by accumulating enough resources.

What truly hindered many Qi Refining cultivators were the bottlenecks between the minor realms.

Advancing from early to mid-stage, mid to late-stage, and late-stage to perfection became exponentially more difficult, causing countless cultivators to make no progress.

“According to my calculations, ten Vital Energy Great Pills, combined with the spiritual veins of the cave dwelling, should be enough for me to break through to the third level of Qi Refining. In fact, this is also the cultivation level of most disciples within the sect, who rely on enduring time and accumulating experience to improve, ultimately getting stuck at the bottleneck of early-stage Qi Refining, becoming the sect's beasts of burden.”

If nothing unexpected happened, Lü Yang would have been one of them.

However, in this lifetime, he had a variable in his hands.

With a thought, Lü Yang summoned a misty white Qi in his hand, which transformed at will into a sword shape or dense smoke, as if it were an extension of his arm.

Innate True Qi!

“According to Liu Xin, the greatest function of Innate True Qi is to help one break through bottlenecks. His breakthrough to the late-stage of Qi Refining must have been aided by it.”

Liu Xin could use it to break through to the late-stage of Qi Refining.

Using it to break through to the mid-stage of Qi Refining should not be a problem for me.

“As long as I break through to the mid-stage of Qi Refining, this life won't be in vain. At worst, I can restart immediately. In the next life, with higher cultivation, my starting point will also be better!”

A moment later, a voice came from outside the cave dwelling.

His Vital Energy Great Pills had arrived.

Lü Yang opened the door and saw a woman standing outside, dressed in plain clothes, with a beauty not inferior to Yun Miaoqing and an even more voluptuous figure.

“I am Qing Chen. Greetings, Junior Brother Lü.” The woman bowed gracefully and then smiled softly. Her laughter seemed to possess a magical quality, soothing the heart and making people unconsciously feel a fondness for her. “I have been ordered to deliver the Vital Energy Great Pills you purchased. Please present your token for verification.”

Lü Yang was familiar with the procedure and complied immediately.

During the handover, this Qing Chen Fairy gently probed, “Junior Brother, being able to purchase so many pills this time, did you perhaps come into some wealth?”

“Senior Sister, what are you saying?”

Lü Yang shook his head with a bitter expression, “I just took out several loans, hoping to improve my cultivation so I can take on some higher-paying tasks.”

“I see.”

Fairy Qing Chen nodded, her face full of concern, “Junior Brother, there's no need to belittle yourself. Which of us formal disciples doesn't have a few loans?”

“However... forgive me for being blunt, Junior Brother, but you still don't understand how to adapt.”

“Oh?”

Seeing that Lü Yang was interested, Qing Chen Fairy smiled slightly, “There are only so many sect missions. How could they possibly be enough to repay so many loans just through missions?”

“In the Primordial Saint Sect, if one only knows how to walk the ordinary path, it's impossible to get rich.”

Qing Chen Fairy spoke softly, “I originally thought that you, Junior Brother, had discovered the cave dwelling of a senior brother and gained an inheritance, and thus

made a big profit. That's why I shamelessly asked. I didn't expect that it wasn't the case."

"Cave dwelling."

Lü Yang lowered his eyelids, his gaze calm like an ancient well, but his tone feigned a look of being moved: "I am slow-witted, Senior Sister. Please elaborate."

"Junior Brother, did you know that the Primordial Saint Sect was founded within the 'Sky-reaching Sea of Clouds'?"

Qing Chen Fairy said blandly, "Within the Sea of Clouds, aside from the four inner peaks, there are many other peaks established in the past by true disciples and elders."

"However, the path of cultivation is long, and over the years, people inevitably fall. Yet after they fall, their mountain peaks and cave dwellings are not dismantled, but remain within the Sea of Clouds. Though there is a degree of risk, each and every one of them is an opportunity. Even a casual gain can be exchanged for a large amount of contribution points!"

"If you are interested, Junior Brother, I happened to discover a relatively safe cave dwelling recently."

Really? I don't believe it!

Lü Yang sneered inwardly, only because Qing Chen Fairy's persuasive manner resembled that of Liu Xin, who had once tricked him into cultivating the Innate Dao Book.

This was a trap!

What opportunity in a cave dwelling—just bait.

It seemed he had revealed his wealth.

Seeing that he, a newcomer, had bought so many spirit pills, they probably wanted to lure him out and kill him to take the pills for themselves?

At this thought, Lü Yang showed a look of temptation: "I need to consider it."

"There's no rush."

Qing Chen Fairy nodded slightly at his words: "The acceptance procedures have already been completed. You can contact me once you've made up your mind."

"I've made up my mind—not going."

Seeing the procedures were done, Lü Yang said nothing more and grabbed the bottle containing the spirit pills before returning to his cave dwelling, leaving Qing Chen Fairy standing there alone.

“???”

Moments later, as she snapped out of it, Qing Chen Fairy nearly ground her silver teeth to bits, her beautiful face filled with murderous intent: “That Lü Yang... actually dared to toy with me!”

Turning away, Qing Chen Fairy soon arrived at another cave dwelling.

Inside the cave, a young Daoist in splendid robes had been waiting for a long time.

Seeing her darkened expression, he immediately frowned as well:

“Did it fail?”

Qing Chen Fairy shook her head: “This person... is a bit too cautious.”

“Moreover, Senior Brother Zhao, this person borrowed money yet didn’t buy the Yin-Yang Immortal Bloom, and instead bought pills. I suspect he never intended to repay the debt.”

“He wants to renege? In his next life, maybe!”

Zhao Xuhe sneered coldly at her words and shook his head: “Did you know? Every new disciple in the Primordial Saint Sect has already been privately marked with a price.”

“And the amount a disciple can borrow from the sect will never exceed his value. This ensures that, no matter what happens, the sect can recover its investment. Flesh, organs, soul... these are all valuable assets, more than enough to repay a debt.”

“He wants to increase his cultivation? Let him.”

“As long as he’s alive, a higher cultivation just makes him more valuable.”

Zhao Xuhe grinned, his teeth seemingly oozing a scent of blood: “When the time comes, we might not only avoid a loss, but even make a profit.”

“Besides, even if he can afford the spirit pills, it doesn’t mean he’ll live long enough to use them, does it?”

“You mean—”

Zhao Xuhe nodded slightly, his words filled with meaning: "Many things are fine... as long as they're not discovered."

Hearing this, Qing Chen Fairy's beautiful eyes lit up at once.

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Chapter 10: A Night of Murder Under the Dark Moon

[1,552 words]

Inside the cave dwelling, within a quiet chamber.

Lü Yang sat cross-legged, beginning to break through.

With the spiritual pills ingested, and coupled with the continuous harvesting of Yun Miaoqing over the past half month, his cultivation rapidly approached a near-limit state.

"Boom!"

In the next moment, as if ascending a step, Lü Yang felt a vast surge of True Qi roaring within his body, rushing like a river, invigorating his spirit.

Qi Refining Stage Two!

"Before reaching Qi Refining Stage Four, there are no bottlenecks; as long as resources are sufficient, time alone can achieve it. But now, it seems I might not have that time."

The existence of Qing Chen Fairy stirred a sense of crisis in Lü Yang.

He would not forget that in his previous life, Liu Xin had brazenly stormed into his cave dwelling. If Liu Xin could do it, couldn't Qing Chen Fairy do the same?

The cave dwelling was unreliable!

"What truly matters is one's own cultivation and strength!"

With this thought, Lü Yang gritted his teeth, directly taking out all the remaining spiritual pills and swallowing them whole, then summoned Yun Miaoqing again.

Although such an approach was somewhat wasteful, with at least thirty percent of the pills' efficacy being squandered, it also allowed him to enhance his cultivation at the fastest possible speed.

In Lü Yang's view, as long as he could break through to Qi Refining Stage Three, these spiritual pills would have been used to their fullest, not bought in vain.

Time flew by, and in the blink of an eye, three days and nights passed.

During this period, Lü Yang neither ate nor drank, and nearly drained Yun Miaoqing to the point of collapse, finally feeling that he had broken through a thin barrier.

"I succeeded!"

Lü Yang looked inwardly at his entire body, feeling a vast True Qi flowing through his meridians like a mighty river, seemingly boundless, yet unable to make any further progress.

At first glance, it seemed as if his cultivation had reached perfection.

"This is the bottleneck."

The next step would be Qi Refining Stage Four, transitioning from the early to the mid-stage, which, within the Primordial Saint Sect, would qualify him as an outstanding disciple eligible for certain positions.

Lü Yang did not pause, nor did he dare to relax, directly taking out the Innate True Qi.

"Continue!"

Activating the Innate True Qi, Lü Yang then manipulated his own True Qi to swallow it in one gulp, subsequently observing the surge of True Qi flooding into his dantian like rivers converging into the sea.

As the Innate True Qi was continuously consumed, Lü Yang soon felt that the bottleneck, which had previously seemed insurmountable like a mountain, was gradually weakening.

Until the Innate True Qi was completely depleted, that invisible bottleneck melted away like snow and ice, collapsing instantly!

In the dimly lit quiet chamber, Lü Yang suddenly opened his eyes.

His gaze was like a torch, illuminating the void.

With a blink, another day and night passed, yet from this moment on, Lü Yang's strength was vastly different from a few days prior!

"Mid-stage Qi Refining, it's almost like a different realm compared to the early stage." Lü Yang felt the changes within his body, his face showing joy: "If the True Qi of the early stage was a small river, then the mid-stage is an ocean! It's increased by more than tenfold! Reaching this point, one can be considered a true cultivator."

In the early stage of Qi Refining, True Qi was limited, and all spells and divine abilities had to be used sparingly.

However, after advancing to the mid-stage, there was no longer a need to worry about such things; ordinary spells could be cast effortlessly, and the consumed True Qi could be replenished within a few breaths.

"Not bad! Not bad!"

Lü Yang walked out of the quiet chamber, took out a white bone flying sword, and with a thought, the flying sword instantly split into ten sword lights, enveloping the entire cave dwelling.

Whoosh whoosh—!

In an instant, the sword lights howled fiercely, and Lü Yang performed the Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula, merging himself with the sword light, feeling an unparalleled sense of comfort and ease.

"It's all thanks to Liu Xin!"

"If it weren't for this 'Innate True Qi' that perfectly matched me, I wouldn't have been able to break through; at the very least, I would have been stuck at Qi Refining Stage Three for several years!"

"No wonder Liu Xin abandoned the Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss to cultivate the Innate Dao Book."

"Unfortunately, his intentions were not righteous, using people as medicine. After obtaining it, Liu Xin caused countless killings, all because of the Innate Dao Book."

"Such an evil art is destined to be used by me!"

Lü Yang suddenly felt a surge of greed rising in his heart.

"Not yet, hold it in... Next lifetime, there's still plenty of time."

Just as Lü Yang was deep in thought, his eyebrows suddenly lifted as he looked toward the cave dwelling's entrance—because one of his sword lights set as a sensor had just been triggered.

“Someone's here?”

A cold glint instantly flashed through Lü Yang's eyes, mixed with a bit of relief—thankfully he had made the snap decision to break through even if it meant wasting resources.

If not for that, he would still be in secluded cultivation, completely unaware of the outside world. Wouldn't that mean certain death?

“This must serve as a warning...”

Thinking this, Lü Yang quickly restrained the aura of his breakthrough, while the killing intent in his heart grew even stronger, like a hunter silently waiting for his prey to walk into the trap.

“Crack.”

Accompanied by a soft sound, the cave dwelling's door was silently pried open, and immediately after, three figures sneaked in one after another.

The trio wore black clothes and masks, not revealing a trace of True Qi. Lü Yang watched from the shadows, clicking his tongue in admiration.

Had he not just broken through and gained higher cultivation, he might not have seen through their disguises, and would have mistaken them for ordinary people. Their ability to conceal themselves was truly exquisite.

...

The leading black-clothed figure gave a hand signal without speaking, and the others understood at once, quickly spreading out to search the cave dwelling.

“Whoosh whoosh!”

In the next second, the foremost black-clothed figure suddenly saw a flash before his eyes, followed by a dazzling sword light shrieking toward him!

“Not good!”

The man's expression changed drastically in an instant. He had no time to defend and could only roll sideways in an attempt to dodge. But how could a person ever be faster than a flying sword?

Swish—!

The sword light flashed, and a pillar of blood shot into the sky!

“Qi Refining mid-stage!?”

The black-clothed leader clearly had a sharp eye. From the power and purity of the sword light, he immediately recognized Lü Yang’s cultivation and cried out on the spot.

At the same time, he cursed furiously in his heart.

Damn that Qing Chen!

This guy was supposed to be a newly admitted disciple? An easy pushover?

And this Lü Yang—clearly at mid-stage Qi Refining and fully capable of crushing the three of them—yet he still resorted to deception and ambush?

What a beast!

Seeing the sword light approaching, the black-clothed man hurriedly formed a hand seal and released a mysterious light to shield himself while shouting loudly, “It’s a misunderstanding! This is all a misunderstanding—”

“Boom!”

Lü Yang turned a deaf ear.

The sword light slashed horizontally, instantly shattering the man’s protective light barrier.

At the same time, in the darkness, another wave of True Qi surged like raging waves, transforming into a massive hand several zhang wide, complete with clearly visible palm lines, which grabbed another black-clothed person directly.

Splat!

The next second, the giant hand suddenly clenched, crushing the second black-clothed figure into a bloody mess—bones snapped, muscles torn, red and white matter splattered everywhere.

Such a brutal scene made the leader’s eyes nearly burst with rage.

Meanwhile, Lü Yang wore a satisfied expression.

“This Innate True Qi Great Hand Seal really is impressive. While it doesn’t show much power against someone in the same realm, it’s guaranteed to crush those below.”

As he pondered, the sword lights did not stop.

Over a dozen beams of sword light howled through the cave dwelling, with the white bone flying sword teleporting within them, not giving the leader a moment to breathe.

After just a few breaths, the leader had already exhausted his strength. Lü Yang seized an opening, controlled the sword, and with one strike, another pillar of blood soared into the air.

“Phew! That was really dangerous...”

Only after doing all this did Lü Yang finally let out a breath of relief.

Looking at the corpses and chunks of flesh all over the floor, he recalled the battle just now with lingering fear.

Strictly speaking, this was his first time killing someone.

Even though he had practiced the ambush combo in private countless times, this was the first time he had put it into actual combat.

“Honestly, my combat experience is far inferior to those three. In the same realm, I might not even win against one, let alone three. But as long as I can ambush, seize the initiative, and force them into a direct power clash, I can still easily suppress them with my superior cultivation.”

“This is exactly what they say—when power can't win, rely on divine abilities; when divine abilities fall short, rely on Dao attainment.”

Lü Yang reviewed and summarized the valuable experience of this cross-level battle, while also reflecting on areas to improve, believing it would surely be useful in his next lifetime.

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[1,429 words]

The next day, Lü Yang waited in his cave dwelling for an entire day.

No one came.

The three black-clothed men seemed as if they weren't disciples of the Primordial Saint Sect at all, not causing the slightest ripple; no one even came to check on the situation.

Lü Yang sighed once more.

He wouldn't doubt that the Primordial Saint Sect, which possessed the Life Lamps of all its disciples, hadn't discovered the deaths of the three.

Now, thinking about it, perhaps "mutual killing among disciples" was an unspoken rule.

As long as it didn't escalate and become widely known, no one would investigate thoroughly.

After all, the demonic sects were unpredictable and hard to fathom.

Someone died—perhaps to silence them, perhaps for wealth, or perhaps they learned something they shouldn't have.

What if an investigation truly uncovered something?

So, it's better not to investigate.

"No wonder it's called the Primordial Saint Sect."

After sighing, Lü Yang felt at ease and began collecting the spoils of battle.

First were the disciples' tokens.

What shocked Lü Yang was that the tokens of the three black-clothed men contained a total of 400 contribution points, an unusually high amount.

"So, they were repeat offenders."

Lü Yang frowned and searched further.

Apart from miscellaneous items, only a secret manual titled "Qi Concealment Technique" caught his attention.

After all, in Lü Yang's view, these three black-clothed men were very skilled at concealing their true qi.

If it weren't for his breakthrough in cultivation, which brought a qualitative leap in both true qi and spiritual sense, he might not have detected their infiltration.

This demonstrated the power of the "Qi Concealment Technique," a true trump card.

"More importantly, this has nothing to do with the Primordial Saint Sect!"

The sect's cultivation methods were only recorded in the disciples' tokens.

The "Qi Concealment Technique," however, was a secret manual, indicating it was likely a personal opportunity of the three black-clothed men.

Therefore, there was no need to worry about the sect having a way to counter it.

"Truly, a pillow comes when one is sleepy. Their deaths were worthwhile!"

Thinking this, Lü Yang sincerely collected the corpses of the three, dug a pit, and buried them, allowing them to rest in peace.

Then, he suddenly thought:

"This 'Qi Concealment Technique' is so exquisite, and it's not passed down by the sect. Where did they get it? Could there be an even greater opportunity behind this?"

In an instant, Lü Yang's thoughts became active.

But he quickly restrained his greed, his gaze returning to calmness:

"No rush, no rush. Perhaps in the next life, I can befriend these three."

There will always be opportunities!

After laying the three to rest, Lü Yang took out his disciple token and began checking the materials needed for refining a Sword Pill, as previously told by Yun Miaoqing.

"To refine a Sword Pill, one needs three taels of Gold Essence, three taels of Jade Marrow, two taels of Cinnabar, and two taels of Sword Qi, totaling ten taels. Then, using true fire and divine water to temper and cool, impurities are removed. Finally, with secret sword techniques, it's slowly refined to merge with the refiner's essence, qi, and spirit, thus truly completing the refinement."

As Lü Yang recalled the method for refining a Sword Pill, he browsed the item catalog.

The more he looked, the darker his expression became.

"Gold Essence and Jade Marrow, Cinnabar and Sword Qi, all priced uniformly at 100 contribution points per tael. True Water, 500 contribution points per gourd. True Fire, 500 contribution points per strand."

"2000 contribution points!?"

Lü Yang gritted his teeth.

He had heard from Yun Miaoqing that disciples of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion would receive a Sword Pill from their elders upon breaking through Qi Refining.

Yet, in the Primordial Saint Sect, it required 2000 contribution points?

An ordinary disciple would have to toil for the sect for twenty years without eating or drinking to accumulate that many contribution points!

Damn demonic sect!

Such exorbitant prices instantly extinguished Lü Yang's pride from his recent windfall, making him realize once again that he was still a pauper.

"In this case, 400 contribution points are somewhat useless."

According to Lü Yang's plan, after restarting in the next life, he would choose cultivation.

Therefore, whatever he obtained in this life couldn't be taken with him.

Thus, no matter what good items he bought with these 400 contribution points, they would be meaningless to him.

As for cultivation, the difference between mid and early Qi Refining was significant.

Even if he spent all 400 contribution points, it wouldn't be enough to break through to the fifth level of Qi Refining.

"It seems I can only exchange them for cultivation methods."

After all, compared to treasures, cultivation methods and divine abilities, as knowledge, could be carried into the next life.

Thinking this, Lü Yang immediately left his cave dwelling and headed to the Library Pavilion.

"Yo, it's you again?"

The old man at the entrance of the Library Pavilion actually remembered Lü Yang, showing a surprised expression:

"You're here to exchange for cultivation methods again? Looks like you've struck it rich."

"Thanks for the kind words, Senior Brother."

Lü Yang cupped his hands and then walked into the Library Pavilion.

This time, he had a clear intention: to find a powerful divine ability specifically for desperate situations.

Soon, Lü Yang locked onto his target.

"'Killing Curse': 300 contribution points."

This divine ability was very special, resembling the Buddhist practice of silent meditation.

It required the practitioner to nurture a breath of killing intent in their chest, refining it day and night with true qi, intertwining it with their life.

Normally, it wouldn't affect speech.

But when needed, upon opening the mouth and uttering "Kill!", the accumulated killing intent would instantly burst forth, shaking souls and spirits, unstoppable.

However, once this breath of killing intent was expended, the person would also die, making it a method of mutual destruction.

"Not bad. It can kill others and also serve as a means of suicide. Perfect for me!"

Possessing the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes, Lü Yang's greatest fear wasn't death but being unable to die, as the book couldn't be activated voluntarily and only worked upon his death.

Therefore, he desperately needed a self-destructive divine ability.

After exchanging for the cultivation method from the Library Pavilion, Lü Yang immediately sat cross-legged and began comprehending the technique.

"'Killing Curse' involves hiding qi in the chest. The most important aspect is this breath of killing intent. The higher its quality, the more powerful the 'Killing Curse' will be upon activation."

"As the saying goes, when heaven initiates killing intent, stars shift; when earth initiates killing intent, dragons and snakes rise; when humans initiate killing intent, heaven and earth overturn. Thus, killing intent in the world is divided into three types: heavenly, earthly, and human. Among them, heavenly and earthly killing intents are rare, encountered once in a century, while human killing intent is ubiquitous, with the aura of weapons being the most superior."

Inside the Library Pavilion, Lü Yang began refining the killing intent.

"Fortunately, I have the necessary materials on hand."

So-called human killing intent mostly comes from weapons used by those harboring murderous intent.

Coincidentally, he still had the weapons from the three black-clothed men.

Lü Yang directly extracted the killing intent from them, gradually refining it into his body.

In an instant, Lü Yang felt as if a thousand blades were scraping his bones and flesh in his chest, the pain unbearable.

Yet, he tightly clenched his teeth, not daring to open his mouth.

Because this was the critical moment of refinement.

If he opened his mouth and let the qi escape, he would surely die instantly!

After a long time, Lü Yang finally felt the killing intent in his chest gradually stabilize, completely merging with his true qi.

With a single thought, it could erupt.

"I wonder how powerful it is..."

Thinking this, a trace of anticipation appeared on Lü Yang's face.

He decided that before dying in this life, he must use the 'Killing Curse' once to see its power.

Returning to the entrance of the Library Pavilion, Lü Yang was surprised to find the old man there cursing loudly.

"That damned lucky bastard..."

The old man held a disciple token, his wrinkled hands trembling uncontrollably.

His old face twisted, unable to express his emotions clearly.

Lü Yang approached curiously:

"Senior Brother? What happened?"

"What happened?" The old man glared angrily upon hearing this, fiercely throwing the disciple token to the ground and sneering:

"It's all over the place. See for yourself."

Before his words fell, the old man reclined back into his rocking chair, sulking.

Lü Yang was puzzled until he opened his own disciple token and saw the latest news, finally understanding what had happened.

"The Grand Prize of the Merit Pool Finally Has a Winner!"

"The colorful merit fish was drawn by the newly inducted disciple Xiao Shiye. A true person awarded him a ten-billion prize on the spot. After receiving the prize, Xiao Shiye went into seclusion, whereabouts unknown!"

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[1,503 words]

"Colorful Merit Fish, Ten Billion Grand Prize."

Due to the widespread dissemination of related news and ongoing discussions, Lü Yang quickly grasped the situation without much effort.

It turned out that within the Primordial Saint Sect, there was a permanent special task known as "Accumulating Merit."

The location was beneath the Sacred Fire Cliff, deep within the sea of clouds, at a treasured place called the "Merit Pool," where an exotic spiritual beast resided, known as the "Merit Fish."

The fish came in five colors: white, blue, purple, gold, and colorful.

The closer the fish was to the colorful hue, the more abundant its essence; consuming it not only enhanced the quality of true qi but also had the effect of breaking through bottlenecks.

Thus, the so-called "Accumulating Merit" task was born.

Each person could undertake this task once a month, first blindly selecting a number, then paying 10 contribution points to receive the Merit Fish corresponding to that number.

However, the 10 contribution points paid by the cultivator were not reclaimed by the sect but were instead recorded in the Merit Pool's account.

The sect's higher-ups had specifically explained: as long as someone selected the sole colorful Merit Fish in the pool, they would receive all the contribution points within the Merit Pool!

This task had been issued for nearly a hundred years.

Yet, in all that time, no one had selected the colorful Merit Fish, resulting in the accumulation of contribution points in the pool reaching astronomical figures.

“Ten billion! Ten billion!”

On the rocking chair, the old man continued to mutter softly, his tone filled with envy, jealousy, and resentment.

Just yesterday, the grand prize of this “Merit Lottery” finally had a result, and the disciple who obtained it had been in the sect for less than ten days.

A century-old prize pool was claimed by a newcomer who had been in the sect for less than ten days!

No wonder the old man from the Library Pavilion felt unbalanced, especially since his participation in the Merit Pool task over the years contributed to that ten billion prize.

Moreover, that Xiao Shiye, upon obtaining the ten billion grand prize from the Merit Pool, also received the most precious colorful Merit Fish.

After consuming it, he broke through from the first layer of Qi Refining to the peak of Qi Refining overnight. He had now been accepted as a disciple by a True Person within the sect and was in seclusion, preparing to break through to Foundation Establishment.

Such a fortunate encounter made even Lü Yang reveal a look of envy.

However, his expression soon changed because that lucky individual, Xiao Shiye, did not conceal the number he chose when he drew the colorful Merit Fish.

“2025113”

Looking at this number, Lü Yang couldn't help but swallow hard.

As Lü Yang firmly memorized this string of numbers, preparing to use it in his next life, a graceful figure suddenly walked into the Library Pavilion.

“Junior Brother Lü?”

Lü Yang responded by looking up and immediately recognized the person—it was none other than Fairy Qing Chen. She seemed surprised as well, her delicate face showing a hint of pleasant surprise at the unexpected encounter.

“Oh, it's Qing Chen. Is it time?”

The old man from the Library Pavilion also saw Fairy Qing Chen. His previously bored expression instantly became serious as he stood up and said, “Then let's set off quickly.”

“Senior Brother, are you also going to explore the cave dwelling?” Lü Yang asked curiously.

“What else?” The old man from the Library Pavilion replied grumpily, “I just lost a large sum of money. If I don't find some extra income, I'll be drinking the northwest wind!”

“Lost a large sum of money?”

“Ah, it was due to my momentary carelessness,” the old man from the Library Pavilion sighed. “Some time ago, the sect had a major battle with the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion from Jiangnan.”

“The Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion came prepared and forcibly seized a mass grave in the south that belonged to our sect.”

“The 'Substitute Death Yin Skeletons' produced in that mass grave are very precious treasures. Once the mass grave was taken, their price within the sect immediately skyrocketed.”

“At first, everyone was hoarding them. Out of caution, I observed for a while.”

“Later, I noticed the price kept rising without falling. Thinking the opportunity was fleeting, I bought a batch at a high price from others.”

At this point, the old man from the Library Pavilion was filled with regret, slapping his thigh in remorse. “Who would have thought, just after I finished hoarding, news came that the sect launched a counterattack and reclaimed the mass grave. As a result, the prices that had just risen plummeted instantly, even lower than the original price!”

Lü Yang: “...”

“But fortunately, there's Qing Chen,” the old man from the Library Pavilion sighed for a while, then regained his composure and exclaimed, “Qing Chen is truly a good person.”

Fairy Qing Chen smiled shyly. “Senior Brother flatters me.”

“It's heartfelt,” the old man from the Library Pavilion said sincerely. “If you hadn't recommended Senior Brother Zhao to me, I might not have even recovered my capital.”

"It was just a small effort," Fairy Qing Chen said modestly. "Senior Brother Zhao happened to need a batch of Substitute Death Yin Skeletons, and you had hoarded some. I merely facilitated the connection. I only hope that in future explorations of cave dwellings, if I find something I like, Senior Brother can assist me."

Senior Brother Zhao... Zhao Xuhe? Lü Yang's heart stirred.

"By the way, Junior Brother Lü."

Only then did Fairy Qing Chen seem to remember Lü Yang, turning her head to look at him. "Are you really not planning to join us in exploring the cave dwelling this time?"

"...You jest, Senior Sister."

Lü Yang shook his head. "I've just joined the sect and am still weak. I want to focus on cultivation. Exploring cave dwellings is too dangerous; I truly lack the strength."

"Young man, I don't like what you're saying."

The old man from the Library Pavilion shook his head. "Focus on cultivation? For ordinary disciples like us without money or influence, blindly focusing on cultivation won't lead to immortality."

"Cultivation is about defying the heavens. Without taking risks, how can your cultivation soar?"

"When everyone else is afraid and wants to retreat, that's when you should be brave and strive. Only then can you seize opportunities!"

No matter how eloquently the old man from the Library Pavilion spoke, Lü Yang politely declined, angering the old man to the point of leaving with a parting shot: "Rotten wood cannot be carved!"

Seeing this, Fairy Qing Chen couldn't say much either. She merely gave Lü Yang a deep look before turning to leave. She and the old man from the Library Pavilion arrived at a secluded cave dwelling on Mending Heaven Peak. She then had the old man wait in the outer courtyard before entering the inner courtyard and arriving at a quiet room.

After a while, the door to the quiet room opened, and Zhao Xuhe stepped out.

"Failed again? He still didn't agree?"

As Zhao Xuhe listened to Fairy Qing Chen's account, his brows gradually furrowed. "He's truly resolute. Well, it's no big loss without him."

"Senior Brother, I think there's something off about him."

Fairy Qing Chen bit her silver teeth lightly. "The life lamps of my three lovers have gone out. I sent them to kill that guy last night, but it seems they failed."

"Senior Brother, you know, my three lovers were all at the third layer of Qi Refining. For Lü Yang to have killed them... Could he have already reached mid-stage cultivation?"

"Impossible! Absolutely impossible!"

Zhao Xuhe shook his head without hesitation. "Breaking through bottlenecks is no easy feat. In just a few days, at most, he could have reached the third layer of Qi Refining, but not mid-stage."

"You don't need to be paranoid. I've checked his purchase records."

"He bought a lot of Vital Energy Great Pills. If he consumed them without regard for cost, reaching the third layer of Qi Refining isn't surprising. As for your three lovers..."

"He used a loan to purchase a divine ability, the Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula from the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion." Zhao Xuhe analyzed carefully. "If he has exceptional talent and insight in swordsmanship, mastering the sword technique quickly, then killing your three lovers isn't that surprising."

"Senior Brother is right."

Fairy Qing Chen pondered for a moment and felt Zhao Xuhe's analysis was more reasonable.

After all, she had firsthand experience of how difficult the mid-stage bottleneck was.

It had taken her nearly ten years to barely break through.

Now, saying that a newly inducted disciple broke through in less than a month was pure fantasy unless he was a True Person reincarnated.

"Alright, let's discuss this matter later."

Zhao Xuhe waved his hand, his eyes gleaming coldly. "Let's first handle the 'cave dwelling' matter. Have all the people been gathered?"

"They have," Fairy Qing Chen nodded. "Especially Wang Bairong from the Library Pavilion. After Senior Brother bought his Substitute Death Yin Skeletons, he now trusts us greatly."

"That's good."

Zhao Xuhe sneered coldly. “Our sect has always been full of talents. Whether we can make a big profit this time depends entirely on our fellow disciples.”

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