

Struggling to Survive with Regression Power in the Primordial Saint Sect

Chapter 71: You Can Achieve Great Things!

[1,635 words]

At the very moment Lü Yang reported to True Person Yinshan, the Yun Clan Ancestor within the secret realm suddenly felt a shiver throughout his body, as if a great calamity was imminent.

“..Is it your incarnation?”

The Yun Clan Ancestor calculated with his fingers and instantly understood the cause and effect, followed by a trace of despair appearing on his face: “Ultimately, it's a calamity that cannot be escaped.”

His current reincarnation heavily relied on secrecy.

It was entirely due to the Sword Pavilion Sect Master's concealment of the heavenly secrets that he hadn't been discovered; however, once exposed, even the Sword Pavilion Sect Master couldn't rescue him.

In other words, his final gamble, staking his life, had completely failed.

The Sect Master's mission remained unfulfilled, the hope of returning to Foundation Establishment was lost, and without him, the Yun Clan's status in the Sword Pavilion would inevitably plummet, no longer the lofty Foundation Establishment Immortal Clan, and even facing imminent destruction.

“No, there's still a chance!”

The Yun Clan Ancestor looked at Lü Yang, a terrifying killing intent suddenly appearing in his eyes, his hatred for Lü Yang so intense that even the waters of the Three Rivers couldn't wash it away.

In the next second, he showed a resolute expression.

With a single thought, the Taiyi Golden Radiance originally surrounding him rapidly retracted, finally converging entirely at his fingertips, transforming into a sharp sword qi.

This sword qi was a divine ability called “Stabilizing the Origin with One Slash, Uniting with the World.”

Although the sword qi appeared ordinary, it could directly lock onto the enemy's cause and effect.

Once the sword was unleashed, as long as the target's cause and effect remained, the sword qi would not dissipate.

In the past, the Witch Ghost Path was exterminated entirely by the Sword Pavilion Sect Master of that generation, a Golden Core True Lord, using this divine ability, leaving no survivors.

Even because the Witch Ghost Path left behind a secret realm inheritance, the cause and effect remained, so the sword qi persisted for a thousand years.

However, this sword was not something ordinary cultivators could unleash.

Because it involved cause and effect, it couldn't be used without Foundation Establishment, and now that the Yun Clan Ancestor had fallen from Foundation Establishment, to unleash this sword, he had to sacrifice his life.

In other words, he intended to perish together!

“With the 'Nine Heavens Instrument' obscuring the heavenly secrets, I can sacrifice my life to kill this demon, then reincarnate anew. Perhaps there's still a sliver of hope to escape alive.”

Although he was originally on his second reincarnation, and now, before returning to Foundation Establishment, he was forcibly beginning a third reincarnation, which severely damaged his cultivation.

Even if he succeeded in escaping, he would inevitably be trapped in the mystery of the womb in the future, becoming an ordinary mortal, never to transcend again.

“At least, I'll kill you first!”

The Yun Clan Ancestor stared intently at Lü Yang, then activated his divine ability, causing his entire essence, qi, and spirit to collapse, all converging into the sharp sword qi he had condensed.

“Slash!”

With a loud shout, the sword qi howled out, directly falling towards Lü Yang's location. In an instant, Lü Yang felt an intense sense of crisis.

“Trying to fight me to the death?”

With a thought, Lü Yang's figure completely merged into the Saint Image behind him, then manipulated the Saint Image to extend two giant hands to grasp the sword qi.

The two entangled, the Saint Image's hands were torn apart by the sword qi, but the sword qi was forcibly torn into large pieces. However, on the sword qi's side, as Lü Yang's cause and effect remained, the sword qi immediately absorbed the heavens and earth to replenish itself, and the torn sword qi instantly restored itself.

On the other side, the Saint Image experienced the same situation.

After all, it was merely a manifestation of Lü Yang's qi, not a real entity.

At this moment, with a surge of his magical power, he immediately regenerated the missing flesh and blood.

The two sides thus reached a stalemate.

Seeing this scene, the Yun Clan Ancestor sighed but didn't linger. At this moment, he no longer had a physical body, only a soul remaining in the world.

Before the True Person of the Saint Sect arrived, early reincarnation was the best strategy.

At this moment, the Yun Clan Ancestor suddenly felt a chill sweep over his heart.

Looking back, he saw Lü Yang in the distance sneering at him:

“Senior, why rush to leave?”

In the next second, he saw Lü Yang holding a mass of his own qi, then drawing a circular light, using the qi to reflect his figure.

“Not good!”

The Yun Clan Ancestor's pupils instantly contracted, shocked and angry, yet unable to understand: “The Profound Yin Form-Capturing Grand Art... How did he capture my qi?”

The Profound Yin Form-Capturing Grand Art, as long as it captured the qi, could kill enemies from a distance.

The Yun Clan Ancestor had already calculated that Lü Yang had learned this divine ability, so he was extremely cautious about concealing his qi during the battle, absolutely not giving Lü Yang any chance to capture his qi, which should have been foolproof.

But he didn't expect that his qi was still captured by Lü Yang!

And now, having lost his physical body, only a soul remaining, if this technique struck, he would likely be annihilated instantly, with no chance of reincarnation!

“Please, Heavenly Lord, save me!”

For a moment, the Yun Clan Ancestor had to postpone reincarnation, instead using his soul to activate the 'Nine Heavens Instrument', trying to block Lü Yang's Profound Yin Form-Capturing Grand Art.

“Too late!”

Lü Yang waved his hand, severing the Yun Clan Ancestor's figure in the circular light. The Yun Clan Ancestor immediately focused his mind, preparing to resist.

Then, nothing happened.

The Yun Clan Ancestor blinked, stunned in place. The imagined remote curse kill of the Profound Yin Form-Capturing Grand Art didn't occur, as if it were fake.

“Something's wrong!”

It was indeed fake! He was stalling for time!

The Yun Clan Ancestor suddenly realized, no longer daring to stay.

With a wave of his hand, he opened a black passage, then his soul rushed into it.

However, at that very moment, a vast qi suddenly entered the Secret Realm of Law Refinement!

“Seal the heavens and earth!”

Only a grand voice echoed throughout the secret realm, golden words and jade speech. The black passage the Yun Clan Ancestor had just opened instantly closed again.

“No——!!!”

The black passage was the place of reincarnation.

Seeing this, the Yun Clan Ancestor screamed miserably, his soul violently fluctuating, looking ferociously at Lü Yang: “You dare deceive me!?”

“What can you do to me?”

Lü Yang smiled faintly, then saw another giant hand reaching in from outside the secret realm, gently grasping the sword qi entangled with him, instantly crushing it.

No matter how powerful the divine ability, it was still useless in the face of a higher level.

'This is Foundation Establishment...'

Lü Yang sighed inwardly.

Even though he had seen it many times, the crushing power of a Foundation Establishment True Person over a Qi Refining cultivator still made him feel awe.

In the next second, True Person Yinshan's figure appeared beside Lü Yang.

"Well done."

True Person Yinshan praised, then turned to look at the Yun Clan Ancestor's soul, laughing: "So it's you, Yun Qingchuan, you old scoundrel."

"Yinshan..."

The Yun Clan Ancestor's eyes turned, seemingly wanting to say something, but before he could speak, True Person Yinshan raised his hand and struck his soul.

Boom!

In the next second, all of the Yun Clan Ancestor's consciousness was erased by True Person Yinshan, leaving only a blank soul held in his hand.

After all, he had fallen from Foundation Establishment.

Although a soul still retained some level, it couldn't compare to a true Foundation Establishment True Person.

Moreover, after the Skeleton Mountain incident, True Person Yinshan's cultivation had improved, now at mid-Foundation Establishment, far beyond what the Yun Clan Ancestor could match.

Buzz buzz!

With the Yun Clan Ancestor's death, the Nine Heavens Instrument lost its owner. True Person Yinshan naturally didn't hesitate, immediately collecting and suppressing it, holding it in his hand to examine.

"A good treasure, truly a good treasure..."

The Yun Clan Ancestor could use this treasure to obscure the heavenly secrets, reincarnating into the secret realm unnoticed, showing its high quality, making even True Person Yinshan unable to resist.

However, this matter involved the Sword Pavilion, and it was the soul of a Foundation Establishment True Person. According to sect rules, he had to report it to the Sect Master for judgment. But once reported, this rare treasure couldn't be hidden and would inevitably become the target of all.

With his strength and status, he might not be able to keep it.

At this moment, Lü Yang suddenly stepped forward, bowing:

“Senior Brother, I, your junior brother, boldly have an unreasonable request... I wonder if I could borrow that righteous path Foundation Establishment's soul for use, and return it within ten years.”

“Oh? You want this old scoundrel's soul?”

True Person Yinshan raised an eyebrow, then shook his head: “You dare to think, but this involves the Sword Pavilion. Once I report it, the Sect Master will surely inquire, and then both the soul and the treasure can't be kept.”

“However... it's not without a workaround.”

At this point, True Person Yinshan suddenly changed his tone, looking at Lü Yang with a half-smile: “Many things, as long as they aren't weighed, a thousand catties become four taels.”

“If you help me conceal this matter, no one reports it, no one investigates, then both the soul and the treasure can be kept.”

Lü Yang was stunned upon hearing this, then showed a puzzled expression: “Conceal what matter?”

“Good! Worthy of being a disciple of our Saint Sect, you can achieve great things!”

The two exchanged glances, understanding each other without words.

In the next second, True Person Yinshan threw the Yun Clan Ancestor's soul into Lü Yang's hand, then collected the Nine Heavens Instrument, and floated away.

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[1,468 words]

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The next day, Lü Yang departed from the Secret Realm of Law Refinement.

As for the events that transpired within the secret realm, naturally, he kept his lips sealed, and even Luo Wuya remained silent, as if Lü Yang had never entered the secret realm.

Regarding Lü Yang, the soul of the Yun Clan Ancestor had already been cleansed by True Person Yinshan; he was content to quietly amass wealth and naturally wouldn't spread the news. To reassure True Person Yinshan, after leaving the secret realm, he simply didn't leave and directly established a cave dwelling within Yinshan.

Cultivating in the mountains, years passed unnoticed, and in the blink of an eye, another ten years had gone by.

On this day, Lü Yang awoke from seclusion, opened his eyes, and looked at the Bright Dao Jade Slip that hadn't left his hand for ten years, only to find several cracks had appeared on it.

"It seems this mysterious treasure also has its limits."

Over the past ten years, he had almost constantly activated this mysterious treasure.

Thanks to it, his attainments in various fields had made significant progress.

Formations, talismans, cultivation.

Most importantly, he had finally deduced a secret technique to cultivate the 『Taiyin Body-Shedding Corpse Liberation True Method』 without triggering the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes.

Lü Yang named it the 『Yin Spirit Ghost Immortal Method』.

Simply put, it was a method of feigned death, with the soul guarding internally, unwavering in will, allowing the yin spirit to emerge upon physical death, thereby enabling the soul to remain in the world.

By using this secret technique, Lü Yang could adjust his own soul to a state similar to that of a Foundation Establishment True Person's soul, so that after the physical body died, he wouldn't enter reincarnation.

This way, he could meet the conditions for cultivating the 『Taiyin Body-Shedding Corpse Liberation True Method』 and undergo 'death and then shedding', without triggering the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes.

"In the next life, this shall be the goal."

After all, just the Saint's Theft alone had cost him several decades.

Compared to it, the 『Taiyin Body-Shedding Corpse Liberation True Method』 was only stronger, not weaker, and the time consumed would likely be even greater.

There was no hope of achieving it in this lifetime.

Thinking of this, Lü Yang took out another jade slip.

It recorded a secret technique called 'Stealing Heaven's Secrets', which Zhao Xuhe had traded to him back then, even placing a confidentiality restriction on it.

If he could cultivate it successfully, it could increase his chances of Foundation Establishment by another ten percent!

Lü Yang lightly tapped it, and as he expected, after eighty years, the restriction on the jade slip had already dissipated, allowing him to easily see its contents.

"Senior Brother Zhao is an honest man, actually leaving no omissions and even writing annotations."

As Lü Yang firmly memorized the Stealing Heaven's Secrets technique, he sighed, "Oh right, Senior Brother Zhao still owes me money in this life. I mustn't forget in the next life."

Another month passed before Lü Yang left his cave dwelling.

However, this time, he heard a piece of news that greatly surprised him: at the Three River Assembly, Second Senior Brother Luo Wuya attempted Foundation Establishment, failed, and perished.

"How could this be?"

Inside True Person Yinshan's cave dwelling, Lü Yang sighed deeply, "I had a close friendship with Senior Brother Luo and thought that upon leaving seclusion, we could drink and converse joyfully."

True Person Yinshan also shook his head upon hearing this, "It's a pity about the second one. His cultivation method was the true inheritance of the Saint Sect, the 『Heavenly Craft True Scripture』 . Upon completion, the 'Heavenly Craft Treasure Qi' he refined was ranked third grade. Besides that, he had also mastered a great divine ability and possessed a Foundation Establishment Pill, giving him a thirty percent chance of breaking through."

Foundation Establishment was as difficult as ascending to the blue heavens.

In this life, Lü Yang was already a hundred years old, and Luo Wuya was no younger. A thirty percent chance of breaking through to Foundation Establishment was already worth risking one's life.

Unfortunately, he lost the bet.

After lamenting for a while, True Person Yinshan looked at Lü Yang, "I see that you've come out of seclusion this time with determination, planning to attempt Foundation Establishment?"

"Senior Brother sees clearly."

Lü Yang cupped his hands, took out the soul of the Yun Clan Ancestor, and returned it to True Person Yinshan, saying solemnly, "After meeting with Senior Brother, I plan to enter seclusion."

"You are truly a talent and should be cultivating in the Saint Sect." True Person Yinshan stroked his beard and smiled, "Now that I think about it, I somewhat regret depleting your fortune back at Skeleton Mountain, causing you to waste thirty years. Otherwise, if you were thirty years younger, you'd have a better chance at Foundation Establishment."

Lü Yang shook his head, "Senior Brother flatters me."

"I never speak empty words." True Person Yinshan shook his head, then waved his hand, and a jade token fell in front of Lü Yang, inscribed with two large characters:

Ascension!

"The Ascension Order I didn't give you back at Skeleton Mountain, you exchanged it for the Bright Dao Jade Slip. The second one couldn't use it, and the third died early on the righteous-demonic battlefield."

"Take it."

Lü Yang was stunned upon hearing this, then quickly waved his hands, "Senior Brother's great kindness, I cannot accept this."

"Enough nonsense." True Person Yinshan looked impatient, "Take it if I tell you to. If you can truly achieve Foundation Establishment, it would be a good karma."

Upon hearing this, Lü Yang had no choice but to accept the Ascension Order, and a sense of anticipation suddenly arose in his heart: his original intention in attempting Foundation Establishment this time was merely to accumulate experience for the next life. But now, with his True Qi at third grade, possessing the Saint's Theft, and if he added this Ascension Order, could he really have a thirty percent chance?

Could there be some conspiracy?

Thinking of this, Lü Yang found it somewhat amusing. There was no helping it; there were too many talents in the Saint Sect, and unsolicited help made him uneasy.

'But even if there is a conspiracy, I'll accept it.'

'Anyway, in this life, even if I die, I plan to die on the path to Foundation Establishment. If I don't succeed, I'll become a martyr. Whether there's a conspiracy or not doesn't matter.'

'If there really is a conspiracy, I'll just be more cautious in the next life.'

Thinking of this, Lü Yang no longer dwelled on it, stood up, respectfully saluted True Person Yinshan, and then turned and left.

Little did he know that after his departure, another figure appeared beside True Person Yinshan.

The newcomer was a middle-aged man with an imposing demeanor, exuding a sharp aura between his brows, as if nothing in the world could daunt him.

True Person Yinshan spoke first, "How is it?"

"...Not feasible."

The man shook his head, "The best age for breaking through to Foundation Establishment is around seventy or eighty. This person is already over a hundred years old; the chances of success are minimal."

"It's a pity that although he cultivated the 『Taiyin Body-Shedding Corpse Liberation True Method』, he didn't complete the final step of transformation to refine the status of 'Corpse Dissolution Immortal'. Otherwise, he could have increased his chances by another ten percent. Without the assistance of a Foundation Establishment True Person, that place can't be breached by just the two of us."

"Let's hope he succeeds."

"If not, we'll have to risk inviting an outsider to help."

True Person Yinshan looked helpless, "Senior Brother Chongguang, you've already achieved complete Foundation Establishment, and with the reincarnation of the 'Overturning Lamp Fire' master, this is an opportunity not to be missed."

"Indeed, at this point, we have no choice but to take a gamble."

True Person Chongguang said solemnly, "If we succeed, it's our fortune; if we fail, it's our fate. Moreover, with the millennium great tribulation approaching, if we don't become True Lords, how can we be the ones to control the game?"

"It's merely a matter of dying sooner or later!"

"At least dying in pursuit of a breakthrough is better than, when the great tribulation arrives, having our minds clouded by calamity, becoming pawns of others, and dying in ignorance."

"You and I have both attempted Foundation Establishment and should understand this truth."

"Senior Brother speaks rightly."

True Person Yinshan nodded, seemingly recalling past events, then sighed, "Qi Refining cannot transcend, and Foundation Establishment is also hard to attain freedom."

"That's just how the world is."

True Person Chongguang's tone was indifferent, "Otherwise, why would there be talk of True Persons and True Lords?"

"Qi Refining cultivators, no matter how brilliant, are merely 'materials', ready to be expended at any time."

"Only by breaking through to Foundation Establishment will one be regarded as a person, and only by achieving Golden Core can one be considered a lord above all, ruling over thousands."

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Chapter 73: Death and Rebirth

[1,465 words]

"Foundation Establishment cultivators lay the foundation of the Great Dao, tempering their physical bodies to refine their mortal essence. When the six senses become empty and still, form is refined into Qi, and the five Qi ascend to the origin. With the three Yang

energies converging at the crown, when the cultivation is complete and form is forgotten, the Immortal Embryo naturally transforms. When Yin is exhausted and Yang is pure, an external body is formed, allowing one to transcend the mortal shell and ascend to immortality, entering sainthood and forever departing from the mundane world.”

Inside the cave dwelling, Lü Yang sat cross-legged on a meditation cushion, silently comprehending.

“The process of Foundation Establishment varies across different cultivation methods, but regardless of the approach, the actual steps are not significantly different.”

That is, using one's own true Qi as the foundation to support the sea of consciousness and refine the form to ascend.

For instance, the 『Nine Transformations Dragon Art』 he cultivated, upon perfection, could refine third-grade true Qi known as 'True Dragon Qi'.

Furthermore, the more advanced Foundation Establishment method, the 『Myriad Chariots Dragon Ascension Scroll』, explicitly described how to use the True Dragon Fiend to complete the refinement and ascension.

This highlighted the importance of the grade of true Qi.

If the grade of true Qi was insufficient, one might be unable to lift the sea of consciousness or might exhaust their strength halfway through the ascension, resulting in a catastrophic fall with no burial place.

The entire process of Foundation Establishment was essentially a path of ascension.

And the endpoint of this ascension path was the 'Foundation Establishment Realm'.

Upon realizing this, Lü Yang couldn't help but exclaim, “Foundation Establishment Realm, Foundation Establishment Realm, it turns out it's not referring to a state but to a place!”

That being said, ascension was merely the first step.

When a cultivator lifted their sea of consciousness and fully ascended into the Foundation Establishment Realm, they had to begin constructing their own Immortal Foundation to ensure they could remain in the realm.

This was another significant challenge.

Ordinary cultivators, even after completing the ascension step, often exhausted their own resources, resulting in a barely stable Immortal Foundation.

The consequence was an unstable Immortal Foundation, unable to withstand the pressure of the Foundation Establishment Realm, leading to a sudden collapse.

Failure in ascension might still leave hope for survival, but the collapse of the Immortal Foundation meant certain death for the cultivator. Luo Wuya likely fell at this hurdle.

It was important to note that when a cultivator ascended to the Foundation Establishment Realm and began constructing the Immortal Foundation, not only was a solid cultivation base required, but countless demonic thoughts would also arise spontaneously. If the Dao heart was not firm and the mind wavered, one would inevitably be influenced by these demonic thoughts. Even with a deep foundation, it would be to no avail.

“Truly, every step is fraught with difficulty.”

After organizing the process of breaking through to Foundation Establishment, Lü Yang committed the contents, secrets, and various key points of the 『Myriad Chariots Dragon Ascension Scroll』 to memory.

Immediately afterward, he took out the Ascension Token and began channeling energy into it.

In the next moment, the Ascension Token transformed into a stream of light and entered his sea of consciousness, illuminating his mind and making his entire body feel ethereal and transcendent.

Closing his eyes, Lü Yang instantly entered a meditative state.

Within his dantian, a strand of true Qi manifested, sprouting wooden limbs, scales, claws, teeth, and whiskers, eventually transforming into a lifelike True Dragon.

Boom!

With a loud roar, this True Dragon departed from the dantian, traveled upward through the Ren and Du meridians, passed through the Crimson Palace, entered the Purple Mansion, and directly reached the depths of the sea of consciousness!

Immediately, Lü Yang felt a great light before him.

The originally vast and seemingly inexhaustible true Qi now poured out like a floodgate opened, transforming into an indescribable force that propelled his sea of consciousness to gradually ascend!

“Fortunately, I have this Ascension Token.”

Lü Yang's mind was clear.

Supporting the sea of consciousness to ascend was no easy task.

Originally, there should have been nine layers of heavenly barriers obstructing the path, each requiring significant expenditure of vital energy to overcome.

However, with the Ascension Token bestowed by True Person Yinshan, all nine heavenly barriers opened completely, making his ascension path smooth and unimpeded.

More importantly, he was not ascending from the very bottom.

“Because I have cultivated the 'Saint Thief', I already possess a certain status. Strictly speaking, I started ascending from mid-air.”

Thus, the ascension journey was shortened by a small segment.

Although it seemed minor, it could very well be the final straw that breaks the camel's back, saving Lü Yang considerable effort.

The Saint Thief and the Ascension Token each resolved a tribulation on Lü Yang's ascension path, while the third-grade 'True Dragon Qi' provided a sufficiently deep foundation, allowing him to ascend into the Foundation Establishment Realm step by step without worrying about depleting his true Qi midway.

In this manner, after an indeterminate amount of time.

Lü Yang felt the brilliant light before him gradually dim, as if he had passed through a region, revealing an endless expanse in his field of vision.

Looking down, Lü Yang actually saw himself.

In addition, he saw Yinshan, the First Saint Demon Sect, the mountains and rivers, the sun and moon, and the myriad beings busy with their lives.

Or rather—the mortal world.

He had seen this scene once before, at Skull Mountain, when True Person Yinshan showed him a battle between Foundation Establishment cultivators. It was the same spectacle.

However, at that time, his true spirit was ignorant, unable to discern the appearance of the Foundation Establishment cultivators, only perceiving their emitted magical light. If given another chance to observe, he should be able to see more clearly.

Indeed, at this moment, he could see a figure sitting cross-legged in the northwest direction, closest to him.

That was True Person Yinshan.

His Immortal Foundation was a black mountain. Although it stretched for thousands of miles, in the boundless Foundation Establishment Realm, it appeared extremely small.

Simultaneously, True Person Yinshan seemed to have noticed him.

In the next moment, a voice gently echoed:

“Focus your mind, do not be distracted.”

The voice, like a clear spring, washed over him, instantly cleansing Lü Yang's emotions. He suddenly realized, “Demonic thoughts have invaded, stirring my distractions!?”

Realizing this, Lü Yang dared not be negligent and immediately focused his attention on the Foundation Establishment Realm.

Now that the Saint Thief, Ascension Token, and third-grade true Qi had all been utilized to their fullest, the rest depended solely on himself.

Lü Yang began to gather his true Qi step by step, initiating the construction of the Immortal Foundation.

However, he quickly encountered a problem.

“Insufficient true Qi.”

That brief moment of distraction had caused a sudden loss of thirty percent of his true Qi, exacerbating the already limited supply, making it difficult to continue.

Helpless, Lü Yang had to reduce the scale of the Immortal Foundation.

The size of the Immortal Foundation often corresponded to the potential, cultivation, and magical power of a Foundation Establishment cultivator.

By reducing its scale, he was sacrificing future prospects for the sake of breaking through.

He continued to cut down until it was half the original size, and only then was the true Qi barely sufficient.

But in the next moment, Lü Yang saw True Person Yinshan suddenly rise and stride toward him, emitting a sinister laugh:

“Not bad, not bad, the Immortal Foundation is established.”

“My efforts to assist you were not in vain. Now, the spiritual treasure in my hand lacks an Immortal Foundation to complete it. Junior Brother Lü, you truly live up to my expectations; you are an excellent talent!”

Before the words had even fallen, True Person Yinshan reached out his hand!

The familiar sensation, the familiar terror—Lü Yang had witnessed True Person Yinshan's actions before.

At this moment, the power displayed was identical to his memories.

Wait, identical?

“Something's not right!”

Lü Yang suddenly awoke.

In his memory, True Person Yinshan dealt with the Yun Clan ancestor. To handle him, there was no need for such a grand display; a mere glance would suffice.

This was an illusion!

In the next moment, Lü Yang's vision blurred. When he looked again, the demonic thoughts had dissipated, and True Person Yinshan remained seated in his original position, merely letting out a regretful sigh:

“It's a pity, Junior Brother.”

Lü Yang responded by lowering his head, only to see that the Immortal Foundation he had painstakingly constructed was now riddled with holes due to the momentary influence of demonic thoughts.

Seeing this, Lü Yang could only smile wryly, “Such suffering.”

Boom!

Before the words had even faded, the sound of the Immortal Foundation shattering echoed throughout the Foundation Establishment Realm, even triggering changes in the external celestial phenomena.

The wind howled mournfully, resembling the weeping of the heavens.

While committing this experience to memory, Lü Yang silently chanted in his heart:

“Book of a Hundred Lifetimes!”

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[1,472 words]

【You failed to break through to the Foundation Establishment Realm and perished, your Dao dissipated.】

【Current remaining pages of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes: 94】

【Starting 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."

Liu Xin's voice echoed from the platform, but Lü Yang remained oblivious, his mind still fixated on the interface of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes.

After a long while, he finally came to his senses:

"I choose cultivation."

In the next moment, his empty body was filled with surging True Qi.

The peak of the tenth level of Qi Refining from his previous life, along with the Heavenly Demon Blood-Transforming Divine Light, the Great Profound Yin Shape Capturing Technique, the Taiwei Pardon Talisman, and numerous other divine abilities, all returned to him.

Lü Yang couldn't help but let out a satisfied sigh.

"Taiwei Talisman, decree of heavenly pardon."

In the next second, Lü Yang activated the Taiwei Pardon Talisman, simultaneously enhancing it with the status of the Saint's Theft, layering an illusory cause and effect over his own karmic line.

In his previous life, he had cultivated diligently for a hundred years without wasting a moment.

With the help of the Bright Dao Jade Slip, his attainments in formations and talismans had reached the seventh grade, essentially the limit for a Qi Refining cultivator.

Among them, talismans were his main focus.

His greatest achievement was successfully recreating the "Innate Primordial True Qi Divine Talisman," which concealed heavenly secrets, retaining thirty percent of its original effect.

"Using it temporarily is sufficient."

"After all, the original was drawn by a Foundation Establishment True Person, blessed with the status of Foundation Establishment. It's unrealistic for me to perfectly recreate it. Achieving thirty percent is already commendable."

Boom!

In the next moment, Lü Yang sensed a disturbance in the karmic web, as if a powerful aura swept through, tracing along the karmic line of True Person Panlong's inheritance towards him.

Lü Yang instantly recognized the owner of this aura—it was none other than the Master of Mending Heaven Peak!

Such a swift reaction!

In previous lifetimes, the Master of Mending Heaven Peak had only found him years later, but now he had located him almost immediately.

Was it because his cultivation was higher now?

"However... times have changed!"

Lü Yang calmed his mind.

Since he had chosen cultivation and inherited the karma of True Person Panlong, it was within his expectations that the Master of Mending Heaven Peak would come after him.

However, this time, there was a significant difference.

He now possessed 'status'!

Foundation Establishment True Persons could easily divine the fate of mortals without status, but once the target had status, the difficulty of divination would skyrocket.

"Hmph! You little brat courting death!"

Through the karmic web, Lü Yang heard the slightly angry voice of the Master of Mending Heaven Peak echoing thunderously.

It was evident that he had detected Lü Yang's attempt to conceal heavenly secrets and had even seen through Lü Yang's background, determining that he was not a Foundation Establishment True Person but a Qi Refining cultivator with status.

In the next moment, Lü Yang felt the Master of Mending Heaven Peak getting serious.

A vast divine consciousness swept over, directly breaking through the illusory cause and effect he had set up, pursuing his origin.

It wouldn't take more than a quarter of an hour to lock onto him.

"So strong, too strong..."

Lü Yang marveled inwardly but remained unflustered.

The Master of Mending Heaven Peak needed a quarter of an hour to lock onto him, but what he needed to do wouldn't even take that long.

In the next moment, Lü Yang took action.

He left his Innate True Qi Incarnation in place, while his true body concealed itself and fled, heading straight to Liu Xin to retrieve his authentic divine talisman.

With his current cultivation, dealing with Liu Xin, who was still in the mid-stage of Qi Refining, was a piece of cake.

Liu Xin didn't notice anything amiss from start to finish.

Moreover, to avoid alerting anyone, after taking the divine talisman, Lü Yang even replaced it with a youthful version he had crafted himself.

"Who is it!?"

Almost immediately after he took the authentic divine talisman, the Master of Mending Heaven Peak completely broke through Lü Yang's blockade and began sweeping through the karmic web.

However, he found nothing.

This experience of being played so thoroughly enraged the Master of Mending Heaven Peak.

No matter how he divined the heavenly secrets, he couldn't find the culprit.

This bizarre change left the Master of Mending Heaven Peak in silence.

After a long while, he spoke again:

"Hong Yun, is that you?"

"Ah?"

Within the Holy Sect, a handsome Daoist with a jade-like demeanor opened his eyes, revealing a hint of helplessness on his face:

"Old Chen, don't slander me."

"Hmph! It must be you!"

The Master of Mending Heaven Peak seemed convinced that Daoist Hong Yun was behind this.

He sneered:

"Panlong entrusted his inheritance to me before his death, agreeing that I would designate the successor. Yet you dared to secretly fish it away through a junior. Do you really think I fear your status and won't take action?"

Daoist Hong Yun narrowed his eyes slightly upon hearing this:

"Panlong's inheritance was fished away?"

"Don't play dumb with me."

The voice of the Master of Mending Heaven Peak continued:

"This matter between you and me is not over. A True Lord reincarnated... is ultimately no longer a True Lord!"

Soon, the fluctuations in the karmic web dissipated.

Clearly, although the Master of Mending Heaven Peak spoke fiercely, he still had reservations and didn't dare to act directly.

However, Daoist Hong Yun still felt somewhat troubled.

After all, among the many Foundation Establishment cultivators in the Holy Sect, the Master of Mending Heaven Peak was outstanding and not easily dealt with.

He had been peacefully cultivating in his cave dwelling, yet now he had inexplicably provoked a formidable opponent.

Naturally, his mood wasn't great, and he also became immensely curious.

"Who is plotting against me?"

Daoist Hong Yun calculated with his fingers but found no results, frowning:

"If it's not a scheme... then it's an unintentional mistake that inadvertently affected me?"

"Interesting!"

"According to the Master of Mending Heaven Peak, a junior took away Panlong's inheritance from him, and he hasn't figured out who it is yet? Which junior is so bold?"

The more Daoist Hong Yun thought about it, the more curious he became, feeling an itch in his heart:

"Unfortunately, this junior seems to possess a treasure that conceals heavenly secrets. Ordinary methods can't calculate his identity... But using the 'Overturning Lamp Flame' for a junior is a bit excessive and not worth it... Forget it, more important matters await."

With this in mind, Daoist Hong Yun shifted his focus.

Almost simultaneously, a disciple within the Saint Sect suddenly raised his head.

His previously muddled thoughts became clear, and his demeanor became imposing.

His name was Xiao Shiye.

"So terrifying..."

Within the Pleasure Hall, Lü Yang had already been lured into the cave dwelling by Yu Suzhen, just like in previous lifetimes.

Liu Xin was already waiting at the door.

Originally, the next step was to surpass Yu Suzhen to death.

However, this time, Lü Yang changed his mind.

"In this lifetime, I want to cultivate the 'Taiyin Shedding Form Corpse Dissolution True Method,' which requires me to 'die once.' Since that's the case, I might as well die here."

This time, Lü Yang planned to be surpassed to death by Yu Suzhen!

Moreover, he intended to use Yu Suzhen's hand to test a thought in his mind.

The correctness of this idea would determine his goal for this lifetime.

That was the art of stealing heavenly secrets!

This Foundation Establishment secret technique, traded to him by Zhao Xuhe, allowed him to plant his own aura through dual cultivation with the opposite sex, making others serve as his stepping stones.

Lü Yang's idea was simple: could this technique be stacked?

Because this secret technique was limited to the opposite sex, if he used it himself, it could only be applied to females, such as Fairy Feixia and Fairy Qinghe.

However, whether it was Fairy Feixia or Fairy Qinghe, their talents and strengths were limited and couldn't meet his needs.

The only one who met the requirements, Yun Miaozen, was far away in the Sword Pavilion.

In contrast, it was different with males.

Liu Xin, Zhao Xuhe, Xiao Shiye—each was more significant than the last.

They were almost all Foundation Establishment seeds, blessed with great fortune, and right beside him.

Thus, Lü Yang devised a plan:

If the art of stealing heavenly secrets could be stacked, then he would first use it on Yu Suzhen, turning her into a cauldron.

Then, he would have her learn the art of stealing heavenly secrets and engage in dual cultivation with Liu Xin, Zhao Xuhe, Xiao Shiye, and other prodigies.

Wouldn't that indirectly apply the secret technique to Xiao Shiye and the others?

Back then, Daoist Hong Yun had nearly scared him to death.

This lifetime was the perfect opportunity for revenge.

He would create a destiny-defying woman, Yu Suzhen, who surpassed even the destiny-defying man Xiao Shiye!

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[1,403 words]

“Sss!”

Accompanied by a violent spasm, Yu Suzhen let out a sigh and then stood up from the body of the young man she had drained, who had already lost all signs of life.

“Hehe... Finally succeeded!”

Feeling the true qi flowing within her, Yu Suzhen nearly burst into tears; after enduring countless hardships in the Pleasure Hall, she had finally broken through to the first layer of Qi Refining today.

After a brief moment of emotional loss of control, Yu Suzhen composed her expression again, her brows and eyes relaxing; her originally charming face suddenly became cold, and her beautiful eyes revealed determination. It was said that youth fades easily, and beauty ages quickly, but she did not want to see herself grow old one day.

“I want to cultivate immortality, I want to live forever!”

At this moment, Yu Suzhen's desire for cultivation was stronger than ever; she wanted to climb to the top step by step in this Primordial Saint Sect!

What she did not notice was that there was a second person in the cave dwelling.

Right beside the young man she had just drained, a phantom figure, invisible to the naked eye, stood with hands behind his back, watching her with great interest.

“Stealing Heaven's Secrets, the first step is considered done.”

“Senior Sister Yu is quite good; she already had the aspiration to cultivate immortality in her heart, and I didn't even need to deliberately stir it; everything came from her own heart.”

This was the best outcome.

After all, Lü Yang had not yet reached Foundation Establishment; he was far from being as naturally integrated as a Foundation Establishment True Person. Deliberately influencing others' thoughts would easily reveal flaws.

Then, Lü Yang examined himself again; now that his physical body was dead, he had entered the 'death then transformation' state of the 『Taiyin Body-Shedding Corpse Liberation True Method』, and his soul had been preserved using the 『Yin Spirit Ghost Immortal Method』 deduced from his previous life, transforming into a Yin Spirit to maintain his vitality.

“Death then transformation, so this is what it means...”

Lü Yang pondered in his heart.

At this moment, his physical body had become like a pill furnace, and the three superior divine abilities he had mastered in life had become the medicinal ingredients inside the furnace.

The body as the furnace, divine abilities as the medicine, and fortune as the craftsman.

The result was to refine the three superior divine abilities into a position of 【Corpse Dissolution Immortal】; only then would the 『Taiyin Body-Shedding Corpse Liberation True Method』 be considered complete.

“This process is probably very long.”

“And it's not something that can be achieved just by spending time; the body as the furnace, but the fire used for alchemy is my merit and fate as the fuel.”

Burning merit and fate, transforming into alchemical fire and investing it into the body; this act was essentially seeking life through death. If, until the fuel was exhausted, the position of 【Corpse Dissolution Immortal】 had not been refined, then it would be true death, and even because of the exhaustion of fate and merit, one would not even be able to be reborn as a human in the next life, only able to enter the path of animals.

“No wonder there's no mention of anyone else in the sect practicing this great divine ability.”

The rewards and the costs were completely disproportionate.

It was conceivable what kind of determination the cultivator who originally created this great divine ability had; it was simply a do-or-die approach, leaving no retreat for oneself.

This was cultivation.

The great path was solitary, with no retreat, risking everything just to gamble on a chance; if one won, so be it, but if one lost, what kind of despair would that be?

Thinking of this, Lü Yang couldn't help but feel emotional, tears streaming down his face.

It wasn't until he saw the panel of the Book of a Hundred Lifetimes beside him that he came back to his senses and slapped his forehead: "Almost forgot, I can restart, so it's fine."

"The soul, without the protection of the body, is hard to maintain; emotions got the better of me."

Lü Yang quickly composed his thoughts and turned to look at Yu Suzhen.

At this time, although Yu Suzhen looked no different on the surface, internally, she was no longer herself; she had already been tainted by Lü Yang's influence.

The technique of Stealing Heaven's Secrets had directly transformed her into a human-shaped cauldron.

From now on, no matter how far Yu Suzhen advanced in her cultivation, Lü Yang could, with just a thought, instantly drain her cultivation and fate, then feed it back to himself.

"But there's no rush."

"Next, I need to find a way to reasonably pass on the technique of Stealing Heaven's Secrets to her, then let her surpass others, fatten her up, and then slaughter."

Thinking of this, Lü Yang shifted his gaze to Liu Xin, who was waiting outside the cave dwelling.

Primordial Saint Sect, Pleasure Hall.

Yu Suzhen followed behind Liu Xin, her steps graceful, her figure enchanting, exuding utmost charm, yet her face carried a coldness that kept others at a distance.

This strong contrast gathered in one person, coupled with Yu Suzhen's already exquisite appearance, immediately attracted the attention of many disciples; even Liu Xin couldn't help but glance at her, a trace of evil fire flashing in his eyes, but he quickly suppressed it.

Business was important.

"Junior Sister Yu, this is the cultivation method 『Innate Dao Book』 for our sect's official disciples; take it back and study it well, don't neglect your cultivation."

“Thank you, Senior Brother.”

Yu Suzhen bowed, and from Liu Xin's perspective, he could just see a large expanse of snow-white, with a faint fragrance wafting to his nose.

Liu Xin swallowed, suddenly reaching out his hand; in an instant, the beauty was in his arms, and that cold face showed just the right amount of panic, her voice crisp and pleasant: “Ah~! Senior Brother, what are you doing? Quickly, let go of me; I already... already don't intend to dual cultivate with anyone.”

As she spoke, Yu Suzhen began to push Liu Xin.

However, those fair, jade-like small hands pressed against Liu Xin's chest; not only did they not exert any force, but they were so soft that it felt like she was giving him a massage.

Seeing this, Liu Xin's evil fire grew stronger, and he couldn't help but laugh wickedly:

“Junior Sister misunderstood; you and I are not dual cultivating, just discussing the Dao.”

Thinking of this, Liu Xin ignored Yu Suzhen's 'resistance', directly picked her up, and walked into the cave dwelling, intending to enjoy himself before getting down to business.

One day later.

The laziness just ended completely numbed Liu Xin's mind, making him lower all his defenses.

When he came back to his senses, he found his body lying weakly on the bed, unable to use even a bit of true qi!

Immediately after, he saw Yu Suzhen leisurely getting up.

Only then did Liu Xin notice that his spear had turned black, even emitting a rotten smell; his expression instantly changed dramatically, looking at Yu Suzhen with shock and anger:

“You poisoned me!?”

“What else?” Yu Suzhen's face was expressionless, as if the previous seduction was all fake: “You wanted to harm me; do you think I wouldn't fight back?”

“Impossible, you bitch! How did you find out!?”

Liu Xin gritted his teeth, trying desperately to circulate his true qi to suppress the poison, but to no avail; he could only watch helplessly as his body grew weaker.

Seeing this, Yu Suzhen sneered: “At first, I didn't know; I just found it suspicious. After all, I was promoted from the Pleasure Hall, and logically, I should have been taught a dual cultivation method, but you gave me a strange 『Innate Dao Book』, clearly with ill intentions.”

Liu Xin's face was full of disbelief: “Just based on that, you're going to kill me?”

“Why not?” Yu Suzhen smiled, showing her teeth: “A woman's intuition is very keen, and even if I was wrong, I wouldn't have lost anything.”

Upon hearing this, Liu Xin was furious: “You...”

“Don't worry, I won't kill you so quickly.” Yu Suzhen continued: “You're at the mid-stage of Qi Refining; you must know many powerful divine abilities and cultivation methods.”

“These are valuable resources and shouldn't be wasted.”

“I'll learn the real cultivation methods first, then drain you dry; that way, your life's efforts won't go to waste.”

“...Pfft!”

Before she finished speaking, Liu Xin, already overwhelmed with anger, couldn't bear it any longer; he spat out a mouthful of blood on the spot, then his vision went black, and he fainted.

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[1,348 words]

“As expected, the more beautiful a woman is, the more deceitful she becomes.”

Witnessing Liu Xin's tragic fate in this lifetime—poisoned by Yu Suzhen and ultimately drained dry through dual cultivation techniques—Lü Yang felt a surge of satisfaction in his heart:

‘That's what you get for harming me in my second lifetime.’

Subsequently, Lü Yang turned his gaze towards Yu Suzhen.

He did not reveal himself but instead cast an illusion, swapping out the Innate True Qi Myriad Spirits Banner.

As for the 『Innate Dao Book』, Lü Yang still left a copy for Yu Suzhen, but he removed the content related to the Myriad Spirits Banner and inserted the technique of Stealing Heaven's Secrets.

As he had anticipated, when Yu Suzhen saw this dual cultivation secret technique, she was almost immediately captivated.

“Stealing Heaven's Secrets allows one to seize another's cultivation and fate through dual cultivation.”

Yu Suzhen's eyes burned with intensity as she perused the contents of Stealing Heaven's Secrets, feeling as if this technique was tailor-made for her!

With this realization, Yu Suzhen's ambition swelled instantly.

Previously, she merely aspired to immortality through cultivation but lacked a clear path to achieve it.

Now, she had found her method.

After all, for Yu Suzhen, seducing men was far easier than cultivating.

Given her aptitude, she had only reached the first level of Qi Refining after spending so much time in the Pleasure Hall.

Even if she dedicated her entire life, she might only attain the third level of Qi Refining.

However, if she could master the Stealing Heaven's Secrets technique, with her beauty, she could cast a wide net, reel in numerous men, and specifically target those with exceptional talent.

By establishing a vast pond of cultivators, her progress would undoubtedly be rapid!

She might even reach the Foundation Establishment Realm!

The more Yu Suzhen contemplated, the more fervent her heart became.

She then used Corpse Dissolving Water to eliminate Liu Xin and the young disciple's corpses, meticulously cleaning the scene.

Three months later, within the cave dwelling.

“You wretched woman! You actually poisoned me?”

Observing the man, whose body was now battered and on the verge of collapse, Yu Suzhen showed no interest in responding, merely continuing her aggressive advance.

For a moment, the cave dwelling echoed with the man's anguished cries.

Thus, the man's body visibly withered at an alarming rate, while Yu Suzhen's complexion grew increasingly radiant.

Boom!

With a soft sound, Yu Suzhen's aura suddenly surged, breaking through the bottleneck of the third level of Qi Refining and reaching the mid-stage.

At this moment, nourished by true Qi, Yu Suzhen even appeared somewhat holy.

However, her actions did not cease, adding a touch of depravity to her sanctity, creating a powerful visual impact.

Meanwhile, Lü Yang remained hidden nearby, witnessing the entire process.

In just three months, he had personally observed Yu Suzhen seducing various disciples, advancing from the first to the third level of Qi Refining, and eventually surpassing them all.

By seducing men, she could become stronger!

Yu Suzhen also paid great attention to her reputation, engaging only in clandestine affairs, maintaining a facade of aloofness and pride, showing no interest in any man publicly.

The more aloof and proud Yu Suzhen appeared, the more people were drawn to her.

Thus, in just three months, Yu Suzhen had lured numerous lust-driven fools and used the Stealing Heaven's Secrets technique to drain them completely.

"Looking at it this way, if it weren't for my syphilis-induced death in the first lifetime, she would have killed Liu Xin. Even without the Stealing Heaven's Secrets technique, she could have obtained the Innate Dao Book and the Myriad Spirits Banner. Perhaps she could have soared just the same. The fate and karma of people are indeed mysterious."

"In any case, the bait has been cast."

Undoubtedly, Yu Suzhen possessed potential.

Ruthless, venomous, and shameless, she was willing to do anything beneficial for herself, practically a natural-born disciple of the Primordial Saint Sect.

She merely lacked an opportunity.

Now, Lü Yang had given her this chance, allowing her to grow rapidly.

More importantly, at this rate, she would encounter Xiao Shiye.

Lü Yang wanted to see if she had the opportunity to climb into Xiao Shiye's bed.

If she could indeed engage in dual cultivation with Xiao Shiye, then he would profit immensely, because Xiao Shiye would eventually catch the colorful merit fish in the Merit Pool!

If he could use Yu Suzhen to transform Xiao Shiye into a cauldron for the Stealing Heaven's Secrets technique, then when Xiao Shiye caught and refined the colorful merit fish, he could suddenly act, using Yu Suzhen as an intermediary, to steal all the cultivation and fate of the colorful merit fish!

Daoist Hong Yun used Xiao Shiye as bait to catch the merit fish.

He, on the other hand, used Yu Suzhen as bait to steal the donkey!

This plan was tantamount to snatching food from a tiger's mouth.

If it truly succeeded, it would undoubtedly infuriate Daoist Hong Yun, who would stop at nothing to investigate.

“Therefore, I must stay far away.”

Carrying the Myriad Spirits Banner, Lü Yang observed Yu Suzhen for a few more days.

After confirming everything was in order, he quietly left the Primordial Saint Sect, heading swiftly towards the mundane world.

Staying in the Primordial Saint Sect offered no benefits.

After all, he was officially declared dead.

Remaining in the sect would only force him to hide in the shadows, silently awaiting the 'death and subsequent transformation' and Yu Suzhen's cultivation.

That would be a waste of time.

“Yu Suzhen is the most crucial part of my plan in this lifetime, but not the only one.

Even if I master the Stealing Heaven's Secrets and the 『Taiyin Shedding Form Corpse Dissolution True Method』, along with the Saint's Theft and third-grade true Qi, I only

have a forty percent chance of breaking through to the Foundation Establishment Realm.

I must find other ways.”

“Moreover, staying far away has its advantages.”

After all, if Yu Suzhen's plan succeeded and a Foundation Establishment True Person became enraged, searching for karma, hiding in the Primordial Saint Sect would be tantamount to seeking death.

However, if he were far away, even if the Foundation Establishment True Person became furious, it would take time to find him.

This time gap would be sufficient for him to attempt breaking through to the Foundation Establishment Realm.

Lü Yang would not place his hopes on 'possibly not being discovered.'

After all, in his previous life, the Yun Clan patriarch had used a device to calculate and locate him.

He would only consider the worst-case scenario.

As for Yu Suzhen, Lü Yang only needed to occasionally deduce karma, observe her, and ensure her actions remained under his control.

After leaving the Primordial Saint Sect, Lü Yang felt as if the sky was vast and the sea boundless.

“My corpse is hidden within the Myriad Spirits Banner.

This mysterious treasure contains a world within and is the only one capable of housing my transforming corpse, allowing me to carry it with me.”

Besides that, there was another opportunity within the Myriad Spirits Banner that

Besides that, there was another opportunity within the Myriad Spirits Banner that deeply intrigued him.

Lü Yang formed a hand seal and unfurled the banner—instantly, black smoke surged forth.

A handsome youth in black robes descended from the banner.

He was a true disciple of the Primordial Saint Sect—Chen Xin'an.

In his past life, Lü Yang had not kept Chen Xin'an due to his low cultivation and an experiment with the 『Innate Primordial Qi Divine Talisman』 to obscure destiny.

But things were different now.

Having mastered the Saint's Theft technique and gained an official identity, Lü Yang was brimming with confidence.

"Where is this place?"

Just emerging from the Myriad Spirits Banner, Chen Xin'an appeared disoriented.

He instinctively looked around for Liu Xin, then frowned.

"Liu Xin is dead?"

After thinking for a moment, Chen Xin'an's expression relaxed, and he turned to face Lü Yang.

"Which sect do you belong to? Did you kill Liu Xin?"

"Yes," Lü Yang nodded calmly.

Unlike in his previous life, Chen Xin'an did not recognize him as a disciple of the Primordial Saint Sect at a glance.

Lü Yang understood why.

In this life, he had never lit the Life Lamp in the sect.

He had also used illusions to deceive others.

On top of that, his main cultivation technique was now the 『Nine Transformations Dragon Art』, not a secret method of the Primordial Saint Sect.

These reasons combined led to Chen Xin'an's misjudgment.

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[1,419 words]

"To be honest, I am Chen Xin'an, a disciple of the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion."

On the Myriad Spirits Banner, Chen Xin'an appeared sincere and righteous as he said, "I was harmed by the evil cultivator Liu Xin during my lifetime. Please forgive the embarrassment."

"Oh?" Lü Yang narrowed his eyes upon hearing this.

Young man, you're not being honest!

Compared to other banner spirits, Chen Xin'an's state was clearly problematic; he seemed to retain some autonomy and could think normally.

He could even lie!

Looking at Chen Xin'an, Lü Yang grinned, "Fellow Daoist, please remain calm. I will destroy this harmful evil treasure so that you all can return to reincarnation."

"Wait, wait!"

Before Lü Yang could finish speaking, Chen Xin'an hurriedly interrupted.

Seeing Lü Yang's puzzled look, he rolled his eyes and sighed, "You may not know, Fellow Daoist, but this treasure refines our true spirits. If you destroy it, not only will we be unable to reincarnate, but we'll also perish with it."

—This was a lie.

In his previous life, Lü Yang had studied the Myriad Spirits Banner for a hundred years, nearly mastering it. His understanding even surpassed Liu Xin's, and he was well aware of its intricacies.

So he immediately recognized that Chen Xin'an was lying.

But why would he lie?

Lü Yang pondered.

Normally, the banner spirits on the Myriad Spirits Banner were no different from the dead; being able to reincarnate was already a blessing. Who could escape this fate?

Could it be that Chen Xin'an had another method to return to life?

"Interesting."

Lü Yang smiled and openly asked, "Fellow Daoist, are you deceiving me because you have a secret? Would you be willing to share it?"

Upon hearing this, Chen Xin'an was momentarily stunned.

In a flash, he thought of a response. However, before he could speak, he suddenly felt darkness enveloping him, and his consciousness became hazy.

"Trying to search my soul?"

Initially, Chen Xin'an remained calm, quickly employing a divine ability to protect his mind and even preparing to fabricate a memory to deceive Lü Yang.

But the next moment, his expression froze.

Because he saw a towering golden figure forcefully entering his sea of consciousness, instantly suppressing all his divine abilities!

"A divine status!?"

How could this be!

As a true disciple of the Saint Sect, Chen Xin'an naturally recognized it.

Lü Yang directly used the divine status stolen from a saint to suppress him, leaving no room for resistance.

"Tell me, what are you planning?"

Lü Yang chuckled, easily controlling Chen Xin'an's sea of consciousness, and quickly extracted the information he wanted from his memories.

The next moment, Chen Xin'an's lips moved involuntarily as he spoke, "I cultivated a great divine ability called 'Thought-Severing Heaven-Seeing Silkworm Secret,' which allows me to split my consciousness and perform possession. I planned to deceive you and then find a way to possess you, so I could be reborn."

"Interesting."

Looking at the sweat-drenched Chen Xin'an, Lü Yang continued to ask with a smile, "It's extremely difficult for a banner spirit to possess someone. How did you plan to possess me?"

"Simple. I would teach you the 'Thought-Severing Heaven-Seeing Silkworm Secret.'"

"This is a great divine ability; you wouldn't be able to resist."

"However, this divine ability is very special. Practitioners need to sever nine strands of consciousness from their own mind and then use a secret method to unify them."

"But I wouldn't teach you the secret method to unify the consciousness strands."

"Therefore, once you practice it, you'll inevitably split into nine different consciousnesses, each wanting to be the master. The result would be internal conflict, and I would benefit from it."

After hearing Chen Xin'an's description, Lü Yang was somewhat tempted.

Suddenly, he was moved and asked again, "Are you really Chen Xin'an?"

Upon hearing this, Chen Xin'an immediately fell silent, showing a struggling expression. However, he ultimately couldn't resist Lü Yang's divine status suppression.

"Strictly speaking, no."

"The real 'Chen Xin'an' is already dead. I am just one of the consciousness strands he severed in the past. But since he's dead, I am Chen Xin'an!"

After listening, Lü Yang clicked his tongue in amazement, intrigued by the great divine ability 'Thought-Severing Heaven-Seeing Silkworm Secret.'

According to Chen Xin'an's description, once this divine ability was mastered, it could not only elevate one's status but also allow the early formation of 'divine consciousness,' which only Foundation Establishment cultivators possess!

This point was particularly crucial.

Because breaking through to Foundation Establishment essentially involves transforming spiritual consciousness into divine consciousness. If one could achieve this transformation in advance, it would greatly aid in building the immortal foundation.

"Senior Brother Chen, your death was worthwhile."

"Seeking you out in this life was indeed the right choice!"

It must be said, divine status is a powerful tool; otherwise, it would have been nearly impossible for Lü Yang to extract so much information from Chen Xin'an.

Now, with the aid of divine status, Chen Xin'an revealed everything, including the original content of the 'Thought-Severing Heaven-Seeing Silkworm Secret.'

After completing all this, Lü Yang withdrew his divine ability and looked at the now autonomous and sorrowful Chen Xin'an.

"You are a disciple of the Saint Sect, right?"

After a long silence, Chen Xin'an finally spoke, his tone firm, "Only a disciple of the Saint Sect could do such a thing."

Thinking of this, Chen Xin'an glanced at Lü Yang again, his tone complex, "You killed Liu Xin but didn't stay in the Sky-reaching Sea of Clouds. Are you planning to betray the sect?"

Upon hearing this, Lü Yang raised his eyebrows slightly, "Also?"

Chen Xin'an tilted his head, puzzled, "What's so strange about that? Given the nature of the Saint Sect, it's normal for disciples to betray the sect."

"However, you might be the strongest one so far."

"Truly unbelievable."

At this point, Chen Xin'an found it hard to understand, "Disciples who are granted great divine abilities are usually implanted with restrictions to prevent future betrayal."

"I was exempted because my father is the master of Mending Heaven Peak. But what about you?"

Lü Yang didn't answer.

What Chen Xin'an said wasn't wrong.

In his previous life, Lü Yang obtained the inheritance of a great divine ability by selling himself to the Three Rivers Society, but that was in his past life.

What does that have to do with me in this life?

However, such matters couldn't be disclosed, so Lü Yang proactively changed the topic, "Fellow Daoist, do you have any knowledge about the world?"

Chen Xin'an was taken aback, "The world?"

Lü Yang nodded, "To be honest, this is my first time traveling, and I don't know where to go. So I wanted to ask you."

"Don't go south."

After a moment of silence, Chen Xin'an honestly said, "North of the Great Long River is the territory of our Saint Sect. All sects, big and small, are led by our Saint Sect. The south is dominated by the Jade Pivot Sword Pavilion, which leads the righteous path. Besides that, the northern frontier and southern barbarians are remote and desolate places with no significant powers."

"If I had to mention, Jiangdong, Jiangxi, and overseas are still acceptable."

"Oh?" Lü Yang looked curious, "Why do you say that?"

"Because the paths are different." Chen Xin'an explained, "Whether it's the Saint Sect or the Sword Pavilion, both in the south and north, they all practice the 'Path of Refining Form and Ascension.'"

"However, Jiangdong, Jiangxi, and overseas are different."

"Jiangdong practices the 'Path of Acting on Behalf of Heaven,' Jiangxi practices the 'Path of Deep Joy and Extinction,' and overseas is a mix of various paths. Although they don't match our orthodox practices, they have their own ingenuity."

As a true disciple and the blood relative of the Mending Heaven Peak master, Chen Xin'an had broader knowledge than Lü Yang.

At this moment, he elaborated, revealing a glimpse of the world to Lü Yang.

Especially his descriptions of Jiangdong, Jiangxi, and even overseas, which were particularly captivating.

However, he soon collected his thoughts and regained composure.

"I know where I should go."

The immediate priority was to find secret methods to increase the chances of Foundation Establishment.

The 'Thought-Severing Heaven-Seeing Silkworm Secret' was an unexpected surprise but shouldn't disrupt his plans.

Places like Jiangdong, Jiangxi, and overseas could wait.

He planned to visit Skeleton Mountain again.

"The Witch Ghost Secret Realm... a place where the Ancient Witch Ghost Path left its inheritance. For such a major sect, the inheritance couldn't possibly stop at the Qi Refining stage, right?"

In his previous life, he hadn't entered the secret realm before it was destroyed.

In this life, he intended to enter it early to see if there were any opportunities related to Foundation Establishment.

Moreover, the Witch Ghost Secret Realm was extremely hidden, making it an ideal place to hide. If something happened with Yu Suzhen, hiding in the secret realm would offer greater security.

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[1,412 words]

One month later, at Skeleton Mountain.

Lü Yang rode his escape light, proceeding unimpeded along the way; after all, with his current strength, he no longer regarded ordinary Qi Refining Great Perfection cultivators as threats.

Even though he now possessed only a Yin Spirit forged from a single soul, relying on his higher status, dealing with Qi Refining Great Perfection cultivators was merely a matter of a wave of his sleeve, unless the opponent, like Yun Miaozen in the past, also possessed great divine powers or carried rare treasures, only then could they contend with Lü Yang.

Of course, this only applied to bullying the weak.

After losing his physical body, Lü Yang's condition was actually at its lowest point; if he encountered a cultivator of the same status, he could only flee in panic.

Soon, Lü Yang halted his escape light.

In the distance, a black mountain range emitting a soaring Yin aura came into view.

"Very good, it seems that True Person Yinshan has not arrived yet."

Lü Yang sensed the karmic threads, confirming that the Witch Ghost Secret Realm had not yet emerged, and that the people from the Divine Martial Sect had not yet arrived; only then did he transform into a gentle breeze and entered the mountain.

In his previous life, when the Witch Ghost Secret Realm emerged, Lü Yang had noted its location, so finding it in this life was easy; before long, Lü Yang arrived at the entrance of a cave, strolled inside, initially narrow, then after several dozen steps, it suddenly opened up, revealing a vast underground lake.

"This is the place."

Lü Yang looked at the lake, feeling a strong fluctuation of the void, but did not enter directly; instead, he lingered at the entrance of the secret realm.

Even though times had changed, his Dao heart remained firm.

Patience leads to success; people who are patient find peace. No rush, let's play with it first.

Lü Yang took out the Myriad Spirits Banner, gently shook it, and Chen Xin'an's figure immediately appeared, then was thrown by Lü Yang into the entrance of the Witch Ghost Secret Realm.

He had not forgotten that there was still a Golden Core sword aura inside the secret realm.

In his previous life, he had not practiced the Saint Sect's cultivation methods, so he was not slain by the sword aura; but in this life, he had cultivated the Saint Sect's body refinement method, the Saint's Theft.

Under such circumstances, who knew whether that sword aura would spare him?

Just to be safe, better to let Senior Brother Chen scout the path first.

Chen Xin'an: "..."

Boom!

The next second, ripples appeared on the underground lake before him; through Chen Xin'an's perspective, Lü Yang quickly saw the scene within.

What entered his eyes was a brilliant sword aura.

However, the sword aura did not strike down but instead locked onto Chen Xin'an from afar, seemingly marking something, and then actually allowed him to enter the secret realm.

"So straightforward?"

Lü Yang looked surprised, then formed a hand seal, intending to retrieve Chen Xin'an.

Clang clang—!

Almost simultaneously, the previously dormant sword aura suddenly trembled; Chen Xin'an, who was about to leave the secret realm, instantly turned into a mass of white Qi and dissipated.

Seeing this, Lü Yang raised his eyebrows, first checking the true spirit of Chen Xin'an within the Myriad Spirits Banner to ensure he could be summoned again after some time, then heaved a sigh of relief, and subsequently threw another banner spirit into the secret realm, conducting several experiments, finally arriving at the conclusion:

"Entry allowed, exit forbidden, huh..."

Lü Yang mused: "I see, the purpose of this sword aura is to annihilate the Witch Ghost Path's lineage, so it won't allow anyone to leave the secret realm."

"As for why entry is allowed... damn, this is a trap!"

Thinking of this, Lü Yang's eye twitched: "This is clearly using the secret realm as bait, luring demonic cultivators in to seek treasures, and then killing them all together!"

The righteous path is too sinister!

Although Lü Yang was unsure whether this guess was correct, if it were him, he would certainly do the same; judging others by oneself, he felt the truth was not far off.

With this in mind, Lü Yang became even more cautious.

So he patiently waited for several more months, until his Innate Qi incarnation once again achieved Martial Dao Heaven Man, only then did he send it into the secret realm.

This time, he no longer thought of leaving but delved deeper into the secret realm.

Soon, buildings appeared in Lü Yang's sight, most of which had turned into white bones, with only broken magical tools scattered all over.

Lü Yang looked around; the entire Witch Ghost Secret Realm was different from the outside world, with no spiritual energy remaining, only an extremely dense Earth Fiend Yin Qi; ordinary cultivators, without corresponding techniques, couldn't even breathe and cultivate here, and over time, even their physical bodies would be eroded by the Yin Qi.

"In such a place, would there be cultivators?"

Lü Yang pondered in his heart, but his actions didn't stop, looking around with interest; he had already realized that he seemed to be in a city.

At this moment, a suppressed shout suddenly came from not far away:

"Bastard... what are you doing?"

Lü Yang turned his head, only to see a human face peeking out from the corner of the ruins, whispering angrily: "Do you not want to live? It's already nighttime!"

Immediately, that face showed hesitation and struggle, then gritted his teeth, crawled out from the ruins, revealing a boy of about fourteen or fifteen years old, who quickly ran to Lü Yang's side, grabbed his hand, and roughly tried to pull him away.

Lü Yang raised his eyebrows at the sight but did not resist.

However, the next second, the boy's expression suddenly froze, turning his head, his fairly handsome face immediately showed a look of despair:

"I shouldn't have saved you... we're doomed... all doomed..."

Tap, tap tap.

Almost simultaneously, footsteps echoed in the empty ruins; Lü Yang looked in the direction of the sound and saw an old man in yellow clothes with lifeless eyes.

The old man's eyes were grayish-white, pupils unfocused, completely lacking focus, yet they stared directly at Lü Yang and the mysterious boy; as his gaze fell, a visible darkness slowly approached the two, accompanied by a strong smell of corpse rot.

"Yellow clothes! How can it be yellow clothes!?"

The boy followed Lü Yang's gaze and also noticed the old man's presence; however, upon seeing the color of the old man's clothing, his face immediately turned pale.

Behind the boy, Lü Yang watched all this with interest.

In fact, he hadn't understood what the boy had just said, but that didn't stop him from being interested in the suddenly appearing yellow-clothed old man.

The next second, Lü Yang placed his hand on the boy's head.

He had no interest in wasting time talking to people and slowly gathering information; as a disciple of the Saint Sect, directly searching the soul was more to his liking.

"You!?"

The boy never expected Lü Yang to 'repay kindness with ingratitude,' screamed on the spot, and then Lü Yang's spiritual sense directly pierced into his mind.

Before long, a large amount of information flooded into Lü Yang's mind.

Language, culture, worldview, and even all the information about this "Witch Ghost Secret Realm" were thoroughly extracted by Lü Yang.

Hundred ghosts roam at night, the human world is like a prison!

Within the secret realm, sword aura hangs overhead, so no one can cultivate; all are mortals, only by devouring ghosts to serve Yama can one seek a sliver of life.

White-clothed ghosts, yellow-clothed ghosts, black-clothed ghosts, red-clothed ghosts.

Listening to the Nether Sect, ghost messengers.

A vast amount of information was digested by Lü Yang one by one, making him click his tongue in wonder and also raising doubts: "The secret realm in my previous life wasn't like this."

In his previous life, the Witch Ghost Secret Realm was almost empty; even when True Person Yinshan destroyed it, he hadn't seen a single living being; however, in this life, the secret realm clearly still had vitality, and the former Witch Ghost Path cultivators not only survived but also found an alternative cultivation path.

"Could it be because of that sword aura?"

Recalling the Golden Core sword aura entrenched in the secret realm, Lü Yang felt a bone-chilling cold: "Could it be that it killed everyone in the future?"

But on second thought, Lü Yang felt something was wrong.

After all, the Golden Core sword aura had been dormant in the secret realm for so many years; what could have happened to make it slaughter the entire secret realm in the future?

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Chapter 79: Lord of the Netherworld's Seizing of the Nether Position

[1,819 words]

Time often waits for no one.

Just as Lü Yang was deep in thought, the darkness surrounding the yellow-robed old man not far away had already spread to his side, carrying a strong corrosive force.

Lü Yang raised his head and looked at the other party with great interest.

"This is a witch ghost?"

The Witch Ghost Path was a major sect of the ancient demonic path.

At that time, every disciple of the Witch Ghost Path would refine a natal witch ghost as the foundation for their future cultivation.

However, with the emergence of the Golden Core Sword Qi, the Witch Ghost Path was exterminated.

These witch ghosts, without the control of cultivators, began to wander within the secret realm.

Depending on the strength of their former cultivators, the witch ghosts were classified into white-robed, yellow-robed, black-robed, and the most ferocious red-robed ghosts.

As for the living people within the secret realm, their origins were also very complex.

Their ancestors were either servants raised by the Witch Ghost Path in the past or disciples who decisively abolished their cultivation when the Witch Ghost Path suffered a calamity.

This was because within the secret realm, cultivation was forbidden.

Since the Golden Core Sword Qi aimed to destroy the inheritance of the Witch Ghost Path, anyone who set foot on the path of cultivation, even at the first level of Qi Refining, would be slain by the sword qi.

This was why Lü Yang, being an outsider and a target of the sword qi's "nesting," was not killed the moment he entered the secret realm. However, it was not much different, as long as the sword qi did not dissipate, his incarnation could not leave the secret realm, which was no different from being dead.

The outcome of the Witch Ghost Path was even more ironic.

Because only mortals survived and could not cultivate, they instead became the prey of the out-of-control witch ghosts, being constantly captured and devoured.

Those who controlled ghosts were ultimately devoured by ghosts.

"That being said, people always find a way out in adversity."

Although they could not set foot on cultivation, over a thousand years, generations of mortals in the secret realm risked their lives and finally found a way to resist the witch ghosts.

That was "controlling ghosts to serve Yama."

In simple terms, it was to use a secret method to offer oneself to the witch ghost, and while being devoured by the witch ghost, one could also borrow the power of the witch ghost.

"The cultivator who created this system called himself 'Ancestor Nether Wishper,' and the Nether Wishper Sect he established has now become the only sect within the secret realm, deeply rooted, and even has a systematic method of controlling ghosts, with different titles based on the grade of the ghost controlled."

Controlling a white-robed ghost was called a "ghost messenger."

Controlling a yellow-robed ghost was called a "Rakshasa."

Controlling a black-robed ghost was called a "Ghost Reaper."

As for the most ferocious red-robed ghost, whoever could control it would immediately become an elder of the Nether Wishper Sect and was referred to as the "Yama Walker" within the secret realm.

"Quite a variety."

Although all cultivators who followed this path of controlling ghosts rarely lived beyond a year or so, as long as they were alive, their strength was undeniable.

At the highest, they could rival the Great Perfection of Qi Refining.

The yellow-robed ghost in front of him had strength at the mid-stage of Qi Refining.

However, what truly interested Lü Yang was that he actually felt a trace of mysterious aura related to "position" from this yellow-robed ghost.

"A bit like...a fragment of a divine ability?"

This feeling was like those superior divine abilities that made up a great divine ability, only the level was weakened countless times, making it extremely weak.

Lü Yang extended his hand and immediately captured the yellow-robed ghost, refining it in an instant.

"Sure enough, it's related to position, but not at the Foundation Establishment level."

"The witch ghosts wandering within the Witch Ghost Secret Realm should all be related to a certain great divine ability, and these witch ghosts are fragments of that great divine ability."

After a moment of thought, Lü Yang took out the Myriad Spirits Banner.

Immediately, the yellow-robed ghost was sent onto the banner by him, transforming into a banner spirit... Gradually, an unusual expression appeared on Lü Yang's face.

"This is truly...an unexpected surprise!"

The witch ghosts within the secret realm concealed a trace of positional aura, suspected to be related to a great divine ability, and his Myriad Spirits Banner could turn these witch ghosts into his own use.

Lü Yang was greatly delighted, his thoughts racing. It proved that he could completely subdue and refine all the witch ghosts within the secret realm through the Myriad Spirits Banner, thereby recombining these position fragments, and eventually, he might be able to condense a great divine ability that could help him break through to Foundation Establishment!

Thinking of this, Lü Yang's heart was immediately ablaze.

"The beings here have long suffered from the harm of witch ghosts. I am kind-hearted and always compassionate. I will reluctantly collect these witch ghosts and restore peace to this place."

Immediately, Lü Yang looked at the fainted young man.

With his cultivation, soul-searching a mortal would naturally not leave any aftereffects. He even left behind a martial arts cultivation method as compensation.

"I am truly a great philanthropist."

At this moment, a voice suddenly came from the distant sky.

Lü Yang looked up and saw a dark cloud, within which was a black-robed Daoist, followed by two child attendants and more than ten beautiful maids.

At a glance, the child attendants held treasures to guard the sides, the maids either held fans and incense or played flutes and pipes.

Behind them was a long procession in black and white, holding suonas, gongs, and drums, playing music and dancing as they walked, a grand spectacle.

"Hmm? Where are the witch ghosts here?"

The black-robed Daoist in the cloud fixed his gaze on Lü Yang and immediately frowned: "Are you the living being who reported the news? Where is the ghost messenger here?"

Upon hearing this, Lü Yang glanced at the other party and said indifferently: "Dead."

According to the memories obtained from the soul-searching of the young man, the ghost messenger had long been killed by the yellow-robed ghost, which was why he was hiding in the ruins to avoid the witch ghosts' search.

The black-robed Daoist in the cloud frowned even more upon hearing this, then suddenly reached out and had the child attendant beside him take out a round mirror, shining it down on Lü Yang.

Lü Yang raised an eyebrow upon seeing this, swept his spiritual sense, and saw through the mirror's function, but did not dodge, allowing the mirror light to fall.

The next second, the black-robed Daoist sneered:

"I wondered who it was. Turns out it's an outsider's wild fox Zen. You must have killed the ghost messenger and taken the witch ghosts here. It seems today I cannot spare you!"

"Wild fox Zen?"

Lü Yang found it utterly ridiculous.

A heretical path within the secret realm actually called him wild fox Zen? It was simply turning the world upside down!

On the other side, the black-robed Daoist did not feel anything wrong.

Although the Witch Ghost Secret Realm was hidden from the world, it was not completely isolated.

Over the years, some rogue cultivators occasionally stumbled into the secret realm by chance.

The black-robed Daoist had seen quite a few.

However, rogue cultivators were weak, with cultivation at most at the early stage of Qi Refining, or mid-stage if better, appearing too fragile in front of the Nether Wishper Sect.

Over time, the black-robed Daoist naturally looked down on so-called external cultivators.

Therefore, facing Lü Yang now, he was even more confident, not taking him seriously at all, just thinking of capturing him quickly to report back.

The next second, the black-robed Daoist focused his energy.

His originally ruddy complexion instantly turned pale, only his lips became plump and red, increasingly bright, exuding a strange Daoist charm.

He controlled a black-robed ghost named "Calling Name Fall." As the name implied, this witch ghost could, after locking onto a target, divine the other's name, and then the black-robed Daoist would call it out.

The person whose name was called would immediately have their soul taken by the witch ghost and die within moments.

Relying on this witch ghost, he had always been invincible in duels.

This time was no exception. He directly activated the witch ghost to start divining the name of this wild fox Zen in front of him. Almost simultaneously, Lü Yang also sensed it.

"Divining me?"

Lü Yang raised an eyebrow: "Interesting. These witch ghosts, as fragments of a great divine ability, are indeed tainted with a trace of positional aura, and can even involve causality..."

As he spoke, he formed a hand seal to obscure causality.

Although he believed that with his own position, it didn't matter what the other party divined, a gentleman does not stand under a dangerous wall, there was no need to take risks.

"How could this be!?"

Seeing that 'Calling Name Fall' had achieved nothing, the black-robed Daoist immediately panicked, unable to understand why his invincible witch ghost had encountered such a setback.

Lü Yang shook his head at the sight: "Truly lacking in challenge. Far inferior to Foundation Establishment."

"But this is fine as well. Rising through rebellion has never been my style. I'm better at this kind of downward compatibility—killing across realms."

On the other side, the black-robed Daoist seemed to have suddenly remembered something. He then reached into his robe and took out a deity statue carved from red

wax. Its appearance was solemn and dignified, with a crown atop its head supporting three long incense sticks. Without a word, the black-robed Daoist lit them.

The next second, green flames ignited behind the deity statue's head.

"I beseech the Ancestor to manifest!"

The black-robed Daoist bowed low.

In an instant, billowing auspicious clouds floated up from the top of the statue's head. Even the deity's brows relaxed.

Next came waves of celestial music, heavenly rain descending, golden lotuses blooming from the earth, and countless other phenomena highlighting the deity statue, making it appear even more sacred and majestic.

Its facial features became vivid, and though it was merely made of red wax, it looked almost alive as it gazed at Lü Yang and spoke with a loud voice:

"Who dares offend my sect's orthodoxy?"

"..."

Lü Yang did not answer.

He quietly examined the figure, a strange look on his face, for in the eyes of those with or without positional aura, the deity's appearance varied greatly.

To the average person, the statue would appear lifelike, almost living.

Yet in Lü Yang's eyes, the statue remained the same. What truly activated it was actually the divine light beneath the statue at that moment.

The light was profound, with seven floating seal characters that burst forth with vast magical power.

Lü Yang immediately understood.

This was precisely what he had speculated earlier—the great divine ability that could only be condensed after gathering all the witch ghosts in the Witch Ghost Secret Realm!

Its name was:

【Underworld Lord Xuanming's Ghost-Controlling Position】 !

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[1,361 words]

Looking at the lifelike red wax deity statue, Lü Yang grew even more interested.

In his previous lifetime, he had spent a full ten years researching the soul of a Foundation Establishment cultivator.

Because of that, he could tell.

“Which elder do I have the honor of meeting?”

Lü Yang cupped his hands and looked straight at the statue before him.

In his eyes, a wisp of a Foundation Establishment soul was clearly hidden within the red wax-carved statue!

However, the statue gave no response, only continued to act on its own, saying, “Those who offend our sect shall die a thousand deaths and never be forgiven!”

As the words fell, the statue took a step forward and suddenly vanished.

The distance between it and Lü Yang was covered in one stride, and its five fingers clenched into a fist that came smashing down!

Seeing this, Lü Yang neither dodged nor retreated, instead throwing a punch of his own.

Witnessing this scene, the black-robed Daoist was overjoyed.

This ancestral statue was no ordinary item.

Only someone of his status within Nether Wishper Sect could possess such a personal protective treasure.

Usually, carrying it on oneself could greatly delay being devoured by witch ghosts.

And in times of need, one could summon the ancestral spirit as now, to suppress enemies.

Though made of red wax, one strike from it could split mountains and shatter stones—no ordinary human body could withstand it.

Therefore, in his eyes, Lü Yang was seeking death.

Boom!

In the next moment, a loud explosion burst out between Lü Yang and the statue, with waves of energy sweeping in all directions.

Lü Yang's body instantly disintegrated.

Whoosh whoosh—!

Clouds rose and fell, energy scattered and gathered again.

As the surging white mist boiled and rolled, it quickly distanced itself from the statue and then reformed into Lü Yang's body.

“What is that!?”

The black-robed Daoist stood dumbfounded, clearly shocked by Lü Yang's ability to gather and scatter at will.

His gaze toward Lü Yang grew increasingly wary.

On the other side, Lü Yang was full of admiration.

“What a fine statue.”

Despite the praise, he had already made up his mind: this so-called Nether Wishper Sect was most likely a remnant legacy of a Foundation Establishment cultivator from the Witch Ghost Path who had reincarnated!

“I knew it—though a centipede dies it never stiffens. Since the Witch Ghost Path wasn't entirely wiped out, it must have some potent hidden hands left.”

“Judging by the outcome I saw in my past life, this hand likely failed in the end, but for me, it's still a behemoth to deal with.”

While Lü Yang was pondering, the statue struck again.

It punched once more.

Lü Yang raised his fist to meet it, but he was still forced to retreat step by step, ultimately disintegrating again and reforming at a distance.

“No match.”

Lü Yang sighed.

This avatar of his, formed from Innate One Qi, specialized in martial arts.

Yet its physical body was weaker than the statue's, and without his greatest advantage, it was naturally hard to win.

"But if you can call for backup, why can't I?"

The next second, Lü Yang suddenly formed a hand seal.

Crack!

A rift opened behind Lü Yang's head, and from it surged a majestic golden light that finally manifested as a mountain-sized giant hand reaching out!

Outside the secret realm, Lü Yang's true body had taken action!

The golden light hand spread its fingers, revealing a formation in its palm suffused with blood light.

With a slap downward, it instantly swallowed the statue into the formation.

"Heaven-Slashing Blood River Sword Formation, rise!"

Lü Yang formed another hand seal.

Within the formation, a mournful rain of blood fell.

Every drop of blood was like a sharp sword light, slashing toward the statue.

"You insolent junior!"

The statue stood firm, with ten thousand ghosts wailing around it, showing no fear.

The wisp of Foundation Establishment soul within it also regained clarity and sent out a transmission:

"A mere seventh-grade formation cannot harm this seat."

"Which sect or school do you belong to? If you can rescue this seat, I will reward you greatly. If you're willing, come meet me at the main altar of Nether Wishper Sect."

"Senior seems to have misunderstood."

Outside the secret realm, Lü Yang's true body let out a cold smile.

“The formation is not meant to deal with you, just to temporarily trap you in case you run away.”

“What?”

In the next moment, Lü Yang’s ‘Saint Aspect’ moved.

The golden light hand clasped the formation tightly.

He pushed the Saint Thief’s position to the limit.

Then, with a forceful clasp, as if erasing a line from a book with a rubber, he wiped everything in his palm clean.

When the golden hand opened again, the statue had already been crushed to powder.

Only a residual glow remained, caught in the hand of Lü Yang’s Innate True Qi avatar.

It was that very divine light of the supernatural power 【Underworld Lord Xuanming's Ghost-Controlling Position】 .

As for Lü Yang’s true body, he directly severed one arm.

After all, that hand had already reached into the secret realm, with Golden Core sword qi surrounding it and unable to retract.

Keeping it would be a waste, and it would regrow eventually.

Then, Lü Yang had his avatar put away the 【Underworld Lord Xuanming's Ghost-Controlling Position】 .

After examining it for a moment, he sighed with slight regret: “Still incomplete, at most one percent. Makes sense—this statue was clearly mass-produced. It couldn’t possibly carry a powerful divine ability.”

As Lü Yang sighed, the black-robed Daoist beside him went mad.

He stared blankly at the shattered statue for a long while before returning to his senses.

His eyes toward Lü Yang turned blood-red in an instant.

“You dare destroy our sect’s ancestral statue!?”

Lü Yang raised an eyebrow at that.

“So that’s the ancestor of Nether Wishper Sect. Foundation Establishment and still alive—been reincarnating and lingering for over a thousand years?”

The black-robed Daoist ignored Lü Yang’s words entirely.

Nether Wishper Sect was deeply rooted in the secret realm and revered by all.

Now that the ancestral statue was destroyed, it was as though his faith had been defiled.

He immediately lost all reason.

“Destroying the ancestral statue—our sect shall never forgive you!”

Before he even finished speaking, he roared and lunged toward Lü Yang.

Lü Yang sneered coldly.

“At this point, it’s I who shall not let your sect off!”

With those words, he waved his sleeve.

His Innate True Qi formed a giant hand that grabbed the black-robed Daoist and smashed him into paste along with his ghost.

However, Lü Yang did not leave right away.

He patiently waited for a moment.

Soon, the yin energy in the area gathered again.

A new black-clothed ghost emerged—it was exactly the witch ghost ‘Hu Mingluo’ that he had just smashed!

Lü Yang watched the entire resurrection process of the witch ghost and clicked his tongue in wonder.

“As expected, this is why the Witch Ghost Path can cling to life until now.”

Witch ghosts could not be killed!

The Witch Ghost secret realm was deeply intertwined with the earth veins under Skeleton Mountain.

The inner and outer areas were seamlessly connected, forming a sealed cycle.

After a witch ghost died, it would turn into yin energy and merge into the earth veins.

Then the yin energy from the earth veins would reform the witch ghost, sending it into the secret realm—thus creating an alternative form of immortality.

To break this, one had to either uproot the entire secret realm along with Skeleton Mountain's earth veins, or force the secret realm to emerge on its own.

The latter was the method of True Person Yinshan—since no one would attempt the former.

Not because it was impossible, but because it shouldn't be done.

Uprooting the earth veins would cause immense karmic loss and directly impact future reincarnations.

Even a Golden Core True Lord was not immortal.

When their lifespan ended, they too had to reincarnate and cultivate anew.

And if they accumulated too much karmic loss, their next life would be plagued with tribulations.

“That's why the Golden Core sword qi stayed in the secret realm and chose the boiling frog approach rather than flipping the table directly.”

“From this perspective, my act of collecting ghost creatures is also inadvisable—it would slowly deplete the yin energy in the earth veins beneath Skeleton Mountain.”

“But so what?”

Lü Yang reached out and grabbed the just-resurrected black-clothed ghost, throwing it into the Myriad Spirits Banner.

He didn't care at all whether it would affect the earth veins of Skeleton Mountain.

Karmic merit?

If there's none, then there's none.

With a low point in this life, there's room to grow in the next.

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