

M. Slaying 41

Chapter 41: The East Mountain Cat Clan

As night fell, the mountains and forests grew silent.

Chu Liang strolled alone along a narrow path in the outskirts.

The East Mountain wasn't large, but its terrain was rugged and few people ever ventured there.

The nighttime breeze carried a chilly, moisture-laden hint, hinting at the possibility of impending rain.

Chu Liang gripped the jade talisman tightly in his hand. The vermilion glow on the talisman acted as his guiding light, offering a rough sense of direction and distance. As long as a great sorcerer didn't dispel the tracking spell on Mistress Ming, she would remain bound by the jade talisman's tracking.

Chu Liang proceeded with caution, moving steadily forward. With the moon high in the night sky, he eventually reached a concealed cave dwelling.

The location that the tracking spell led him to was hidden behind the steep cliffs of the mountains and dense forests. Were it not for the guidance of the tracker, he would have struggled to spot it. It's no surprise that Official Ming's search had been in vain.

Now that he had found Mistress Ming's location, relief washed over him. With a few agile leaps, he reached the entrance of the cave dwelling.

As a show of courtesy, he didn't barge in immediately. Instead, he knocked on the door.

Tap, tap, tap!

Tap, tap, tap!

After knocking for a while, a sound emerged, resembling something between a beast's growl and a yawn. Soon after, the stone door was pulled open, unveiling a sizable cat's head.

"Who is it?"

The being had a large cat head adorned with striking black spots, and its face bore a perpetually drowsy expression. His fur and tail were still visible, but his body had taken on a humanoid form, clad in coarse attire. It was clear that he was a lesser demon, capable of taking on a humanoid form, yet unable to transform his head and tail.

With a smile, Chu Liang spoke, "I am a disciple of the Mount Shu Sect, and I have come to meet Mistress Ming from Xingzhou City. Kindly relay my message."

"It's Mount Shu..."

The lesser demon turned around lazily.

Then, he suddenly froze and raised his head abruptly, exclaiming, "Mount Shu?"

"Yes. Mount Shu."

Chu Liang nodded.

"Oh, goodness!" the lesser demon cried out in a bizarre, high-pitched tone. His entire body leaped up about one zhang and he retreated frantically, as if escaping for his life. All the while, he shouted, "Great King! Great King! Trouble is here! A disciple of the Mount Shu Sect has come knocking! Meow-ow!"

"Meow-ow!"

"Hey!"

"Meowwww"

The entire cave dwelling resonated with a cacophony of cat cries.

It was unclear how many demonic creatures were roused from their sleep.

These low-level demons held a deep-seated fear of the sects within the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten.

Chu Liang stood by the cave entrance, maintaining his polite demeanor. After some time, a tall and slender man with disheveled, fluffy hair emerged, accompanied by a retinue of low-level demons. Given his resemblance to Mistress Ming, Chu Liang assumed that he was her brother.

A group of approximately a dozen lesser demons trailed behind him. Many of them, with their feline heads and humanoid bodies, had not completely assumed human form. Some remained in their full cat-like state, presenting a variety of colors—orange, white, and adorned with various patterns.

"I am the Demon King in these parts," the Demon King proclaimed, fixing his gaze on Chu Liang.

He then inquired, "What has brought you to my cave dwelling at this late hour?"

"I apologize for the intrusion," Chu Liang replied. "I've come in search of Mistress Ming from Xingzhou City. She was granted an official title by the Mount Shu Sect, but she has recently disappeared. I have been tasked with finding her."

"Who is this Mistress Ming or Mistress Dark[1] you speak of? We do not know her!" The Cat King responded with an unfriendly tone.

"Hmm..." Chu Liang continued in a friendly tone, "To be honest, our sect employs a tracking spell, and it indicates that she is here."

"Your tracking spell must be mistaken." The Cat King frowned and retorted, "Let me make it clear; everyone within this cave dwelling is a benevolent demon who does not do anything evil. If you persist in causing a commotion in the dead of night, I won't be intimidated!"

"I have no intention of causing any trouble. If it's convenient, may I enter and conduct a search?" Chu Liang asked.

"It's not convenient!" The Cat King flatly refused.

Chu Liang smiled and responded, "I see..."

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"Heeel... help... Young Hero, spare me!"

After a short while, the Cat King cried out in despair as he found himself bound by the Demon-Binding Rope, assuming a classic tortoise-shell pattern.

Being a heroic demonic creature who had grown up in the wild, he had never feared capture or death. Pleading for mercy was simply unthinkable to him!

However, being bound in such a manner before his subordinates left him utterly terrified!

If even a whisper of today's events were to get out, the Cat King's reputation in the vicinity would be irreparably damaged, and he would no longer be able to hold his head high.

"So, I'll pose the question again: Can you grant me permission to search for Mistress Ming?" Chu Liang asked politely.

"Escort the young hero to meet my little sister now!" the Cat King roared.

The surrounding timid demonic creatures, who had been reluctant to approach, promptly guided Chu Liang into the cave, leading him to a stone chamber within.

Upon entering the cave, Chu Liang didn't forget to bring the Cat King along with him.

Upon pushing open the door to the stone chamber, he caught sight of Mistress Ming, who was similarly bound, though with restraints that were not as meticulously crafted as the Demon-Binding Rope, but rather rudely restricting her movements.

Mistress Ming's eyes lit up when she saw Chu Liang. "Young Hero Chu?"

In contrast, the Cat King released a deep sigh.

"I was informed by Official Ming that you had returned home to visit your parents and older brother. Could you please explain what has occurred?" Chu Liang inquired as the young demons released Mistress Ming from her restraints.

"It's a rather long story..." Mistress Ming began, casting a disappointed glance at the Cat King.

"Our family used to reside here in the East Mountain as a modest mountain cat clan. We never clashed with humans, nor did we inflict harm on anyone. We led peaceful lives," Mistress Ming explained gradually. "However, a few days ago, upon my return, I discovered that both my parents had already passed away, and my older brother... he had established this cave dwelling and assumed the position of the mountain king."

"When I returned, the demon king from a neighboring mountain happened to be visiting," Mistress Ming continued. "The moment the Tiger King laid eyes on me, he insisted on taking me as his wife..."

"I swore I would rather die than agree, so my older brother tied me up and locked me here," Mistress Ming explained.

"Wow!" Chu Liang gazed at the Cat King and commented, "I now understand what kind of brother you are!"

"I am not!" the Cat King retorted angrily. "You two don't understand anything!"

He turned to Mistress Ming and said, "Haven't I already explained how our parents passed away? In recent years, an increasing number of demonic creatures from distant regions have migrated to the East Mountain. We've had to compete for territory and sustenance due to the limited space in the area. We couldn't risk relocating to human cities, which is why we had to contend with each other for resources. Our parents lost their lives in battles against other demonic creatures.

"Do you think I wanted to be the king of this mountain? I constructed this cave dwelling and welcomed all the wandering cats so that the cats in the East Mountain could have a place to call home!"

With a tone heavy with sadness and anger, the Cat King shed tears as he went on, "When I had just established my cave dwelling, we were a mere dozen or so demonic creatures with seven or eight weapons..."

"I've worked tirelessly for years just to barely get by here. Then, a few days ago, I crossed paths with the Tiger King from Hidden Forest Mountain. He was far more powerful and influential than I, and he was open to forming an alliance with my clan. I thought that by befriending him, we could avoid fearing other demonic creatures encroaching on our East Mountain territory. So, I went to great lengths to win his friendship and invited him to our cave for a feast."

"Who could have foreseen... who could have foreseen that my younger sister would return at that very moment?"

"That Tiger King is terribly lustful, and he was immediately entranced by my younger sister's beauty. He promptly proclaimed that as long as my younger sister married him, he would eternally protect the East Mountain Cat Clan. If we refused, he was likely to launch an attack!" explained the Cat King with a sense of helplessness.

"But didn't you mention that your younger sister already has a husband?" Chu Liang asked.

The Cat King nodded emphatically. "I certainly did!"

"And how did he react?" Chu Liang inquired.

The Cat King replied, "He became even more excited."