

Struggling to Survive with Regression Power in the Primordial Saint Sect

Chapter 13: The Mantis Hunts the Cicada, Unaware of the Oriole Behind

[1,355 words]

Outside Mending Heaven Peak, over a dozen official disciples gathered together, with Zhao Xuhe, Qing Chen Fairy, and the elder from the Library Pavilion, Wang Borong, at the forefront.

Among them, only these three had mid-stage Qi Refining cultivation.

Zhao Xuhe stood at the front, his voice loud and clear: "It is an honor for Zhao to have you all respond to my invitation. I extend my heartfelt thanks."

After speaking, he bowed to everyone.

"To be honest, I discovered a cave dwelling left by a predecessor outside Mending Heaven Peak. Unfortunately, there is a protective formation around it that I cannot break through."

Qing Chen Fairy spoke at the right moment, her soft voice tingling to the ears: "Therefore, I sought the help of fellow disciples to break the formation together and share the treasures inside. Zhao Senior Brother is a member of the Three Rivers Association, known for his integrity, so rest assured you will not be shortchanged."

Zhao Xuhe clearly had some means.

He and Qing Chen Fairy cooperated, and the elder from the Library Pavilion, Wang Borong, chimed in accordingly, quickly uniting the scattered crowd.

Soon after, everyone flew away from Mending Heaven Peak using their light escape technique.

The "Sky-reaching Sea of Clouds" where the First Saint Demon Sect was located was vast, almost endless. They flew for a quarter of an hour before stopping at a sea of clouds.

"This is the place."

Zhao Xuhe moved his thoughts, and his true Qi parted the sea of clouds, revealing a grand mountain peak with excellent feng shui, resembling a coiled dragon at first glance.

“This place is called Coiling Dragon Island,” Zhao Xuhe introduced proactively. “I investigated and found that it was once the cave dwelling of a true disciple, True Person Panlong. The protective feng shui formation was once a Foundation Establishment formation, but over the years, the spiritual veins it relied on have dried up, and its power has diminished significantly.”

“Everyone, please follow me to break the formation.”

As his words fell, Zhao Xuhe took the lead and entered Coiling Dragon Island. The others naturally did not dare to lag behind and followed one after another.

After a while, a figure quietly appeared.

“Interesting.”

Lü Yang looked at Coiling Dragon Island below but had no intention of entering. Instead, he took out four black banners and began setting them up outside the island.

“Since the repayment deadline is approaching, there’s little time left in this lifetime.”

“Why not take a big shot?”

“However, this Coiling Dragon Island is treacherous, and Zhao Xuhe has many people on his side. I alone cannot contend with them inside.”

After some thought, Lü Yang came up with a good plan.

First, he never believed in the saying that there are good people in the Demon Sect, so he was certain that Zhao Xuhe had ulterior motives in gathering people to explore the cave dwelling.

However, with so many people present, including the elder from the Library Pavilion, Wang Borong, even if Zhao Xuhe could handle them, he would surely suffer some losses. Since that’s the case, it would be better to set up a formation outside the island and wait for an opportunity to ambush those who come out.

Isn’t this more cost-effective than venturing inside?

For this, Lü Yang used his last 100 contribution points to exchange for a set of Maze Formations.

The four “Maze Banners” could confine the heavens and earth, reversing directions. Although they had no offensive power, they could trap people inside, making it difficult to escape in a short time.

“Next, I just need to wait patiently. No rush; things will go smoothly if I take my time.”

Lü Yang patiently lay in ambush.

“Zhao Xuhe! What do you mean by this!?”

“You killed us, extinguished our Life Lamps; the Holy Sect will not spare you!”

Inside Coiling Dragon Island, blood flowed like a river.

The official disciples who had just been working together were now fighting individually, screams echoing as a blood-red light harvested their lives.

Away from the crowd, Zhao Xuhe and Qing Chen Fairy stood side by side.

Their expressions were mocking, their brows exuding a sinister aura, completely different from their earlier sincere demeanor.

Facing the crowd’s accusations, Zhao Xuhe sneered coldly, his tone chilling: “Stop struggling. This place was meticulously arranged by me. This ‘Blood Demon Soul-Slaying Blade’ cost me 3,000 contribution points. Today, none of you will escape from Coiling Dragon Island!”

As he spoke, several more people were killed.

The blood-red light in the sky flashed, instantly draining their flesh and blood, then revealing its form—a crimson flying blade.

“You! Bastard!”

Among the crowd, the only one still resisting was the elder from the Library Pavilion, Wang Borong.

Unfortunately, Zhao Xuhe was in no hurry to kill him, merely wearing him down.

While doing so, Zhao Xuhe mocked coldly: “Old Wang, did you really think you could spend my money and live? I bought the Substitute Death Yin Puppets from you precisely for today! Otherwise, if you had a bunch of them, it wouldn’t be easy to take you down.”

“Now that I’ve bought all your Substitute Death Yin Puppets.”

“After I kill you, I can take back the contribution points I gave you, equivalent to getting a bunch of Substitute Death Yin Puppets for free.”

“Looking at it this way, I should thank you!”

Zhao Xuhe’s heart-piercing words nearly made Wang Borong vomit blood. Taking advantage of this, Zhao Xuhe’s flying blade flashed and pierced his chest.

Thud!

Wang Borong’s lips moved slightly, his face full of unwillingness, but he couldn’t utter a single word before being drained of all his blood and Qi by the flying blade, finally collapsing.

With Wang Borong dealt with, the dust settled.

After a while, the wails gradually ceased.

“Congratulations, Senior Brother!”

Qing Chen Fairy was also covered in fragrant sweat.

The Blood Demon Soul-Slaying Blade consumed a lot of energy, and she had contributed significantly to Zhao Xuhe’s slaughter.

“Thanks to you, Junior Sister.”

Zhao Xuhe smiled slightly, retracting the Blood Demon Soul-Slaying Blade into his hand, and asked: “How is it? With its current power, can it break the restriction?”

Qing Chen Fairy observed for a moment, her delicate brows furrowed: “It seems still a bit lacking.”

Swish—!

The blade entered and exited. Qing Chen Fairy’s pretty face turned blank, her eyes dazed as she looked at the crimson flying blade embedded in her abdomen, and in the blink of an eye, she was sucked dry into a mummified corpse.

“Now it’s not lacking.”

Zhao Xuhe looked at the Blood Demon Soul-Slaying Blade in his hand, finally nodding in satisfaction. He then arrived at a tightly closed quiet room deep within Coiling Dragon Island.

Without a word, he raised the blade and slashed.

Boom!

A thunderous roar echoed as the quiet room's door shattered, revealing its interior, where a jade box was placed.

Zhao Xuhe walked up with great joy, opened the jade box, and saw inside a two-volume Dao book.

The upper volume was titled "Nine Transformations Coiling Dragon Technique."

The lower volume was titled "Myriad Chariots Dragon Ascension Treasure Scroll."

Looking at the two Dao books in the jade box, Zhao Xuhe's hands trembled with excitement: "Third-grade true technique! As expected, a third-grade true technique pointing directly to the Golden Core path!"

"Master truly didn't deceive me."

"Master said that after three lifetimes of bitter cultivation, I've accumulated enough merit for True Person Panlong. This lifetime, the merit is complete, and Panlong's inheritance is my opportunity."

"After today, as long as I focus on cultivating, refining the 'True Dragon Qi,' and establishing the 'Myriad Chariots Dragon Ascension' foundation, I will surely regain my true self, completely transcend tribulations and return. Moreover, with a third-grade true technique, not only will the Foundation Establishment path be smooth, but the Golden Core path is also within reach!"

The more Zhao Xuhe thought about it, the more excited he became, immediately putting away the Dao books.

"Switching cultivation methods requires dispersing my current cultivation. There's no time to lose; I must return to my cave dwelling to enter seclusion. Once I emerge, I can formally become Master's disciple."

With hopes for the future, Zhao Xuhe flew out of Coiling Dragon Island using his light escape technique.

However, in the next second, Zhao Xuhe's expression suddenly changed dramatically.

"Who's there?"

Boom!

At this moment, Zhao Xuhe's eyes widened, but all he saw was a magnificent sword light, as powerful as thunder, slashing right before his eyes!

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[1,499 words]

A flash of sword light, accompanied by a thunderous roar.

In an instant, Zhao Xuhe's head was severed by the sword light, but before it could hit the ground, his body suddenly exploded, transforming into a field of bones.

"Who might this fellow sect member be, waiting here for Zhao?"

After the bones shattered, a stream of yin energy darted out, reconstituting Zhao Xuhe's form a hundred meters away, his face still bearing traces of panic.

However, before he could finish speaking, the sword light arrived, shadowing him closely.

Swish—!

The next second, Zhao Xuhe's head once again soared into the sky, only to turn into a sky full of bones; the yin energy retreated another hundred meters, revealing his figure once more.

"I..."

Boom!

"You..."

Crack!

"Enough!"

Dozens of sword lights filled the space, slaying Zhao Xuhe more than ten times before he finally regrouped, seizing an opportunity to evade the sword light.

Though it was only a brief moment, Zhao Xuhe grasped it precisely. He then swung his wide sleeves, unleashing a rolling wave of blood-colored smoke that enveloped him entirely. He quickly swallowed several pills to recover his injuries and true qi, then diverted his attention to scan his surroundings.

"Lü Yang, it's you!"

Zhao Xuhe's gaze was sharp, instantly recognizing that the sword light which had killed him multiple times was the Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula, and immediately identified Lü Yang.

Even so, he was deeply shocked.

Because he had personally experienced the power of that sword light—it wasn't something a Qi Refining early-stage cultivator could achieve. In just a few days, Lü Yang had already reached the mid-stage of Qi Refining.

"This person must possess some fortuitous encounter!"

Thinking this, Zhao Xuhe suppressed his anger, feeling an indescribable joy: "Good, good, today is truly a double blessing. I'll accept this opportunity!"

Outside the Maze Formation, Lü Yang appeared solemn.

"This is truly troublesome..."

He believed he had struck hard enough, yet Zhao Xuhe still managed to seize a sliver of life, failing to kill him outright with a single combo.

He was even recognized.

However, with the Maze Formation confusing all directions, his true body remained hidden, attacking only with a flying sword from afar. In a real fight, he still had a greater chance of winning.

Meanwhile, Zhao Xuhe also noticed the Maze Formation around him.

Although it was a rudimentary trapping formation that he could easily break given some time, with Lü Yang interfering and his true qi currently less than half of his peak, he found himself helpless for the moment.

Thinking this, Zhao Xuhe's eyes shifted, and he suddenly spoke:

"Brother Lü, truth be told, there's no real enmity between us..."

"Go!"

Taking advantage of your illness to claim your life—Lü Yang naturally wouldn't reminisce with Zhao Xuhe or give him a chance to heal. He immediately formed a sword seal and continued his attack.

"Tch! Refusing a toast only to drink a forfeit!"

Seeing this, Zhao Xuhe's gaze turned cold. He abandoned the idea of stalling for time and instead formed a hand seal, summoning a golden iron seal into the air.

This item, called the "Primordial Magnet Gold Seal," could attract all metal objects and was specifically effective against flying swords.

It was Zhao Xuhe's secret treasure, intended for future battles between righteous and demonic forces, particularly against disciples of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion. Now, he brought it out early to counter Lü Yang's sword light.

"Set!"

Zhao Xuhe activated the treasure seal, precisely capturing a slashing sword light. With a single stamp, he subdued the sword light, rendering it immobile.

Lü Yang, upon seeing this, remained calm.

He was still at his peak, while Zhao Xuhe was at a low point.

This kind of true qi-consuming tug-of-war favored him, so he wasn't worried.

"My greatest advantage now is hiding in the shadows, with the formation concealing me. Zhao Xuhe can't find my position. Even if he has some means to turn the tables, as long as I don't reveal myself, they are useless. If I continue to wear him down, victory will be mine."

So Lü Yang made up his mind—not to reveal himself.

Flying sword? Forget it!

Anyway, you can't refine my flying sword in a short time and have to expend true qi to suppress it. That suits me just fine. Let's see how long you can last!

Rumble!

Lü Yang stood outside the formation, channeling his true qi. A misty white energy rose from above, forming a large handprint several meters wide that slammed into the formation.

This technique wasn't particularly powerful; it was purely about overwhelming force.

Seeing this, Zhao Xuhe's face darkened, realizing that Lü Yang had seen through his plan.

"Curse you!"

Zhao Xuhe couldn't help but curse inwardly. Clearly, he was also at the mid-stage of Qi Refining, yet he was so cautious. How could he possibly turn the tables?

Although he still had the strength to fight desperately, even if he killed Lü Yang, he wouldn't survive. How could Zhao Xuhe, who had finally obtained a fortuitous encounter, accept this?

As his true qi continued to deplete, Zhao Xuhe finally couldn't hold back and shouted:

"Brother Lü, do you know what opportunity I obtained on this Coiling Dragon Island? A third-grade true technique that directly points to the Golden Core path! If you stop now, I am willing to share the technique with you!"

"Third-grade true technique?"

Outside the Maze Formation, Lü Yang stood up abruptly upon hearing this.

In the hierarchy of true qi, there are thirty-six grades in nine ranks.

Below the seventh grade, there's no path to Foundation Establishment; below the third grade, there's no path to Golden Core.

And now, Zhao Xuhe was offering a technique that could cultivate third-grade true qi, with the potential for future Golden Core attainment!

What a great opportunity!

"No, wait..."

Lü Yang took a deep breath, suppressing his greed, and sat back down: "This person is offering great benefits, still trying to lure me out. If I go out, I'll fall into his trap."

"What do you say, Brother Lü? Can we reconcile?"

Inside the Maze Formation, Zhao Xuhe continued to persuade, but a voice suddenly echoed from all directions: "Foolish! Killing you means the technique is mine!"

"Brother Lü, that's not correct." Zhao Xuhe shook his head and smiled: "Opportunities are predestined. This third-grade true technique is something I obtained through three lifetimes of cultivation and exchanged for with merit. It's not fated for you. Even if you kill me, the technique will fly away and won't be yours."

"What?"

Lü Yang was momentarily stunned upon hearing this, then his expression became uncertain.

Opportunities are predestined, and without fate, the technique would fly away even if obtained?

But soon, Lü Yang reacted, sneering: "If that's the case, why should I reconcile with you for this technique?"

Zhao Xuhe hurriedly explained: "Brother Lü, you originally had no fate with the technique, but if I voluntarily share it with you, then fate is established."

"...Fine."

Lü Yang was silent for a moment, then said: "Copy the technique for me, and I'll let you out."

"Deal."

Zhao Xuhe agreed decisively, then took out a jade box, opened it, and revealed two volumes of Daoist scriptures inside.

"The upper volume, 'Nine Transformations Dragon Art,' is a Qi Refining technique that can cultivate a 'True Dragon Qi,' making one a standout among peers. The lower volume, 'Myriad Chariots Dragon Ascension Scroll,' is a Foundation Establishment technique that can cultivate the 'Myriad Chariots Dragon' Dao foundation, with future prospects of attaining the Golden Core path."

After introducing the technique, Zhao Xuhe suddenly changed the subject:

"But Brother Lü, I am currently injured and my true qi is weak. If I give you the technique now and you go back on your word, what then?"

"...That's simple."

Lü Yang's eyes turned, and he proactively suggested: "You can give me the 'Myriad Chariots Dragon Ascension Scroll' first and keep the 'Nine Transformations Dragon Art' yourself."

"I'm currently only at the Qi Refining stage. Even if I have a Foundation Establishment technique, I can't cultivate it. You don't have to worry about me going back on my word and harming you." At this point, Lü Yang's face was full of sincerity: "After I let you out, you can then give me the 'Nine Transformations Dragon Art.' How about that?"

Zhao Xuhe thought for a moment and felt that Lü Yang made a lot of sense.

"Agreed!"

Zhao Xuhe took the 'Myriad Chariots Dragon Ascension Scroll' from the jade box. Lü Yang still didn't show himself but instead condensed a large hand of true qi to grab it from a distance.

Seeing this, Zhao Xuhe could only sigh inwardly, suppressing his last bit of hesitation, and obediently handed over the technique to Lü Yang.

Lü Yang received the technique, memorized it word by word, then grinned.

"Goodbye!"

The next second, Lü Yang sank his qi into his dantian and directly activated the Killing Curse, self-destructing without hesitation!

Boom!

Moments later, the smoke and dust dispersed, revealing Zhao Xuhe's bewildered face.

"My technique... it's gone?"

Why self-destruct?

Even if self-destruction was necessary, why wait until after obtaining the technique to do it? I haven't even had a chance to look at the technique myself!

"Lü Yang..."

Zhao Xuhe stood in the wind, looking at the 'Myriad Chariots Dragon Ascension Scroll' that had turned to ashes, murmuring Lü Yang's name, his expression gradually twisting:

"Bastard!"

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[1,692 words]

"Who made a promise with you? Let's talk about it in the next life!"

"With the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes, at worst, I'll just take the 『Myriad Chariots Ascending Dragon Scroll』 in this life, and the 『Nine Transformations Dragon Art』 in the next—either way, they're both mine!"

From the very beginning, Lü Yang never trusted Zhao Xuhe.

All that talk about sharing Daoist scriptures was nothing more than a temporary expedient. Lü Yang was certain that as soon as Zhao Xuhe escaped, he would find a way to kill him.

Unfortunately, Zhao Xuhe was stronger, and Lü Yang didn't have absolute confidence in killing him to eliminate future troubles. If they truly fought to the death, it was possible that he might die instead.

Moreover, with his loan about to mature and no way to repay it, the time left in this life was already running out. So, as soon as he obtained the Daoist scripture, Lü Yang decisively self-destructed.

【You brazenly self-destructed and died.】

【Current remaining pages of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes: 97】

【Restarting a new life, you can choose one of the following gains from your previous life:

1: Treasure.

2: Cultivation.

3: Lifespan.

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

"Those whose names are called, step forward."

As consciousness cleared, Liu Xin's familiar and detestable voice rang out on the stage. Lü Yang ignored it and said in his heart, "I choose cultivation."

Boom!

In the next moment, Lü Yang felt a surge of true qi erupt from his dantian, swiftly flowing to his limbs and bones, beginning to frantically transform his essence, energy, and spirit. However, he gritted his teeth and operated the qi-concealing technique he had obtained from the three black-clothed men, suppressing all movements beneath his skin.

A moment later, Lü Yang exhaled a deep breath of turbid air.

"I'm back again!"

Qi Refining Stage, Level Four, Mid-stage!

Raising his head to look at Liu Xin on the stage, Lü Yang no longer felt the fear he had at their first meeting.

At this time, Liu Xin was only at Qi Refining Stage, Level Six!

He would only be able to break through the bottleneck to the late stage of Qi Refining after selecting a registered disciple and refining them into Innate True Qi.

Only then might he be able to see through Lü Yang's qi-concealing technique. Before that, even if Lü Yang stood right in front of him, he would only be regarded as an ordinary person.

"But there's also an unexpected surprise."

Lü Yang looked inward at his dantian and saw a misty white qi floating within—it was the Innate True Qi from his previous life, and it still existed in this life!

"I understand now... The Book of a Hundred Lifetimes doesn't rewind to the original anchor point but to my previous life!"

This was undoubtedly a good thing.

Because it meant that the treasures, cultivation, and even lifespan he chose in each life could be retained in the next, without having to start from scratch each time.

Next, Lü Yang's actions proceeded as usual.

He went on stage, was assigned, and entered the Pleasure Hall.

He surpassed Yu Suzhen.

He quietly lay low, broke through after three months, and silently became an official disciple.

"In this life, according to my plan, besides the remaining volume of the 『Nine Transformations Dragon Art』, there are two major events worth attempting."

The first was naturally the "Merit Lottery."

Lü Yang stayed in his cave dwelling for a few days, then went to the Merit Hall to receive the "Accumulate Merit" task, and immediately rushed to the Merit Pool.

"2025113!"

Standing among the crowd around the Merit Pool, Lü Yang stylishly combed his hair and began to imagine how he would spend the grand prize after drawing it from the Merit Pool.

Ten billion, ten billion, a lifetime wouldn't be enough to spend it all~!

Goodbye, poverty, I'll miss you...

In the next second, a commotion arose among the crowd, and countless people looked at Lü Yang in surprise, as well as at the merit fish drawn by his selected number.

"Brother, you have pretty good luck."

Someone approached Lü Yang, speaking enviously, "A purple merit fish, although only slightly better than white and blue ones, is still a rare encounter."

"...What?"

Lü Yang tilted his head, a row of question marks appearing above it.

A purple merit fish?

Not a colorful one?

Lü Yang quickly looked at the merit fish he had drawn, which was emitting a blue glow, and then checked the number he had chosen—2025113—there was no mistake.

Why didn't he win!?

Could it be that the lucky guy from his previous life, Xiao Shiye, lied? But he couldn't possibly know that someone could restart a life, so there was no reason to lie.

That being the case...

"There's a scam going on!"

Lü Yang was so angry that his hands were trembling, his face flushed red, and he finally realized: that so-called lucky guy, Xiao Shiye, was clearly a prearranged shill!

"Forget it, at least it's still a merit fish." Lü Yang could only comfort himself this way.

.Purple was still considered rare, second only to gold and Colorful ones.

Although he missed out on the ten billion grand prize, consuming the purple merit fish would likely allow his cultivation to quickly reach Qi Refining Stage, Level Five.

Thinking this way, Lü Yang felt much better.

Then, just to be safe, he didn't take the merit fish back to his cave dwelling but consumed it on the spot in front of everyone, then began to meditate and refine it.

After completing everything, Lü Yang clearly felt several gazes on him dissipate.

As expected, the essence of the purple merit fish allowed him to smoothly break through to Qi Refining Stage, Level Five, and even brought him to the threshold of Level Six.

"This is just the purple one—if it were Colorful..."

Lü Yang's heart was filled with longing. After all, in his previous life, that Xiao Shiye had consumed a Colorful merit fish and advanced from Qi Refining Stage, Level One to the Great Perfection overnight.

"Forget it, I won't force it."

Lü Yang quickly regained his composure. The first matter had failed, but there was still a chance with the second one—the "Substitute Death Yin Puppet Price Bubble Incident."

Elder Wang Borong of the Library Pavilion had nearly lost everything because of this, and was deceived by Zhao Xuhe into becoming cannon fodder on Panlong Island. But ultimately, it was because Wang Borong entered the market too late. Lü Yang was different; he knew the timing of the price bubble's fluctuation.

"It's already showing an upward trend now."

Lü Yang opened his disciple token to check the price of Substitute Death Yin Puppets and found that there was indeed some fluctuation, indicating that insiders were already manipulating it.

"I still lack a sufficient amount of capital to enter the market..."

Lü Yang thought for a moment and turned to the Merit Hall.

As expected, as a new disciple, he was seen as a fat sheep waiting to be slaughtered by the senior disciples. Before long, Zhao Xuhe approached him proactively.

"Junior Brother, you don't look well. Are you facing some difficulties?"

Hearing this, Lü Yang looked up and gave a bitter smile: "What difficulties could there be? Just lacking money. I wonder if Senior Brother has any tasks that can earn contribution points?"

"So it's a lack of money... I understand. I've been there myself. When I was your age, I was also worried about contribution points every day, overwhelmed with tasks, and even my Dao companion despised me and broke up with me... Sigh, every day was filled with endless tasks, and life seemed hopeless."

Zhao Xuhe spoke with a sigh, appearing to share Lü Yang's plight.

After speaking, he patted Lü Yang's shoulder and said, "I've wasted half my life, and finally concluded a universal truth."

"That is, money is dead."

"So, let money generate money. Use contribution points to earn more contribution points. Only then won't you become a slave to the Primordial Sent Sect and can escape this life of drudgery!"

Upon hearing this, Lü Yang immediately showed admiration: "Listening to your words is better than studying for ten years!"

But soon, Lü Yang lowered his head in disappointment: "But Senior Brother, I don't even have any contribution points now. How can I earn more?"

"That's short-sighted!"

Zhao Xuhe's expression became even more amiable, flashing a smile: "Although you don't have money now, you can borrow it. Just repay it after earning more, right?"

"But..."

Lü Yang still looked hesitant.

Seeing his opportunity, Zhao Xuhe wouldn't let it slip away and quickly said, "How about this, I see that Junior Brother and I are fated, so I'll lend you some!"

Lü Yang's eyes lit up immediately: "Really?"

Seeing his ...seeing his eager expression, Zhao Xuhe became certain—the fish had taken the bait!

"Of course it's true!"

Zhao Xuhe pounded his chest in assurance while taking out the so-called Sanhe Association badge, then asked Lü Yang, "Junior Brother, how much do you plan to borrow?"

Lü Yang paused for a moment, then raised two fingers.

"Two hundred?"

"Two thousand!"

Lü Yang looked resolute. "To be honest, I haven't used my Cultivation Loan yet—worth 1,000 contribution points. Plus, I still have my newcomer benefits: the Bone Flying Sword, Vitality Pills, the Human-Faced Owl... I'll use all these as collateral. Senior Brother Zhao, can you lend me 2,000 contribution points?"

Zhao Xuhe froze.

Since when were young people this reckless?

I've barely pitched anything, and you're already going all-in?

Before Zhao Xuhe could react, Lü Yang said something even more shocking, "Senior Brother Zhao, I plan to go all-in on Substitute Death Yin Puppets."

"What!?"

Zhao Xuhe was first stunned, then as if a realization dawned on him, he quickly lowered his voice, "Junior Brother... you didn't happen to learn some insider info, did you?"

"Senior Brother is wise," Lü Yang also lowered his voice, "When I was choosing a cultivation method at the Library Pavilion earlier, I overheard Senior Brother Wang Borong at the door saying something—it seemed like the southern battlefront was losing, and the mass grave producing Substitute Death Yin Puppets was lost. But the Holy Sect has secretly sealed off the news..."

"Hiss!"

At these words, Zhao Xuhe gasped, then his eyes were filled with intense greed—it was clear he smelled a golden opportunity.

If the news was true, then this was a chance to get rich!

Watching the excited and restless Zhao Xuhe, Lü Yang sneered inwardly.

The fish had taken the bait!

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Chapter 16: The Frenzied Bubble

[1,362 words]

With Zhao Xuhe's guarantee, Lü Yang smoothly borrowed 2,000 contribution points from the "Three Rivers Association" behind him and then invested all of it to purchase Substitute Death Yin Puppets.

On the other side, Zhao Xuhe was also pacing excitedly in his cave dwelling.

"The news turned out to be true!"

Upon receiving the message from his master, he became extremely excited: "The mass grave in Jiangnan of the Primordial Saint Sect was actually captured by the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion."

"The one who acted was the Third Elder of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion, the peerless sword cultivator known as 'Demon-Slaying True Person.'"

"In a short time, it's impossible to reclaim it."

"With the loss of the mass grave, the price of Substitute Death Yin Puppets is destined to rise in the short term. This is a great opportunity for us to speculate and hoard!"

"I'm going to make a fortune!"

Being able to attain the position of a merit building deacon disciple in the Primordial Saint Sect, Zhao Xuhe naturally had the background and connections, not to mention the insight and greed. Therefore, once he confirmed Lü Yang's information was true, he immediately began gathering funds and then invested all his cash into purchasing Substitute Death Yin Puppets.

And the development of the situation was exactly as he had anticipated.

As the incident at the Jiangnan mass grave spread, more and more people who "perceived the business opportunity" began sweeping the market, buying Substitute Death Yin Puppets at high prices.

Just like all speculative bubbles, those who entered first made quite a bit of money.

However, as the event fermented, everyone found that the price of Substitute Death Yin Puppets showed no signs of decreasing; they were bought at high prices and sold at even higher prices.

Making money suddenly became easy.

As long as they bought in and then sold out, they could easily earn contribution points that previously required completing several or even dozens of sect missions.

Thus, more people went crazy.

More and more people began to invest their savings, hoping to make money, and they indeed did, further stimulating the market.

Even the more cautious individuals, upon discovering that fellow disciples they usually looked down upon were making more money than themselves just by buying and selling, naturally felt unbalanced and thus joined the wave as a matter of course.

Under such a wave, the price of Substitute Death Yin Puppets soared.

From the initial 200 contribution points, it climbed all the way to 300 contribution points, a fifty percent increase that drove countless speculators even crazier.

After all, its price hadn't stagnated and was still rising.

It was rising today, so it would surely rise tomorrow; if it rose tomorrow, why wouldn't it continue to rise the day after? Not buying now would be a loss!

Thus, more and more people acted upon hearing the news.

300, 400, 500—finally, when the price soared to 500 contribution points, people's rationality somewhat returned, feeling that it might be enough.

"It's time to sell!"

Zhao Xuhe was the first to grasp this subtle point, beginning to secretly sell off the Substitute Death Yin Puppets he had hoarded in batches, preparing to cash out and exit.

At the same time, the entire Substitute Death Yin Puppet market's price also began to fall.

After all, Zhao Xuhe wasn't the only smart person in the world; others also keenly noticed the downward trend and began to gradually sell off their goods.

If this development continued, it wouldn't take a few days for the price to completely collapse and return to normal.

However, just as this wave was about to subside, suddenly, a piece of news from the upper echelons of the Primordial Saint Sect spread throughout the sect overnight.

"The Primordial Saint Sect is preparing to counterattack!"

"The loss of the Jiangnan mass grave enraged a True Person within the sect, who decided to take action personally, mobilizing disciples to launch a counterattack and engage in a battle with the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion!"

"A great war is imminent!"

During wartime, all materials beneficial to the war effort are bound to increase in price.

And the Substitute Death Yin Puppet, a tool that can save lives at critical moments, how important would it be in the bloody and brutal upcoming righteous-demonic war?

It's equivalent to a second life!

Undoubtedly, on the night this news spread, the price of Substitute Death Yin Puppets, which had begun to fall, experienced a second surge!

Not only did it instantly return to the peak of 500 contribution points, but it also continued to climb!

By the next morning, 500 contribution points had become 1,000 contribution points, a fivefold increase compared to the original price of 200 contribution points!

"Hahahahaha!"

In the Library Pavilion, Wang Borong stood on his treasured rocking chair, dancing with excitement, his old face flushed with excitement and fanaticism.

"Rise! Keep rising!"

"No, I need to buy more. Selling this little amount now won't earn much. If I hoard more, I'll have enough contribution points for a cave dwelling!"

At this moment, the entire Primordial Saint Sect was celebrating among ordinary disciples.

These ordinary disciples lacked insight, connections, and information channels, so when others were secretly selling, they were still buying.

And now, they had made it big.

Countless ordinary disciples saw their net worth double overnight, earning more money than some senior disciples with backgrounds and backing.

For a time, countless fantastical stories spread throughout the Primordial Saint Sect.

For example, a poor lad who was publicly rejected by his fiancée, after doubling his wealth, angrily broke off the engagement, leaving behind the words, "Do not underestimate the poor youth."

Another example, a little girl who had to rely on others due to her father's death and her mother's remarriage, living a life of daily abuse from her stepmother and unable to keep her father's inheritance, now doubled her wealth and immediately bought a high-end cave dwelling in full.

Do you have dreams? Do you want to realize your dreams?

Come buy Substitute Death Yin Puppets!

This kind of madness, where everyone was involved, peaked one day when a disciple at the peak of Qi Refining suddenly broke through and successfully established his foundation.

Because that disciple publicly admitted that the reason he could break through was entirely due to earning enough contribution points by trading Substitute Death Yin Puppets, which he then used to buy a Foundation Establishment Pill in full. Therefore, he wanted to thank the Substitute Death Yin Puppet; without it, he couldn't have defied fate.

It was completely insane.

1,000, 2,000, 3,000—the price of Substitute Death Yin Puppets soared, and while some were happy watching the skyrocketing prices, others were sorrowful.

Happy ones included Lü Yang.

He didn't hesitate and chose to sell when the price soared to 2,000.

After all, he had originally bought 10 at 200 contribution points each and sold them at 2,000 contribution points, making a tenfold profit and earning 20,000 contribution points!

Sorrowful ones included Zhao Xuhe.

When he saw the price rebound, he regretted it deeply, especially after seeing Wang Borong, whom he used to look down upon and even planned to harm.

As far as he knew, Wang Borong, who had been mediocre for decades and was almost half-buried, had hoarded over 20 Substitute Death Yin Puppets, all bought at high prices during this period. When Zhao Xuhe was secretly selling, he even mocked him as a leek waiting to be harvested.

But now, he was about to earn 100,000 contribution points!

If it were just that he didn't earn anything, that would be one thing.

But when Zhao Xuhe saw Wang Borong earning so many contribution points and grinning every day, it felt even more painful than his own loss!

Seeing the price of Substitute Death Yin Puppets rising continuously without stopping, Zhao Xuhe pondered repeatedly and hesitated for an entire night.

Finally, he re-entered the market.

He threw the contribution points he had previously earned back into the Substitute Death Yin Puppet market.

At first, he remained cautious and didn't invest all his contribution points, but as he watched the price keep rising, he felt he was losing out with every increase.

"Opportunities must not be missed. I've already missed once; how can I miss a second time?"

"It will still rise. Buying now is better than buying later."

Many others shared Zhao Xuhe's thoughts.

When this group of early cash-out individuals re-entered the market, it further stimulated the price increase of Substitute Death Yin Puppets and strengthened people's confidence.

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Chapter 17: Others Panic, I Double Down

[1,402 words]

Actually, Zhao Xuhe was also well aware that by now, the Substitute Death Yin Puppet had completely become a bubble, one that could burst at any moment and collapse entirely.

But he believed that with his sharp intuition, he would definitely be able to exit in time.

Therefore, when Lü Yang contacted him saying he had already exited and wanted to repay the 2000 contribution points loan he had previously borrowed, Zhao Xuhe still felt sorry for him.

"Too hasty, Junior Brother, you're too hasty!"

"Did you not see that the price of the Substitute Death Yin Puppet is still rising? And the battle hasn't even started yet—once the fighting truly begins, that's when the demand will really outstrip supply!"

"Before it skyrockets too much, I suggest you quickly buy it back."

Facing Zhao Xuhe's earnest persuasion, Lü Yang, however, remained rational.

Although he was also envious of the soaring price of the Substitute Death Yin Puppet and even regretted selling too early, he understood very clearly the reason Zhao Xuhe was trying to persuade him.

Concern for him?

Don't be silly—he just wanted to pull more people in!

After all, the more people entered, the more chances he had to cash out and leave.

"Hold it in, I'm not in a rush."

"In this lifetime, I'll observe the situation first, confirm the peak price, and repeat the operation in the next lifetime—then it will be my opportunity to make huge profits."

With the **【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】** in hand, I'll only make profits, never losses!

Thinking of this, Lü Yang instantly felt balanced in his heart, settled the loan with Zhao Xuhe, and directly entered seclusion, ignoring the outside world.

At the same time Lü Yang entered seclusion, the price of the Substitute Death Yin Puppet continued to soar.

Because the Primordial Saint Sect really started preparing for war!

Large numbers of disciples received transfer orders and began leaving the sect in succession, destination unknown.

In such a situation, there was naturally no possibility of the Substitute Death Yin Puppet price dropping in the slightest.

Even if it was expensive, those about to head into the righteous-demonic war could only grit their teeth and buy.

After all, money can be earned again, but a life is only one.

In this scenario, more and more people chose to enter the market, and most of them weren't ordinary disciples, but true children of noble families.

Compared to ordinary disciples, these family-born disciples came from powerful clans, and even their least powerful elders were Foundation Establishment Real Persons.

The contribution points they could mobilize were undoubtedly much more than those of ordinary disciples.

As a result, once they entered the market, the previously slowing price trend of the Substitute Death Yin Puppet once again took off.

Three thousand, four thousand, five thousand.

Clearly, this price was already no longer on the same level as the puppet's actual value, and some people, out of fear, had already started to exit.

In this case, the price of the Substitute Death Yin Puppet naturally began to drop.

This kind of panic gradually spread, but there were still more people, especially those who had experienced the first price dip, who remained full of confidence.

"Don't panic, this is just a technical correction!"

"Selling? That's still a long way off!"

This time, Zhao Xuhe felt he had learned his lesson.

Previously, because he exited too early, his re-entry not only failed to profit, but he even suffered a small loss—how could he possibly make the same mistake twice?

"The righteous-demonic war hasn't even started yet. There's still plenty of Substitute Death Yin Puppets on the market, so it looks like the price has peaked."

"But once the fighting begins, these puppets will be consumed in large quantities, and there's no substitute of the same quality."

"By then, everyone will have to come back and buy again!"

"At that time, there will definitely be a third price surge!"

"A mere five thousand contribution points? Even seven thousand, or ten thousand is possible!"

"No supply but huge demand, and it concerns one's life—people will sell their pots and pans just to buy!"

Zhao Xuhe felt his analysis was flawless.

"So while those fools sell out of fear... I'm doubling down!"

Thinking of this, Zhao Xuhe not only invested all his savings, but even took out loans, leveraging the credibility of the Sanhe Association to borrow a huge sum.

He went all-in.

Of course, Zhao Xuhe was not the only "smart person"—others made the same judgment and began sweeping up stock in the market.

As a result, the price, which had just recently dipped, began to climb again.

Seeing this, Zhao Xuhe, who had felt some uncertainty in his heart, instantly felt reassured and thought his decision to go all-in was truly wise.

Then, early the next morning.

A voice suddenly rang out from Sacred Fire Cliff and instantly spread throughout the entire Primordial Saint Sect.

"Recently, under the personal direction of the Sect Master True Person, we have openly mobilized disciples to create the appearance of preparing for war, while secretly sending people to launch a surprise attack on the Jiangnan Ten-Thousand-Pit."

"Therefore, we are pleased to announce to all disciples."

"As of yesterday, the Jiangnan Ten-Thousand-Pit has been personally reclaimed by the Sect Master True Person, and the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion has already contacted the Sect Master, expressing willingness to negotiate peace with our Saint Sect."

Boom.

In the literal sense—at the moment this news spread, an explosion rang out from within a certain cave dwelling, as if someone had gone mad and self-detonated.

Immediately after, silence reigned.

The vast Primordial Saint Sect, which had been full of life and vitality just the day before, was now engulfed in a suffocating dead silence.

Because everyone understood—the reclamation of the Jiangnan Ten-Thousand-Pit meant that there was no longer a shortage of Substitute Death Yin Puppets.

The Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion initiating peace talks meant that the righteous-demonic war was postponed indefinitely.

Even more importantly, this news had been published through disciple tokens—an official announcement.

So it couldn't possibly be false.

The bubble named Substitute Death Yin Puppet burst spectacularly at that moment, and its price plunged from the peak of seven thousand like falling from a cliff.

Five thousand, three thousand, one thousand, two hundred.

The price, which had taken over a month to climb, now crashed back to the original value within just a quarter of an hour—and was still falling!

Everyone wanted to sell, but no one was willing to buy.

Especially those who had hoarded large amounts of Substitute Death Yin Puppets—they could only watch helplessly as the price fell through the floor and their wealth evaporated.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

That night, almost every period of time saw a thunderous explosion within the Primordial Saint Sect—countless people suffered from shattered Dao hearts.

Inside his cave dwelling, Zhao Xuhe had already fainted.

When he opened his eyes again, his expression was still dazed, as if in a dream: “Terrifying... I actually dreamed that the price of Substitute Death Yin Puppets dropped... hahaha...”

Then he glanced again at the current price of the Substitute Death Yin Puppets.

100 contribution points each.

“...Must be a mistake.”

After a moment of silence, Zhao Xuhe turned off his disciple token, took a deep breath, and tremblingly reopened it to check the price again.

50 contribution points each.

“Pfft!!!”

Zhao Xuhe immediately spat out a mouthful of old blood.

His face turned pig-liver purple, and his Qi circulation instantly collapsed just like the price of the Substitute Death Yin Puppets.

“I hate...!”

Zhao Xuhe didn't have time to think—he desperately suppressed the urge to explode, circulated his energy, and smoothed out his True Qi, barely avoiding a real case of Qi deviation.

At that moment, a voice suddenly rang out outside his cave.

“Senior Brother Zhao, Lü Yang has come to visit.”

“Lü Yang?”

Zhao Xuhe was stunned for a while before remembering this junior brother of his.

Then, thinking of how the other exited early and repaid the loan, while he himself had lost everything...

“Pfft!”

Wiping away the blood from the corner of his mouth, Zhao Xuhe staggered out the door, only to see Lü Yang standing there, full of energy, waving at him enthusiastically:

“Senior Brother, how much did you make today?”

Boom!

With a loud explosion, Zhao Xuhe's steel teeth clenched tight, and True Qi rampaged through his body, bursting through his skin and leaking streaks of blood.

Lü Yang's face instantly filled with horror: “Senior Brother!?! Are you alright?!”

“...I'm fine.”

Zhao Xuhe forced out a slight smile: "By the way, Junior Brother Lü, I recently discovered an ancient cultivator's cave dwelling—it seems there are quite a few treasures inside."

As he finished speaking, a murderous gleam flashed in Zhao Xuhe's eyes, and he squeezed out his words through clenched teeth: "Don't know if Junior Brother is interested?"

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[1,358 words]

"An ancient cave dwelling?"

After hearing Zhao Xuhe's suggestion, Lü Yang shook his head. "Senior Brother, your kind invitation is appreciated, but I lack mastery in divine powers, and for now I only wish to focus wholeheartedly on cultivation."

"Oh?" Zhao Xuhe narrowed his eyes. "Could it be that Junior Brother doesn't trust me?"

"You overthink, Senior Brother. It's simply that I haven't learned any divine powers yet and have no ability to engage in magical combat. Even if I accompany you, I'd only be a burden."

Lü Yang's explanation was reasonable.

After all, he had just joined the sect and immediately began speculating with Substitute Death Yin Puppets, even pawning his Library Pavilion cultivation manuals as collateral — Zhao Xuhe was well aware of this.

"Then forget it."

Zhao Xuhe shook his head, his expression turning cold.

At this moment, murderous intent had already arisen in his heart.

After all, he had lost everything — even his pants — while Lü Yang had profited and exited early.

How could he possibly accept that?

What's more, the contribution points Lü Yang earned had originally been borrowed from him. Rounding it off, that money should have been his!

"Fine, let it sit with you for now."

Zhao Xuhe sneered internally. "Only knows how to cultivate without learning divine arts — does he think this is one of those righteous sects where he can train in peace? Once I settle the matter on Panlong Island, I'll sneak into his cave dwelling one night and kill him. Those contribution points will still be mine!"

"As expected, that Zhao guy is probably already thinking about how to deal with me."

Leaving Zhao Xuhe's cave dwelling, Lü Yang swaggered toward the Library Pavilion, already guessing Zhao Xuhe's thoughts but showing no sign of panic.

After all, he hadn't spent the last few days idly.

While others were frantically flipping Substitute Death Yin Puppets, he had turned a deaf ear to the commotion, bought a massive stash of spirit pills, and gone into seclusion.

Qi Refining Stage from level four to six was considered mid-stage, without a bottleneck. As long as one had money and pills, breakthroughs were guaranteed.

And Lü Yang, who had earned a windfall of ten thousand contribution points, was naturally generous.

At this moment, he had already broken through to Qi Refining Stage level six, reaching the peak of the mid-stage.

By the way, he also used contribution points to exchange for a Dust-Cleansing Pill to cure the venereal disease his original body had.

It proved that the most incurable disease in a person's life — was poverty.

In his First Lifetime, Yu Suzhen died from a venereal disease, and in the end, it was still due to a lack of money.

As for the mid-stage bottleneck, he had originally hoped the Innate One Qi could help break through, but perhaps due to insufficient quantity, the effect was barely noticeable.

It seemed that Liu Xin hadn't only harmed him in the past.

As for claiming not to know divine powers — that was just to fool Zhao Xuhe.

In his previous life, he barely managed to suppress Zhao Xuhe in a sneak attack using formations when the latter was exhausted. But this time, it wouldn't be so troublesome.

Even in a head-on fight, he now had the confidence to escape!

"Senior Brother Wang, have you been well lately?"

Arriving at the Library Pavilion, Lü Yang skillfully pulled out a gourd of wine and smiled. "This is top-quality Drunken Flower Brew — I got it especially for you, Senior Brother."

"...It's you again."

At the gate of the Library Pavilion, the old-faced Wang Borong twitched his eyelids, then sighed. "Drunken Flower Brew, one gourd costs 50 contribution points."

"You really are rolling in wealth, aren't you?"

In this life, Lü Yang made sure to forge a strong relationship with Wang Borong.

At first, Wang Borong didn't care much for him, but ever since the Substitute Death Yin Puppet scheme exploded, this senior of the Library Pavilion had changed his attitude.

The reason was simple.

Before the Substitute Death Yin Puppet fiasco, Lü Yang had persuaded Wang Borong to sell off some of his hoarded goods, thus avoiding financial ruin.

Since then, Wang Borong had been deeply grateful.

"Pitiful that I've lived for decades in vain, yet couldn't see as clearly as a youngster like you. If you hadn't enlightened me, I might've already succumbed to cultivation deviation."

"Not at all, Senior Brother. You mustn't belittle yourself."

Lü Yang shook his head. "As the saying goes, wise words can't persuade a ghost who's determined to die. I advised many that day, but only you truly listened."

"Your ability to rein in your horse before the cliff was a kind of wisdom."

"Mm."

Wang Borong narrowed his eyes, stroking his beard. Though he knew Lü Yang was flattering him, the words still felt pleasant.

Then the two laid out a table and chairs and began to drink.

Wang Borong didn't hold back, pouring a full cup of Drunken Flower Brew and downing it in one go before slowly saying, "You little rascal, what exactly do you want?"

At this moment, only one question lingered in Wang Borong's heart.

"You and I have no ties. Do you actually believe the rumors that I'm some master of the Library Pavilion waiting for a destined one?"

"Of course not."

Lü Yang poured wine while chuckling. "As the saying goes, having an elder at home is like having a treasure. I just think, Senior Brother, that since you've survived in the Primordial Saint Sect this long, you must have some skills. Also, working in the Library Pavilion, perhaps you could give me some pointers on cultivation methods or divine powers."

Lü Yang's tone was exceedingly sincere.

Wang Borong didn't respond directly, just kept pouring himself more wine. As he drank, he began to complain about the sect's shameless behavior in scamming its disciples.

"Utter beasts!"

"How coincidental — just when prices peaked, the sect suddenly cracked down. This was clearly premeditated. There are bad eggs in the upper echelons!"

Lü Yang kept pouring wine and casually echoed his sentiments.

When Wang Borong had drunk enough and started nodding off, Lü Yang leaned in and whispered, "Senior Brother, I came this time to select a cultivation method or divine power."

"Any recommendations? The more powerful, the better!"

"I knew you wanted something!" Wang Borong laughed smugly. "But you're asking the right person!"

Lü Yang quickly clasped his hands in respect. "I humbly seek your guidance."

"First off, don't even think about true high-grade divine powers. Our Library Pavilion is only a branch under Mending Heaven Peak — the cultivation methods and divine powers here are all limited."

"The truly powerful ones are up on Sacred Fire Cliff — off-limits unless you're a true disciple!"

"But that's to be expected. Us low-level disciples in the early or mid-stages of Qi Refining — we're nothing but cattle and horses to the sect. How could we be taught powerful techniques?"

After all, what's the use of cattle and horses knowing too much? It'd only cause trouble.

As for true disciples, they're officially part of the sect's core and heirs to its legacy — naturally, they enjoy different treatment.

"Is there no middle ground?" Lü Yang asked softly.

"Of course there is!"

Wang Borong smiled faintly. Having worked in the Library Pavilion for over forty years, there wasn't a single method or divine power he didn't know.

Though he might not know their full contents, he was clear on their effects after practice.

"In this Library Pavilion, there are only three divine powers with truly outstanding might — and every one of them comes with severe side effects."

"Side effects?"

At this, Wang Borong's expression grew solemn. He said in a deep voice, "For example, there's one called 『Heavenly Demon Blood Transformation Divine Light』 . It empowers your magical tool by sacrificing your body — greatly boosting its power. But once mastered, it shortens your lifespan and blocks future cultivation. A total severance from the immortal path."

"Now tell me, isn't that a huge side effect?"

Wang Borong meant to scare Lü Yang off, but unexpectedly, instead of being disheartened, Lü Yang grew even more excited.

"A divine power like this — it's tailor-made for me!"

Though the side effects were severe, they only applied to this lifetime. And what did the side effects of this life matter to his next?

It seemed... he had found the correct way to use the **【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】** !

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[1,322 words]

"You really want to learn these divine abilities?"

Seeing Lü Yang's eager expression, Wang Borong was somewhat surprised and couldn't help but say, "Junior Brother, in the Immortal Path, cultivation realm always comes first. You must distinguish between primary and secondary priorities."

In his view, Lü Yang had already earned so many contribution points at such a young age.

In the future, even if he didn't reach Foundation Establishment, achieving the peak of Qi Refining was still very hopeful. So why practice those divine abilities with significant side effects? Even if one's combat power reached the heavens, what would it matter? In the end, when lifespan ends, one still turns to dust.

"Life is short; don't mislead yourself."

Speaking of this, Wang Borong showed a sorrowful expression: "You're still young and don't understand this principle. Flowers may bloom again, but youth never returns."

"You're now in your prime, but what about ten years later? Twenty years later?"

"Making this choice today may seem gratifying, but the drawbacks might only become apparent decades later. By then, there's no medicine for regret."

Before he finished speaking, Wang Borong seemed to fall into memories again. After a while, he sighed: "You don't know, when I was young, I was quite prominent in the Primordial Saint Sect. But just one misstep led to a lifetime of stagnation. Every time I think about it, I feel unbearable pain."

As he spoke, Wang Borong's eyes turned red.

Under the influence of alcohol, he simply pulled Lü Yang and began recounting his glorious past.

Actually, it wasn't much—just that he didn't understand the importance of true Qi grades when he was young. He accidentally obtained a cultivation method below grade seven and started practicing it.

As a result, the true Qi grade was too low, making Foundation Establishment hopeless for life, and even achieving the peak of Qi Refining was difficult.

Over the decades, with half his body buried in the yellow earth, his former fellow disciples and admired women had all extended their lifespans and remained youthful to this day.

How regretful and heartbreaking that must be. But who can live life over again?

"What? I can live again? Then it's fine."

Seeing Wang Borong pass out drunk, Lü Yang finally stood up and, following Wang Borong's description, found the book Heavenly Demon Blood Transformation Divine Light.

Undeniably, this was indeed a demonic cultivation method.

Lü Yang exchanged for it, his expression solemn: "Quick to achieve, significant side effects, high risk—it possesses almost all the characteristics of the demonic path."

To master this divine ability, one must first select a magical tool, then use it to skin oneself alive, and then refine it with secret methods.

After eighty-one days, one can create a blood-transforming treasure light attached to the magical tool. Ordinary cultivators would be injured upon contact and die upon touch.

"At the same time, I myself will become a blood shadow dependent on the magical tool."

"If the magical tool remains intact, the blood shadow does not perish."

"The side effect is halving of lifespan. Moreover, after becoming a blood shadow, one no longer has a human body, only a human form, so cultivation will no longer progress."

"Good, it truly suits me!"

Lü Yang's eyes brightened, and he immediately decided to practice this divine ability.

During the practice, he discovered that this divine ability actually had another version, seemingly modified and optimized by a great cultivator.

"After all, this divine ability is indeed extraordinary."

"The modified version doesn't require the practitioner to skin themselves and perform a blood sacrifice but instead has the practitioner perform a blood sacrifice on their own siblings or descendants."

"In this way, one can still refine this divine ability. However, since the resulting blood shadow isn't the practitioner themselves, it's difficult to control freely, posing a risk of backlash. But I'm different. Whether in this life or the next, the blood shadow will only be myself!"

A few days later, Lü Yang left the Library Pavilion.

In addition, he purchased the Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula in full, so he could use it openly in the future.

The next day, the "cultivation method" was delivered.

“Demonic cultivator!”

Looking at Yun Miaoqing, who was holding her magical sword tightly against her neck and staring at him defiantly, Lü Yang suddenly felt a sense of déjà vu.

But he quickly put it out of his mind.

“Sorry, I need the method and experience for refining a sword pill.”

“What? How do you know... Wait, you...!”

Familiarity breeds ease.

Relying on his familiarity with Yun Miaoqing, Lü Yang went all out and quickly extracted the necessary knowledge and experience from her.

Pulling up his pants, Lü Yang turned and left.

This time, he went to “Myriad Treasures Peak,” the mountain corresponding to the Outer Sect’s Treasure Refinement Hall and one of the Inner Sect’s Four Peaks. Most of the sect’s magical tools came from here.

“I want to rent a ground fire furnace.”

At the front desk, Lü Yang directly stated his request.

After providing sufficient contribution points, he was invited into the highest-grade furnace room within a quarter of an hour.

After thorough preparation, he took out the materials.

Three taels of refined gold, three taels of jade marrow, two taels of cinnabar, and two taels of sword Qi. Then he performed a hand seal to draw intense fire from the earth’s core and placed everything into the furnace!

“Although most sword pills in the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion are refined by senior members, that’s in the righteous path, where there’s no need to worry about sabotage. This is the Primordial Saint Sect. Rather than relying on the morality of the refiner, I’d better do it myself, even if it means trying several times.”

Each set of materials cost 2,000 contribution points.

Lü Yang had earned a total of 10,000 contribution points.

After purchasing divine abilities and cultivation methods and repaying debts, he could only afford three sets of materials for refining sword pills.

“If all three attempts fail, then I’ll try again in the next life!”

With this thought, Lü Yang began meticulously refining the materials, strictly following the methods and experiences extracted from Yun Miaoqing, controlling the ground fire carefully.

Refined gold merged with jade marrow, cinnabar combined with sword Qi.

Gradually, a pill appeared in Lü Yang’s spiritual sense. However, before he could rejoice, the pill suddenly trembled in place.

“Boom!”

It exploded.

One set of materials was wasted. Lü Yang calmly waved his sleeve to sweep away the remnants and silently summarized the experience: “My steps should be correct.”

“The problem lies in the final step.”

Lü Yang reviewed Yun Miaoqing’s memories, and understanding gradually surfaced in his eyes:

“To refine a sword pill, the sword and the heart must be one. But I’ve only been cultivating the Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula for a short time. Clearly, my sword cultivation realm is lacking.”

Logically speaking, this was a hard requirement that could only be slowly honed.

But that was from the perspective of the righteous path, which emphasizes gradual progress and rarely uses methods that seek quick success at the expense of morality.

However, the demonic path didn’t adhere to such principles.

“Sword and heart as one—ultimately, it’s about control over the sword pill. If that’s the case, cultivating Heavenly Demon Blood Transformation Divine Light alongside should have the same effect!”

“Maybe even better!”

After all, the Heavenly Demon Blood Transformation Divine Light was a technique that used one’s body to sacrifice for the tool.

Once mastered, one would practically merge with the magical tool, achieving a level of synchronization far beyond so-called sword and heart unity.

“But if I want to do this, I can’t use the anesthetic I had prepared.”

Refining a sword pill was a meticulous task. If he dulled his senses with medication, a split-second delay during refinement could easily lead to failure.

So he had to remain fully conscious throughout.

“This is the demonic path—we must be ruthless with ourselves. Otherwise, how can we be considered a talent?”

Thinking of this, a cold gleam flashed in Lü Yang’s eyes.

Moments later, he sat cross-legged before the ground fire furnace, stuffed a rag into his mouth, and once the sword pill formed again, directed sword Qi toward himself—

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[1,315 words]

Nearly three months later, in the Earthfire Furnace Room.

Lü Yang’s body trembled as he slowly stood up.

Or rather, it would be more accurate to say he floated up—because at this moment, he no longer had flesh, skin, or bones, but had become a crimson blood shadow!

“I’ve succeeded!”

The blood shadow had no face, only light swirling around as a slightly distorted voice vibrated out, “Eighty-one days—it’s finally complete!”

In the next second, the blood shadow gradually withdrew its radiance, and the peeled skin on the ground suddenly flew up of its own accord and was “worn” by the blood shadow.

The pale skin gradually filled with a flush of blood, the withered flesh slowly plumped, and before long, Lü Yang appeared in the furnace room, intact and unharmed.

At first glance, he looked no different from an ordinary person.

Compared to three months ago, his aura now was even grander; his vigorous true Qi vaguely condensed into a Qi seed.

Qi Refining Stage, Seventh Layer—late stage!

Perhaps the process of cultivating the divine ability was too excruciating, an unimaginable tempering of essence, Qi, and spirit, which unexpectedly pushed him through his bottleneck.

Even more fortunate, this breakthrough had occurred before he officially completed the divine ability.

Had it been after, even breaking through would've been useless—for instance, right now, his cultivation was permanently fixed at the seventh layer of Qi Refining.

“But this will suffice.”

Lü Yang muttered to himself in a low voice.

Possessing the 【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】 , he had never fixated on the achievements of a single life.

How to live better in the next life was his true goal.

“Let's test its power!”

With a single thought, a magnificent sword pill appeared at the center of Lü Yang's brows, and in the next instant, his figure transformed into a stream of blood light, merging with the sword pill.

“Boom!”

Outside the Myriad Treasures Peak, the ground suddenly shook violently, and the previously bustling crowd swayed—several people directly toppled to the ground.

“What's going on?”

“An Earth Dragon turning over? Impossible—with the True Persons suppressing the Earth Veins, how could an Earth Dragon possibly stir?”

The disciples all looked at one another in confusion.

Among them, a few with higher cultivation levels suddenly sensed something and instinctively turned toward a certain direction, astonishment gradually surfacing in their eyes.

“Look!”

“That's—”

Everyone's gaze turned as one.

Then they all saw a radiant streak shoot out from one of the furnace rooms like a rainbow piercing the sun, soaring into the firmament in the blink of an eye, stirring waves through the sea of clouds it passed.

Clang clang!

Clear sword cries echoed across the Nine Heavens.

A brilliant red light dyed the entire Myriad Treasures Peak in blood hue, mobilizing the spiritual energy of heaven and earth into a surging tidal wave!

Within such a storm of spiritual Qi, most disciples couldn't even breathe, nearly suffocating!

"With such momentum—is that someone at the late stage of Qi Refining?"

One disciple revealed a look of envy: "That must be someone who's already formed their Qi seed—only the final step of nurturing remains, and Foundation Establishment is in sight."

"Who broke through just now?"

"I've seen senior brothers at the late stage of Qi Refining before, but none with such oppressive aura. That sword-light like a rainbow must also be an extraordinary magical tool!"

Meanwhile, above the sea of clouds.

Lü Yang, now a blood shadow, merged with the sword-light, his spiritual sense spreading in all directions.

Within a radius of ten li, he could see everything with utter clarity—like observing lines on his palm.

"Late stage of Qi Refining—true Qi settles in the dantian, forming a Qi seed, triggering the metamorphosis of essence, Qi, and spirit. If I still had a physical body, it would've gone through a qualitative leap—impervious to blades and spears would be the norm, and true Qi should have increased severalfold. Pity I'm now nothing but spiritual awareness..."

While Lü Yang was musing, his brows suddenly arched.

"Who's there?"

Before his words finished, his sword responded to his will—scarlet light like a rainbow tore apart the sea of clouds, revealing the silhouette of a young and handsome man.

“Senior Brother, please don’t attack! Please don’t attack!”

The man shouted loudly, but Lü Yang paid him no mind.

The sword-light rushed forth—seeing this, the man hurriedly drew a small flag and planted it midair.

In the next instant, the flag fluttered and transformed into a pair of portal-like flag gates.

The man ducked into one flag gate, and once Lü Yang’s sword-light chased in, he emerged from the other gate and reached out with a wave.

The flag gates vanished, transforming back into a single small flag.

Lü Yang raised a brow, noticing that his split sword-light had been trapped in some unknown space and avoided by the other party.

“Interesting.”

Lü Yang grinned.

The sword pill at his brow trembled violently, like muffled thunder rolling across the sky.

In the blink of an eye, it split into dozens—hundreds—of sword-lights fanning out like a peacock spreading its tail.

Seeing this, the young man who had previously seemed smug now turned pale with alarm.

He hurriedly took out the small flag once more to protect himself and loudly said, “Senior Brother! I am Xiao Shiye—I came here just to make your acquaintance, I mean no harm! Please, Senior Brother, withdraw your divine ability!”

“Xiao Shiye?”

Lü Yang was briefly stunned when he heard the name.

Then the sword-lights that were about to erupt suddenly halted midair, reflecting a face drenched in cold sweat.

That predetermined dog-favored brat?

In the next moment, Lü Yang recalled the sword-light and reverted to human form, landing before Xiao Shiye and laughing heartily, “Junior Brother, don’t misunderstand—I was merely jesting just now!”

Xiao Shiye wiped the sweat from his forehead, secretly cursing.

He was sure Lü Yang had been about to go full-force.

Still, he put on a brilliant smile and offered politely, “Senior Brother, your divine powers are vast and boundless—Xiao here is truly in awe.

A small token, please don’t decline.”

With that, he casually handed the small flag over.

“How could I accept this...”

Lü Yang shook his head while smoothly accepting the flag.

Only then did he see the characters embroidered on its surface—“Void Escape,” stitched in gold thread.

“This treasure is called the Void Escape Flag.”

Xiao Shiye took the initiative to explain: “I picked it up from a mortal antique store before I joined the sect. At first, it seemed mundane—but after joining, I discovered it was a miraculous treasure.”

“The flag has two sides. When activated, it forms two flag gates—life and death.”

“Within the same realm, as long as you enter through the death gate and exit the life gate, no matter how grave the danger, you’ll always find a way out. Disasters won’t touch you.”

Lü Yang couldn’t help but twitch at the corners of his mouth after hearing this.

Such a miraculous treasure—Xiao Shiye had actually picked it up randomly at a mundane antique shop before even entering the sect?

Thinking of this, Lü Yang’s mind stirred, gathering his spiritual sense into his eyes.

With the increase in spiritual sense from reaching the late stage of Qi Refining, many wondrous uses became available.

The one Lü Yang used now was a mystical technique called “Qi Viewing Art.”

What he saw nearly made his eyes bulge.

In his vision, Xiao Shiye's entire body—crane cloak, boots, robe, headpiece, even the belt around his waist—radiated with treasure light!

In terms of quality, they might not be inferior to his sword pill!

Even with Lü Yang's current composure, he couldn't help but feel a little off-balance.

After all, he had spent months and a fortune forging his magical tool.

Meanwhile, Xiao Shiye seemed to have priceless treasures as common as cabbage—who wouldn't be jealous?

"This man's fortune is astonishing."

If before Lü Yang thought Xiao Shiye's big win in the Merit Pool had been rigged, now he was beginning to reconsider.

Could it be that he was actually just lucky?

As this thought took root, Lü Yang's expression turned increasingly strange.

With fortune this strong, tagging along with him would practically guarantee all sorts of opportunities.

And his cultivation wasn't high—making it easy to take advantage of him.

This Xiao Shiye... might actually be quite the talent!

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

[1,054 words]

"Junior Brother Xiao is indeed a man of remarkable appearance."

Lü Yang, while adjusting his clothes, patted Xiao Shiye on the shoulder.

"I am Lü Yang. We should have entered the sect in the same batch, so I wouldn't consider myself your senior."

"The same batch?"

Upon hearing this, Xiao Shiye looked surprised, then showed a respectful expression.

“In that case, Brother Lü must possess exceptional talent; otherwise, he wouldn't have achieved such cultivation.”

“I don't deserve such praise.”

Lü Yang waved his hand.

He was well aware of his own abilities.

His talent was far from outstanding.

He relied on consuming pills for daily cultivation and used demonic techniques to break through bottlenecks.

If he had followed the standard cultivation path, he would probably still be stuck at the third level of Qi Refining.

After learning that Lü Yang was of the same generation, Xiao Shiye became less reserved and quickly became acquainted with him.

After some conversation, Lü Yang tentatively asked, “I just had a breakthrough and was planning to return to my cave dwelling to stabilize my cultivation. Brother Xiao, where are you headed next?”

“To be honest, Brother Lü, I plan to visit the Merit Pool.”

Xiao Shiye smiled.

“I heard that the Merit Pool tests one's luck. Recently, I've been experiencing some good fortune, so I thought I'd try my luck there.”

“Merit Pool.”

Lü Yang's heart stirred.

Suddenly, he had a sudden impulse.

“In that case, why don't we go together?”

He had already tried the numbers Xiao Shiye had chosen in his previous life.

So he was curious to see what choices Xiao Shiye would make in this life and whether there was any manipulation involved.

Meanwhile, in a sea of clouds outside the Myriad Treasures Peak.

More than ten figures stood silently.

At the forefront was a young man in white, looking elegant and handsome, surrounded by mist.

At that moment, one of them suddenly showed a joyful expression.

“Senior Brother Liu, that man named Xiao has come out.”

Before the words had fully left his mouth, the handsome young man seemed to awaken from his meditation.

The mist dispersed, revealing a face Lü Yang would never forget.

It was Liu Xin!

At this moment, Liu Xin had also reached the late stage of Qi Refining.

Moreover, by primarily cultivating the 'Innate Dao Book,' he exuded an even more ethereal and immortal aura compared to ordinary cultivators.

“He finally came out.”

Liu Xin's lips curled into a smile.

At first glance, he didn't seem to possess the ferocity of a demonic cultivator.

Instead, he gave off a gentle and amiable demeanor.

However, when he activated his true qi and used the Qi Observation Technique to look in Xiao Shiye's direction, his smile suddenly froze.

“Late stage of Qi Refining?”

Liu Xin frowned slightly.

He clearly hadn't expected someone at the late stage of Qi Refining to be accompanying Xiao Shiye.

This was a variable significant enough to make him reconsider his plans.

At that moment, a soft exclamation came from beside Liu Xin.

Liu Xin turned his head in response and smiled gently.

“What's the matter, Qing Chen? Do you recognize that late-stage Qi Refining cultivator?”

Upon hearing this, the charming woman standing behind Liu Xin pursed her red lips.

“To be honest, Senior Brother Liu, I do recognize that late-stage Qi Refining cultivator.”

She then spoke with a tone of resentment.

“His name is Lü Yang. He joined the sect a few months ago. During the Substitute Death Yin Puppet incident, he left early and made a significant profit, earning at least Ten thousand contribution points! I suppose he used that fortune to break through to the late stage of Qi Refining.”

The charming woman was none other than Qing Chen Fairy, who had been by Zhao Xuhe's side in the previous life.

However, unlike the previous life, in this one, Qing Chen Fairy had a falling out with Zhao Xuhe early on and had already become Liu Xin's companion.

The reason for their falling out was simple: Zhao Xuhe had dragged her into speculating on Substitute Death Yin Puppets.

Zhao Xuhe went bankrupt, and naturally, Qing Chen Fairy was no exception.

Incidentally, Liu Xin had also speculated.

Moreover, the impact of the Substitute Death Yin Puppet incident in this life was far greater than in the previous one.

So after it collapsed, their losses were significantly more substantial than in the previous life.

Not only were they on the verge of bankruptcy, but they also accumulated a large amount of external debt.

Thanks to this, they had no choice but to engage in activities they hadn't done in their previous life—robbing fellow disciples—to compensate for the losses from speculating on Substitute Death Yin Puppets.

Over time, they even formed a team, consisting of disciples with certain backgrounds and influence in the sect, but who had gone bankrupt due to speculating on Substitute Death Yin Puppets.

As for their targets, they focused on those ordinary disciples who had little capital, left early, and made a significant profit.

Xiao Shiye was their recent target.

Now, after hearing about Lü Yang's deeds from Qing Chen Fairy, Liu Xin's eyes gleamed even brighter, clearly considering Lü Yang as a target as well.

“There's no time to lose. Let's act!”

With Liu Xin's command, everyone present let out sinister laughs.

Then, each of them activated their escape lights and flew towards Lü Yang and Xiao Shiye.

Just after leaving Myriad Treasures Peak and traveling a certain distance in the sea of clouds, Lü Yang suddenly frowned.

The sword pill between his brows pulsed as if warning him.

Following the direction indicated by the sword pill, Lü Yang's frown deepened.

He saw that, centered around him and Xiao Shiye, escape lights were flying in from all directions, forming a net closing in on their position.

Before long, a voice came from behind.

“Fellow Daoist, please stay!”

Upon hearing this, Lü Yang's face darkened.

Even saying something like that—clearly, the newcomers had ill intentions!

Lü Yang didn't look back, ignoring the voice behind him.

He focused on channeling his power, enveloping Xiao Shiye in sword light, and fled rapidly towards the Merit Pool.

However, the opponents were clearly prepared.

Lü Yang had barely escaped a short distance when he stopped, looking around.

He saw that the surrounding sea of clouds had somehow become thin, replaced by a vast mirage, bizarre and colorful, trapping him and Xiao Shiye at the center!

“Such a calamity without cause.”

Lü Yang's expression turned grim.

Using the Qi Observation Technique to observe from a distance, he gritted his teeth.

“One late-stage Qi Refining, seven mid-stage Qi Refining. The odds of winning are at most thirty percent.”

What to do?

While Lü Yang was contemplating countermeasures, Xiao Shiye suddenly spoke.

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[1,272 words]

In the end, Lü Yang figured it out.

"I can't leave!"

It wasn't because he had been moved by Xiao Shiye's final display, but because he suddenly realized something that made his skin crawl.

"At the root of it, why did I follow Xiao Shiye out here?"

"I should have gone straight to Zhao Xuhe and retrieved the other half of that third-grade true cultivation method from my previous lifetime, the 『Ninefold Transforming Dragon Art』."

But what happened instead?

He followed Xiao Shiye to the Merit Pool, just out of curiosity?

He had to remember—the Merit Pool's grand prize could only be drawn once per year, and he had already used up his chance this year.

There was absolutely no benefit in going to the Merit Pool with Xiao Shiye.

Would I really do something with no benefit at all?

That doesn't make sense!

In an instant, Lü Yang felt as if a bucket of cold water had been dumped on his head.

His limbs went cold to the extreme.

"Who's influencing me? Who's tampering with my thoughts?"

"No... something's off."

Upon realizing this, Lü Yang suddenly saw things clearly.

Why had he accompanied Xiao Shiye to the Merit Pool?

Because Xiao Shiye needed him!

Otherwise, right now it would be Xiao Shiye alone being hunted down by powerful enemies!

But now, he had an extra helper—himself!

If Xiao Shiye was a destiny-favored child of great fortune, then Lü Yang was the unlucky scapegoat always thrown in to take the arrows when fate turned bleak!

Under these circumstances, splitting up to escape?

That would only draw fire!

Lü Yang was one hundred percent certain: if they split up, he would be the one who got caught and killed, while Xiao Shiye would slip away safely!

"How insidious!"

Lü Yang let out a long breath.

Xiao Shiye, this destiny-blessed child, was deliberately diverting disaster toward others.

And any disciple of the First Saint Demon Sect would inevitably fall for it.

Because among the sect's disciples, there were no good people.

If someone volunteered to stay behind, any other disciple would rejoice, squeeze out a few crocodile tears, and flee without hesitation.

But doing that could very well make you Xiao Shiye's scapegoat.

Unfortunately for him, Xiao Shiye ran into Lü Yang.

Xiao Shiye was certain there were no good people in the sect, so he devised this plan, but unfortunately, Lü Yang thought the same way.

"No good people in the sect? And you, Xiao Shiye, are supposed to be one?"

"I don't buy it!"

So, no matter how convincing your speech sounded or how noble your sacrifice appeared, I'd assume you're not a good guy first—then figure out what scheme you're trying to pull!

That's right, Lü Yang jumped to the conclusion first!

That was why he wasn't blinded by appearances.

He examined himself in time and discovered what truly didn't add up—otherwise, he would've fallen into a terrible trap!

Meanwhile, Liu Xin, who had been chasing them all this time, saw Xiao Shiye charging toward him and Lü Yang still standing motionless not far away.

A thought arose in his heart: "Capture the leader to subdue the bandits—Xiao Shiye's cultivation is low and easy to handle, but it's more prudent to take out Lü Yang first."

Before Liu Xin could finish thinking, a sudden loud boom erupted.

"Boom!"

In the next moment, a magnificent sword light tore through the sea of clouds.

Instead of fleeing, it reached Xiao Shiye's side under his astonished gaze.

"Brother Xiao, we hit it off the moment we met—how could I, Lü, possibly abandon you?"

"A mere thief—what do we have to fear, united together?"

Lü Yang spoke with heroic fervor.

Xiao Shiye stared dumbfounded.

Could it be he'd misjudged? Had he actually met a good person in the sect...?

"Impossible!"

Xiao Shiye immediately snapped out of it, sensing that while Lü Yang appeared to be fighting at his side, he was actually standing protectively in front of him.

His face instantly darkened.

'A good person? He's a scheming bastard!'

"Brother Lü, it was all a misunderstanding earlier."

Xiao Shiye smiled bitterly, realizing Lü Yang had seen through his plan.

He couldn't help but mutter softly, "At this point, why don't we truly join forces?"

"Join forces? Sure."

Lü Yang sneered.

Then he directly threw Xiao Shiye toward the others instead of Liu Xin.

Xiao Shiye cursed loudly: "You shameless bastard, Lü!"

In the distance, Liu Xin burst into laughter.

He didn't know what had gone down between Lü Yang and Xiao Shiye, but clearly, they had fallen out.

And that suited him just fine.

After all, he wasn't obligated to accommodate his enemies.

If they wanted to self-destruct, he was more than happy to push them further!

With that thought, Liu Xin immediately adjusted his plan and shouted to the others:

"You all pin down Xiao Shiye—I'll deal with Lü Yang!"

He gave the order and flew toward Lü Yang in a streak of light.

But at that moment, he saw Lü Yang suddenly smile.

Something's wrong!

The next second, Lü Yang vanished.

Almost simultaneously, a sudden burst of sword light erupted from within the crowd surrounding Xiao Shiye.

Lü Yang stepped out from within the light!

Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula!

Wherever the sword light went, his mind followed in an instant!

Liu Xin instantly recalled the earlier exchange between Lü Yang and Xiao Shiye.

So the talk of joining forces hadn't been sarcasm—it was a tacit agreement!

The two had understood each other perfectly and even acted out a convincing scene together.

They'd successfully fooled him and created the perfect opportunity—hurling a fully-charged Lü Yang into the midst of a group of unprepared cultivators, the strongest of whom was only at mid-stage Qi Refining!

Liu Xin's expression changed dramatically.

"Scatter!" he shouted.

"Too late!"

Lü Yang grinned wickedly.

His sword pill exploded like a peacock spreading its tail.

But unlike before, this time the sword light was tinged with a deep, bloody hue.

In an instant, Lü Yang exhaled, transformed into a blood shadow, and merged with the sword pill.

A crimson light screen surged upward like blood-colored flames.

Centered on Lü Yang, divine light swept in all directions like wildfire, dyeing the world in blood.

In the blink of an eye, everyone was engulfed!

Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light!

Though the skies were clear, those struck by the blood light felt an icy chill pierce their bones.

Then, all consciousness faded.

When the divine light finally receded, only Xiao Shiye remained, visibly shaken.

Around him, nothing but drifting, empty human skins.

Their flesh and blood had been completely devoured by the Blood-Transforming Divine Light.

The crimson glow on Lü Yang's sword pill now looked even more sinister.

The next instant, the sword pill quivered, and a blood shadow emerged, forming Lü Yang's figure.

He fixed his gaze forward and saw Liu Xin standing there in a daze, as if dreaming.

He burst into laughter.

"So it's you, Senior Brother Liu."

Before the words had even finished, he flew at Liu Xin with a sword slash!

He had not forgotten the grudge from his past life—being instantly refined into fuel as a 'Talent' in his second previous lifetime.

He would avenge that injustice today!

Yesterday's hatred still stabbed like a thorn in his back.

Today, don't blame me!

Lü Yang charged with sword in hand.

Liu Xin, having just witnessed the terrifying divine light, turned pale and immediately tried to retreat.

"Trying to run?"

Lü Yang didn't hesitate and gave chase.

Liu Xin shouted, "Qing Chen, undo the barrier!"

The moment he spoke, the illusory mirage sealing the area shattered.

A graceful figure appeared—Qing Chen Fairy.

The treasure that had trapped the area in fog was her "Nine Palaces Mist Veil."

It contained a Nine Palaces Formation that could trap space and seal escape.

Originally, it was meant to prevent targets from fleeing.

Unexpectedly, it had blocked Liu Xin's own path instead.

Seeing Qing Chen Fairy appear, Liu Xin finally sighed in relief.

The next second, he flew over to stand beside her, shoulder to shoulder.

Their expressions turned grim as they stared at the approaching Lü Yang and Xiao Shiye.

Both sides stood in tense silence.

A moment later, Liu Xin finally spoke in a low voice.

"Can we... talk this out?"

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Chapter 23: Innate True Qi Myriad Spirits Banner

[1,353 words]

Above the sea of clouds, Liu Xin took the initiative to back down: "If you two junior brothers are willing to turn hostility into friendship, I am willing to offer a superior Dao book as a gift."

"At this point? Are you joking?"

Lü Yang chuckled when he heard this: "Senior Brother Liu, we're all disciples of the Primordial Saint Sect, what's with the act? Right now, you've already reached a point of no return with us."

“.”

Liu Xin didn't reply, but his expression darkened abruptly.

Because Lü Yang was right—at this moment, the one who truly had no intention of reconciliation was no longer Lü Yang or Xiao Shiye, but Liu Xin and Qing Chen Fairy.

The reason was simple—the sect rules of the Primordial Saint Sect.

"Although so long as one isn't caught, the sect rules may as well not exist—but conversely, once discovered, those rules become absolutely binding."

Lü Yang sneered, “This probably isn’t the first time people like you have ambushed and robbed fellow sect disciples in secret. It’s just that no one caught you before. But now, all I need to do is leave and report it to the Law Enforcement Hall, and once the truth is revealed, Senior Brother Liu, you will be as good as dead.”

“You must be joking, Junior Brother.”

Liu Xin’s facial muscles twitched slightly: “You and I could sign a legal contract agreeing never to speak of today’s events to a third party. That would certainly put my mind at ease.”

“Really?” Lü Yang retorted.

Of course it was fake.

Only the dead are truly trustworthy!

“Qing Chen!”

With a low shout from Liu Xin, the previously silent Qing Chen Fairy finally opened her mouth. Her crimson lips parted slightly, and she slowly uttered a syllable:

“Open!”

As soon as the word left her lips, the surrounding sea of clouds shifted again.

In an instant, towering peaks manifested, encircling Lü Yang and Xiao Shiye in the center.

Clearly, it was another formation!

“Did you really think I feared your Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light?” Liu Xin surprisingly recognized Lü Yang’s divine power, and sneered coldly as a flag billowing in the wind suddenly appeared in his hand: “This ‘Innate True Qi Myriad Spirits Banner’ still lacks a main soul to oversee it—today, I’ll use you to consecrate it.”

“Go!”

Before Liu Xin finished speaking, Lü Yang had already merged with his Sword Pill and slashed forward in a flash, the overwhelming stench of blood forcing Liu Xin to swallow back his unfinished mockery.

“Return to me, souls!”

Liu Xin formed a hand seal and shook the Myriad Spirits Banner vigorously.

Instantly, two wisps of hazy white Qi surged out, gradually coalescing into human shapes.

Lü Yang didn't stop—he brought his sword down in a single strike.

The two silhouettes, under Liu Xin's guidance, also activated their True Qi and charged forward fearlessly. But with a thunderous boom, they were shattered by the sword aura.

Liu Xin had initially intended to join forces with the two summoned spirits, but seeing them so easily destroyed, he quickly retreated again.

“Qing Chen, attack now!”

Qing Chen Fairy's delicate face turned solemn. She removed a phoenix-feather hairpin from her hair and flung it forward.

The hairpin instantly transformed into a golden beam of light aimed at Lü Yang's brow.

But before the phoenix hairpin could reach Lü Yang, another beam of treasured light appeared out of nowhere and blocked it—it was none other than Xiao Shiye, the many-treasure boy.

And that wasn't all. Xiao Shiye spread his sleeves wide and, in one breath, flung over a dozen magical tools into the air.

Although the quality of these treasures varied, without exception, they all radiated intense spiritual light. Yet, the moment he released them, they all exploded mid-air!

“Boom rumble rumble!”

The erupting spiritual light was like mini suns, directly intercepting Qing Chen Fairy's killing formation, and nearly blowing the formation apart from within!

Such a lavish display made the corners of the other three people's eyes twitch involuntarily.

Unlike Lü Yang, Xiao Shiye had no powerful spells or divine powers, but when it came to dueling, he didn't bother with any tricks.

All he needed to do was throw out his magical treasures and detonate them—that was enough.

This tactic made Liu Xin's already gloomy face even darker. He simply waved the Myriad Spirits Banner in his hand, and instantly summoned dozens of spirit banners.

These were all trophies Liu Xin had gained from ambushing and murdering fellow disciples over the past while.

“All of you—reinforce the formation.”

Following Liu Xin’s command, the summoned spirit banners moved immediately, each falling into place around Qing Chen Fairy’s formation to strengthen and enhance its power.

Seeing this, Qing Chen Fairy felt reassured. She also brought out a small banner, shook it forcefully, and immediately the towering mountains conjured by the formation responded.

They locked down the heavens and sealed off all directions, shielding both her and Liu Xin while blocking Lü Yang’s sword light.

Only then did Liu Xin smile in satisfaction and shake the Myriad Spirits Banner again.

This precious treasure was something he had obtained during a fortuitous encounter alongside the 【Innate Dao Book】. It had since become his greatest reliance in spell duels.

The banner followed the principle of one main soul, two guardians, and three corpse gods.

As the Dao gave birth to One, One to Two, Two to Three, and Three to all things—only by completing these six positions and combining them with ten thousand souls could this treasure be considered perfected.

It sounded simple, but despite ten years of painstaking refinement, Liu Xin still hadn’t succeeded.

Gathering ten thousand souls was manageable—he just had to make time to slaughter a mortal city—but securing those six core roles had remained elusive. He hadn’t even completed the three corpse gods, let alone the two guardians.

Even so, the power of this treasure was already formidable.

“Kill them!”

Liu Xin shook the banner, and thousands of souls surged out.

Unlike the previously summoned spirits with cultivation, these were all wrathful ghosts—mortal souls twisted by hatred.

Though their quality was poor, their numbers were immense.

Once summoned by Liu Xin, they resembled a monstrous tidal wave, engulfing Lü Yang's figure in an instant.

What made things worse was that, as ghosts without flesh or blood, they were completely immune to Lü Yang's Blood-Transforming Divine Light!

But Lü Yang remained fearless.

Although the Divine Light was his strongest technique, it wasn't his only one.

After refining his Sword Pill, his 【Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula】 was just as fearsome!

With a mere thought, Lü Yang's Sword Pill split into hundreds of sword lights. His figure began to flit among the light, teleporting unpredictably.

He didn't face the ghosts head-on—instead, he retreated when they advanced, and struck when they were tired, turning the fight into a game of guerrilla warfare against the spirit banners.

This was the true strength of a sword cultivator.

Strike once, retreat a thousand miles, then attack again from another angle—forcing the enemy into exhaustion, exposing flaws, and finally, decapitating them in one clean blow.

In no time at all, Lü Yang had slaughtered the ten thousand ghosts into scattered fragments, breaking their formation.

On the other side, Xiao Shiye had also gone all out, hurling several superior magical treasures and detonating them violently, shaking the barely stabilized formation into chaos again.

Seeing the tide of battle turn, Qing Chen Fairy couldn't help but glance at Liu Xin. "Senior Brother..."

"Don't panic. I'm not worried—why are you?"

Liu Xin still appeared calm.

He wasn't concerned about Xiao Shiye, and he didn't believe Lü Yang could continue using his sword escape and killing techniques without exhausting his Qi and magic.

That was his battle strategy.

First send out expendable spirits to deplete the enemy's strength.

Once their Qi ran low, he would unleash his final trump card to secure victory in one stroke.

Truthfully, if not absolutely necessary, he didn't want to use his trump card.

That spirit banner was simply too precious—its identity in life was dangerously sensitive. If anyone saw it, no witnesses could be allowed to live. Even the slightest rumor could doom him forever.

“Well, if you're unwilling to sacrifice the lamb, you'll never catch the wolf.”

After a moment of consideration, Liu Xin still raised his banner and bowed respectfully: “A powerful enemy approaches. To break this deadlock—I humbly ask for your aid, Senior Brother.”

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Chapter 24: Self-Destruction!

[1,481 words]

Once, Liu Xin was just an ordinary disciple commonly seen in the Primordial Saint Sect Sect, living a life of completing missions, cultivating, and repaying debts like a beast of burden.

Until one fateful encounter completely changed his destiny.

It all started with a bounty task issued by a true disciple who wanted to explore an ancient cave dwelling and happened to need a few expendable pawns to scout the way.

Liu Xin, unaware of the full story, was lured by the reward and joined the exploration team.

By the time he realized he was just cannon fodder, it was already too late, and he was forced into the cave dwelling by the true disciple.

However, he discovered that all the restrictions inside the cave had no effect on him.

He advanced unimpeded and obtained the fortuitous opportunity.

It was a golden box containing the 《Innate Dao Book》 and the Innate True Qi Myriad Spirits Banner, with a handwritten note left by the original owner of the cave.

The note claimed that the cave's owner called himself the “Innate Wanderer.”

The Dao book and magical treasure in the box were left for a fated person, whom he had calculated would be a true disciple of the Primordial Saint Sect, bearing the character “Xin” in his name.

But he refused to accept that.

In the note, the Innate Wanderer fiercely cursed the shamelessness of the Primordial Saint Sect, forcibly claiming a fated bond where none existed, binding his inheritance to a Primordial Saint Sect true disciple.

So he deliberately confused the karmic cause and passed the inheritance to Liu Xin.

Moreover, the note clearly stated that Liu Xin would face a deadly calamity after acquiring the treasure, so he left behind a method to break the situation within the cave.

Originally, in the thread of fate, the fake “Xin” was not the real “Xin,” so Liu Xin was supposed to act as someone else's pawn, a treasure delivery boy.

However, due to the deliberate arrangement of the Innate Wanderer, Liu Xin instead gained the opportunity, usurped the position, and even killed the true disciple in reversal.

That was a night of life-and-death excitement.

By sunrise, only Liu Xin walked out of the Innate Wanderer's cave dwelling, completely transformed, while the true disciple of the Primordial Saint Sect disappeared without a trace.

However, Liu Xin did not kill him entirely.

Instead, with the help of the backup left by the Innate Wanderer, he refined that true disciple alive, making him the strongest banner spirit in his possession.

The banner fluttered as a black-robed figure stepped out, but instead of immediately looking at Lü Yang, he glanced around with a nostalgic expression.

“Survival of the fittest, disciples fighting each other... the Primordial Saint Sect is still the same old Primordial Saint Sect Saint Sect.”

“Senior Brother, how have you been?” Liu Xin cupped his hands.

“Useless fool, have you run into another enemy you can’t handle?” the black-robed figure sneered with disdain. “You were given the Innate Dao Book, what a waste.”

“I can’t compare to Senior Brother.”

Liu Xin remained respectful and polite: “This person is a sword cultivator and also cultivates the Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light. I’m indeed no match for him.”

“Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light?” The black-robed figure paused, his expression becoming more serious, then shook his head. “Anyone who can master that divine power is impressive, but he’s walking the wrong path. All effort in vain. According to our agreement, this is already the third time I’ve taken action.”

“Senior Brother is wise.”

Liu Xin nodded. “After this matter, I will release you into reincarnation. With your merit and foundation, I believe you’ll surely walk the Dao path again in your next life.”

“Good.”

Only then did the black-robed figure turn to face Lü Yang.

Seeing this, Lü Yang and Xiao Shiye didn’t react much, but Qing Chen Fairy widened her eyes and stared intently at the black-robed figure.

She wasn’t a newly inducted disciple.

At first, the black-robed figure merely looked familiar, but once he released his aura, she suddenly recognized him.

“It’s Chen Xin’an, Senior Brother Chen!?”

One of the four Inner Peaks, the son of the Mending Heaven Peak Master! The missing true disciple!

When Chen Xin’an disappeared back then, the Peak Master of Mending Heaven flew into a rage and personally attempted to deduce the cause and effect, but found nothing—still, it caused a huge stir.

Who would have thought he ended up in Senior Brother Liu’s hands?

Qing Chen Fairy’s expression shifted, as if realizing something, and instinctively stepped back, trying to put distance between herself and Liu Xin.

Puchi!

The blade pierced through and out.

Qing Chen Fairy's beautiful face showed confusion as she looked dazedly at the hand embedded in her lower abdomen.

Then her head tilted, and she fell silent.

She died again.

"What a pity. Since you saw it, I can't let you live."

As Qing Chen Fairy died, the surrounding formation trembled, but with Liu Xin's activation of the Myriad Spirits Banner, her corpse was instantly sucked into the flag.

Moments later, a perfectly intact Qing Chen Fairy stepped out from the banner—now a banner spirit.

Although becoming a banner spirit imposed more restrictions than in life, she could still control the formation and soon stabilized its fluctuations.

At the same time, the black-robed true disciple Chen Xin'an also approached Lü Yang.

"Hm?"

Looking at Chen Xin'an, Lü Yang's eyes narrowed slightly.

The man's cultivation wasn't high—only at the seventh layer of Qi Refining like himself—but he felt different.

Chen Xin'an glanced at Lü Yang and shook his head. "The Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss is a dual cultivation technique emphasizing controlling three thousand women. But your qi is chaotic and impure—clearly not from proper dual cultivation. That fifth-grade Yin-Yang Dragon Tiger Qi of yours barely ranks as sixth-grade."

His critique made Lü Yang's heart sound a silent alarm.

"May I ask who you are?"

"My name is Chen Xin'an. I'm acting under duress this time, but if you can escape and bring word back to Mending Heaven Peak, my father will surely reward you generously."

Before the words finished, Chen Xin'an attacked!

He raised his hand, and his qi instantly fused with heaven and earth.

Vast true qi howled forth, resonating with the surrounding spiritual energy!

At that moment, Lü Yang's pupils contracted.

Not because of Chen Xin'an's power, but because he clearly sensed the flaws and gaps in his own qi as Chen Xin'an moved.

In an instant, Lü Yang understood.

"My Yin-Yang Dragon Tiger Ode is not the limit—there's a more superior technique on Mending Heaven Peak! This man must be a true disciple of Mending Heaven Peak!"

Lü Yang's guess was spot on.

As the son of the Mending Heaven Peak Master, Chen Xin'an cultivated the 《Mending Heaven True Classic》—an upgraded version of the Yin-Yang Dragon Tiger Ode.

Ordinary dual cultivation involves merging with another.

But the Mending Heaven True Classic's dual cultivation merges with heaven and earth, mating with the universe itself.

The resulting Mending Heaven True Qi is ranked third-grade.

Thus, when Chen Xin'an struck, even without using a divine power, the sheer strength of his third-grade qi overwhelmed Lü Yang.

Seeing this, Liu Xin revealed a confident smile.

No one knew Chen Xin'an's strength better than he did.

In his view, even if Lü Yang were ten times stronger, he still couldn't beat Chen Xin'an.

"We've won!"

Liu Xin decisively judged.

But he didn't notice Xiao Shiye observing him darkly from afar, as if deep in thought.

With Xiao Shiye's cleverness, he easily saw the disadvantageous situation.

"I didn't want to use it, but you forced me."

Xiao Shiye knew well that he was the weakest here, relying entirely on magical tools to stay relevant.

But now, even that wouldn't suffice.

With a deep breath, he opened his storage pouch.

At once, a flood of radiant spiritual energy burst forth, immediately drawing Liu Xin's attention.

Even Chen Xin'an and Lü Yang paused their fight to look.

Then, a small tower flew out from Xiao Shiye's storage pouch.

It looked as if it were cast from gold, with nine levels.

At the top, a light manifested in human form, full of life in its expression.

“A spirit treasure!?”

Before the less experienced Lü Yang could react, both Liu Xin and Chen Xin'an cried out in shock.

Their faces showed visible horror.

Cultivators refine tools.

When a tool shines, it becomes a magical treasure.

When the treasure births intelligence, it becomes a spirit treasure!

Magical treasures come in low, mid, and high grades and offer countless wondrous uses.

But they all require a master's command to unleash their power.

Spirit treasures are different.

Spirit treasures possess their own consciousness and can act independently, even cultivate themselves to grow stronger!

In the next instant, Xiao Shiye formed a seal, and the spirit treasure tower began to swell.

“Bastard!”

Chen Xin'an cursed first, completely losing his earlier composure.

He had realized Xiao Shiye wanted to make the spirit treasure self-destruct!

On the other side, Liu Xin nearly spat blood.

This heaven-defying treasure was something only Foundation Establishment True Person should possess.

It was outrageous enough that Xiao Shiye had one—now he wanted to blow it up?

Utter waste of a heavenly marvel!

Even more absurdly, the spirit treasure didn't resist at all.

Instead, it cooperated, expanding rapidly before anyone could stop it.

“Boom!”

In the next second, explosive flames swallowed everything.

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

Chapter 25: Fortunes and Frights

[1,445 words]

The exploding treasure light surged like a massive tidal wave, instantly tearing apart the formation laid down by Qing Chen Fairy and engulfing Lü Yang, Liu Xin, and Chen Xin'an.

Liu Xin screamed first.

In order to deal with Lü Yang, he had summoned the Banner Spirit one after another, and even brought in Chen Xin'an, which drained most of his true qi.

At this moment, he had no strength left to resist the impact of the explosion.

His body was immediately ignited and then turned to ash, the Myriad Spirits Banner in his hand falling powerlessly through the air.

"Truly worthy of being a disciple of our Primordial Saint Sect."

With Liu Xin dead, although Chen Xin'an still had the strength to hold on, he could no longer maintain his existence.

He let out a long sigh and then drifted away with the wind.

As for Lü Yang, he was directly swallowed by the treasure light, turning into nothingness.

It was only after a long while that the surging treasure light gradually subsided, revealing the figure of Xiao Shiye, whose face was filled with ecstatic joy.

"I won!"

Xiao Shiye laughed excitedly.

After all, although self-detonating a spiritual treasure was his trump card, it came with many restrictions and was very easy to dodge.

To use this move to kill an enemy, one first needed to restrict the battleground to ensure a hit.

Secondly, the explosion's power was dispersed, with a wide range but lacking focus, so the enemy had to be worn down first to ensure a one-hit kill.

Finally, the spiritual treasure had self-awareness and might refuse to self-destruct.

"Fortunately, luck still stands with me!"

Xiao Shiye felt that ever since he had joined the Primordial Saint Sect, it was like his fortunes had turned.

Whatever he wanted, he got, and no matter what he did, it felt like divine assistance.

He shorted the Substitute Death Yin Puppet at the highest price and profited hundreds of thousands of contribution points.

A casual trip to the mortal world had him picking up a treasure left behind by a predecessor with ease.

When being hunted, he just happened to run into Lü Yang as a convenient shield.

No matter what kind of crisis he encountered, he always escaped unscathed, and through a series of coincidences, gained the greatest benefits.

"What a fine Myriad Spirits Banner, from now on it's mine."

Just as Xiao Shiye was about to step forward to claim the treasure, a figure shrouded in blood light appeared beside him at the same time, also reaching out to grab the banner.

Seeing this scene, Xiao Shiye froze in place, then his whole body began to tremble.

"What, Brother Xiao also wants this magical treasure?"

The blood-shadow fluctuated, then slowly revealed Lü Yang's face.

He turned his head and gave Xiao Shiye a wide grin, startling him so much that his entire body shuddered.

Are you man or ghost?

Xiao Shiye's face turned deathly pale as he looked at the Blood-Transforming Divine Light swirling around Lü Yang's body.

The images of all those people who had been drained into dry corpses by him flashed through his mind.

In the next second, he hurriedly released the Myriad Spirits Banner from his grip and respectfully saluted.

"Congratulations, Senior Brother. This is the Myriad Spirits Banner I was keeping for you. Now it returns to its rightful owner!"

"Much appreciated."

Lü Yang took the "Innate True Qi Myriad Spirits Banner" with a cheerful smile, studied it for a moment, then injected it with mana and withdrew two storage pouches from it.

These were the storage pouches of Liu Xin and Qing Chen Fairy.

Opening the pouches, he saw the Innate Dao Book right on top, and another book titled Secrets of Formation Treasures, clearly owned by Qing Chen Fairy.

"All good things indeed."

Lü Yang sighed in appreciation, firmly memorized the contents of the two books, then looked toward Xiao Shiye, who was now slowly backing away, trying to put distance between them.

To be fair, Xiao Shiye's trump card was truly unexpected.

A spiritual treasure's self-detonation could even kill someone at the peak of Qi Refining.

Theoretically, it was a surefire kill.

But Lü Yang happened to be the exception of all exceptions.

Because he cultivated the Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light.

Now turned into a blood shadow, he had form without substance, and his true soul was completely stored in the Sword Pill.

As long as the Sword Pill wasn't destroyed, he could not die.

Facing Xiao Shiye's exploding spiritual treasure, his Sword Pill, crafted from golden essence and jade marrow, was much sturdier than mere flesh.

Though not entirely unscathed, it wasn't destroyed, so once the explosion passed, Lü Yang reformed again and reaped the most benefits.

Thinking of this, Lü Yang found Xiao Shiye increasingly pleasing to the eye.

He had judged correctly—Xiao Shiye was truly a talent!

Without him, how could Lü Yang have gained such rich rewards?

"This time, I truly must thank Junior Brother Xiao."

"As a token of gratitude, this Senior Brother shall now send you on your way."

Lü Yang chuckled softly, then waved his hand.

A streak of blood light struck Xiao Shiye before he could speak, instantly draining him into a dry husk.

This person was too dangerous to keep alive.

With such high fortune, what if he regained power later and returned for revenge?

Better to end it now and eliminate all future trouble.

"But to think he died just like that?" Lü Yang looked at Xiao Shiye's corpse, rubbing his chin in slight surprise.

"With his child-of-heaven level luck, shouldn't some benefactor have appeared at this moment to stop me?"

"I even prepared a countermeasure. Never expected it to be this easy."

With that thought, Lü Yang suddenly felt a stir in his heart and once again used the Qi-Observing Art to examine Xiao Shiye.

A bizarre scene appeared.

Previously when he looked at Xiao Shiye, his treasure light soared to the heavens—he was practically bathed in good fortune.

But now, all the treasure light had vanished into thin air.

Seeing this, Lü Yang had an inexplicable thought rise in his heart:

This man's fortune had run dry.

"Sigh..."

The next second, a sigh suddenly sounded.

Lü Yang looked up at the sky, his expression freezing just as a look of astonishment was about to surface.

All his thoughts and emotions were suspended in that moment.

At some point, a figure appeared in front of Xiao Shiye's corpse.

That person wore a crane cloak, a faint smile on his lips, gently fanning a feather fan.

He looked like a refined scholar out on a spring stroll.

Yet with his appearance, the entire world seemed to lose its color.

Only the place he stood remained as the center of everything, gathering all the fortune, wealth, and luck in the world.

He was heaven's favored child, inciting jealousy and hatred.

"Is this all the harvest there is?"

The newcomer reached out, and the Innate Dao Book and Innate Qi Myriad Spirits Banner, just stored by Lü Yang, flew out of the pouch into his hand.

At that moment, a sudden voice asked, "Hong Yun, you've left seclusion?"

The one called "Hong Yun" looked up with a smile, seemingly meeting someone's gaze.

"No choice," he said, "the person I chose suddenly died."

The voice sounded surprised, "Died? Your chosen one can actually die? What happened?"

"Funny, isn't it? He died from bad luck."

"I gave him so much fortune, originally intending for him to fish out that colorful fish from the Merit Pond."

"But too many variables burned through his luck too early."

"When his luck ran dry, death naturally followed."

After saying that, the Daoist Hong Yun weighed the Innate Dao Book in his hand, shook his head, and casually stored it away again.

Then he looked at Lü Yang beside him.

"This one, however, is interesting..."

Daoist Hong Yun made some calculations, his smile growing wider.

"This person carries a great deal of unpredictability. The recent Substitute Death Yin Puppet incident seems to be connected to him."

"Yes, his background is clean, no mistake... but how did a mortal start with fourth-level Qi Refining at entry?"

"Hiding deliberately... likely a rogue cultivator taught by a master. That's fine... wait, no—he knew the Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula before joining?"

"Could he be a spy from the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion?"

The more Daoist Hong Yun calculated, the more interested he became.

Other than the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes, all of Lü Yang's secrets were revealed by Hong Yun through tracing karma and deduction.

Until finally, his brows furrowed.

"...Cultivated the Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light?"

The next second, all the interest vanished from Hong Yun's eyes, replaced by a look of disgust.

Transformed into blood shadow—his immortal path was already severed.

Such a cultivator wasn't worth his energy, much less worthy of the title "Heaven's Chosen."

"What a pity about that colorful fish in the Merit Pond. Couldn't catch it this time. Guess I'll wait until next time."

Daoist Hong Yun withdrew his gaze, then took a step forward, disappearing like a fisherman leaving with an empty hook.

Leaving Lü Yang alone, standing still.

Sweat pouring like rain.

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

[1,425 words]

The landscape was picturesque, the setting sun like blood.

Lü Yang stood above the sea of clouds, and after a long while without a palm strike descending from the heavens to pulverize him, he finally breathed a sigh of relief.

"That just now... was a Foundation Establishment True Person?"

Lü Yang didn't even dare to speak aloud, only pondering in his heart, his expression turning extremely grim, for the gap between them was simply too vast.

Not only his body but even his thoughts were frozen; it wasn't until Daoist Hong Yun departed that he could react.

That feeling was akin to a mouse caught in a cat's paw—it was no longer a mere difference in strength but a disparity in levels, instantly extinguishing all arrogance in Lü Yang's heart.

"I'm still too weak, without power."

Originally, after defeating Liu Xin and others despite being outnumbered, Lü Yang had swept away the gloom of his previous life and felt invigorated.

Now, however, he had once again tempered his mindset.

The path to immortality was long and required steadfast progress.

Lü Yang sighed, then recalled the matter of Xiao Shiye, fear resurfacing in his eyes: "Fortune... is it actually bestowed by others?"

At this point, he remembered.

Before heading to the Merit Pool, Xiao Shiye had said, "I've been a bit lucky lately, so I want to take the opportunity to try my luck."

"A bit lucky lately."

At the time, Lü Yang thought it was just the modesty of a child of destiny.

But now, it seemed that might have been the truth—he had only recently become fortunate.

Because of that Daoist Hong Yun!

"The colorful fish in the Merit Pool must refer to the colorful merit fish. Did Daoist Hong Yun intend to use Xiao Shiye to fish it out of the Merit Pool?"

"If that's the case, then in the previous life, he succeeded. However, speaking of which, after Xiao Shiye fished out the colorful merit fish, he announced his seclusion and was never heard from again..."

Lü Yang thought deeply and was terrified.

Fishing, fishing—the fish was caught, so the bait naturally became useless?

At this thought, Lü Yang suddenly looked up.

Primordial Saint Sect, Sky-reaching Sea of Clouds.

Perhaps to those elusive high-level figures of the Saint Sect, disciples like them were merely a group of fish raised in a pond?

"Truly worthy of the Saint Sect..."

Lü Yang took a deep breath, somewhat understanding why no one had killed him.

A single fish, even if it flopped around a bit and had some unspeakable secrets—so what?

They might even think you're a talent!

"In any case, at least the secret of the 【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】 hasn't been exposed."

Lü Yang felt fortunate in his heart.

Not only that, but the karma related to the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes seemed to have been concealed from Daoist Hong Yun, so much so that he didn't suspect why Lü Yang had reached the fourth level of Qi Refining without even entering the sect.

"No time to lose, better go back and eat."

Fortunately, although the 【Innate Dao Book】 was taken away by Daoist Hong Yun, Lü Yang had already memorized the entire content of the cultivation method beforehand.

This was a good habit Lü Yang had developed because of the 【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】 .

Whenever he encountered a good cultivation method or divine ability, he would immediately memorize it, so he could use it in the next life without spending contribution points to exchange for it again.

Moreover, Daoist Hong Yun took away the 【Innate Dao Book】 but didn't take away Qing Chen Fairy's 【Secret Explanation of Array Treasures】 .

"Indeed, the two are incomparable; Qing Chen Fairy's item obviously didn't catch his eye—but it's very useful to me."

In fact, Lü Yang didn't value the 【Innate Dao Book】 much, because he had already set his sights on Zhao Xuhe's third-grade true technique.

The 【Innate Dao Book】 was dispensable.

On the contrary, the 【Secret Explanation of Array Treasures】 , which involved the arts of array formation and treasure refining in cultivation, piqued his interest.

As for the Innate True Qi Myriad Spirits Banner...

"There will be opportunities; let's talk about it in the next life."

Returning to the cave dwelling, Lü Yang first calmed his mind and focused on cultivation, while studying the 【Secret Explanation of Array Treasures】 and slowly repairing the damage to his sword pill.

It wasn't until half a month later that he emerged from seclusion again.

This time, he sought out Zhao Xuhe.

When he arrived at Zhao Xuhe's cave dwelling, he saw Zhao Xuhe arguing with a stern-looking young man wearing the Law Enforcement Hall's attire.

"Senior Brother, you have to believe me. Don't you understand my credibility? Over a decade, it's been quite good. It's just 1,000 contribution points; I'll definitely repay it... What? Interest!? You... Fine, no problem. Senior Brother, please give me a few more days; I'll repay it with interest."

After a moment of entanglement, the Law Enforcement Hall disciple sneered and left.

Zhao Xuhe stood there with a gloomy face, his aura fluctuating.

Seeing the opportunity, Lü Yang immediately revealed himself and walked over.

"Senior Brother Zhao, long time no see."

Zhao Xuhe looked up in response and immediately noticed Lü Yang's undisguised aura, his pupils contracting sharply: "Junior Brother Lü, you've broken through to the late stage of Qi Refining!?"

"Just a fluke, just a fluke."

Lü Yang smiled slightly and said, "I have dull aptitude. After several months of seclusion and spending a lot of contribution points, I was lucky enough to break through. I've made a fool of myself in front of Senior Brother."

Upon hearing this, Zhao Xuhe's expression became even more rigid, even vaguely twisted.

After all, both of them had speculated on the Substitute Death Yin Puppet.

He had lost everything, even his lover had run off with someone else.

Lü Yang, however, had made a fortune and even used the contribution points earned to break through to the late stage of Qi Refining.

What was more infuriating was that he might not even be Lü Yang's match now!

"Although I obtained the opportunity from True Person Panlong, due to insufficient fortune and merit, I only got half of that third-grade true technique..."

For this, he had even consulted his master.

His master deduced the cause and concluded that it was because he had speculated on the Substitute Death Yin Puppet, prematurely exhausting three lifetimes' worth of accumulated merit, leading to a failed endeavor.

Thinking of this, Zhao Xuhe nearly ground his teeth to pieces.

Half of a third-grade true technique, only a Qi Refining realm part of the 【Ninefold Transforming Dragon Art】 , lacking the Foundation Establishment realm's cultivation method—utterly useless to him!

Not to mention, he now owed external debts and didn't even dare to dismantle his cultivation and switch paths, fearing that during the transition, debt collectors would come knocking.

Seeing him powerless after dismantling his cultivation, they might turn into robbers, rob him clean, and then kill him to silence him—that would be truly unspeakable suffering.

"Junior Brother, did you come to see me for something?"

"It's a long story."

Lü Yang sighed, "To be honest, I came to seek guidance from Senior Brother. I've recently encountered some trouble."

"Trouble?" Zhao Xuhe's eyes lit up.

Upon hearing this, Lü Yang sighed, "Previously, I focused solely on cultivation. It wasn't until I broke through to the late stage of Qi Refining that I learned about the issue of true qi grades. I deeply regret it..."

Hearing Lü Yang say this, Zhao Xuhe suddenly felt much better.

"So it's about true qi grades."

Zhao Xuhe feigned concern and comforted him, "Most disciples in the Saint Sect actually aren't aware of this, so it's normal that Junior Brother didn't know."

"Ah, the world is unpredictable."

Lü Yang shook his head helplessly, "So I came to ask Senior Brother if there's any way to improve the grade of true qi. If there's a superior cultivation method, even better. As for the price, Senior Brother needn't worry. I can afford one or two thousand contribution points."

"Oh?"

Upon hearing this, Zhao Xuhe's mind became active.

One or two thousand contribution points—he happened to need such an amount urgently.

In a flash, Zhao Xuhe's thoughts raced, and then he suddenly said:

"Junior Brother Lü, since you put it that way... I do have a cultivation method suitable for you. As long as you cultivate it, you can definitely improve your true qi grade."

"Really?"

Lü Yang's face immediately showed anticipation, "What cultivation method is it?"

Upon hearing this, Zhao Xuhe hesitated.

For some reason, he had a strange feeling.

But on second thought, this cultivation method was only half complete—it was already useless.

Rather than keeping it, better to make use of it to repay debts.

Thinking of this, Zhao Xuhe gritted his teeth and directly took out the 【Ninefold Transforming Dragon Art】 he had obtained from Panlong Island and handed it to Lü Yang.

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Chapter 27: Comprehending Formations

[1,528 words]

The development of events unfolded just as Lü Yang had anticipated; in the end, Zhao Xuhe sold the 『Nine Transformations Dragon Art』 to him at a low price of 1500 contribution points.

Well, people are always like this when they're in debt.

After obtaining the 『Nine Transformations Dragon Art』, Lü Yang immediately returned to his cave dwelling and memorized the contents of the cultivation method word by word, sentence by sentence, before putting it away again.

"It's a pity I can't cultivate right now."

Having transformed into a blood shadow, his cultivation neither increased nor decreased, forever remaining at the late stage of Qi Refining. Even if he wanted to disperse his cultivation, it was impossible, so he could only wait for the next lifetime.

Though that was the case, Lü Yang wasn't in a hurry to commit suicide.

After all, time was precious. Even with the 【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】 , he wouldn't waste it lightly. Even if he couldn't cultivate, there were other areas where he could continue to make progress.

Thinking of this, Lü Yang took out the 『Secret Explanation of Formation Treasures』 from his storage pouch, the one belonging to Qing Chen Fairy.

That's right, he was going to learn formations!

Among the four arts of cultivation—formations, tools, pills, and talismans—having proficiency in any one of them would immediately make one a high-level talent in the cultivation world, capable of thriving anywhere.

Take Qing Chen Fairy, for example.

Lü Yang truly thought she was a talent—not only proficient in formations but also able to refine formations into magical tools.

Unfortunately, her taste in men was lacking; she fell for scumbags who turned their backs on her, leading to her dying with resentment in both lifetimes.

Opening the 『Secret Explanation of Formation Treasures』 , the very first page made Lü Yang sigh involuntarily.

【So-called formation treasures are treasures formed by formations and formations formed by treasures; the two complement each other. The techniques within are the result of painstaking research.】

【To learn this path, both talent and effort are indispensable.】

After the preface, the second page was densely packed with patterns, each annotated to explain its meaning.

【The Dao of formations centers on formation patterns. By outlining formation patterns and emulating the heavens and earth, one can borrow the marvels of the universe. However, the numbers of the heavens and earth exhaust the mysteries of the world, making them difficult to comprehend, let alone transform into formation patterns. This requires extraordinary perception. Only by mastering formation patterns can one have the ability to learn formations.】

【Very good, now you have a certain understanding of the basic principles of formations.】

【Next, turn to the third page. Let's look at the following simple example and apply what we've just learned in practice.】

On the third page, an extremely complex and intricate pattern appeared before Lü Yang's eyes.

Was this a formation diagram?

Lü Yang touched his chin.

Deciphering a formation diagram essentially meant identifying the composition of formation patterns within the formation to deduce its function.

Formation patterns were the foundation of all formations.

Whether a formation could function depended mainly on whether the combination of formation patterns was reasonable, whether there were conflicts, and whether a complete circuit could be formed to operate.

“Interesting.”

Lü Yang smiled confidently, feeling that this didn't seem particularly difficult: “With my talent and effort, a mere simple formation diagram is within my grasp!”

One month later.

Lü Yang sat blankly on the meditation cushion, surrounded by a large pile of manuscripts, all filled with his calculations. He was utterly dejected.

In his hands were various combinations of formation patterns.

After an unknown amount of time, a spark of spiritual light suddenly lit up at Lü Yang's fingertips.

“It's done!?”

Lü Yang instantly stood up, his face filled with joy. He carefully examined the formation patterns he had pieced together, calculated with his fingers for a moment, then showed a puzzled expression:

“This isn't right. How did it succeed?”

“How is this thing operating?”

Clearly, this was the result of his painstaking efforts over a month, yet he didn't understand why it worked.

This feeling drove Lü Yang crazy.

After a month of arduous study, he had gained a deeper understanding of formations.

Simply put, formations were very similar to programming.

Comprehending formation paths was like extracting usable parts from the messy code written by the heavens and earth to compose one's own code.

However, formations were such that if you didn't understand them, you simply didn't.

It was like panning for gold in a pile of dung; without talent, one would end up like Lü Yang now—not finding any gold but instead uncovering a heap of dung.

“No matter what, at least I've found something.”

Lü Yang sighed and continued his sleepless and foodless research.

Just like that, another month passed before he finally deciphered the pattern in his hands.

“This is an illumination formation!”

“Within the range covered by the formation, light shines everywhere. Most methods of concealing one's tracks become ineffective. Besides that, it has no offensive or defensive capabilities.”

Lü Yang looked haggard, his eyes bloodshot, but his face was filled with excitement and a strong sense of accomplishment as he turned to the third page of the 『Secret Explanation of Formation Treasures』 .

【Actually, it's normal if you can't decipher it.】

【The purpose of the third page's exercise is mainly to let you understand how difficult formations are, to approach them with a humble heart, and not always aim too high.】

Lü Yang: “.”

“Beast! Beast!”

Lü Yang suddenly stood up and threw the book in his hand to the ground. He was now one hundred percent certain that this was definitely a formation book written by a formation master of the Primordial Saint Sect!

After a while, Lü Yang picked up the book again.

There was no choice; some things didn't care whether you liked them, understood them, or wanted to do them.

For the sake of life, you had to grit your teeth and do them.

However, after further study, Lü Yang found that his talent wasn't as bad as he had imagined.

As the book said, the complex pattern on the third page wasn't meant for beginners to decipher, which was why Lü Yang had been stuck on it for two months.

Nevertheless, there were benefits.

Now that he had switched to some simpler formations, Lü Yang's learning speed visibly increased.

Occasionally, when he encountered obstacles, a few days of research would get him through.

This also helped Lü Yang, who had been heavily discouraged before, regain his confidence.

In the cave, unaware of the passage of time, the years flew by.

In the blink of an eye, twenty years had passed.

During this time, Lü Yang was completely absorbed in studying formation books, even neglecting to pay the rent for his cave dwelling and directly moved to the outer sect.

After all, he couldn't cultivate now, and without urgent needs, he naturally slacked off and stopped working.

And in these twenty years, almost every few years, a child of destiny with great fortune, like Xiao Shiye in the past, would suddenly rise in the outer sect.

However, after that child of destiny obtained a well-known great opportunity in the Primordial Saint Sect, they would suddenly disappear.

Along with them, a large number of unlucky people who, after discovering the child of destiny's fortune, harbored ill intentions and tried to cling to their luck, would also vanish.

“It's that senior fishing again.”

Every time he heard similar news, Lü Yang would feel a wave of fear.

After all, with Xiao Shiye's example before him, he would only keep his distance from children of destiny.

He couldn't afford to provoke them, so he could only avoid them.

As for Zhao Xuhe, twenty years later, he had already reached the peak of Qi Refining and become a well-known true disciple of the Primordial Saint Sect.

Unfortunately, a few years ago, he failed to break through to the Foundation Establishment Realm and passed away.

Regarding this, Lü Yang only sighed and didn't concern himself further.

What truly brought Lü Yang joy was that, after twenty years of diligent study, he had finally thoroughly mastered the knowledge in the 『Secret Explanation of Formation Treasures』 .

In the cave dwelling, Lü Yang's entire mind was focused on the sword pill before him.

At this moment, he couldn't even maintain his human form, and the blood shadow was extremely dim.

This was a sign that his end was near.

The side effects of cultivating the Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light had finally caught up with him, causing him to exhaust his lifespan at the age of forty, his oil running dry and lamp extinguished.

However, Lü Yang didn't care at all. He continued to concentrate on inscribing formations.

Even when he was about to pass away, he didn't get up or try to take any remedial actions, because that would only interrupt his inspiration. He didn't want to waste his precious inspiration.

“I understand! Wait, no, it's wrong.”

“Oh, right! Right... no, still wrong... oh, right, right!”

Just like that, after a long time, finally, at the moment when Lü Yang's blood shadow was almost dissipated, on the brink of life and death, Lü Yang suddenly opened his eyes wide—

“Hahaha! I succeeded!”

Seeing the formation patterns he had painstakingly drawn pieced together around the sword pill and finally operating successfully, Lü Yang burst into loud laughter, his laughter echoing in the cave dwelling.

And just like that, he lost his breath amidst the laughter.

“Book of a Hundred Lifetimes!”

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

Chapter 28: Nine Transformations Dragon Art

[1,373 words]

【You remained unmoved even as the end of your life approached, all for the sake of refining a formation treasure. In the end, you succeeded, but also sat in meditation and passed away because of it.】

【Current remaining pages of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes: 96】

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

One: Treasure.

Two: Cultivation.

Three: Lifespan.

Four: Abandon all gains and randomly awaken a talent based on the experiences of your previous life.】

“Those whose names are called, step forward.”

Lü Yang opened his eyes and, after a long time, exhaled deeply, awakening from the dream of past and present lives: “I choose the magical tool.”

In the next second, his dantian stirred.

A crimson sword pill covered in intricate formation patterns and shining like a sky full of stars appeared within his dantian, emitting a clear sword cry.

Lü Yang looked pleased.

This sword pill was the culmination of over twenty years of effort in his previous life.

Not only were its materials superior, but it had also been enhanced by the Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light.

More importantly, just before his death, he had successfully embedded a high-grade formation into the sword pill, turning it into a formation treasure.

With this, whenever Lü Yang engaged in combat, he could drag his enemies into the formation diagram.

The advantages of this were obvious.

No matter how powerful a cultivator was, it was impossible to contend with a formation laid down by a cultivator of the same realm all by themselves.

Fairy Qing Chen's strength wasn't great because she was only at the mid-stage of Qi Refining.

Moreover, from Lü Yang's current perspective, her time spent studying formations was too short—she was absolutely no match for someone like him who had devoted twenty years to the art.

“It's time to give you a name.”

As Lü Yang willed it, a chilling blood shadow immediately rose from the sword pill, identical in appearance to him, their minds in sync.

He chuckled softly and said:

“You were forged through the self-sacrifice of my past life and are enhanced by the Blood-Transforming Divine Light. From now on, I shall name you Blood Yang.”

The sword pill vibrated in response, as if acknowledging the name.

Clearing away distractions, Lü Yang cast a glance at Liu Xin, who was still talking animatedly on stage, then withdrew his gaze.

The Innate True Qi Ten Thousand Spirits Banner could wait for now.

Next, Lü Yang began acting according to the template of his previous life.

Step onto the stage, assign disciples, select the Pleasure Hall.

Overpower Yu Suzhen.

No longer borrow from Zhao Xuhe, but instead directly sell off the White Bone Flying Sword and other benefits received as a new disciple.

Then he began quietly purchasing Substitute Death Yin Puppet.

Soon, the price of Substitute Death Yin Puppet surged.

Lü Yang covertly fanned the flames, buying low and selling high, steadily expanding his capital before making large-scale acquisitions.

But to avoid drawing envy, he didn't sell at the peak price from his previous life.

He exited the market when the price reached 3,000 contribution points.

By then, he had stockpiled a total of 20 Substitute Death Yin Puppet.

A clean profit of 60,000 contribution points.

After completing all this, Lü Yang purchased a large quantity of spiritual pills.

Then he sealed off his cave dwelling and brought out the greatest gain from his four lifetimes of reincarnation.

《Nine Transformations Dragon Art》

《Myriad Chariots Dragon Ascension Scroll》

The former was for Qi Refining, the latter for Foundation Establishment.

Together, they allowed one to cultivate Third-Grade True Qi, paving the way toward the Golden Core realm.

Perfectly aligned with Lü Yang's expectations.

“Nine Transformations Dragon Art has ten layers, corresponding to the ten levels of Qi Refining. As the name implies, each level triggers a transformation of True Qi—Heavenly Serpent, Divine Eagle, Azure Ox, Brocaded Tiger... After nine transformations, one becomes a dragon, increasing the chance of breaking through to Foundation Establishment by thirty percent.”

Lü Yang was enthralled and immediately decided to disperse his cultivation to begin training anew.

“Boom!”

As his dantian’s True Qi dissipated rapidly, Lü Yang’s cultivation plummeted.

Before long, he fell from the fourth layer of Qi Refining back to being a mortal.

But he didn’t let the dissipated True Qi go to waste.

He fed it all into the “Innate Qi.”

This external Qi that Lü Yang had forged with self-sacrifice in his second life was now nourished by the cultivation of his current life.

It had essentially become his avatar.

With it guarding him during closed-door cultivation, he wasn’t completely defenseless.

In the blink of an eye, three years passed.

Inside the cave dwelling, Lü Yang sat cross-legged on a meditation mat, circulating profound techniques.

His once-empty dantian was now filled with a vast and powerful True Qi.

His Qi flowed with his intent, transforming freely.

One moment it became a fleeing rabbit darting through his meridians.

The next it turned into a lurking python coiled in his dantian.

Then it transformed into a fierce brocaded tiger roaring at the sky.

Next, it became a graceful soaring eagle sweeping across the horizon.

Its transformations were endless.

After a long while, Lü Yang finally let out a deep breath.

The Qi, like a white arrow, did not disperse upon leaving his body but formed a robust azure ox walking slowly, as if carrying a towering divine mountain.

“It’s done!”

Joy lit up Lü Yang’s face.

These three years of cultivation were far smoother than in his previous three lives.

After all, in this life, he had an abundance of contribution points and no shortage of external medicinal aids.

Therefore, in just three short years, he had returned to the sixth layer of Qi Refining—peak mid-stage.

Although he was stuck at the mid-stage bottleneck, Lü Yang was confident.

In at most five years, or as few as three, he would break through and return to the late stage of Qi Refining!

Moreover, although he was still at the sixth layer of Qi Refining, his combat power likely differed little from his past life.

This was because his current True Qi was now entirely different.

“Nine Transformations Dragon—each transformation comes with a corresponding spell or divine ability.

Brocaded Tiger boosts True Qi's destructive power.

Azure Ox enhances physical strength.

Divine Eagle grants clairvoyance.

Heavenly Serpent conceals one's aura.

Jade Rabbit increases speed.

Mountain Camel boosts True Qi regeneration.”

Six transformations had almost eliminated the gap between mid and late Qi Refining!

But what tempted Lü Yang most was the “Flying Fish Transformation” among the nine.

Because this transformation had a very simple effect—breaking through bottlenecks!

“If I cultivated the sixth transformation now, I might instantly reach the late stage.”

“But that would be a waste.”

Lü Yang had grand ambitions.

There was no way he would use such a precious breakthrough opportunity just to reach the late stage of Qi Refining.

He planned to save it for when he aimed for complete mastery in Qi Refining.

Lü Yang's plan for this life was simple—cultivate.

“I'll cultivate silently, then seamlessly transition into the Myriad Chariots Dragon Ascension Scroll after reaching full mastery. I'll stay in closed-door cultivation until Foundation Establishment and stun the world!”

With this thought, Lü Yang casually fed himself a spiritual pill and resumed his meditation.

Then, just a few days later—

“Boom!”

Lü Yang was jolted awake from his meditation by a tremor shaking the ground.

He opened his eyes and found that the Innate Qi avatar he had stationed outside had been destroyed.

An enemy had invaded?

Lü Yang was utterly puzzled.

He had secluded himself in his cave this entire life, focusing solely on cultivation, indifferent to the outside world.

Why would someone suddenly come to kill him?

With doubt in his heart, Lü Yang walked out of his cave dwelling—

Only to see a familiar face he didn't expect.

“It's you?”

Outside the cave, Zhao Xuhe's bloodshot eyes glared at him.

Several powerful cultivators stood beside him, their auras surging with killing intent as they stared furiously at Lü Yang.

“This senior brother.” Lü Yang cupped his hands and said, “I am Lü Yang. May I ask—”

“So it really is you!”

Zhao Xuhe interrupted Lü Yang directly, gritting his teeth.

“Panlong Island vanished mysteriously. The opportunity I gained after cultivating merit through three lifetimes suddenly disappeared. I paid a great price to ask my master to divine the cause and effect. My master told me that the opportunity was snatched by a disciple of the Primordial Saint Sect surnamed Lü from this very place!”

“Speak! Do you have Panlong True Person’s inheritance?”

“...”

As Zhao Xuhe finished speaking, Lü Yang froze for a moment.

Then, as if realizing something, his expression turned dark at a speed visible to the naked eye.

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

[1,334 words]

Zhao Xuhe's words made Lü Yang feel as if he had fallen into an ice cave.

In this lifetime, he hadn't even visited Panlong Island, and the cultivation method was memorized from his previous two lifetimes, yet Panlong Island had vanished?

Due to so-called karma?

Because he had cultivated the "Nine Transformations Dragon Art" ahead of time, intercepting the karma between it and Zhao Xuhe, Panlong Island disappeared as a result?

Cultivation method karma, opportunities are predetermined.

So this was Zhao Xuhe's destined opportunity, and he couldn't seize or practice it; otherwise, someone would immediately deduce the karma and trace it back to him?

Understanding this, Lü Yang couldn't help but laugh in anger.

This world is truly disgusting!

True cultivators calculate opportunities in advance, benefiting their disciples, and if something goes wrong, they can deduce the cause and correct the deviated karma.

In such circumstances, how could ordinary people ever rise?

They could only bow their heads and be beasts of burden!

Just like now, on the surface, only Zhao Xuhe appeared, but in reality, the one truly taking action was likely Zhao Xuhe's so-called "master" behind him!

Lü Yang was one hundred percent certain that it must be a Foundation Establishment True Person!

Looking up, Lü Yang recalled Daoist Hong Yun from his previous life, as if seeing a pair of eyes overlooking from the vast sky above.

"Why force me?"

Thinking of this, Lü Yang's anger surged, and he looked at Zhao Xuhe with a mocking smile on his lips.

Almost simultaneously, someone beside Zhao Xuhe suddenly stepped forward.

"Junior Brother, be careful!"

Swish!

A flash of sword light, and Zhao Xuhe felt a blur before his eyes; when he saw the scene clearly, his anger was instantly extinguished by a chill.

The person who had just stepped forward was a fellow disciple under the same "master," who had joined three years earlier, cultivated the "Ode of Yin-Yang Great Bliss" to the sixth level of Qi Refining, mid-stage peak, and had refined his true qi to the fifth-grade limit, making him much stronger than Zhao Xuhe.

However, now, that senior brother had disappeared.

His flesh, bones, and blood were completely consumed by a crimson divine light, and in the blink of an eye, only an empty human skin slowly fell to the ground.

The next second, a spiritual light flew out from the human skin.

"Thank you, fellow Daoist, for freeing me."

Within the spiritual light, a phantom figure appeared, showing no anger at being slain by Lü Yang's sword, but rather a sense of relief and joy.

He then looked at Zhao Xuhe.

"Junior Brother, before coming here, Master commented that my foundation was shallow, merits insufficient, and that achieving Qi Refining perfection in this life was unlikely, let alone Foundation Establishment."

"I begged Master for guidance, and he instructed me to accompany you, to save your life at a critical moment. You have accumulated merits over three lifetimes, with a thirty percent chance of achieving Foundation Establishment in the future. Now that I've saved your life, the karma is set. If you achieve Foundation Establishment, you must assist my reincarnated self in cultivation and attaining the Dao."

After speaking, the spiritual light soared into the sky.

Below, Lü Yang's gaze grew colder.

"Using my hand to establish karma for your disciple, to reincarnate and return? You're certain I can't stir up trouble and want to squeeze out my last bit of value?"

Lü Yang's eyes shifted, and he saw several disciples of the Primordial Saint Sect stepping forward beside Zhao Xuhe, all at the sixth level of Qi Refining, mid-stage peak cultivation.

At the same time, Zhao Xuhe finally reacted, showing excitement and loudly saying, "Senior Brothers, as long as you help me capture this thief today and reclaim my opportunity, if I achieve Foundation Establishment in the future, I will repay you with all my strength, assisting you in reincarnating and attaining Qi Refining perfection!"

Upon hearing this, everyone nodded.

"Rest assured, Junior Brother."

"Opportunities are for those destined. This thief unjustly seized your opportunity, an unforgivable crime. With Master above, we will certainly help you capture this thief!"

Lü Yang laughed upon hearing this: "No matter how you put it, isn't it still about forcefully seizing?"

"Stubborn and unrepentant."

The leading disciple of the Primordial Saint Sect shook his head and sneered: "My name is Lu Yuanchun. Since you refuse to surrender, don't blame me for being ruthless."

As he spoke, Lu Yuanchun formed a hand seal, revealing his cultivation at the seventh level of Qi Refining, late-stage. He then summoned a golden treasure mirror, which hung in the air, replacing the sun, and instantly emitted thousands of golden rays, sharper than blades, pouring down like torrential rain to engulf Lü Yang.

Seeing this, Lü Yang frowned, and his figure instantly vanished.

Immediately, a sword light soared into the sky, splitting into thousands, darting left and right but unable to escape the golden rays' coverage, forced to withstand them head-on.

"Master had already calculated that this thief excels in swordsmanship, so he naturally provided a countermeasure."

Lu Yuanchun smiled proudly, then looked at Zhao Xuhe: "Junior Brother Zhao, I've trapped this thief, making it difficult for him to use his sword techniques to escape."

"Please activate the treasure seal to capture his flying sword, and the matter will be settled!"

"Thank you, Senior Brother!"

Zhao Xuhe cupped his hands and quickly took out a gleaming golden treasure seal, which he summoned into the air, aiming at Lü Yang's sword light.

"This thing again..."

Lü Yang's eyes flickered, recognizing it as the "Magnetic Gold Seal" Zhao Xuhe had used in his second life, a magical tool that restrains flying swords.

With lessons from his past life, Lü Yang naturally wouldn't let Zhao Xuhe succeed. He immediately willed the Blood Sun Sword Pill to move, avoiding contact with the Magnetic Gold Seal, then redirected the sword light, transforming it into a sky full of Blood-Transforming Divine Light, sweeping towards Zhao Xuhe.

Zhao Xuhe was shocked, retreating in panic and shouting, "Senior Brother!"

"Don't panic, it's just a trapped beast's struggle."

On the other side, Lu Yuanchun remained calm and said loudly, "Junior Brothers, please take action."

As he spoke, several disciples of the Primordial Saint Sect stepped forward, wearing sinister smiles, and without waiting for the divine light to fall, they committed suicide.

In an instant, blood lights burst from their corpses.

These blood lights, like chains, temporarily trapped Lü Yang's Blood-Transforming Divine Light, making it difficult to retract, and his thoughts felt sluggish.

Zhao Xuhe and Lu Yuanchun were clearly well-prepared.

Especially Lu Yuanchun, who had received secret instructions from his master before coming, learning many details about Lü Yang, and thus prepared various countermeasures.

Therefore, he had set the strategy before the battle: first, limit Lü Yang's speed to prevent escape; then, have Zhao Xuhe suppress the sword pill; finally, have the accompanying junior brothers jointly restrain the Blood-Transforming Divine Light, rendering Lü Yang helpless despite his high-level techniques.

"Out of tricks, the outcome is decided!"

Lu Yuanchun sneered, feeling confident in victory, and shook the golden treasure mirror, causing thousands of golden rays to follow, aiming to refine Lü Yang alive.

Seeing this, Lü Yang could only sigh.

"This is the benefit of having backing..."

With his current strength, even against multiple opponents, Lu Yuanchun and Zhao Xuhe wouldn't be his match, but their preparation was too thorough.

Every move targeted his weaknesses.

And all of this was due to Zhao Xuhe's mysterious "master," who deduced karma and fate, leading to such targeted arrangements.

Generally speaking, at this point, he would indeed be powerless.

"Fortunately... I have a cheat!"

The Blood Sun Sword Pill was brought from his previous life by the "Book of a Hundred Lifetimes," beyond karma, and naturally immune to any calculations.

Even if Zhao Xuhe's mysterious "master" could predict his swordsmanship and the Blood-Transforming Divine Light, he could never fathom the Blood Sun Sword Pill's secrets!

In the next second, Lü Yang willed, and his true qi surged.

Clang, clang—!

The Blood Sun Sword Pill responded with a long cry, and the array patterns on the sword pill suddenly exploded, locking the heavens and earth, sealing the universe, instantly encompassing everyone!

In the blink of an eye, Lü Yang had deployed the grand formation he had spent twenty years researching and refining in his previous life!

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Chapter 30: Mending Heaven Peak Master

[1,245 words]

In his previous life, Lü Yang had painstakingly studied the Dao of formations, and the grand formation he finally engraved on the Blood Sun Sword Pill was a sword formation named “Heaven-Slashing Blood River Sword Formation.”

The formation was structured by Three Essentials and Nine Palaces, primarily powered by the sword qi river driven by the Blood Sun Sword Pill, and supplemented by the Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light.

Lü Yang had even specifically designed three hundred and sixty formation eyes, and according to his concept, as long as three hundred and sixty cultivators entered and occupied them, the power of the formation could be brought to its peak.

He had already thought this part through.

Once he seized back his Innate True Qi Myriad Spirits Banner from Liu Xin, he would let the banner spirit enter the formation eyes—it would be not only efficient and convenient but also portable.

But for now, he had to control the formation personally.

“Open!” Lü Yang made a hand seal, and the Blood Sun Sword Pill resonated.

Inside the formation, a river from the south surged toward the north, covering the firmament and stretching beyond sight.

At this moment, Lu Yuanchun, Zhao Xuhe, and all the others were already trapped within the heavenly river.

The river roared, and sword qi surged endlessly every moment.

A few cultivators with weaker cultivation levels barely managed a scream before turning into blood blossoms in the river.

Upon seeing this, Lu Yuanchun's expression changed drastically.

"This is impossible! Although Master mentioned that this person knows formations, I didn't even give him time to lay one—why are we still caught in a formation?"

Lu Yuanchun naturally could not comprehend.

Because the Blood Sun Sword Pill was no ordinary magical tool—it was a formation treasure.

So-called formation treasures were formations themselves—the moment one willed it, the formation was complete, with no need for setup!

And now that they had fallen into it, everything had exceeded Lu Yuanchun's expectations.

After all, formations borrowed the marvels of heaven and earth, harnessed their powers, and were known to be invincible at the same realm.

Although he prided himself on his strength, falling into a formation still shook his confidence.

Could it be that today he would really capsize in a ditch?

At this thought, Lu Yuanchun's expression became even gloomier, no longer as confident as before, and even Zhao Xuhe beside him began to grow uneasy.

"Senior Brother, this formation..."

"Junior Brother, be careful. I fear today's situation has taken an unexpected turn," Lu Yuanchun whispered while simultaneously summoning the Radiant Mirror of Treasured Light into the air to protect himself.

At this moment, Lu Yuanchun still held onto a glimmer of hope.

In his eyes, Lü Yang was merely an ordinary disciple who had stumbled upon some opportunity.

Though knowledgeable, he had only recently joined the sect.

Even if he understood formations, how much could he possibly control?

As for this formation—could it not be some remnant left behind by an elder?

Yet in the next second, Lü Yang shattered his illusion.

With a cold expression and a mere thought, Lü Yang pointed, and the once-clear river of sword qi instantly turned a glaring shade of crimson.

Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light!

This divine ability was tremendously powerful, infamous for “brushing causes harm, touching means death.”

However, that also meant it only showed effect when it hit the target.

If it missed, it achieved nothing.

But within the “Heaven-Slashing Blood River Sword Formation,” Lü Yang had solved this flaw—anyone inside the formation was effectively immersed in the divine light!

In other words, once it was activated, it could not miss!

In an instant, Lu Yuanchun felt the earth tremble and the mountains sway.

His remaining junior brothers screamed one after another, and within moments, they were turned into human skins!

“Not good!”

Lu Yuanchun’s expression changed drastically as he gritted his teeth and changed his hand seal.

The aura around the Radiant Mirror of Treasured Light above his head instantly became chaotic and violent.

One glance was enough for Lü Yang to realize what was happening.

“Self-detonating your magical tool? Naive!”

The Radiant Mirror of Treasured Light was clearly a top-tier magical tool.

If Lu Yuanchun detonated it, he might indeed tear open the formation and carve out a path to escape.

But that assumed Lü Yang didn’t understand formations.

Ordinary formations, even with someone operating them, could only follow predetermined rules—they were dead formations.

However, a formation master at the helm made all the difference.

A capable formation master could adjust the formation in real time according to changes on the battlefield.

Thus, a dead formation became a living one—its power beyond comparison.

Let alone the fact that the “Heaven-Slashing Blood River Sword Formation” was personally created by Lü Yang, wielded as smoothly as moving his own limbs.

So the moment Lu Yuanchun detonated the magical tool, Lü Yang acted.

With one hand calculating and the other manipulating formation patterns, he instantly dispersed the concentrated explosion across the entire formation.

Once dispersed, the explosive force diminished severalfold.

The formation, which would have been broken, remained perfectly intact.

He even took advantage of the crack from the shattered mirror to engulf both Lu Yuanchun and Zhao Xuhe.

Zhao Xuhe didn't even have time to scream before being reduced to a desiccated corpse.

“Impossible! This bastard is actually a formation master?!”

Lu Yuanchun's face turned ashen.

He felt all his flesh and blood pouring out like a dam burst, clearly about to follow Zhao Xuhe into death.

“Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light...”

At the brink of life and death, fear snuffed out his rage.

Lu Yuanchun's eyes nearly burst from their sockets, but he was powerless—finally, he accepted his fate and lowered his head.

“Boom!”

The next second, a jade pendant at Lu Yuanchun's waist quietly shattered.

Immediately, it released boundless light and broke Lü Yang's grand formation in an instant!

Seeing this, Lü Yang's pupils shrank as he looked to the heavens.

Where his gaze fell, the radiance outlined a solemn and commanding face in the sky, calm yet awe-inspiring, tens of thousands of feet high!

That face showed no emotion, and its eyes gleamed like sun and moon.

Even though Lü Yang only made eye contact for a moment, sharp pain brought tears to his eyes.

His entire true qi was suppressed by seventy to eighty percent on the spot, nearly causing him to fall from the sky.

The giant face looked down, and a thunderous voice echoed from the mountains:

“Insolence!”

The voice was not loud, yet it sounded like it carried the weight of heaven's mandate.

Lü Yang instantly became a target of the world's contempt—spiritual qi fled from him as if avoiding a plague.

The intangible gaze weighed on Lü Yang like Mount Tai.

Even the ground beneath him began to crack inch by inch.

Such a scene naturally alarmed the entire Mending Heaven Peak.

At once, countless disciples in closed-door cultivation awakened and stepped out of their cave dwellings.

Seeing the massive face in the sky, they were struck with terror.

“Greetings, Peak Master!”

“Greetings, Peak Master!”

Some veteran disciples from Mending Heaven Peak recognized the face and immediately broke into cold sweat, kneeling without hesitation and kowtowing repeatedly.

Mending Heaven Peak Master!

Lü Yang finally learned the identity of Zhao Xuhe's mysterious master—the Peak Master of Mending Heaven Peak, a Foundation Establishment True Person who oversaw one of the four inner peaks of the Primordial Saint Sect!

“Boom rumble—!”

As the words fell, the formation diagram Lü Yang had painstakingly refined in his previous life began to crumble.

Large swaths of formation patterns even exploded where they stood.

Witnessing this, Lü Yang could not help but reveal a trace of helplessness.

The gap between Qi Refining and Foundation Establishment had completely surpassed his imagination.

Twenty years of painstaking effort and achievements—defeated by the mere title of “Foundation Establishment True Person!”

Just a mild rebuke, and it had come to this?

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

[1,231 words]

Not long ago, atop Mending Heaven Peak, within the summit cave dwelling.

In stark contrast to the bustling activity below, with its myriad worldly affairs, the summit was serene, with clouds rising and falling, detached from the mundane, as if transcending the chaotic human realm.

Before a cliff, two figures stood, gazing down at the sea of clouds below.

One appeared elderly with white hair and a youthful face, dressed in black and white Daoist robes, holding a horsetail whisk, resembling the benevolent old immortals often depicted in mortal tales.

The other was a middle-aged man, who said with a sly smile:

"Mending Heaven, I heard you've been selecting a son-in-law for your daughter recently?"

"Why? Are you interested?" The Master of Mending Heaven Peak turned to look at the middle-aged man. "If it's one of your disciples, he could be a good match for Qian'er."

"Better not."

The middle-aged man shook his head. "I know my disciples; they're all flashy but lack substance. They can't handle your daughter. Better find someone else."

"Then forget it." The Master of Mending Heaven Peak shook his head. "I've already found someone suitable. This person has cultivated diligently over three lifetimes, possesses great merit and foundation, has a thirty percent chance of forming a Dao foundation in the future, and after learning True Person Panlong's 'Nine Transformations Dragon Art,' he even exhibits the might of a true dragon in bed."

"True Person Panlong? That can't be."

The middle-aged man calculated with his fingers, then shook his head. "Panlong Island vanished, and the opportunity was seized by someone else, not your disciple."

"Soon, he will be."

The Master of Mending Heaven Peak said calmly, "I've already calculated who seized the opportunity. I've sent Yuanchun to handle it. It won't be long before things are back on track."

"Tsk tsk tsk, you're really leaving no room for others." The middle-aged man shook his head. "The path of immortality is hard to attain. Why be so harsh on the younger generation?"

"Occasionally, we need to give them some hope. After all, the Saint Sect needs fresh blood."

"No need for your teachings."

The Master of Mending Heaven Peak sneered. "If that were all, I might not have acted. But I've calculated that the one who seized True Person Panlong's opportunity is quite unusual."

At this point, the Master of Mending Heaven Peak's tone carried a hint of surprise. "This person has only been in the sect for a few years. Not only did he profit greatly during the recent Substitute Death Yin Puppet incident, but he also cultivated the Blood-Transforming Divine Light, refined a Sword Pill, mastered the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion's sword techniques, and reached the sixth level of Qi Refining."

"Oh? Quite impressive."

The middle-aged man looked surprised, then silently calculated for a moment before sighing. "I didn't expect our Saint Sect to produce such talent."

After speaking, the middle-aged man seemed intrigued.

"Come, point me in his direction. Let's see what kind of potential he has. If he's of good quality, perhaps we can refine an excellent treasure pill."

"That's simple, just over there, hmm?"

The Master of Mending Heaven Peak initially wore a smile, but as he pointed out the direction and looked into the distance, his smile gradually faded.

"Boom!"

As the Master of Mending Heaven Peak's gaze fell, the vast Mending Heaven Peak seemed to experience a dragon's upheaval. Even the peripheral areas had rocks tumbling into the sea of clouds.

Within a certain cave dwelling on Mending Heaven Peak, Liu Xin lay prostrate on the ground, too terrified to breathe, fearing he might attract the attention of the Master of Mending Heaven Peak.

"Not looking for me, not looking for me..."

Liu Xin desperately repeated in his mind, suppressing his guilt and fear.

After all, that was a Foundation Establishment True Person.

Even a single glance could kill someone in the Qi Refining realm, and his son's soul was hidden within Liu Xin's Ten Thousand Spirits Banner.

If discovered, it would be a disaster beyond redemption!

"No need to fear. I have a divine talisman protecting me; he can't calculate my presence."

Liu Xin trembled, clutching a talisman tightly.

"Yuanchun pays respects to Master."

Lu Yuanchun, coughing up blood, bowed to the face in the sky, pleading guilty, yet felt no relief at surviving.

Instead, his heart was cold.

At the last moment, he had used a jade pendant to break through Lü Yang's grand formation.

The pendant contained a trace of the Master of Mending Heaven Peak's divine consciousness, his greatest reliance as a Foundation Establishment disciple. Because it

was difficult to create, once used, it was nearly impossible to replace, equivalent to a life.

Now, it was gone.

Moreover, not only had he failed to help Junior Brother Zhao reclaim the opportunity, but he also failed to protect him, leading to his unexpected death—a complete failure.

With multiple offenses, his path to immortality was now hopeless.

"Disciple is incompetent."

Lu Yuanchun dared not speak or explain, choosing only to bow and await his master's decision after killing Lü Yang.

Clang—!

At this moment, Lu Yuanchun suddenly heard a sword's cry.

The sound was not loud but exceptionally clear, refreshing, and impossible to ignore.

Initially, it resembled the gentle sound of flowing water, but as time passed, the flow became more turbulent, the sound more deafening, eventually transforming into a roaring river, echoing throughout the heavens and earth.

Lu Yuanchun instinctively looked up.

Then he saw a figure standing proudly in mid-air under the gaze of the True Person, his back straight, unafraid, meeting the gaze head-on.

Beneath his feet was a surging river of sword Qi.

The river was crimson, filled with overwhelming killing intent, yet it did not spread but continuously contracted, flowing back into a delicate Sword Pill.

"What is he trying to do?"

Lu Yuanchun swallowed hard. He had a guess but couldn't believe it.

Could someone be so bold, so unaware of the heavens' will?

At the same time, the face in the sky seemed to realize something, frowning:

"You intend to attack me?"

Lü Yang's expression was indifferent.

The Sword Pill absorbed the blood river, its edge pointing straight to the sky:

"Please enlighten me, senior."

The face remained silent, seemingly disdainful of a response.

The next second, Lü Yang saw a black dot suddenly appear in the sky, rapidly expanding, descending upon him with overwhelming force.

As the black dot approached, Lü Yang barely discerned its form—it was a finger, descending from an unimaginable height, with skin textures clearly visible.

Lü Yang was struck by a sudden realization—this was the opponent's answer:

An ant, how can it comprehend the vastness of the sky?

In an instant, an intense sense of crisis enveloped him, nearly freezing his thoughts, like an ant emerging from its hole suddenly facing the bright sky.

"Trying to crush me with a finger???"

Lü Yang exhaled deeply, then his entire body's true Qi began to burn intensely.

The Killing Curse obtained in his second life was now fully activated.

At this moment, life and death were cast aside.

Lü Yang's heart was filled only with rage.

In this life, he sought no conflict, focused solely on cultivation, yet you calculated karma, sent people to seize my opportunity, and when that failed, personally attempted to kill me.

Speaking of cultivation methods and karma, claiming the opportunity was predestined.

Am I destined to be a beast of burden, while you are destined to be high above?

"Kill!"

Lü Yang shouted, his chest's true Qi transforming into a long howl, his fury forging a beam of sword light, striking straight into the sky.

A silent collision occurred, like a flickering candle flame.

After a brief brilliance, darkness engulfed Lü Yang's vision and consciousness.

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chapter 32

[1,389 words]

【You were pressed to death by a single finger from the Mending Heaven Peak Master.】

【Current remaining pages of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes: 95】

【Reopening a new lifetime, you can choose one of the following gains from your past life:

One: Treasure.

Two: Cultivation.

Three: Lifespan.

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

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

Liu Xin's voice echoed from the platform, but this time Lü Yang hadn't snapped out of it for a long while, his mind still stuck on the sword strike filled with fury from the last lifetime.

“To try to shake a great tree like an ant... I suppose it wasn't entirely wrong.”

Lü Yang let out a deep breath.

Even though he had personally witnessed the gap between himself and a Foundation Establishment cultivator, he wasn't discouraged. Instead, his fighting spirit had only intensified.

With the 【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】 in hand, anything that failed to kill him would only make him stronger.

At worst, he would just start all over again.

Thinking of this, Lü Yang looked once again at the interface of the 【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】 .

In his previous life, he had focused solely on bitter cultivation, and apart from reaching the sixth layer of Qi Refining, he had gained nothing else.

However, he couldn't choose cultivation.

After all, as long as the hidden dangers of the 『Nine Transformations Dragon Art』 remained, he couldn't train in it. Otherwise, it would be like carrying a ticking time bomb.

“I choose talent.”

【Calculating past life experience...】

【After your death, the tale of you drawing your sword to slash at a Foundation Establishment cultivator spread. Countless people mocked you for overestimating yourself, unaware that you actually weren't entirely without merit.】

【Though you still failed to injure the Foundation Establishment cultivator in the slightest, in the instant before you were pressed to death, you miraculously broke through a bottleneck in swordsmanship, forcing the Mending Heaven Peak Master to exert a bit more strength to finish you off. He later sighed that, though you were but an ant, you had some skill.】

【You have awakened the purple-grade talent: “Some Skill.”】

【Some Skill: No matter how fearsome the attack, as long as it falls within the limits of your abilities, you can freely respond to it—twice.】

“What kind of talent is this?”

Lü Yang frowned.

At first glance, it seemed like some kind of absolute defense divine ability, but the phrase “within the limits of your abilities” in the description took some of the edge off.

Still, he didn't dwell on it.

After all, he had only chosen a talent to avoid the hidden dangers of cultivating the 『Nine Transformations Dragon Art』 from his past life. If the talent was strong, great. If weak, so be it.

More importantly, he cared about whether there was a way to avoid the Mending Heaven Peak Master's divinations.

“If it really doesn’t work, I’ll just have to give up the 『Nine Transformations Dragon Art』.”

“Lü Yang.”

“...Here!”

Liu Xin’s voice from the stage snapped Lü Yang out of his thoughts. He quickly stepped onto the platform, and just like in past lives, Liu Xin assigned him to the Pleasure Hall.

In the next second, Lü Yang suddenly froze.

“Wait... I remember that in my Myriad Spirits Banner, Liu Xin had refined a powerful figure into it, very likely a true disciple of the Saint Sect.”

This didn’t add up.

He had merely cultivated a technique and was traced through karma by the Mending Heaven Peak Master, who had followed the thread to his doorstep. Liu Xin, on the other hand, had killed a true disciple!

How was he still alive?

With that thought, Lü Yang’s eyes instantly lit up, staring straight at Liu Xin on the stage.

“That’s it. The only explanation is that he possesses a rare treasure that conceals karma, preventing Foundation Establishment cultivators from divining any information about him!”

In an instant, Lü Yang’s thoughts began to churn.

Immediately after, he changed his approach, replicating his actions from the First Lifetime by publicly enraging and killing Yu Suzhen, successfully drawing Liu Xin’s attention.

He obtained half of the 『Innate Dao Book』 from Liu Xin’s hands.

He went into seclusion to cultivate.

As expected, on a certain dark and windy night, a fully prepared Liu Xin, humming a little tune, came to the entrance of his cave dwelling.

“Junior Brother Lü, are you there?”

Lü Yang didn’t speak.

Seeing this, Liu Xin wasn't surprised.

Instead, he revealed a faint sneer and calmly opened his storage pouch, pulling out several array flags and placing them all around.

These were all arrays used for soundproofing and illusion generation, ensuring that no matter what happened inside, no one outside would notice a thing.

Liu Xin had done this many times before. To this day, no one had ever suspected him, and even if someone attempted a karmic divination...

Thinking of this, Liu Xin patted the pouch hidden in his robe and smiled confidently.

Even if someone used karmic divination—it would be useless!

Soon, after the formation was fully set up, Liu Xin no longer concealed himself and directly unleashed his True Qi, slashing open Lü Yang's cave with a single sword, then strolling inside.

“Junior Brother Lü, don't hide. Someone like you is exactly the kind of talent Senior Brother needs...!?”

Liu Xin's voice abruptly stopped.

Inside the cave, Lü Yang was seated cross-legged on a meditation cushion, looking at him with a half-smile. He showed none of the signs of someone who had been cultivating the 『Innate Dao Book』 .

“...Something's not right!”

In a flash, Liu Xin's pupils contracted, and a banner appeared in his hand.

But it was already too late.

The next second, a red light flared.

Liu Xin felt his True Qi and blood essence rapidly drained, collapsing to the ground in a stumble!

Heaven-Slashing Blood River Sword Formation!

Lü Yang had long since set the diagram outside the cave entrance, so Liu Xin's forceful entry was no different from walking into a trap—easily subdued by Lü Yang.

“Senior Brother, I've been waiting a long time.”

Looking at the fallen Liu Xin and remembering how he had been tricked to death in the First Lifetime, Lü Yang sneered coldly.

At last, you've fallen into my hands!

If our roles were reversed, I'd make you understand what true cruelty means!

“Who... are you really?!”

Liu Xin lay slumped on the ground, completely drained of energy, utterly confused. Had he been schemed against? By a newly recruited disciple?

Impossible! Absolutely impossible!

“You're a spy from a righteous sect? Wait, don't kill me! I'm useful to you... I have a high-grade Dao book—it can help you reach Foundation Establishment!”

In the face of death, Liu Xin blurted out his greatest secret.

“In addition, I also have a magical tool. Inside it lies a true disciple of the Saint Sect. He knows many secrets of the... no, the Primordial Saint Sect.”

“As long as you let me live, all of it is yours!”

Before Liu Xin could finish his sentence, Lü Yang activated the Blood-Transforming Divine Light, completely draining him into a human skin: “Fool. Killing you means they're mine anyway!”

“Even you are mine now!”

Then, Lü Yang raised his hand and summoned the Innate True Qi Myriad Spirits Banner, shaking the banner once and sweeping it over Liu Xin's corpse.

In his earlier life, he had read the 『Innate Dao Book』, so naturally, he knew how to activate this treasure.

Liu Xin's corpse entered the banner and began to vaporize into Qi.

After circulating within the banner for some time, Lü Yang gave the banner a shake—and Liu Xin reappeared.

But this time, the resurrected Liu Xin had already become the banner spirit of the Myriad Spirits Banner.

Lü Yang had deliberately preserved his memories, so when Liu Xin revived, he stared at Lü Yang in disbelief: “Junior Brother Lü? Impossible! How could you possibly know how to activate the Myriad Spirits Banner?!”

“What did you just call me?”

Lü Yang sneered coldly: “Do I need to teach you what attitude a banner spirit should show toward their banner master? Or are you eager to be scattered into soul dust?”

“Spare me, my lord! Liu Xin greets my lord!”

Liu Xin’s legs immediately gave way, kneeling on the ground.

Even though he retained all his memories from life, he felt no hatred for Lü Yang, the one who had personally killed him.

His every thought was filled only with absolute loyalty.

Such was the overbearing nature of the Myriad Spirits Banner.

At first glance, the banner spirit was no different from a living person, but in truth, their mind had already been seized, incapable of true autonomy.

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

- Chapter 33: Innate Primordial True Qi Divine Talisman

Chapter 33: Innate Primordial True Qi Divine Talisman

[1,547 words]

After a long time, Lü Yang held a yellowed talisman paper in his hand, examining it with great interest.

After refining Liu Xin into a banner spirit, Lü Yang had him recount his life in detail, including how he had schemed to kill Chen Xin’an and how he had avoided the calculations of Foundation Establishment True Persons.

“Innate Primordial True Qi Divine Talisman?”

“This is the talisman,” Liu Xin prostrated himself and said respectfully, “This talisman was left behind by the Innate Daoist. As long as it is carried on one’s person, it can avoid karmic calculations.”

Lü Yang nodded in satisfaction, then lightly shook the Myriad Spirits Banner.

This time, descending from the banner was a handsome young man in black robes.

Upon seeing Lü Yang, he was first stunned, then looked at Liu Xin, who had already become a banner spirit beside him, and his body immediately trembled.

“Haha... hahaha! So you have this day too!”

Chen Xin’an laughed heartily, then looked at Liu Xin: “I thought you were already incompetent, but I didn’t expect your incompetence to exceed my imagination.”

“Being refined into a banner spirit by someone?”

“How did you manage that?”

Facing Chen Xin’an’s mockery, Liu Xin merely lowered his head, showing no intention of answering. Only then did Chen Xin’an turn to look at Lü Yang.

“As expected of a disciple of our Saint Sect,” Chen Xin’an praised, clapping his hands and laughing, “Junior Brother, I don’t ask you to let me go and reincarnate. Since you were able to kill Liu Xin, it has resolved my deep-seated hatred. How about this: I’ll give you a hidden treasure as a reward?”

“Now that I am also a banner spirit, you can naturally see through the truth and falsehood.”

“That hidden treasure is located on an island deep within the Sea of Clouds, called Gourd Island. Your current cultivation is still low; it’s best to go after reaching the peak of Qi Refining.”

“No need.”

Upon hearing this, Lü Yang showed no sign of being tempted and shook his head indifferently: “Senior Brother Chen, we are all disciples of the Saint Sect. Why put on an act?”

“Junior Brother, you truly misunderstand me.”

Chen Xin’an sighed softly: “Although most of our Saint Sect disciples do not speak of camaraderie, we still repay kindness and are not heartless and unjust people.”

“Stop flattering yourself.”

Lü Yang interrupted Chen Xin’an’s words without hesitation, sneering: “Where are the good people among the Saint Sect disciples? Those who survive, every single one of them, are bad people! Senior Brother Chen, don’t waste your efforts. I won’t go to your hidden treasure.”

Regarding this True Inheritance Senior Brother, Lü Yang was extremely wary.

If there really was a hidden treasure, why hadn’t Liu Xin, who held the Myriad Spirits Banner for so many years, gone to seize it?

Most likely, he was also afraid that Chen Xin’an would turn the tables!

This person had a deep background and unfathomable methods, completely different from the likes of Liu Xin. Even if he became a banner spirit, he couldn’t be fully trusted.

Chen Xin’an’s expression changed slightly: “Then why did you summon me? What is your intention?”

“Just conducting an experiment.”

Lü Yang’s tone was calm, but Chen Xin’an sensed danger in it and hurriedly said: “Wait, wait... I also know where to find a Foundation Establishment opportunity.”

Boom!

The next second, Lü Yang, without hesitation and ignoring the so-called Foundation Establishment opportunity, directly shattered Chen Xin’an’s true spirit that had been refined into the Myriad Spirits Banner.

“No—!”

“The Master of Mending Heaven Peak targeted me so much in my previous life. In this life, I’ll first kill his son to vent my anger. After a few lifetimes, when I reach Foundation Establishment, I’ll go kill him!”

Lü Yang’s face remained calm.

Possessing the **【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】**, his Dao heart was incomparably firm, unyielding even after numerous setbacks. No matter how powerful the opponent, he had the confidence to ultimately defeat them.

As for the Foundation Establishment opportunity, coincidentally, he also knew of one!

Chen Xin'an's aura completely dissipated, his soul scattered. Lü Yang then put away the Myriad Spirits Banner, tidied up the scene, and began to wait silently.

Before long, Mending Heaven Peak trembled violently!

A familiar oppressive feeling emerged, as if Mount Tai had descended upon him. Lü Yang immediately put on a fearful expression; he knew exactly what that was.

That was the gaze of a Foundation Establishment True Person.

Clearly, after he completely killed Chen Xin'an, he had alarmed the Master of Mending Heaven Peak.

The other party was probably now deducing the culprit through karma.

Normally, he should be discovered in the next second.

Lü Yang waited in his cave dwelling for half an hour, but until the oppressive feeling disappeared, the Master of Mending Heaven Peak still did not appear before him.

"...It really works!"

He can't deduce it!

Lü Yang's face remained expressionless, but he laughed inwardly.

With this verification, he could finally cultivate the Nine Transformations Dragon Art with peace of mind in this life.

Subsequent actions, Lü Yang replicated the operations of previous lifetimes.

First, he hyped up Substitute Death Yin Puppet to earn contribution points, then hyped up Yun Miaoqing to conceal his sword techniques and sword pill, and then purchased a large number of spiritual pills to begin closed-door cultivation.

Ten years later.

In the blink of an eye, generations of disciples rose and fell, and the various disturbances of the past returned to calm. The development trend of the Saint Sect remained steadily positive.

Only today, there seemed to be something different.

Heaven and earth resonated; Lü Yang's closed-door cave dwelling seemed to become a vortex, with surging spiritual energy rushing in from all directions like a breached dam.

“This is... a celestial phenomenon!?”

“A senior brother has condensed a Qi Seed and broken through to the late stage of Qi Refining!”

Even in the Primordial Saint Sect, the late stage of Qi Refining was considered a high-level laborer, no longer easily treated as a talent, and had a certain degree of autonomy.

Therefore, within Mending Heaven Peak, those disciples who toiled daily for their livelihood, upon seeing the celestial phenomenon manifested by Lü Yang’s breakthrough, were inevitably amazed. Yet beneath that amazement lay stronger envy, jealousy, and even resentment of “Why not me?”

At the same time, inside the cave dwelling, Lü Yang also opened his eyes.

In an instant, a flash of white lightning seemed to streak through the dim meditation room, dazzlingly bright!

“The so-called bottleneck truly lives up to its name.”

In this life, Lü Yang’s cultivation speed was the same as in his previous life.

In just three years, he reached the sixth layer of Qi Refining, the peak of the mid-stage, but then stagnated at the bottleneck for seven years.

This was still because he had previously broken through to the late stage of Qi Refining and had experience.

Otherwise, this time might have been even longer. It was evident why so many cultivators were stuck at this step, unable to make any progress throughout their lives.

Just after breaking through, Lü Yang did not rush to end his seclusion but sat quietly for another three days. Only after fully grasping the changes in his true Qi, physique, and spiritual consciousness did he stand up.

He opened the panel of the **【Book of a Hundred Lifetimes】** :

【Name: Lü Yang】

【Age: 28】

【Cultivation: Seventh Layer of Qi Refining (Late Stage), Ninth-Grade Array Master】

【Talents: Dual Cultivation Prodigy (White), Some Skill (Purple)】

【Cultivation Method: Nine Transformations Dragon Art (Seventh Layer)】

【Divine Abilities: Divine Firmament Sword Control True Formula (Minor Achievement), Secret Explanation of Array Treasures (Perfect), Killing Curse (Perfect), Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light (Perfect), Qi Concealment Technique (Perfect)】

【Treasures: Blood Sun Sword Pill (Superior Magical Treasure), Innate True Qi Myriad Spirits Banner (Superior Magical Treasure)】

【Pages of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes: 95】

Also at the late stage of Qi Refining, Lü Yang in this life was much stronger than in his previous life. His true Qi was on a completely different level. If they were to fight, it would be a one-sided slaughter.

Especially after mastering the Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light, combined with the Heaven-Slashing Blood River Sword Formation, even if the opponent was also at the late stage of Qi Refining, once enveloped by his formation, unless they had a deep understanding of him and had prepared methods to counter the Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light in advance, they would still be doomed.

“However, it’s still not safe.”

The Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light was powerful, but it was still a divine ability that ordinary disciples could find. Who knew what powerful divine abilities those True Inheritance disciples possessed?

“True Inheritance disciples... I wonder if I have a chance?”

Lü Yang looked expectant.

In this life, with the divine talisman concealing karma, his identity was as clean as a whistle.

Generally speaking, he was an ideal candidate for recruitment.

After all, even for Foundation Establishment True Persons, a late-stage Qi Refining cultivator was a decent subordinate.

Moreover, unlike in his previous life, he had not transformed into a blood shadow, nor had his immortal path been severed. No matter how one looked at it, he should have some investment value.

Therefore, Lü Yang had already made up his mind.

If a Foundation Establishment master extended an olive branch, even if it was the Master of Mending Heaven Peak, he would not refuse. He would first take the benefits; the grudges could be settled in the next life.

A man's knees are as precious as gold; today is the time to cash in!

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