

M. Slaying 32

Chapter 32: Undercover

Clear white clouds drifted across the sky, and the bright sunlight bathed the sea of clouds, bestowing a tranquil and serene atmosphere upon Mount Shu.

For those who had recently confronted a life-threatening ordeal, the beauty of the scene was all the more enchanting.

Upon returning to Mount Shu and taking a brief rest, Chu Liang resumed his busy day around noon.

His first stop was the White Pagoda, where he discovered that the cage was empty.

Two potential explanations arose: either the White Pagoda didn't bestow rewards for vanquishing the black-robed man, as it had a history of only rewarding for the elimination of demons and monsters, or, despite his use of the Soul-Swap Spell, the black-robed man's actions were technically deemed as suicide, and thus an imprint wasn't supplied.

The correct answer would have to await further verification in the future.

Nonetheless, this venture was not entirely fruitless. Chu Liang had obtained several small items from the black-robed man that warranted further examination.

Although he hadn't been rewarded for killing a human, he had possibly gained more from this, for humans were inherently distinct from evil entities. Each practitioner essentially represented a chest of riches.

Even though the enchanted artifacts of a cultivator who followed the diabolical path were often malevolent and sinister, providing little use to him, he could still derive value from these items. The Mount Shu Sect rewarded disciples with sword coins for surrendering diabolical artifacts, so these items were not without purpose.

He began by unsealing the small porcelain bottles containing captive ghosts.

The most formidable defensive assets of the Dark King Sect's disciples were the ghosts they had refined and summoned. From Chu Liang's perspective, while he couldn't control these spirits, he

could dispel them individually with a single stroke of his sword, guiding them towards the cycle of reincarnation. Simultaneously, he could exchange this accomplishment for rewards at the White Pagoda. This way, he intended to reap substantial gains!

However, upon uncorking the porcelain bottle, his anticipation quickly turned into disappointment.

It appeared that the black-robed man had cast a curse during the process of refining the ghosts, ensuring their loyalty and obedience. With his demise, all these ghosts had dissipated.

What a pity...

Chu Liang sighed silently.

Every one of the small porcelain bottles proved to be empty, leaving a sense of emptiness in his heart.

There were some materials associated with the diabolical cultivation methods, which Chu Liang was not familiar with. He had a feeling that these materials wouldn't be of any use to him, and he'd probably need to hand them over to the Hall of Weapons.

Then there was the infamous dark and malicious artifact known as the Netherworld Codex, which elevated one's cultivation through acts of murder. It was a profoundly sinister artifact.

As Chu Liang laid his hand on the book, he could sense the anguished cries of the souls trapped within it. It was evident that this was something he had no intention of using.

There was also a small pouch that the black-robed man had carefully preserved.

When Chu Liang unfastened it, he discovered three small hollow dark copper spheres, each roughly the size of a walnut. They felt extremely cold to the touch, emanating a palpable aura of dread.

This must be some sort of evil enchanted artifact.

I'll ask my teacher about it later.

Finally, there was the dark gold token bearing the inscription "Soul Subjugator," which also appeared to be an enchanted artifact.

Chu Liang struggled to discern the purpose of this item. Nevertheless, considering the original owner had perished, he felt there wasn't much risk in experimenting with it. To understand this item, he sent a strand of his divine sense into the item.

Whoosh!

His divine sense sank into the token, revealing a dim and shadowy space.

Within this space, there were no living entities, only several lines of golden text suspended in the void. It appeared to be an enchanted device designed for transmitting information.

[Fiend]: "I have achieved a breakthrough and reached the third level of the Realm of the Five Elements. For my forthcoming cultivation, I require the Profound Netherworld Essence or any demonic creatures from the Netherseas... As you all journey through the world, kindly be vigilant and on the lookout for these resources."

[Fifty-Ninth]: "Congratulations, Esteemed Fiend! We will do our utmost to locate them for you."

[Sixtieth]: "Congratulations, Esteemed Fiend! As your subordinate, I will try my best."

[Fiend]: "Eh? Why hasn't Fifty-Eighth replied for such a long time? Did something bad happen?"

[Fifty-Ninth]: "It's been another two hours. Did something happen to Fifty-Eighth?"

[Fiend]: "Fifty-Eighth, if you see this message, please respond."

Chu Liang read the messages carefully and recalled a particular type of enchanted device he had heard before. Such a device served as an interdimensional domain for housing souls. Through the connection of their souls, a limited number of individuals could transmit information across space.

The Mount Shu Sect didn't have expertise in soul-related techniques and lacked enchanted artifacts that could function as interdimensional soul domains. Consequently, Chu Liang had never seen such

a device before. The disciples of the Dark King Sect, diabolical cultivators who specialized in soul-related techniques, often possessed such artifacts as part of their practices.

However, there appeared to be only these four individuals within the interdimensional soul domain.

The person going by Fiend, along with Fifty-Eighth, Fifty-Ninth, and Sixtieth, seemed to form a group. Just by their names, it seemed obvious that Fiend was probably the leader.

Since Fifty-Eighth didn't respond, it implied that the token belonged to him.

What should I do?

Should I respond?

Since there was no imminent danger, and it seemed unlikely they could reach him through the interdimensional soul domain to cause harm, Chu Liang decided to take a chance and give it a try.

Carefully, he sent a response using his divine sense.

In the span of a heartbeat, that message materialized within the domain.

[Fifty-Eighth]: "Esteemed Fiend, Congratulations! As your subordinate, I'll do everything I can to locate them for you."

The more he talked, the higher the chance he'd mess up. When unsure, he tended to just agree with the previous statement; responding with a simple "me too" seemed like the safest bet.

Since there weren't any responses, Chu Liang set the Soul Subjugator Token aside and proceeded to organize the other items.

Soon, he felt the Soul Subjugator Token vibrate.

Wow. It even vibrates.

He picked it up and saw a new reply in the interdimensional soul domain.

[Fiend]: "What were you doing earlier? Were you in danger?"

Upon seeing the leader's inquiry, Chu Liang paused for a moment. He didn't have much time to think, as prolonged silence would raise suspicion. Yet, saying the wrong thing could also draw attention.

He needed a reasonable explanation for his prolonged absence.

However, he didn't know much about this "Fifty-Eighth," and lying could potentially reveal inconsistencies.

He thought about it and decided to tell the truth.

"I was in a fight earlier. I managed to capture a Confucian cultivator at the Spiritual Awareness Realm and successfully trapped her soul within the Netherworld Codex."

[Fiend]: "A Confucian cultivator at the Spiritual Awareness Realm? Excellent. If you managed to refine that soul, it would be able to move freely during the day and be of great help to you."

[Fifty-Ninth]: "Impressive."

[Fifty-Ninth]: "I wish I had that kind of luck."

[Fiend]: "Fifty-Eighth has extensive experience in the martial world. It's more than just luck. The two of you should learn from him."

[Fifty-Ninth]: "Yes. Yes."

Chu Liang managed to fool them with a simple lie and quickly exited the interdimensional soul domain.

Clearly, the one referred to as Fiend had already achieved the third stage in the Realm of the Five Elements. He was definitely considered a powerful cultivator in the Dark King Sect. The one referred to as Fifty-Ninth seemed to be rather idle. He was always ready to respond and appeared to have a lot of free time. The one referred to as Sixtieth rarely appeared and Chu Liang didn't know much about them.

Following the brief exchange, Chu Liang resolved to report this matter to his teacher.

When he arrived at the pavilion, Di Nufeng was awake, which was a rare occurrence. She was immersed in a popular romantic picture book. These stories featured lovesick characters, and it was somewhat surprising to envision a valiant woman like her engrossed in such tales.

"Teacher, I have something to report," Chu Liang politely greeted her.

"What is it?" Di Nufeng asked in a casual manner, putting the book aside.

"These are the enchanted artifacts I retrieved from the black-robed individual." Chu Liang presented the three dark copper spheres and inquired, "I'm not familiar with these items. Can I keep them?"

"Oh?" Di Nufeng cast a casual glance at them and remarked, "These are Shadowburst Thunder Bombs."

"Shadowburst Thunder Bombs?"

"They're small toys that can cause an explosion while inducing fear." Di Nufeng explained.

She then went on, "I can't believe that guy at the Golden Core Realm had three of these! Clearly, he kept them as life-saving measures. You can use them, and you should be able to exchange them for some sword coins at the Sword Exchange Pavilion. The decision is yours."

"I understand," Chu Liang nodded, then continued, "There's another matter I need to report."

He proceeded to provide Di Nufeng with a brief account of his experience when entering the interdimensional soul domain.

"Oh?" Di Nufeng was immediately captivated, sitting up more attentively.

"A few days ago, Immortal Jiuyi from the Fog-Hidden Mountain of Immortals engaged in a fierce fight with the Left Guardian and Right Guardian of the Dark King Sect. The White Silver King was killed, and the Violet Gold Marquess managed to escape with severe injuries. The Violet Gold Marquess' subordinates consist of eight Guiders, twenty-four Fiends, and seventy-two Soul Subjugators..."

"In the past, he relied on these Soul Subjugators to capture souls, harm the innocent, and enhance his cultivation. The black-robed individual should be one of these Soul Subjugators."

"Each Guider oversees three Fiends, and each Fiend supervises three Soul Subjugators; that's the structure under the Violet Gold Marquess."

"The interdimensional soul domain is formed by everyone leaving a fragment of their soul seed entwined to create a formation, enabling long-distance communication. However... if one person's soul dissipates, this soul-subjugating token should no longer be able to access the soul domain. I've never heard of anyone being able to replace the previous owner of the token after killing a Soul Subjugator from the Dark King Sect..."

Di Nufeng appeared somewhat perplexed.

Chu Liang pondered for a moment and suggested, "Is it possible that even though the Soul Subjugator died, his soul didn't truly dissipate... Perhaps he made an error while activating the incantation and inadvertently ensnared himself within the Netherworld Codex..."

Chu Liang then retrieved the Netherworld Codex and presented it to Di Nufeng.

In fact, upon further thought, it was clear that the secret communication method employed by a diabolical sect could not be simply used by anyone. Under normal circumstances, if a Soul Subjugator died, their token would immediately lose its function.

A situation like that of Fifty-Eighth should be considered extremely rare.

Di Nufeng examined the codex and roughly understood the situation.

Suddenly, a smile appeared on her face.

"Nice..."

"Give this Netherworld Codex to the Hall of Weapons so that all the innocent living souls, except the soul of that Soul Subjugator, can be released and dispelled."

"As for you, you should lurk within that interdimensional soul domain and try your best to blend in..."

"The Violet Gold Marquess is now in hiding with severe injuries. The righteous cultivators are not the only ones seeking him. Within the ranks of the diabolical cultivators, there's a frenzy of infighting and bloodshed. He doesn't dare to return to the Dark King Sect and must be hiding somewhere..."

"If you manage to infiltrate a faction that is directly subservient to him, there's a chance you might uncover his hiding place..."

"When I, your teacher, single-handedly eliminate the Violet Gold Marquess, it will be a tremendous achievement. At that time, what can Wang Xuanling, that old man, do to rival me?"

As Di Nufeng indulged in fantasies of a glorious future, her smile grew even more unrestrained.

Chu Liang, on the other hand, sensed a heavy burden on his shoulders.

Comrade Chu Liang, your mission is to remain undercover!

"Esteemed Teacher, if you were to kill the Right Guardian of the Dark King Sect, would the sect offer substantial rewards?" Chu Liang inquired cautiously.

"Fear not, my dear. Any rewards that come our way will be divided with a 70-30 split, and you will certainly receive your due," Di Nufeng replied with a shaky chuckle. Her laughter gradually turned eerie, "Hehehehehe..."