

M. Slaying 501

Chapter 501: I'm Sorry

Swoosh—

In this crucial moment, Chu Liang had no time to worry about other matters and immediately activated Dimension Compression to dodge the incoming strike. Fortunately, there was no longer any black snow outside Fengya Mountain, which granted him more freedom.

This sudden shift in movement, however, made the black-robed elder suspicious.

"Dimension Compression?" The elder's figure flickered and appeared right in front of Chu Liang. "Which hall do you belong to?"

Chu Liang wanted to shout, "I'm your dear Fifty-Eighth! We have talked in the Soul Subjugator Token for so many days. I'm the only normal one—how could you not recognize me?"

However, he understood, logically, that this was not the right action to take. After all, he had just informed the Eastern-Route Guider that all three of them were on Fengya Mountain. Additionally, he couldn't use any of the unique divine techniques of the Soul Subjugators. If he were interrogated and asked to prove his identity, he would certainly fail.

Throughout their interactions, the Eastern-Route Guider had only communicated with them through the Soul Subjugator Token. He had never met them face-to-face, and who would have thought their first meeting would turn out this way?

With no other option, he replied, "I'm from White-Bone Hall. What made you attack the instant you arrived?"

"I am the Eastern-Route Guider under the Violet Gold Marquess. If you see me and do not bow, I have the right to punish you."

During the prime of the White Silver King and Violet Gold Marquess, they wielded tremendous power as the Left and Right Guardians of the Dark King Sect. Many of their subordinates would trample over the ordinary disciples of the Four Halls of Darkness, leading to deep-rooted grievances. But now, with the death of the White Silver King and the disappearance of the Violet

Gold Marquess, these Soul Subjugators were forced to keep their heads down. How could they still strut around as if they owned the place?

Sure enough, the black-robed elder was none other than the Eastern-Route Guider, intentionally picking a fight, clearly with the intention of capturing someone for interrogation.

This fucker really knows how to choose his targets. He picked someone from his own side... Chu Liang couldn't help but curse inwardly.

He could only reply, "The White-Bone Hall has been on duty at the outskirts of Fengya Mountain the entire time, which is why I did not recognize the great Guider; please forgive me."

Chu Liang said this to inform the Eastern-Route Guider that he had been here all along. By doing so, he wanted to convey that he had no knowledge of what was happening beyond the outskirts, hoping the Eastern-Route Guider would target someone else.

With Jiang Guo by his side, he was not intimidated by the Eastern-Route Guider at all.

However, the Eastern-Route Guider served as the only one that could connect them to the Violet Gold Marquess. If he were to die, their connection to the Violet Gold Marquess would be severed.

In order to prevent the big fish from slipping away, they couldn't kill this guider just yet. Thus, Chu Liang answered in this manner, hoping the Guider would leave them be.

To his astonishment, the Eastern-Route Guider nodded slightly after hearing this and asked, "Who is this child, then?"

He glanced at little Jiang Guo, who was staring at him with a fierce look.

In fact, from the moment the elder launched his attack on Chu Liang, Jiang Guo had been eager to step in. It was the way Chu Liang looked at her that told her not to make a move, so she obediently held back.

At this moment, the aura of death that enveloped her had dissipated. Wearing a plump red jacket and holding half a fruit with juice still on her lips... she just looked like an ordinary, silly child. The Eastern-Route Guider didn't see anything unusual.

"I don't know," Chu Liang replied. "She's probably a child who got lost nearby. I felt sorry for her, so I gave her a few fruits to eat."

"How kind of you," the Eastern-Route Guider said with a chuckle. Then, without warning, he raised his hand, and a torrent of yin qi surged forth!

"You used an immortal art that reeks of righteousness. Clearly, you are an undercover agent in our sect. Die!" the elder shouted.

The yin qi surrounding him morphed into countless soul apparitions, surging toward Chu Liang with a deadly intent.

Swoosh—

Gritting his teeth, Chu Liang used Dimension Compression two more times to dodge the oncoming soul apparitions while shouting, "Punch him!"

As soon as these words were spoken, little Jiang Guo immediately stopped holding back her anger.

This old man suddenly appeared, interrupted her while she was eating, and even attacked the kind person who had given her fruit.

If she didn't give him a good punch, quelling this anger would be quite difficult.

The little girl leaped into action, and with the hand not holding the fruit, she quickly formed a fist and hit the Eastern-Route Guider right in the face.

It was a fierce punch, filled with her pent-up anger, equivalent to the pure strength of a seventh-realm cultivator.

Boom—

"Ah..." The Eastern-Route Guider's scream barely reached anyone's ears as his body was launched into the sky, fading away into a lone star in the distance.

As he flew off, Chu Liang vaguely heard the sound of bones cracking, and several broken teeth seemed to fall to the ground. The sight sent a shiver up his spine and made his scalp tingle.

In terms of sheer strength alone, this little girl might be on par with his esteemed teacher.

However, she hadn't cultivated any divine abilities, so her power was considerably less. If his esteemed teacher had thrown a punch infused with Samadhi True Fire, this old man would never have had the opportunity to lose his teeth.

When the old man was sent flying away, Jiang Guo turned and looked at Chu Liang with a big smile. He quickly gave a thumbs-up in praise.

...

On Fengya Mountain.

Luo Yao and Monk Pushan followed closely behind Ghost Face, standing guard at a prominent mountain pass. They had just cleared a wave of the tide of yin entities attacking the mountain, slaying all the wandering souls and wild ghosts in the black mist.

With the arrival of the White-Bone Hall's master, Ghost Face went off to report, leaving the two of them at their post.

Monk Pushan couldn't help but say, "I have no idea where Chu Liang is or how he's doing. This place is crawling with demons and ghosts. I hope nothing bad has happened to him. I told you earlier that we should spend more time looking for him..."

Luo Yao replied, "Didn't he just say through the Soul Subjugator Token that he is on Fengya Mountain too? He must be fine."

During their earlier retreat into Fengya Mountain, Chu Liang couldn't leave because Guo Zhanfeng clung to him like glue, so they left first. Being separated from Chu Liang in a place like this left them feeling somewhat anxious.

"Speaking of which, why hasn't there been any news in the Soul Subjugator Token for some time..." Monk Pushan murmured. "The Eastern-Route Guider mentioned he would capture someone for

interrogation and then scout the area for the Violet Gold Marquess. Once that's done, the Marquess should arrive. Why is there still no update? Could he have failed such a simple task?"

"Probably not," Luo Yao said as she shook her head.

The two were conversing in a way where one would speak ten sentences while the other would respond with just one.

Suddenly, a gust of wind swept in from afar. They spotted Ghost Face descending from a distance, dragging "Chu Liang" while cursing continuously.

"Do you think this is your backyard? Wandering around like that? The sect leader as well as the masters of the four halls were all inside. Even I could only stand guard outside. If you had recklessly barged in, you would've lost your life on the spot! I always thought you were reliable; how could you suddenly act so recklessly..."

"You had been assigned that mountain earlier, but your inability to handle the tide of yin entities gave the ghosts a chance to reach Fengya Mountain so quickly. The hall master scolded me again. If there are any repercussions this time, you can kiss your position as chamber master goodbye!"

Ghost Face continued to scold for quite some time, but Chu Liang remained silent. Instead, he looked at Monk Pushan and Luo Yao, appearing somewhat puzzled.

Monk Pushan stepped forward and said, "Old Chamber Master, please don't scold him anymore. Our chamber master didn't do it on purpose. He might not be aware of what happened since he arrived late and was in a hurry to find us, which is why he ended up in the wrong place."

The scolded "Chu Liang" glanced around, assessed the situation of these people, and then looked back at Ghost Face.

"How dare you still look at me? Do you think that my scoldings were unfair?" Ghost Face continued to speak angrily.

Pah.

Suddenly, Chu Liang slapped Ghost Face, the sound reverberating loudly.

This stunned Luo Yao and Monk Pushan. Chu Liang had always been the most composed and reliable among them; how could he lose his temper after just a few scoldings? Was he dropping the act and rebelling?

This place was covered in black snow and teeming with diabolical cultivators. If a fight broke out, it would undoubtedly attract attention from all directions, especially the terrifying sect leader of the Dark King Sect. Secretly taking out Ghost Face would not be easy...

What surprised them even more was that after the slap, Ghost Face appeared dazed for a moment. Then, he turned to Chu Liang and said respectfully, "I'm sorry."

Huh?

Chapter 502: He Came and Left

After being slapped by Chu Liang, Ghost Face suddenly became extremely submissive, following him obediently.

Monk Pushan watched this scene and muttered quietly, "Does he have some kind of special fetish?"

Luo Yao rolled her eyes at him.

This seemed to be some sort of divine ability that bewitched the soul.

Regardless, Luo Yao thought it was odd as Chu Liang had never demonstrated this kind of technique before. Moreover, such divine technique usually required a higher cultivation level. Given Ghost Face's strength as a sixth-realm diabolical cultivator, he definitely was not someone that Chu Liang could easily bewitch.

What is going on? Lu Yao wondered.

When "Chu Liang" came before them, they noticed some subtle differences, as if there had been a change in his temperament.

This Chu Liang was, of course, the Whale-Riding Immortal in disguise.

As he came before Luo Yao and Monk Pushan, he did not conceal his identity, saying, "I am a member of the Mount Shu Sect. Chu Liang has told me about you two. Follow me."

So, this Chu Liang was indeed not the real one!

The two quickly sent messages back to their respective sects to verify this with Mount Shu. They then received confirmation that this person could be trusted, but his exact identity had not been revealed by the Mount Shu Sect.

Only then did Luo Yao and Monk Pushan obediently follow the Whale-Riding Immortal, watching as he strolled around Fengya Mountain. They had no idea where he intended to go.

Along the way, some disciples from other halls came to stop them, not allowing them to continue advancing forward. Yet, with just a glance from the Whale-Riding Immortal, the eyes of the weaker disciples would dim, turning away to go elsewhere. When the light returned to their eyes, they had already forgotten what had happened.

This incredible technique amazed the two young disciples. It was something that they had never witnessed. However, Monk Pushan seemed puzzled. "This is similar to the methods we use in our monastery, but it shouldn't be this effective..."

Divine techniques capable of bewitching people were usually illusory techniques, creating a false scene to compel certain actions. However, the Whale-Riding Immortal clearly did not create a false scene. He was definitely controlling their souls.

Great divine abilities like these were rarely passed down in the world of immortality cultivation. The most famous one was naturally the immortal art Brahma Sound of Wisdom from the Buddhist Cloud Monastery.

However, very few individuals in the Buddhist Cloud Monastery have mastered this immortal art, much less used it so effortlessly. From what Pushan remembered, aside from the legendary Sweeper Monks in the hillside area at the back of the mountain, no one else should be capable of this.

Indeed, within the Buddhist Cloud Monastery, young monks who demonstrate exceptional skills could be appointed as Monastery Officers. The ranks above the Monastery Officers include the Monastery Supervisors, followed by the Monastery Hall Master, and finally the Chief Monk. The Chief Monk could be promoted to Head of Monastery, with those above having the chance to sweep the hillside area at the back of the mountain.

The Sweeper Monk had always represented the legendary pinnacle of achievement within the Buddhist Cloud Monastery.

"Indeed, it's the Brahma Sound of Wisdom," the Whale-Riding Immortal said suddenly with a smile. "But I didn't steal it; it was the Noble Dharma of a Buddhist sect who taught me."

"Ah..." Pushan uttered in realization.

Apart from the Buddhist Cloud Monastery, the Holy Mountain in the Northern Regions would be the only other place where one could learn the Brahma Sound of Wisdom. The Noble Dharma was deeply revered by numerous Buddhist disciples.

Because in this era in which the Hallowed Ones had yet to emerge, many regarded the Noble Dharma as the greatest power in existence. Since this most powerful existence was a Buddhist, it naturally raised the status of the Buddhist sect, which had long been weak in the land of the nine provinces.

"Esteemed Senior, you actually know the Noble Dharma! I've admired him for a long time. Are you his disciple? Then you must be part of the Buddhist sect! Is your true form bald as well? It's just like the old saying. Us meeting is like meeting a friend from home in a foreign land. We are fellow disciples meeting in this dangerous situation, you..."

Once the Whale-Riding Immortal felt less like a stranger, Monk Pushan started babbling away.

The Whale-Riding Immortal's pupils contracted slightly. He stared at Pushan for a while before saying, "Let's pretend I said nothing."

...

With everything going smoothly, the Whale-Riding Immortal led them to a smooth rock face. The black mountain wall gleamed like a polished mirror.

Just as he reached out to press his hand against the wall, a gust of wind howled in the distance, and a black whirlwind suddenly descended.

Boom—

As it landed, a loud explosion echoed.

When the black wind subsided, two figures emerged.

One of them was enveloped in flaming qi. He wore a tall hat and dark armor, standing tall with tanned skin. Every movement he made gave off a powerful, intimidating vibe.

"I originally planned to watch from the shadows and act only when Granny Meng arrived. But I didn't expect you to injure my subordinate. The Four Halls of Darkness..." The man with the tall hat said as he laughed boisterously. "I, the Violet Gold Marquess, have returned! Hahaha!"

As he laughed, the waves of qi surged around him, spreading out like ripples.

In an instant, the mountains and fields trembled.

Seeing this, Luo Yao and Monk Pushan felt conflicted. So this was the marquess they had never met? Should they step forward and introduce themselves?

Next to the Violet Gold Marquess stood an old man in black robes with half of his face sunken in. He looked like he was on the verge of death, as if he had just been beaten half to death.

However, after landing, he still dutifully shouted, "Those under the Marquess's command need not hide anymore. Those holding the Soul Subjugator Token, step forward and pay your respects!"

As the creator of the Soul Subjugator Token, the Violet Gold Marquess could easily sense the presence of the Soul Subjugator Tokens nearby. He chose to land on Fengya Mountain because he detected that Luo Yao and Pushan were his subordinates.

The first step upon his arrival was to gather his old forces.

However, no one moved.

The atmosphere suddenly became a bit awkward.

The Whale-Riding Immortal didn't move, Luo Yao and Pushan were unsure whether to move or not, and Ghost Face simply couldn't move at all.

As a result, no one moved.

The Eastern-Route Guider furrowed one eyebrow, stepped forward, and announced, "Your undercover mission is over! The marquess has come to restore our positions at the pinnacle! You can drop the act now!"

At his shout, Luo Yao and Pushan remained still, but the Whale-Riding Immortal, who had been busy feeling around the mountain wall, turned around.

"Hmm?" The Eastern-Route Guider jumped back, startled by the sight of the Whale-Riding Immortal's face.

He looked around and, seeing that the little girl was not there, he calmed down. "Marquess! It was this boy who injured me. He is of ordinary cultivation, but a strange little girl was following him earlier and that girl was extremely powerful."

"Oh?" The Violet Gold Marquess narrowed his eyes at the Whale-Riding Immortal, his expression turning grim. "So you are the one who had the audacity to injure my subordinate Guider? In that case, let my first fight after emerging from closed-door cultivation be with you to reaffirm my authority—"

Boom.

A sudden explosion echoed from the mountainside.

A fierce golden light burst forth, instantly obliterating half of the Violet Gold Marquess's body. The remaining pieces of his body were sent soaring into the sky, scattering like specks of starlight.

The Eastern-Route Guider was directly blown apart, leaving no trace of his body, disintegrating into ashes scattered everywhere.

The Whale-Riding Immortal retracted his finger and muttered softly, "How noisy."

Monk Pushan and Luo Yao exchanged glances, both seeing the astonishment in each other's eyes. It seemed that this "Chu Liang" was far stronger than they had imagined.

The two of them saw clearly that the explosion just now, which was enough to kill a seventh-realm cultivator, had been caused by a mere flick of his finger!

It seemed they really didn't need to keep up the act anymore from now on.

Immediately afterward, the Whale-Riding Immortal turned and pressed his palm against a specific spot on the mountain wall, which started shining with a brilliant light.

Whoosh—

The black mountain wall began to glow, emitting a blinding white light. Its mirror-smooth surface suddenly split apart, revealing a shadowy cave entrance that led into an open expanse within.

Inside the cave, there was nothing but a simple copper sword, lodged firmly in a narrow crevice.

In a flash, the Whale-Riding Immortal appeared before the sword.

He knew his actions had alerted the sect leader of the Dark King Sect, so he needed to act quickly.

Shiiing.

He pulled the copper sword out of the crevice in one swift motion!

...

Amid the vast, snowy expanse of Fengya Mountain, a two-story pavilion stood in stark contrast to its surroundings. Its beams and pillars were adorned with intricate carvings, while flickering candlelight cast a warm, inviting glow. The air around it was filled with a soothing fragrance, creating an aura of warmth that felt jarringly out of place on this barren, frosty peak.

Inside the pavilion, two people sat leisurely facing each other.

"You sure know how to enjoy life, always so at ease even when you're out and about," commented the man in loose robes on the left.

His eyes slanted upward, and the cold sheen on his face made it seem as though he wore a mask, giving him a rather intimidating look.

The man on the right, clad in green, smiled and spoke in a gentle, soothing manner. "It's a piece of cake."

If Chu Liang saw the man on the left, he would definitely find him familiar; this person was none other than Chen Mingcang, the master of the Northern Abyss Hall.

In the last great battle on Mount Shu, he played a key role in ambushing the prodigious disciples of Mount Shu at Sword Sheath Peak and nearly succeeded. Later, while he was locked in a fight with the Weapons Master, Di Nufeng came to assist and almost turned the cultivation he had spent almost a century building into ashes with a powerful surge of her flames.

Chen Mingcang barely escaped with his life.

After he returned, he learned that because he had not been present while his forces were escaping Mount Shu, every one of his men was crushed by a single palm strike from Venerable Wen Yuan.

Since then, he found himself alone, having lost all his men and becoming the only one left in his hall.

Of the Four Halls of Darkness, the Northern Abyss Hall under him had the most meticulous personnel training. Unlike the White-Bone Hall, which accepted anyone, or the Scarlet-Robe Hall, which didn't recruit at all, Chen Mingcang had carefully nurtured his forces over several decades, with the potential to produce several seventh-realm Eminent Ones in the future. They were the elites of the diabolical sect. Yet, they were all lost on Mount Shu, leaving him somewhat disheartened ever since.

Though he dared not say it out loud, he couldn't help but harbor some resentment. If it hadn't been for the decisions of the sect leader of the Dark King Sect, things wouldn't have ended up this way.

Regarding the situation with Granny Meng, he showed up but put in no real effort. He simply stayed alongside his friend, the master of the Vermillion-Azurite Hall.

"It has been a day and a night and the sect leader still can't find where Granny Meng's son's burial site is. Could the location of the burial site be fake?" Chen Mingcang said suspiciously.

"When Granny Meng spoke of this before, she certainly didn't intend to betray the sect. It's likely that the burial site is being obscured by some tricks, but the location itself cannot be false," replied the master of the Vermillion-Azurite Hall, pausing briefly before adding, "We'll know for sure when she arrives."

As the two chatted, a whistling sound suddenly pierced the air from outside, followed by the boisterous laughter of the Violet Gold Marquess.

"The Violet Gold Marquess came here?" Chen Mingcang frowned. "No one informed him of this matter, so he must have spies within the Four Halls."

"That's not surprising. However, everyone I brought this time is a Painted Skin Ghost, so it's impossible for any of his spies to be among them," the Vermillion-Azurite Hall Master said.

"I don't have any subordinates, so it is even more impossible for his spies to be in my hall," Chen Mingcang replied. "The Scarlet-Robe Hall only has those Enchantresses, so it must be that fool, the Elder of White-Bone Mountain from White-Bone Hall."

As he spoke of this, he gritted his teeth and continued, "He always likes to make a grand display, but it's always him who messes up. The last attack on Mount Shu was probably foiled by a spy among his subordinates. Otherwise, how could the plan have failed so miserably?"

Upon mentioning that failure, Chen Mingcang felt a deep sense of indignation bubbling up inside him.

"However, he has the most subordinates, so we can't carry out any major plans without him," said the master of the Vermillion-Azurite Hall. "After being severely injured by Immortal Jiuyi, the

Violet Gold Marquess was in closed-door cultivation for a long time. It seems he's full of resentment and is eager to make a big move now."

"Heh, I'd like to see what grand move he can make."

Chen Mingcang sensed the aura of the Violet Gold Marquess. Just as he was about to extend his divine sense in that direction, he was surprised to find the aura vanish almost instantly...

"Huh?" The master of the Vermillion-Azurite Hall looked puzzled. "The Violet Gold Marquess left already?"

Chapter 503: Esteemed Senior?

Fengya Mountain was located amid the Northern Regions' glaciers. One side of the mountain was rugged and rocky, while the other was an incredibly smooth, vertical cliff.

Suddenly, a drastic change occurred.

Rumble.

There was a loud sound like that of rumbling thunder, and the whole mountain shook violently. The tremor caused large amounts of snow, ice, and rocks to fall, forming an avalanche in the blink of an eye.

Amid the vibrations, a curtain of light descended between the heavens and the earth, looking as if the sky had been sliced open. The gleaming light curtain dropped next to the flat and smooth side of the mountain, resembling a mirror. The reflection of Fengya Mountain instantly appeared on that mirror-like light curtain.

Fengya Mountain had always seemed like one half of a mountain, but after merging with its reflection, it was finally whole. It now looked like a proper majestic snow-capped mountain.

"So, that's how it is..."

Chu Liang, who was babysitting, watched the whole thing happen from an icy mountain nearby. As he observed the phenomenon from the external perspective of an uninvolved party, he suddenly thought that the world was intriguing and unpredictable.

"That seems to be the entrance to a hidden realm!"

The smooth mountain wall of Fengya Mountain had not been split in half by a sword but by a hidden realm. Once the hidden realm was opened, the two sides of the mountain wall merged, forming a complete Fengya Mountain.

He immediately figured out why the Dark King Sect had been unable to find the corpse of Granny Meng's son despite having sealed off the mountain for so long. It was because the corpse had been hidden in the hidden half of Fengya Mountain!

And now, has it finally been found?

Beside him, little Jiang Guo didn't care about any of this. She languidly watched the shaking snow-capped mountain transform, probably thinking... That thing doesn't look yummy.

Initially, Chu Liang didn't want to get involved. As long as the Dark King Sect found the corpse, Granny Meng would have to show up. Once she did, the three sects and the Imperial Supervisory Bureau monitoring the situation would strike like lightning, ruining the Dark Long Sect's plan. None of that required Chu Liang to take action.

Nonetheless, a Buddhist chant suddenly rang out behind him. "Amitabha..."

The voice of the speaker was melodious yet heavy. As it echoed in his mind, Chu Liang suddenly found himself unable to move.

"Benefactor Jiang has indeed opened Fengya Mountain. We must hurry now."

"I only hope that the Noble Dharma keeps his word."

"Please rest assured, Benefactor Meng. My esteemed teacher does not give false promises."

As the two people spoke, they appeared before Chu Liang.

One of them was a short, chubby monk wearing a loose red and yellow robe. This person had not shaved his head; he had sparse short hair. There was a bald patch at the top of his head, in the

middle of his sparse hair. It was a smooth, reflective surface—comparable to the smooth cliff wall of Fengya Mountain before the transformation.

The monk had a very kind and honest-looking face. When sunlight fell on his head, it looked as though he was crowned with a halo, emanating the aura of Buddha.

The other person had a totally different vibe. She was a thin old lady with wrinkly skin and white hair. Nevertheless, her hair was meticulously styled, and her clothes were exquisite, giving some semblance of the beautiful woman she had likely been in her youth. Her gaze, however, was grim and fierce. She was shrouded in a dense aura of death, resembling a malicious ghost.

After hearing the monk's way of addressing her and then seeing her appearance, Chu Liang quickly realized that the main character of this whole affair had appeared!

Granny Meng...

Chu Liang wanted to send a message to his sect right away, but he found that he was frozen, unable to budge at all. That Buddhist chant seemed to have taken control of his soul, leaving him unable to move even a little.

The monk walked straight up to Chu Liang and picked up little Jiang Guo.

Surprisingly, the usually short-tempered little girl didn't resist. She just looked at Chu Liang and pointed at him.

"He'll be fine. He'll recover in a while," the monk said softly, patting the little girl's head to soothe her.

Without sparing another glance at Chu Liang, the monk lifted his foot to take a step. It landed on the ground when he reappeared several hundred zhang away. After a few more steps like that, the monk and the old lady headed toward Fengya Mountain, disappearing from Chu Liang's line of sight.

...

A while later, Chu Liang finally let out a long breath, collapsing onto the snow.

"Haaah..."

That monk's cultivation level was terrifyingly high. He had cast a divine skill so casually, yet it had left Chu Liang unable to move for such a long time.

He immediately sent the news back to his sect: It's highly likely that Granny Meng has entered the mountain with a strange and very powerful monk.

The three major sects sprang into action.

Naturally, they were not rushing over from where their sects were based. Long before this operation began, the cultivators from the three sects had already gathered at a secret location in the Northern Regions.

Just a short time later, beams of light filled the sky, flying in all directions. However, by the time they came looking for him, Chu Liang had already left the area.

The Whale-Riding Immortal had entrusted little Jiang Guo to Chu Liang, but he had let the child get taken. That meant he would have to give an explanation to the Whale-Riding Immortal. So, even if Chu Liang didn't have the power to get her back, he had to find out where she had been taken.

Meanwhile, Fengya Mountain was undergoing dramatic changes. The one who had opened the hidden realm was, of course, the Whale-Riding Immortal.

After pulling out the copper sword, he said to Luo Yao and Pushan, "It's going to get dangerous here soon. You two should leave first."

Then the Whale-Riding Immortal leaped out of the cave entrance. When Luo Yao and Pushan followed him out, they saw that the hidden realm had been opened, revealing the scene reflected in the mirror-like light curtain. It was then that they understood the Whale-Riding Immortal's intention.

They watched as the Whale-Riding Immortal stepped into the light curtain, sending a wave of ripples across it. Then he reappeared on the other half of the mountain.

Moments later, all of the Dark King Sect disciples who could move freely again sprang into action. Under their sect leader's orders, they rushed into the hidden realm.

A man appeared high on the mountain peak of Fengya Mountain. He was dressed in a black robe, and his hair was flying about in the wind, obscuring his face. Nevertheless, the overwhelming pressure he gave off was unmistakable.

The imposing figure of the Dark King Sect's leader stood up high.

...

Lu Chengchou had paid a great price to have the Dark King Sect attack the Mount Shu Sect. The most important part of that price was the Jiuli Hidden Realm, which contained the Breath of the Yellow Springs.

The Breath of the Yellow Springs could revive an ordinary person with an intact corporeal body for a thousand years and revive a cultivator for a hundred years. The higher the person's cultivation level was, the faster the spiritual qi from the Breath of the Yellow Springs would run out... It would not be wrong to call this effect of bringing the dead back to life a miracle, but that was it.

However, in the hands of the Dark King Sect's leader, the Breath of the Yellow Springs could do much more than that. He could use it to revive the True Form of Ksitigarbha from the dead!

Even if he would only be able to control the True Form of Ksitigarbha for a moment, that meant he could use the power of a ninth-realm cultivator for a moment! He could destroy the mortal realm in an instant!

Once he obtained the Breath of the Yellow Springs, the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten would fear the Dark King Sect. He could then take over the mortal realm and reform its power structure.

When the Dark King Sect raided the Mount Shu Sect, they lost the battle and suffered major losses. It did not matter to him though, as that had been within his expectations.

Moreover, compared to obtaining the Breath of the Yellow Springs, the loss of those low-level disciples was insignificant. As long as the top figures in the Dark King Sect remained formidable, there would never be a shortage of evildoers willing to join the sect.

However, when the Dark King Sect's leader allowed Granny Meng to examine the Breath of the Yellow Springs, she stole it.

...

The Dark King Sect's leader was truly furious this time. He was determined to use all the sect's manpower to retrieve the Breath of the Yellow Springs.

After his sect members entered the hidden realm, he waved his hand, and a black barrier covered the light curtain, preventing anyone else from entering.

He knew that Granny Meng's child was her only weakness. She had stolen the Breath of the Yellow Springs to revive her son. As long as he had control over the child, he could control Granny Meng.

By the time Chu Liang arrived at Fengya Mountain, the members of the Dark King Sect had already rushed inside. He was one step late; the Dark King Sect's leader had already sealed off the hidden realm.

If he did not use force to break through the black barrier, even Dimension Compression couldn't help him enter the hidden realm. However, using force would alert the Dark King Sect disciples on the other side.

Just as he was worrying about what to do to the barrier, a familiar figure suddenly appeared on the other side of the light curtain, with a flash of bright red clothing.

She looked out the mirror and called out to Chu Liang, "Esteemed Senior?"

Chapter 504: Stop Now

The sky over the snowy region seemed to crumble, overtaken by brilliant radiance for thousands of zhang.

Countless beams of light encircled Fengya Mountain from all directions, sealing it off completely. The disciples of the Dark King Sect who had not entered the hidden realm in time were killed on the spot.

Most of the Dark King Sect's members had already followed their sect leader into the hidden realm. The sect leader had even used a divine ability to seal the entrance of the hidden realm, blocking the light curtain with a black barrier.

The righteous cultivators bombarded the barrier frenziedly with their divine skills and enchanted tools, but all that did was cause ripples to break out across the barrier.

This barrier, which an eighth-realm Eminent One had conjured, seemed indestructible. But was that really the case?

A vicious and shrill screech echoed in the sky. "Caaaw!"

A giant three-legged bird shrouded in flames spiraled upward, spreading its wings to form a blazing sun! It heated up the vast snowfield instantly, melting the large swaths of ice and snow below.

Meanwhile, a glowing crescent-shaped treasure rose high into the sky, radiating bright rays of moonlight.

The sun and moon were both in the sky!

The Yu Dynasty had powerful cultivators under its command, but that was not the only reason the Yu Dynasty held a steady position as the ruling power. It was also because the Yu Dynasty had legendary artifacts for guarding the empire. The top ten artifacts in the Catalog of the Mortal World's Ten Thousand Treasures were in the hands of the Divine Nine and the Dark King Sect, but the imperial court controlled the three artifacts ranked after the top ten.

The Panyang Ancient Jade was ranked eleventh and an important treasure of the Xia Family. They had used it to establish their empire, and it was not to be used lightly. The Immortals' Talisman of Lunar Radiance and the Golden Crow's Soul Essence were ranked twelfth and thirteenth respectively. Both treasures were enshrined in the Imperial Supervisory Bureau.

The two legendary artifacts soaring into the sky now were the two that the Imperial Supervisory Bureau possessed.

The Immortals' Talisman of Lunar Radiance contained power that was as cold as ice. It could release endless beams of moonlight as swords, turning one sword into a myriad. This was equivalent to magnifying the range of a single sword countless times. When wielded by a master of the Dao of the Sword, the talisman could be used to instantly slash across thousands of li.

One of the three eighth-realm swordsmen in the mortal realm was in the Imperial Supervisory Bureau... and he might even be the best of the three. That person was the Imperial Supervisory Commissioner, Qi Yingxuan.

He was the one wielding the Immortals' Talisman of Lunar Radiance. Once the crescent moon rose to the sky, there would be nothing across the four seas and the nine provinces that he could not cut down. He would become a truly terrifying force.

The Golden Crow's Soul Essence was said to be refined from the souls of nine Golden Crows that had been shot down in ancient times. When the Golden Crow's Soul Essence was used, the power of the ancient Golden Crow would be reactivated for a brief period to conjure a sun to rise in the sky, burning with divine flames!

When these two treasures rose to the sky, they swept away the dense demonic qi on Fengya Mountain!

In the next second, two beams of light shot out simultaneously from the sun and the moon, striking the black barrier.

Boom!

The seemingly indestructible black barrier did not even shatter; it just melted away like the surrounding ice and snow, vanishing into nothingness.

...

Just before that attack, Chu Liang saw a familiar figure behind the black barrier. The person was a stunning woman in red. She was very clearly Enchantress Yi, whom Chu Liang had encountered in the past.

Back when Chu Liang's cultivation power was still weak, he had tricked her with a small ploy. The problem was that Chu Liang was currently dressed the same way as back then. He got caught red-handed.

Chu Liang was now powerful enough that he wouldn't necessarily fear her, but he was in a hurry to find little Jiang Guo and didn't want to get involved in a conflict.

With the barrier between them, Chu Liang couldn't hear how Yi Qiushui was addressing him, so he assumed she was cursing at him. After all, once she reported what happened to her teacher, she would have discovered that she had been tricked. Unless she was a fool, it was impossible she hadn't figured it out by now.

Thus, Chu Liang decided to avoid her and try to break through the barrier from another direction. If that didn't work, he would let Tuntun out to take a couple of bites of the barrier.

Nevertheless, before he could make a move, the two treasures—the sun and moon hanging high in the sky—unleashed their power, melting the barrier in an instant.

With the barrier gone, Chu Liang's gaze met Yi Qiushui's. Chu Liang's expression showed that he had not prepared for this.

This... How awkward.

Chu Liang's mind raced, thinking about what he should do.

Right then, Yi Qiushui called out, "Esteemed Senior! We meet again."

Huh?

Chu Liang had been ready for her to curse at him, so hearing her call him "Esteemed Senior" was truly unexpected.

Could it be that she still hasn't realized I tricked her? Could she really be that foolish?

Since Yi Qiushui wasn't being hostile, Chu Liang decided not to complicate matters.

He put on a stern face and asked in a deep voice, "I'm looking for a little girl in a red coat. Have you seen her?"

"Granny Meng appeared just now!" Yi Qiushui replied. "My esteemed teacher and the others have gone after her. There seemed to be a little girl by her side. I'll take you there!"

Chu Liang sincerely said, "Thank you."

At the same time, he couldn't help but sigh inwardly. As expected, there are still many good people in the diabolical sect.

...

In the center of the hidden realm, there was a cave sealed with Mysterious Ice, and inside the cave was a shadowy figure.

The Whale-Riding Immortal was the first to arrive at the cave. With a wave of his right hand, he deftly carved out a chunk of Mysterious Ice from the sealed cave. There was a black human figure inside the ice! It had vividly detailed features and an intact form, seeming as if it were alive.

It turned out that Granny Meng had placed her son's corpse in this cave, inside the hidden realm opposite Fengya Mountain. She had filled the cave with water, and the water froze into Mysterious Ice in no time, preserving the body for ten thousand years.

Before the Whale-Riding Immortal could extract the corpse from the ice, someone else descended onto the mountain peak. It was the Dark King Sect's leader, clad in a black robe.

He knew that the barrier he had cast wouldn't hold for long, but all he needed was a moment to seize control of the corpse. Yet, someone had beaten him to it.

"It's you again," the Dark King Sect's leader said, his tone filled with concealed anger. He stared at the Whale-Riding Immortal. "Who are you, and why do you repeatedly thwart my plans?"

Whenever a new eighth-realm cultivator attained the Heavenly Origin, other masters of the Heavenly Origin would sense it. In other words, the eighth-realm cultivators in the mortal realm had some awareness of each other.

Yet, the Dark King Sect's leader did not recognize the man standing before him.

When the Dark King Sect raided the Mount Shu Sect, the world saw the sword strike that protected Baize as Chu Liang's doing. However, the dark King Sect's leader knew that the true source of the power behind that strike had been the Whale-Riding Immortal.

The failed raid had been Lu Chengchou's problem, so the Dark King Sect's leader hadn't bothered looking into the matter. But now, this person was once again trying to sabotage his plans. The Dark King Sect's leader would not tolerate it this time.

He formed a hand seal; he was ready to summon the True Form of Ksitigarbha at any moment. The Dark King Sect's leader intended to unleash the power of a Heavenly Origin Terminator, delivering a thunderous strike onto the person before him. He planned to leave swiftly before the righteous immortal sect members entered the hidden realm.

The Whale-Riding Immortal noticed the movements of the Dark King Sect's leader, but he remained unafraid.

He just put on a small smile and replied, "You don't know who I am, but I know who you are. Not only do I know your name, but I also know that you are an incomplete person who cannot find yourself..."

"Nonsense!" the Dark King Sect's leader shouted.

Yin qi surged wildly around him!

Just as a fight was about to erupt between the two masters of the Heavenly Origin, a voice rang out from the distance. "Amitabha..."

This Buddhist chant caused the sect leader of the Dark King Sect to halt abruptly.

Granny Meng and the bald monk accompanying her arrived at the cave. The monk was carrying a little girl in a bright red coat in his arms. This combination made for a rather peculiar sight.

If it wasn't for his monk's robe, they might have looked like grandparents taking their granddaughter shopping for Chinese New Year's goods.

"Lin Poyun, do you recognize him?" Granny Meng yelled, looking at the sect leader of the Dark King Sect.

Lin Poyun, the sect leader of the Dark King Sect, glanced at the kind-looking monk beside Granny Meng. He took a couple of steps back and then asked quietly, "Who is he?"

"Amitabha," the monk said unhurriedly. "I am but a humble monk, Wu'e—a disciple of the Noble Dharma."

"You intend to use him to disturb my Dao heart?" Lin Poyun sneered at Granny Meng. "I have treated you well all these years, yet you're betraying me like this. How am I supposed to tolerate you?"

"You can't even tolerate yourself, so how could you tolerate me?" Granny Meng replied with a cold sneer.

As she spoke, the cold wind atop the peak suddenly grew fierce. It lifted the hood of Lin Poyun's black robe and revealed his young face.

Lin Poyun appeared to be less than thirty years old. He had long hair that was flying about in the wind and delicate brows that made him look rather feminine. Additionally, there was some malevolent qi around him.

This was likely the first time that Lin Poyun—the Dark King Sect's leader whose name shook the world—was revealing his appearance to the outside world.

Strangely, Lin Poyun and Monk Wu'e looked quite alike. One was a young man with smooth, delicate skin and long flowing hair, while the other was a middle-aged man with rough skin and a gleaming bald head. Yet, their facial features were strikingly similar.

Anyone observing them up close would be able to see that there was at least an eighty percent resemblance between them. They looked almost like the same person, just separated by twenty years.

"Sect Leader Lin, listen to my humble advice," Monk Wu'e said with a sigh. "Stop now. Forces from righteous sects have gathered outside."

Chapter 505: They Can't All Be, Right?

"Back then, you were just a village boy, nearly made into a puppet by Xuan Yinzi. I saw your immense potential and, out of compassion, persuaded him to take you on as a disciple.

"After that, you quickly rose within the sect while the opposite happened to Xuan Yinzi. He was losing the hearts of the people. At that point, I noticed your intentions to revolt and offered to help you approach the True Form of Ksitigarbha.

"I truly didn't expect you to be so ruthless. To gain the recognition of the True Form of Ksitigarbha, you severed a part of yourself, discarding all your goodness and becoming a vessel of pure evil. From that moment on, you earned the acknowledgment of the True Form of Ksitigarbha, severely wounding Xuan Yinzi in the fight for the Great Dao of the Profound Darkness, ultimately achieving Heavenly Origin.

"You promised me that once you comprehended the Great Dao of the Profound Darkness, you would help me resurrect my son. But when you had the opportunity to do so, you broke your promise."

Granny Meng confronted the sect leader of the Dark King Sect with a stern and chilling look.

"Lin Poyun, since I helped you ascend to this position, I also have the power to take you down. You probably didn't expect that the remnant of goodness you severed back then would survive and evolve into a mortal of pure goodness, later becoming a disciple of Noble Dharma at the Holy Mountain in the Northern Regions."

The bald monk alongside her watched with eyes full of empathy and compassion.

No one could have guessed that the kind-hearted and benevolent Master Wu'e of Holy Mountain was actually the infamous sect leader of the Dark King Sect.

After becoming a disciple of Noble Dharma, Monk Wu'e devoted himself to cultivation and attained the power of a seventh-realm Eminent One.

If it were an ordinary seventh-realm cultivator, the sect leader of the Dark King Sect wouldn't have any reason to fear this monk. However, he felt that this monk was more challenging to deal with than any cultivator who had attained the Heavenly Origin.

From the first moment he saw the monk, he felt a surge of thoughts infiltrating his mind, as if another consciousness with its own reasoning was attempting to take control of his mind.

"No... Impossible." The sect leader of the Dark King Sect shook his head vigorously. "Even if good and evil repel each other, I should be the one to devour you. How can your consciousness dominate mine? It must be Noble Dharma; that old fool must have done something somehow."

"I promised Noble Dharma that I would give half of the Breath of the Yellow Springs to the Whale-Riding Immortal and use the other half to resurrect my son. After that, I will become a nun and cultivate on the Holy Mountain, no longer concerning myself with any affairs of the diabolical sect," Granny Meng said, her voice as cold as the biting wind. "Lin Poyun, if you do not leave now, you will die."

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh.

Within the time it took to say those few words, multiple beams of light descended upon the scene. The hall masters of the Four Halls of Darkness arrived, all looking on in disbelief at what was happening.

"Heheh..." The sect leader of the Dark King Sect chuckled softly twice.

Today marked yet another severe blow to the diabolical sect.

Since the battle at Mount Shu, the Dark King Sect had yet to regain its strength, and now this setback had once again plunged it back into a dire situation.

He didn't care about any of his subordinates; as long as he obtained the Breath of the Yellow Springs, it wouldn't matter if all these small fry died.

However, in light of the current situation, with the righteous sects already present and Monk Wu'e influencing from the sidelines, even with the True Form of Ksitigarbha, he couldn't accomplish much. No matter how unwilling he was, he could only accept this defeat.

"Noble Dharma? Whale-Riding Immortal?" He directed his piercing gaze at Granny Meng, Monk Wu'e, and the Whale-Riding Immortal. "I will remember you."

With that, the sect leader of the Dark King Sect waved his sleeve sharply, "We're leaving!"

Boom!

In an instant, the sky behind him split open, revealing a massive black hole that swallowed him whole. When he disappeared, the masters of the four halls were still confused. They remained uncertain about what was happening, but with the sect leader gone, they had no choice but to follow.

As the disciples of the Dark King Sect prepared to confront the righteous sects, they gazed up at the enormous black hole in the sky and realized that their leader had escaped once again.

Immediately, they quickly scrambled to enter the black hole in the air.

In an instant, their forces fell into chaos, and the righteous cultivators pursued them closely, striking down the diabolical cultivators like a relentless rainstorm.

The Dark King Sect had endured two significant battles, both resulting in devastating defeats. It seemed unlikely they would regroup any time soon. However, with the legendary artifact and an eighth-realm cultivator, they would certainly rise again.

"It's a pity that we can't keep him here this time," the Whale-Riding Immortal said. "He will probably cause more trouble in the future."

"It's my fault. My cultivation level is not high enough," Monk Wu'e replied. "If I were an eighth-realm cultivator like you, we could have subdued him together."

"He has the True Form of Ksitigarbha, making it incredibly difficult for us to hold him here," the Whale-Riding Immortal remarked. "Unless another cultivator who has attained the Heavenly Origin and has a legendary artifact comes to our aid, it simply can't be done. You shouldn't push yourself too hard. If you forcibly use the connection between you and him to subdue him, you would also be affected. If he vanishes in that moment, you might no longer be the Wu'e you are now."

Monk Wu'e pondered for a moment before he let out another sigh and murmured, "Amitabha."

"There's no need to discuss further," Granny Meng replied, her eyes filled with excitement as she fixed her gaze on the figure trapped in the Mysterious Ice[1]. "Shall we get started?"

She retrieved a small porcelain bottle from her bosom and gently opened the lid. A surge of pure and fierce yin qi rushed out, causing countless ghosts in the mountains to wail as the heavens and earth began to tremble!

...

"Ah... I will have my revenge, I want you all dead!"

On a glacier a hundred li away, Violet Gold Marquess lay in an ice cave with half of his body... gone.

With just the left half of his body remaining, he had lost significantly more than before. In addition to his shoulder and chest, he had lost a leg and half of his face.

With a seemingly casual flick of his finger, the Whale-Riding Immortal had unleashed an unparalleled immortal art. Its destructive force was somewhat less than Immortal Jiuyi's Divine Mirror of the Eight Trigrams.

However, the Violet Gold Marquess had managed to survive the attack of Immortal Jiuyi because he had suffered only a fraction of the damage thanks to the White Silver King, who had been in front of him and had absorbed the bulk of the impact.

But today, he bore the full brunt of the strike.

Countless dark purple fleshy sprouts attempted to twist and grow, but the intense golden light dissolved them away. The excruciating pain forced the Violet Gold Marquess to howl once more!

After Immortal Jiuyi had destroyed his left half, it took him a whole year to regain full health. Yet, on this very day of his emergence, he lost the right half.

What kind of earthly suffering was this?

Violet Gold Marquess spat out a mouthful of blood.

His injuries were so severe that he could barely move, making the restoration of his body seem like a distant fantasy. He urgently needed a precious herb to replenish his true essence and qi. Without immediate help, he might die right here.

With no other choice, he could only seek help from others.

As the creator of the Soul Subjugator Token, he possessed the highest authority over it. He could sense any token nearby and send messages to specific holders.

At this moment, only three living individuals on the icefield still had the Soul Subjugator Token.

They were Fifty-Eighth, Fifty-Ninth, and Sixtieth.

Among them, Fifty-Ninth and Sixtieth stood alongside the eighth-realm cultivator who had injured him, clearly having betrayed him.

Only Fifty-Eighth was his sole hope...

He had personally collected every soul flame on the Soul Subjugator Token to guarantee the loyalty of each of his subordinates.

It baffled him why those two would dare to betray him. The only explanation he could think of was that they had been threatened by that eighth-realm cultivator.

As this thought crossed his mind, he ruthlessly extinguished the soul flames of Fifty-Ninth and Sixtieth. With few Soul Subjugators remaining, he had now snuffed out two more. In doing so, the souls of those two traitors were utterly obliterated.

Two traitors are already a lot; it's unlikely that all three of them could be traitors, right? the Violet Gold Marquess thought.

He had reviewed the past messages in the interdimensional domain of the Soul Subjugator Token and it was obvious to him that there was something wrong with Fifty-Ninth and Sixtieth.

They were weird, displaying obvious signs of betrayal.

However, Fifty-Eighth appeared to be a calm, stable, and completely normal Soul Subjugator.

In reality, it was difficult for Violet Gold Marquess to fully trust a subordinate he had never met. But who else could he contact now?

If he remained here until nightfall and encountered an icefield demonic beast or a ghost, he would surely die.

The Violet Gold Marquess had a backup plan: he would inform Fifty-Eighth of a location not far from his current position. If Fifty-Eighth arrived alone, he would disclose his actual location. However, if there were others following, he would conceal his presence.

After a thoughtful pause, the Violet Gold Marquess sent a private message to Fifty-Eighth.

[Violet Gold Marquess]: "I have suffered some minor injuries. Bring some pills and spirit plants to me; I will be waiting at the top of the glacier, eighty li east of Fengya Mountain."

[Violet Gold Marquess]: "The Eastern-Route Guider has died. If you succeed this time, I will appoint you as the new Guider."

[Violet Gold Marquess]: "Proceed with caution."

Chapter 506: Big Brother Berry

It was a mess on Fengya Mountain.

While the disciples of the diabolical sect rushed forward to block the attacks of the righteous cultivators, Enchantress Yi led Chu Liang in the opposite direction, heading toward the cave where the corpse was hidden.

Some disciples of the Dark King Sect noticed Chu Liang heading in the opposite direction and were about to scold him. However, upon seeing Enchantress Yi dressed in red, they didn't dare utter a single word.

Without any mishaps, they arrived at the center of the hidden realm just in time to witness the Sect Leader of the Dark King Sect opening the black void and escaping into it.

Enchantress Yi was shocked. "The sect leader has fled... again..."

"Then you should leave first. Thank you," Chu Liang said.

As the disciples of the diabolical sect vanished into the black void, pursued by the righteous cultivators, Yi Qiushui, who had just arrived, was in the perfect spot to make her escape.

"Alright." Before she made her escape, she said to Chu Liang in a solemn tone, "Honored senior, you must come see my teacher."

"I will," Chu Liang replied, nodding in agreement. He had no choice but to agree.

With that, Yi Qiushui flew into the sky and left.

Chu Liang pressed on alone. Upon reaching the peak outside the cave, he was taken aback by the scene unfolding before him.

The Whale-Riding Immortal had already restored his original appearance, and the bald monk who had taken Jiang Guo, along with the elderly woman, were right beside him.

At that moment, Granny Meng was gently retrieving her son's body from the ice coffin. He appeared to be a thin and elegant young man. Then, she took half of the Breath of the Yellow Springs from the porcelain bottle and slowly infused it into his body.

The other half was handed to the Whale-Riding Immortal, who gently injected the misty vapor into the crown of Jiang Guo's head.

Swoosh—

As the light radiated, the wails of ghosts from all directions intensified.

The righteous cultivators outside, who had just driven away the diabolical sect, suddenly found themselves confronted by a massive horde of fierce and malevolent spirits.

Immediately, they started fighting again.

Fortunately, after a brief period, both had absorbed their respective portions of the Breath of the Yellow Springs.

It remained uncertain whether the corpse could be revived, as it showed no signs of movement.

Monk Wu'e then said, "He has been dead for a long time. We can't be sure if his yang soul[1] can truly return to his body. Let's take him back to the mountain for observation."

"Alright," Granny Meng replied, with no choice but to agree.

As the Breath of the Yellow Springs merged with Jiang Guo, she underwent a remarkable transformation. The yin qi that surrounded her small frame dissipated, and the dullness in her eyes vanished, replaced by the vibrant and spirited gaze of a young girl.

"Ah..." She opened her eyes and stared at the Whale-Riding Immortal, as if she wanted to say something.

The Whale-Riding Immortal looked over at Chu Liang. He held the little girl's hand and took a gentle step forward, appearing in front of Chu Liang.

"Why did you come here?" he asked.

"I was chasing after the two of them. They came and took Jiang Guo away," Chu Liang said, pointing at the two elderly figures.

He only realized now that the Whale-Riding Immortal was with those two elderly figures.

The Whale-Riding Immortal smacked himself on the forehead as he said, "I forgot to tell you!"

He continued explaining, "When Granny Meng visited the Holy Mountain, I happened to be there and made a deal with her. She would give me half of the Breath of the Yellow Springs, and I would help her find her son's body."

"And she..." Chu Liang glanced at Jiang Guo again.

The little girl was smiling brightly at him, calling out clearly, "Big Bro Berry!"

So she isn't mentally challenged.

She's just not entirely alive?

But does this little girl really think my name is Berry?

A series of thoughts raced through Chu Liang's mind.

Before Chu Liang could correct her, the Whale-Riding Immortal spoke up, "I'm sure you've sensed that something wasn't right with her. She actually died thousands of years ago. An ancestor of my family, the Jiang Family, couldn't bear the loss of his daughter and made numerous attempts to resurrect her. In the end, he created the Ba in the Immortals' Marsh, and her body transformed into a seventh-realm Cataclysmic Ba.

"I have done everything I can to prevent her nature as a Cataclysmic Ba from causing disaster in the world. Yet, all my efforts have only served to alleviate and delay the inevitable. Aside from making her sleep, there was no better solution. However, with this Breath of Yellow Springs, I should be able to keep the world safe from the effects of the Cataclysmic Ba for quite some time."

"So, you really are Jiang Tiankuo, an esteemed senior of Mount Shu. I've heard my teacher and Senior Aunt Yan speak of you," Chu Liang said.

"Haha," the Whale-Riding Immortal laughed heartily. "I didn't mean to hide; I have my reasons. When the opportunity arises, I will return to Mount Shu to meet them."

"They're not in a hurry, but there is someone... Esteemed senior, don't you want to meet her now?" Chu Liang said slowly. "This time, all of Mount Shu's elite disciples are here. Senior Sister Jiang should be present as well. I know... she has a lot to ask you."

Jiang Tiankuo's smile faded. He looked toward the battlefield, where the righteous cultivators were battling numerous creatures of yin energy. After a moment of silence, he replied, "I'll think about it."

With that, he held Jiang Guo's hand and said, "I'll take them back first. If you encounter any difficulties, you can mention my name on the Holy Mountain at the Northern Regions."

As he finished speaking, he and the others turned into a gust of wind and left.

In the vast mountains, Chu Liang found himself suddenly alone.

At that moment, the Soul Subjugator Token in his chest began to vibrate.

He focused his divine sense into the token to check the message and saw the name of Violet Gold Marquess!

...

When he first obtained the Soul Subjugator Token, his goal was to capture this big fish.

But then, he never expected that he would thwart the diabolical sect's evil plans through this token. The information he gained was far more valuable than the Violet Gold Marquess himself.

Now that there was news of him, he certainly couldn't let this opportunity slip away.

Chu Liang quickly used the United Hearts Jade to send a message to Jiang Yuebai. Previously, all his communications with Mount Shu happened through this jade, with Jiang Yuebai serving as his point of contact.

Amidst the current chaos, locating the elders of Mount Shu would be challenging. The quickest way to relay the message was, of course, through Jiang Yuebai.

[Chu Liang]: "The Violet Gold Marquess sent a message asking me to bring him precious medicine. I suspect he is severely injured. Prepare the elders. If I send a message, be ready to rush over and provide support."

[Jiang Yuebai]: "Hmm?"

[Jiang Yuebai]: "Are you planning to go alone?"

[Chu Liang]: "Given how cunning the Violet Gold Marquess is, it's very likely that the location he provided is a facade. If I bring others with me, he will know and will definitely not show up."

After a moment of thought, Chu Liang deduced the trick the Violet Gold Marquess might be using.

The Violet Gold Marquess claimed that he was slightly injured. But with his cultivation level, would he really need to seek help from a mere subordinate for a minor wound? Most likely, he was severely injured, and his life could be at stake.

Only then would he behave in this way.

Following this line of thought, he would definitely be very cautious. The location he provided was likely a ruse, and he would be watching from nearby. If anything seemed wrong, he would keep himself hidden.

When dealing with this old fox, one had to think two steps ahead.

[Jiang Yuebai]: "But this is too dangerous..."

After all, the Violet Gold Marquess was a seventh-realm expert, and it was natural for her to worry about Chu Liang going alone.

[Chu Liang]: "It's fine. As long as my identity isn't exposed, he has no reason to attack me. This place isn't far. As long as you come as soon as you receive my message, I won't necessarily be in danger."

[Jiang Yuebai]: "Be careful."

"..."

After just a few words, Chu Liang soared away from the chaotic battlefield, making his way toward the glacier dozens of li away. He soon arrived at the location the Violet Gold Marquess had mentioned.

He extended his divine sense far and wide, scanning the area but finding nothing unusual.

So he sent another message and waited patiently. As long as the Violet Gold Marquess confirmed that he held the Soul Subjugator Token and had come alone, he would likely reveal the true location soon.

[Fifty-Eighth]: "Marquess, your subordinate has arrived."

Chapter 507: Didn't Ask You to Come Now

The Violet Gold Marquess left peacefully.

...

In the ancient cave beneath the glacier, the Violet Gold Marquess felt a chill spread throughout his entire body... no, half of his body.

He could feel his qi and blood rapidly draining from the wound, despite his best efforts to use his divine abilities to seal it. However, the foundational qi of the eighth-realm cultivator continued to consume everything within him.

If he weren't trying so hard to heal the wounds, he would likely be unable to preserve even half of his body.

However, for an Eminent One like the Violet Gold Marquess, as long as they had not yet died, they could restore themselves to life, even if they were reduced to a pile of blood.

This was the exact reason why Eminent Ones at a high cultivation level would cultivate foundational qi that could prevent healing. Of course, there were other methods. For example, Di Nufeng would just burn it away entirely.

Even if you possess the ability of Last Drop of Blood, you still need to have a drop of blood, right?

The injury inflicted by the Whale-Riding Immortal was even worse than the one he had previously sustained from Immortal Jiuyi. The golden energy from the strike continued to gnaw at the Violet Gold Marquess. He was already struggling to stop the injury from spreading and he could barely exert additional effort to heal his wounds.

If he had a large supply of precious herbs to continuously replenish his qi and blood, he could use his foundational qi to fight back against the spreading injury. It would take him some time, but he would be able to stop its progression.

However, during his last closed-door cultivation, he had depleted all his reserves to repair his body.

After the attacks, he barely had any Soul Subjugators left. With so few people available to gather spirit plants and precious herbs for him, he had none remaining in reserve.

At this moment, he could only place his hopes on Fifty-Eighth.

If Fifty-Eighth could bring precious herbs to save his life at this moment, the Violet Gold Marquess would be willing not only to promote him as a Guider but also to recognize him as his own "father."

At that moment, he truly felt life slipping away from him!

As he anxiously waited, a dark figure finally descended onto the glacier outside.

He's here!

The Violet Gold Marquess was filled with joy, as if he had clutched a much-needed lifeline.

But he didn't act hastily. Instead, he carefully suppressed his aura and assessed the situation there with his divine sense. As a seventh-realm cultivator specializing in soul arts, his range of divine sense was significantly broader than that of other great experts.

That's why he was confident in using this method.

However, what the Violet Gold Marquess saw made his heart skip a beat.

The figure that landed was clad in a black robe, unmistakably the same Eminent One who had nearly obliterated him with a mere flick of his finger!

Why is it him?!

The Violet Gold Marquess's remaining half of his chest heaved violently. He quickly suppressed his aura, stopping the fluctuation of his foundational qi, not daring to make any sound.

An eighth-realm Eminent One possessed an even more powerful divine sense; he dared not make the slightest movement.

At the same time, he silently prayed, hoping this person was merely passing by and not here in search of him. But why did he carry the aura of the Soul Subjugator Token?

He can't possibly be Fifty-Eighth, right? Impossible... absolutely impossible! I must be mistaken; my divine soul is injured and my senses have become muddled.

Then, he saw the person take out the Soul Subjugator Token.

Shortly after, he received a message.

[Fifty-Eighth]: "Marquess, your subordinate has arrived."

Huh?

The Violet Gold Marquess's pupils widened in despair. Shit. He is Fifty-Eighth.

It felt like a non-swimmer falling into the water, clinging to a log to stay afloat, only to realize it was a fierce crocodile.

So the three Soul Subjugators I selected to infiltrate the White-Bone Hall as my undercover agents turned out to be actual undercover agents? What kind of sick joke is this?

He was so angry he wanted to punch the wall, but he neither had the strength nor dared to move.

If he made the slightest noise and alerted this person, his life would be truly ended by a mere flick of the finger!

At that moment, the Violet Gold Marquess could only wait for Fifty-Eighth to leave and then look for another way to survive.

As the saying went, "If one survives a great disaster, fortune will follow." As long as he made it through today's crisis, he would surely rise again!

But as that thought flashed through his mind, the Violet Gold Marquess felt uncertain once more. He had already faced a great disaster before, losing a whole chunk of his body previously.

He had just emerged from closed-door cultivation! It seemed more likely that it would be surviving one disaster only to face another.

At that moment, he recalled all the evil deeds he had committed throughout his life—the innocent lives he had taken, the mountains of corpses and seas of blood recorded in the Netherworld Codex. Could this be retribution?

He couldn't help but silently pray, Heavens, if you spare my life this time, I, the Violet Gold Marquess, will surely turn over a new leaf!

As soon as this thought crossed his mind, he heard the sound of heavy footsteps approaching.

Bang.

A massive wolf head came into view. The wolf stood at the entrance of the cave, furious that some creature had intruded upon its territory.

No wonder there was such a hidden cave here. So it's the lair of an icefield demonic beast? The Violet Gold Marquess thought.

"Roar..." The giant wolf let out a low, muffled growl.

The Violet Gold Marquess stared at it with his one remaining eye. If he were in his prime, he could have killed this demonic beast, which appeared to be between the fourth and fifth realms, with just a glance.

But now, his strength was sapped by his severe injuries, leaving him nearly immobile. If he risked everything for a desperate counterattack, he might just succeed.

However, doing so would create fluctuations in his foundational qi, which would surely be detected by that eighth-realm Eminent One, putting his life at risk.

So, he couldn't move. His only chance of survival lay in the hope that this wolf demon wouldn't eat him—or, better yet, that it might bring him some treasures of nature.

Thinking this, he fixed his gaze on the wolf demon with his one eye, trying his best to show a warm and friendly smile with the remaining half of his mouth.

Initially, the wolf demon hesitated, but now the fury in its eyes was fully ignited.

This unwelcome guest had not only invaded my lair but had even dared to provoke me! These were the thoughts racing through the wolf's mind.

“Roar——”

...

Dusk was approaching, and the howls of ghosts and wolves echoed all around.

Though the human population was low in the Northern Regions icefield, it was not without life. The icefield was home to numerous demonic beasts, making it a dangerous place at night.

Chu Liang had been waiting for so long that his body started to stiffen.

He didn't dare make any unusual movements, fearing that the Violet Gold Marquess would be suspicious. But it had already been half a day; surely any doubts should have dissipated by now, right?

You might not be in a hurry to heal, but I'm in a rush to get home for dinner!

Occasionally, he received messages of concern from Jiang Yuebai through the United Hearts Jade, asking about his situation. However, since the Violet Gold Marquess still hadn't appeared, Chu Liang was reluctant to leave.

The situation remained deadlocked until almost nightfall.

Everything at Fengya Mountain had ended, and the members of the major sects had returned home. Only the members of the Mount Shu Sect remained, waiting for news from Chu Liang.

This Violet Gold Marquess is too damn patient, Chu Liang thought.

After sending several messages without receiving a reply, Chu Liang finally decided to give up. He asked Jiang Yuebai to inform the elders of the Mount Shu Sect to carefully search within a hundred li around his location for any signs of foundational qi fluctuations.

Streaks of light scoured the area for a while, but no discoveries were made. In the distance, a streak of light descended, revealing Jiang Yuebai's figure on the icefield.

"Looks like he got away. That scoundrel from the diabolical sect is truly cunning," Chu Liang said with a sense of resignation.

"You did great this time," Jiang Yuebai said with a smile. Dressed in a gown with a ring of pure white fur around the neck, she continued, her eyes gleaming with pride, "You ruined the evil plan of the diabolical sect, inflicting significant losses on the Dark King Sect. The Discipline Master mentioned that these diabolical cultivators won't be able to cause any more problems for a while, and it's all thanks to you."

As she spoke, Chu Liang could see the moonlight reflecting off the vast white icefield.

"It was our team effort," Chu Liang said with a smile. After a moment, he added, "I ran into Whale-Riding Senior again. He confirmed that he really is... Jiang Tiankuo."

"Ah." Jiang Yuebai's smile faltered for a moment, her gaze shifting as she said softly, "I knew it was him."

"He said he had his reasons for not being able to show himself openly," Chu Liang explained. "I think once he's done with all his tasks, he'll come see you at Mount Shu."

"Let him be," Jiang Yuebai said, her gaze dimming slightly.

Seeing her expression, Chu Liang felt a sudden pang of sympathy. He didn't know what it was like to be abandoned by one's parents; he had never experienced it himself, but he imagined it must be very painful.

However, when he saw the sorrow on Jiang Yuebai's face, he couldn't help but step forward and gently hold her hand, saying, "It's okay; everything will be alright."

Jiang Yuebai's shoulders trembled, and for a moment, it was unclear what thoughts crossed her mind. She remained silent and still, as if frozen in place.

Chu Liang's face appeared calm, but his heart pounded so hard that he felt it might burst from his chest.

The vast icefield stretched endlessly for miles, the moonlight casting a frosty glow over everything. They stood so close that he could feel her warm breath mingling with the crisp, chilly air.

Other than that accident on the stage, this was the first time Chu Liang had been so close to Jiang Yuebai.

Suddenly, Chu Liang felt he needed to be braver.

He realized this could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. If he let it slip away now, who knew when they would have a chance to be in such an atmosphere again?

So, he leaned closer to Jiang Yuebai's ear and whispered, "I—"

He had barely uttered a single word when his pupils suddenly dilated, and panic flashed in his eyes. He stepped back immediately.

Sensing his change, Jiang Yuebai finally looked up and said, “You—”

She had barely uttered a word when Chu Liang stammered, "Esteemed sen—ah, U-uncle Jiang."

Jiang Yuebai abruptly turned around and saw a figure standing in the moonlight behind them. She had no idea when he had arrived.

The figure was tall and handsome, with a weathered face and a complex expression—it was none other than Whale-Riding Immortal.

“I...” The usually carefree Whale-Riding Immortal appeared a bit nervous at that moment. He wanted to look at Jiang Yuebai but hesitated, ultimately directing his gaze toward Chu Liang.

His gaze at Chu Liang conveyed a myriad of emotions: self-control, anger, disdain, and confusion over what to do next.

The Whale-Riding Immortal twisted his wrist repeatedly. Was he contemplating chopping someone into pieces? No one could tell.

The Whale-Riding Immortal continued, “I thought about it, and you were right. I should come see her...”

Chu Liang’s expression grew a bit numb, his eyes filled with a mix of nervousness, relief, disappointment, and a hint of regret. For a moment, he felt like crying but found no tears.

He screamed inwardly, Uncle, I asked you to come see her, but I didn't mean now...

Chapter 508: You Wouldn't Say No, Right?

“Well, I’ll be damned!” Chu Liang muttered, recalling his earlier words. He felt the urge to punch himself for being so unnecessary, blurting out that extra sentence.

“Haaaaaa...” He let out a heavy sigh.

Now that the father and daughter were talking over there, Chu Liang felt like an outsider who needed to step aside... though, in truth, he was indeed an outsider.

As he left, Chu Liang caught a glimpse of Jiang Yuebai's expression—it seemed rather complicated. She didn't look happy as she stared at Jiang Tiankuo. Still, Chu Liang knew she had been anticipating this meeting for a long time.

So deep down, he was happy for her.

If only it had happened at a different time...

With this thought in mind, Chu Liang wandered slowly beyond the ten-mile radius. Suddenly, a series of guttural beastly roars echoed in the distance, and a faint, blood-stained aura drifted toward him on the wind.

What's going on? Something's not right, Chu Liang thought.

Although there were quite a few demonic beasts on this icefield, their territories were clearly defined, and interactions were minimal. Large-scale gatherings and battles were rare.

It was unusual to smell such a strong scent of blood.

He became cautious and flew in that direction, extending his divine sense far ahead.

As he drew near, he spotted four or five large demonic beast corpses sprawled messily in front of a concealed cave.

Each corpse appeared mangled. As the scorching demon blood flowed onto the icy surface, it immediately solidified into ice, releasing wisps of steam into the air.

The scent of blood attracted more and more demonic beasts. They arrived in search of food, fiercely snarling and biting at each other in a competition for food, resulting in a cacophony of noise.

He cautiously approached the cave entrance, only to be met with a shocking scene.

At the edge of the cave lay a... No! It was half a corpse.

The blood-soaked armor and half-dried blood formed a ghastly sight. Yet, the golden skeleton beneath the flesh revealed that this person was far from ordinary.

This was the skeleton of a seventh-realm Eminent One!

Immediately, someone came to mind. Although the battle happened today, he had not heard of another seventh-realm Eminent One dying. Could this be the Violet Gold Marquess himself?

The Guardian of the diabolical sect who claimed that he had only suffered "minor injuries."

No wonder he didn't take the bait. Was I really in a contest of patience with a dead man? Thank goodness I didn't keep waiting. If I had, I would still be stuck here even after the Ji Family's competition ended.

All the demonic beasts lying outside the cave had likely tried to eat this dying man only to be killed by him. However, in this process, the Violet Gold Marquess must have exhausted his last bit of qi.

Out of caution, Chu Liang didn't immediately approach to check. He controlled the Dustless Sword and stabbed the body a few times. Given how severely mauled and gored it was, the body definitely wouldn't mind a few extra strikes.

After observing for a while and seeing that the other remained motionless and lifeless, Chu Liang finally stepped forward to confirm the identity.

He stood at the cave entrance and raised his hand, channeling a surge of foundational qi to flip over the body lying face down.

The remaining half of its face was revealed. With one eye wide open, the expression conveyed a sense of resignation and an unresolved grudge in death.

How pitiful, Chu Liang thought.

Chu Liang had just let down his guard, believing the man was truly dead when, suddenly, a spark of soul flame erupted from that wide-open eye!

Whoosh—

The light quickly pierced Chu Liang's eye!

In actuality, Chu Liang had been cautious enough.

Even if this body belonged to a seventh-realm Eminent One, considering the severe injuries it had sustained and the time that had passed since all its qi was depleted, it should have been dead.

However, there was something extraordinary about this body. He was the Violet Gold Marquess. The Violet Gold Marquess of the diabolical sect had studied the Dao of Soul for a century, and in terms of soul strength, very few seventh-realm Eminent Ones could compete with him.

Even though his body had been dead for half a day, a wisp of soul flame still lingered! The Violet Gold Marquess had indeed died, but his soul remained intact!

Chu Liang could hear the Violet Gold Marquess's frantic roar echoing in his mind.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!! I will take you down with me!"

...

Boom!

Chu Liang felt a tremendous force wrenching open his head as the Violet Gold Marquess's broken form invaded his forehead, the seat of his celestial spirit.

As the Violet Gold Marquess seized his divine soul and refused to let go, Chu Liang realized he couldn't move at all.

This was the first time he had ever faced such an attack. He was entirely unfamiliar with this setting. A deep blue ocean surrounded him, and both he and the Violet Gold Marquess were submerged in the water. Every ripple and movement made Chu Liang feel extremely dizzy.

This was his Niwan Sea of Consciousness!

At that moment, the Violet Gold Marquess's soul was like a dying candle, on the verge of extinguishing at any moment. Nevertheless, as the saying goes, a thin, lifeless camel is still bigger than a horse. Even in his dying state, the Violet Gold Marquess was still strong enough that Chu Liang found it hard to handle.

"I can't believe you are this weak..." the Violet Gold Marquess shouted. "Who the hell are you?"

The marquess was shouting hysterically. This was meant to be a final, desperate act of revenge before he died, but to his surprise, he discovered something different.

"Marquess, I am Fifty-Eighth..." Chu Liang struggled to speak, attempting to make the marquess stop whatever he was doing.

Though he had never seen the Violet Gold Marquess, there was no doubt about the identity of this opponent. Who else could possess such a powerful fragmented soul?

A clash of souls was vastly different from a physical fight. The most significant distinction was that even the slightest pain could instantly plunge the mind into chaos.

At this moment, Chu Liang couldn't think calmly.

"I can't believe your Sea of Consciousness could be so calm... No matter. As long as I can destroy your soul, I can take control of your body and start cultivating again. Heaven hasn't forsaken me yet..." the Violet Gold Marquess said.

He had slipped into madness.

After being surrounded and attacked by demonic beasts and losing all the qi in his body, he had sunk into utter despair. Now, discovering a glimmer of hope for survival, he clung to it desperately.

As for taking over a body, it was something he had never considered, as it seemed utterly unrealistic.

Even with an incredibly strong soul cultivation, body possession is an extremely difficult task. Even for someone at the level of the Violet Gold Marquess, he might be able to possess a mortal or a cultivator in the first two realms, but once they reach the third realm, it's nearly impossible.

To seize control of someone else's body, one must enter their Sea of Consciousness, which would be a domain controlled by the owner of the body. The invasion of any foreign soul would trigger a reaction from the Sea of Consciousness and the entire Sea of Consciousness would fight back, meaning that the invading soul would have to fight with more than just the power of the original soul.

Typically, the Sea of Consciousness would either kill the invading soul or self-destruct. As long as the owner of the body refused to cooperate, seizing control would be impossible.

However, when he invaded Chu Liang's Sea of Consciousness, he discovered that this space didn't reject him. It was as if two foreign souls were fighting there while the Sea of Consciousness remained neutral.

Thus, even though the Violet Gold Marquess was just a fragmented soul, he easily gained the upper hand, as Chu Liang's soul was no match for him.

Chu Liang's mind stopped working. He felt his soul being stifled...

When he could see everything around him clearly, he realized what was happening.

This was the deepest area of his Sea of Consciousness, a place where outsiders should not have been able to remain this aggressive.

But why is it so calm? Is it because I am an outsider?

There's no one to help me here, so which part of this domain am I in control? As Chu Liang pondered this, he focused his mind and began summoning the White Pagoda.

Boom—

As a thought crossed his mind, a familiar sensation washed over him, causing his soul to sink once more into the White Pagoda.

The Violet Gold Marquess, who had been firmly grasping him, also became momentarily dazed and found himself in a strange space.

"Hmm?" The Violet Gold Marquess exclaimed with utter astonishment. "What is this place?"

"It's where you will die..." Chu Liang forced the words out through clenched teeth.

"Then I'll take my time exploring it after I kill you!" the Violet Gold Marquess retorted viciously.

But he didn't realize that this was no longer just a battlefield between him and Chu Liang. A small creature with golden wings, previously sound asleep, slowly opened its eyes and drowsily gazed at them.

The two figures surged with light as the Violet Gold Marquess gripped Chu Liang's neck tightly, as if trying to extinguish his light.

Tuntun blinked hard and furrowed her tiny brow. "Bad..."

She wobbled into the air, flew over to the Violet Gold Marquess's side, and sank her teeth into his arm.

Whoosh—

It wasn't an actual bite but more of a gentle inhalation. In an instant, the Violet Gold Marquess's form transformed into a purple stream and was drawn into Tuntun's belly.

"Ah!" The Violet Gold Marquess let out a sudden wail.

The chance of rebirth was right in front of him, but he could not grasp it. He could only cry out, "I am not willing to accept this—"

If this isn't fate, then why torment me repeatedly by giving me hope? Is it merely to deepen my despair?

The Guardian of the diabolical sect for this generation was finally killed.

"Phew..." Chu Liang let out a long breath.

He regulated his breathing for quite a while before slowly recovering his mental composure. As he reflected on the situation, he recognized that he had been cautious enough during the initial inspection; he simply hadn't expected that a seventh-realm Eminent One would possess such powerful vitality.

Even with half of his body remaining and his qi completely depleted, he could still keep his soul flame alive.

That was truly terrifying.

Looking at Tuntun, whose belly was once again bulging from its meal, he patted the little creature's head and said with a sigh, "You've saved my life again, but with this meal, my three months of effort to starve you of spiritual energy had been wasted..."

As his soul ascended from the White Pagoda, he slowly opened his eyes.

He was still in the icy cave, facing the mauled and gored body of the Violet Gold Marquess before him. The marquess looked as if he had died a peaceful death. Now that the marquess's soul had completely dissipated, Chu Liang no longer had to worry about anything.

Chu Liang reached onto the marquess' body, rummaged around, and discovered a jade pendant that resembled an enchanted storage tool.

After putting away the jade pendant, he stood up, bowed to the remaining half of the body. The expression on his face conveyed that he pitied the marquess. Although the marquess had nearly killed him just moments ago, Chu Liang still intended to show the utmost respect.

Then Chu Liang solemnly said, "Violet Gold Marquess, you were a prominent figure in the diabolical sect. To leave your corpse exposed here, reduced to a meal for demonic beasts, is something this junior cannot bear.

"After all, the Mount Shu Sect values compassion. Although you committed countless evils in your lifetime, death extinguishes all. The past will not be pursued. I will take you back to the Mount Shu Sect for burial, so you may rest in peace.

"Furthermore, you once asked me to bring you some spirit plants and precious herbs, but unfortunately, I never got the chance to do so. I will plant some treasures of nature on your tombstone to accompany you in eternal slumber. Alas, it pains me that you did not die with a complete body...

"I suppose you wouldn't say no to this, right?"

Chapter 509: Opening Another Enchanted Tool

After a while, Jiang Yuebai sent a message to Chu Liang through the United Hearts Jade, telling him that it was fine for him to meet back up with them.

Chu Liang returned to the top of the glacier and saw the father and daughter standing together. They indeed looked quite alike.

The Jiang Family's genes were pretty good. Among the three major aristocratic families, the Jiang Family had the highest proportion of people who were born without any birth deformities. It was just that the total number was a bit low compared to the Xia and Ji Families.

The father and daughter both had calm expressions, and it was unclear what they had just talked about. When Chu Liang arrived, the father and daughter exchanged glances, still a bit awkward with each other.

The beautiful scene that the Whale-Riding Immortal had interrupted was still fresh in their minds, so they probably remembered it the moment they saw Chu Liang.

Guessing that was the case, Chu Liang quickly said, "I just discovered the corpse of the Violet Gold Marquess over there."

However, he didn't mention that the Violet Gold Marquess's soul had invaded his Sea of Consciousness. It was rather strange and might involve his greatest secret, so he had to think it over carefully before revealing it to anyone.

"Ah..." the Whale-Riding Immortal replied, "you mean the one I killed with a flick of my finger?"

The Whale-Riding Immortal roughly explained what had happened earlier, and Chu Liang finally realized who the culprit behind the Violet Gold Marquess's peaceful demise was. He couldn't help but be amazed.

Sure enough, at the higher cultivation realms, the gaps tended to be greater between cultivators of the same realm.

Most cultivators saw a seventh-realm Eminent One as a mighty and unreachable existence. Yet, to the eighth-realm Whale-Riding Immortal, such a mighty existence was a mere ant that could be killed with just a flick of his finger.

After hearing the Whale-Riding Immortal's explanation, Jiang Yuebai's expression suddenly turned rather grim.

Chu Liang noticed it and quickly figured out what she was thinking.

The Violet Gold Marquess was undoubtedly considered a powerful figure among the seventh-realm Eminent Ones. His swift demise showed just how difficult it was for a seventh-realm Eminent One to contend with an eighth-realm Eminent One.

In fact, the current leader of the Dark King Sect had to rely on the True Form of Ksitigarbha to take over the sect. It was with the blessing of that legendary artifact, which was ranked among the top ten in the mortal realm, that he managed to seize control of the Great Dao of Profound Darkness from the previous leader.

If Daoist Yan wanted to seize control of the Great Dao of Swordsmanship, it would probably be a feat as difficult as ascending to the heavens. So, Jiang Yuebai was likely worrying about her teacher.

Chu Liang thought of his own teacher acquiring control over a Great Dao, and he wasn't worried for her. Other cultivators had to rely on legendary artifacts to contend for the Great Dao, but his teacher only needed a heart full of filial piety. After all, others were fighting for the control of a Great Dao, but his teacher was fighting for her inheritance.

The Whale-Riding Immortal suddenly placed a hand on Chu Liang's shoulder and said with a smile, "Treat my daughter well. Otherwise, I can't guarantee that my finger won't get itchy again someday."

Chu Liang broke out in goosebumps and nodded repeatedly. "Uncle Jiang, please rest assured that I will!"

Jiang Yuebai looked at her father in annoyance. "What are you even saying?"

She turned around and left, flying off in the direction of Mount Shu.

"All right. You should go back as well." The Whale-Riding Immortal finally released his grip on Chu Liang. "We'll meet again if fate allows."

After bidding the Whale-Riding Immortal farewell, Chu Liang quickly flew off to catch up with Jiang Yuebai. The pair rode the wind side by side, flying at a leisurely pace.

Chu Liang asked, "What did you talk about earlier?"

"Not much..." Jiang Yuebai gently shook her head. "He just told me what he's been up to all these years."

Chu Liang looked at her expression. It seemed as calm and detached from the world as before, without any significant difference. However, he could faintly sense that something had changed. He just couldn't quite pinpoint what it was and why it had occurred.

Nevertheless, since Jiang Yuebai didn't want to say more, Chu Liang didn't press further. He believed in Jiang Yuebai's wisdom and abilities, confident that she could handle any problem on her own. She wasn't someone who needed others to worry about her.

...

Chu Liang headed down to the Hall of Weapons bright and early at dawn the next morning.

He had an appointment with Wen Yulong. They were going to open and inspect the Violet Gold Marquess' storage enchanted tool. It wouldn't just be Wen Yulong this time though; Chu Liang had invited the Weapons Master to join them.

After all, the items of diabolical cultivators were strange. There might even be some dangerous items, so someone had to be there to keep things under control.

"Hahaha..." The Weapons Master laughed heartily, his blue-gold eyes shining brightly. "Who would've thought... There were so many of us, but we didn't achieve much in that battle. Yet, you managed to pick up the Violet Gold Marquess."

"I was just lucky," Chu Liang replied with a smile.

"This time, the credit goes to you. If it weren't for your undercover work in the diabolical sect, we couldn't have thwarted their schemes twice in a row," the Weapons Master praised. "The Violet Gold Marquess' belongings are well-deserved rewards for you."

"Let's hurry and open it up!" Wen Yulong exclaimed eagerly.

"Okay." Chu Liang nodded. "As usual, one hand per person."

This wasn't their first time opening a storage enchanted tool together, so the two of them already had a routine.

The Violet Gold Marquess' storage jade pendant didn't have any strict access restrictions, but it made sense. Anyone who could snatch away his storage tool would need to be extremely powerful, so it would be pointless for him to set any access restrictions.

Chu Liang smiled and used his divine sense to probe into the storage jade pendant. Then he randomly pulled out an item and placed it on the table. It was a black iron box. When he opened it, he found two neat rows of a dozen or so black spikes inside, each about the thickness of a finger.

Chu Liang immediately recognized the spikes. They were the Soul-Piercing Nails that Soul Subjugators often used.

"Soul-Piercing Nails..." The Weapons Master frowned. "These are the Dark King Sect's evil enchanted tools, and they're extremely malevolent. These things must be destroyed."

Chu Liang asked, "Can't we use these?"

The Weapons Master shook his head, "Each Soul-Piercing Nail is forged with a conscious soul that has been refined to be controlled by a diabolical cultivator. The nail drives the refined soul into a person's body, instantly occupying it and in turn immobilizing the person's body and soul. It is too malicious; the souls inside the nails must be released and purified."

So, that's how it is...

This was the first time Chu Liang learned how the Soul-Piercing Nails worked.

It was normal for the exclusive enchanted tools of the Dark King Sect disciples to be strange, but the frequent use of such things was bound to attract divine retribution. Even someone as powerful as the Violet Gold Marquess had not been able to escape a tragic end.

It was Wen Yulong's turn. He rubbed his hands together in preparation for a while. Then he reached in and pulled out a jade slip.

After examining it, the Weapons Master said, "This is the Dark King Sect's orthodox cultivation arts manual. It is quite detailed and contains a few secret techniques that we have not seized before. It can be stored in the Hall of Conservation."

Chu Liang had learned about the history of the Dark King Sect early on during his undercover mission.

In the early days of the Dark King Sect, the sect consisted of just Xuan Yinzi and his guardians: the White Silver King and the Violet Gold Marquess. The Soul Subjugators were disciples who cultivated the orthodox cultivation arts of the Dark King Sect.

After the current sect leader defeated the previous sect leader and took over, he expanded the Four Halls of Darkness, recruiting people from various diabolical sects. While this greatly strengthened his power, it placed the Left and Right Guardians—the White Silver King and the Violet Gold Marquess—in an extremely awkward position.

Consequently, the orthodox disciples were ostracized and suppressed by the new members. Ultimately, it was because they used to be under the direct command of the previous sect leader.

The Left and Right Guardians initially held great power within the sect, on par with that of the current sect leader. However, after the White Silver King died and the Violet Gold Marquess was severely injured, the Four Halls openly suppressed the forces of the Left and Right Guardians. The Dark King Sect's current leader ignored this situation since things were playing out in his favor.

The Dark King Sect's line of orthodox disciples had since been completely severed, so this issue no longer existed.

In any case, the first two items were basically useless to Chu Liang. Even if he handed over the diabolical cultivation arts manual and the Soul-Piercing Nails, the little bit of compensation he would receive in exchange was nothing to him. He hoped to find something he could actually use.

So, after quietly gathering his energy, he reached out to pull out the third item.

Whoosh.

There was a flash of light, and in his hand was a black iron token engraved with some strange patterns and four words, Dream of Souls Airship.

"What is this?" Chu Liang asked curiously. "An airship?"

The Weapons Master answered, "It should be. You can try to activate it, but you'll need to do it outside."

The three of them—the elder and the two youths—walked out of the Hall of Weapons to a clearing at the back of the mountain.

Chu Liang then used his foundational qi to activate the token.

Boom!

There was a howl of wind, and suddenly, a massive airship appeared before them!

The airship seemed like it had been cast in black meteoric iron. It was a deep dark gold, carrying a great sense of mysteriousness. It was about ten zhang in length and five or six zhang in height, with a large flag at the top bearing the words "Violet Gold Marquess."

As they expected, it was the Violet Gold Marquess's airship.

"Haaa..." The Weapons Master sighed. "Back in the day, my ride was even more majestic than this..."

"Why don't you start a business on Red Cotton Peak? You'll make enough money to buy it back in no time," Chu Liang quickly consoled him.

To help the Mount Shu Sect retrieve its lost treasure, the Weapons Master had sold off nearly all of his belongings, keeping only a few essential treasures that he depended on. Nowadays, he mentioned this to everyone he met, clearly showing his regret.

The three of them leaped onto the airship.

As soon as the Weapons Master landed, he said, "The material used for this airship is not ordinary black meteoric iron. It's actually black meteoric iron mixed with gold—Crow Gold Iron. And so much of it was used... This guy must have been really was rich."

Chu Liang smiled. Why would people engage in shady dealings if they weren't profitable?

While they were exploring the upper level of the airship, they saw a blue figure float out of the cabin and softly say, "Have you returned, Master?"

The three of them looked over and saw a tall woman draped in a veil, wearing only a bustier and a short skirt. Her skin was so fair that it almost seemed translucent. She had a pair of deep eyes with an exotic charm. Her gaze was gentle like calm waters, naturally alluring.

She was a remarkably beautiful woman dressed in revealing clothes.

Chu Liang was quite surprised. She seems to be a living person... But how is she living inside this airship that's inside a storage enchanted tool?

While Chu Liang was still puzzled, the woman asked in surprise, "Are you... Master's friends?"

Instead of answering, the Weapons Master said, "Is the master you speak of the Violet Gold Marquess?"

The woman nodded. "Yes."

"The Violet Gold Marquess was filled with evil and guilty of monstrous crimes. He has already been executed by a righteous cultivator," the Weapons Master replied sternly. "You were his servant. Are you also a diabolical disciple?"

"Eh?" The woman staggered back several steps, falling to her knees. "Not at all. He trapped me on this airship."

The Weapons Master ordered her to rise. "Stand up and speak... Tell us about how you got here."

"All right," the woman replied. She slowly got up and then said, "My name is Hun Mengji."

Chapter 510: He's Still Got the Desire For It

Hun Mengji explained, "I was originally a dancer in Jiangnan and was even a bit famous. Unfortunately, fate was unkind to me, and I fell seriously ill. I was supposed to die.

"But the Violet Gold Marquess happened to find me. Right when my soul left my body, he captured it and used a Human-Faced Jade Essence Flower to reconstruct my corporeal body.

"I became a being that's neither human nor ghost. And he placed restrictions on me, preventing me from leaving this airship. I could only stay here and serve him."

After hearing Hun Mengji's story, the three men nodded, believing she was telling the truth.

Her situation was just as she described. She had a corporeal body, yet she was surrounded by an aura of death. Furthermore, there were indeed restrictions on her, which the Violet Gold Marquess had put in place. It was impossible for her to leave.

Having heard Hun Mengji tell them her story in a weak and tearful voice, they couldn't help but pity her.

The Weapons Master comforted her. "Miss, you don't have to be sad anymore. The Violet Gold Marquess has been slain, and I will now lift the restrictions he placed on you and help you regain your freedom."

Chu Liang said, "But she is still considered a ghost even though she has a corporeal body. If she encounters righteous cultivators outside, they might treat her as an evil entity. And if she encounters bad people, she doesn't have any cultivation power to protect herself."

"Senior Brother Chu, are you thinking of keeping her here?" Wen Yulong asked cautiously. "Would Senior Sister Jiang allow that?"

"W-w-why are you asking that??" Chu Liang quickly waved his sleeve dismissively. "I have no improper thoughts like that!"

"Heeeeey," the Weapons Master said, "Little Chu, you are at the age when you're hot-blooded with raging hormones. It's normal for you to have thoughts like that. This airship is part of your spoils of war, so how you deal with it is none of our concern. If you choose to keep her, we'll keep it a secret for you. However, let me give you a piece of advice. When it comes to matters of the heart, it's important to remain devoted to one person..."

Well, then. The old man is unexpectedly loyal.

Chu Liang silently expressed his gratitude to the Weapons Master and Wen Yulong, Thanks, guys.

"That's not what I meant..." Chu Liang quickly explained. "I was thinking we could let Miss Hun Mengji live on Mount Shu."

"On Mount Shu? Our sect doesn't have a tradition of keeping ghosts. I doubt it will be convenient for her to move around on the mountain either."

"I can find her a job so she can save up some money. In the meantime, she could also find a cultivation art that's suitable for her. If she has plans to do something else in the future, she can do as she wishes."

"Oh," Wen Yulong uttered in understanding. He had figured out Chu Liang's intentions. "You want to trick someone into working for you again."

"How can this be called trickery?" Chu Liang glanced at Hun Mengji with a serious expression. "I'm resolving her need for a job."

Hun Mengji's gaze shifted back and forth between Chu Liang and Wen Yulong, utterly confused by what they were discussing. However, she did grasp one point. The current owner of the airship was this young man surnamed Chu.

So, Hun Mengji quickly bowed and said, "I, your servant, am willing to follow your orders, Young Master."

In truth, Chu Liang was resisting a great temptation.

Of course, this temptation was not anything anyone might have imagined. He was tempted not by the woman's beauty but by the fact that she had fused with the Human-Faced Jade Essence Flower as a ghost to make her corporeal body. She was essentially an upgraded version of a Human-Faced Xiao!

Moreover, the Violet Gold Marquess had used his divine abilities to fuse Hun Mengji's spirit with the Human-Faced Jade Essence Flower, so it was certain Hun Mengji would have much better qualities and abilities compared to wild Human-Faced Xiao that consumed the Jade Essence Flower directly. Otherwise, Hun Mengji wouldn't have such a fully intact consciousness and be entirely devoid of ferocity.

Human-Faced Xiao were extremely rare. Chu Liang had been searching for a long time and had only managed to gather a couple of Large-Headed Dolls. If he were to cut Hun Mengji down with a sword now, he might be able to obtain a top-grade doll.

Nevertheless, it was precisely because Hun Mengji had a fully intact consciousness and was clearly an innocent, living woman that Chu Liang couldn't bring himself to kill her. He could only accept this new employee with a heavy heart.

However, his reluctance was visible in his gaze when he looked at Hun Mengji.

My Large-Headed Dolls... I have to admit that my personal effort only accounts for a small part in achieving my current cultivation level. Most of the credit goes to my Large-Headed Dolls that work so hard until they give off smoke.

So, how could I not be tempted to have one more Large-Headed Doll?

The Weapons Master, an old hand in the martial world, noticed Chu Liang's lingering gaze. He smirked and whispered to Wen Yulong beside him, "See that? He's still got the desire for it, heh."

...

Obviously, there was more on this airship than just one servant girl. Chu Liang, Wen Yulong, and the Weapons Master quickly explored every part of the airship they could and found that it was indeed contained a world of wonders.

The Violet Gold Marquess had clearly put a lot of effort into this airship. The materials used for the exterior were extremely expensive and durable, and there were extremely complex enchanted formations in the interior.

In the bridge of the ship, there was a disk made of dark gold. It was missing a piece in the center.

Chu Liang inserted the iron token for the airship, and it fit perfectly. The airship rumbled, shaking as spiritual energy surged within it.

After activating the enchanted formation, Chu Liang tested the airship's speed. It accelerated steadily, taking a while to reach maximum speed. When the airship was flying at full speed, its speed was almost on par with that of a seventh-realm Eminent One riding the wind with full force!

Of course, it couldn't compare to divine skills like the Golden Path, but to Chu Liang, the airship's flying speed was incredible. Additionally, the flight was remarkably stable, with no bumps or vibrations at all.

There were various inscribed enchanted formations on the disk, and Chu Liang activated one of them.

With a whoosh, more than ten stone statues sprung up around the deck, all resembling armored soldiers wielding weapons.

As soon as the stone statues appeared, Hun Mengji let out a miserable cry, "Ah..."

The Weapons Master immediately recognized the statues and stated, "These are Soul-Suppressing Stone Statues. They are specifically used to subdue ghosts."

Chu Liang hurriedly deactivated that enchanted formation and then activated the one next to it.

Boom!

A black-colored hole opened on the airship. A small bronze ball shot out from the hole and exploded in the distance.

Chu Liang recognized that bronze ball. "It's a Shadowburst Thunder Bomb."

"Senior Brother Chu, don't just go trying out the enchanted formations one by one. Why not pass the airship to me?" Wen Yulong suggested. "I'll thoroughly inspect its capabilities and modify it according to your preferences before handing it back to you."

"Sounds good."

Chu Liang had also realized that the enchanted formations in the airship were too complex. He wouldn't be able to test them all in just a short time. He might as well just leave that task to Wen Yulong instead.

Chu Liang added, "Obviously, the elements associated with diabolical sects need to be removed. The color scheme is not very pleasant to look at either, so it would be best to change it to a neater color."

The Weapons Master was exploring another side of the bridge and made a discovery. "It seems this airship even has autopilot mode using spiritual energy. That's quite novel."

"We can't use that." Chu Liang shook his head decisively. "The airship still needs someone to drive it, or problems could easily occur."

The three of them flew the airship around in the sky for a while before landing it on the clearing behind at the back of the mountain. Then Chu Liang put the airship away for the time being.

Overall, he was very satisfied with this airship. He had finally found something from among the Violet Gold Marquess' belongings that he could use.

After returning to the Hall of Weapons, the three of them resumed pulling things out from the Violet Gold Marquess' storage enchanted tool.

"Let me try to pull out something good again," Wen Yulong said with a grin.

He reached in and pulled out a weapon. It looked like a scythe, its blade radiating an eerie blue glow. They could tell at one glance that it was a weapon used for evil.

The Weapons Master explained, "This is a Soul-Harvesting Scythe. The blade is made of a special material that has been through a refining process. Just by inflicting a small cut wound on a person, the scythe can extract that person's soul through the wound. It's extremely malevolent."

Chu Liang reached into the storage enchanted tool again and pulled out an extremely chilling and sinister book.

He had seen this item before and immediately recognized it. "The Netherworld Codex!"

When he opened the Violet Gold Marquess' Netherworld Codex, each page emitted an aura of killing intent that soared toward the heavens. The entire room instantly filled with a chilling air, and the cries of ghosts seeped out from the pages!

"The Violet Gold Marquess was truly heinous. He saved up refined conscious souls in this Netherworld Codex to serve as fuel for his cultivation power. Who knows how many innocent lives he took throughout his cultivation journey..." the Weapons Master said angrily.

The Soul Subjugators used to roam the world, helping the Violet Gold Marquess collect conscious souls. Back then, there would be a monthly Soul-Gathering Meeting, where each Soul Subjugator

had to hand over one conscious soul to the Violet Gold Marquess. Extra souls could be exchanged for his cultivation arts manuals or precious herbs.

Naturally, Chu Liang, who had been an undercover agent in the Dark King Sect for a long time, had already known all about that. Nevertheless, when he saw the many resentful souls in the Violet Gold Marquess' Netherworld Codex, it made him feel that the Violet Gold Marquess's death had been far too peaceful. The Violet Gold Marquess' sins were so great that even descending to the eighteenth level of hell would not be enough to make up for them.

The Weapons Master added, "This book needs to be purified immediately so that the souls in it can find peace."

Wen Yulong reached into the storage enchanted tool again. This time, he pulled out a black-gold token about the size of his palm, with the word "Guardian" engraved on it. The spiritual energy flowing within the token seemed to exude an imposing aura similar to that of an ancient vicious beast.

"This... is the token of a Guardian of the Dark King Sect," the Weapons Master stated. He inspected the token and remarked, "It seems a unique secret technique was used to imbue the token with spiritual energy to signify the owner's identity."

"So, does that mean anyone who possesses this token can become a Guardian of the Dark King Sect?" Chu Liang asked.

The Weapons Master replied, "Perhaps. People who have never met the Violet Gold Marquess may acknowledge whoever is in possession of this token as a Guardian."

Chu Liang quietly put the token away as well.

The Violet Gold Marquess had died silently, so it was likely that very few people knew he was dead. Chu Liang had no intention of publicizing that. This token might come in handy in the future.

Afterward, Chu Liang pulled out a bunch of bottles and jars. The Violet Gold Marquess had kept his many ghosts in them, and there were nearly a hundred in total.

However, just like with the Soul Subjugators, the Violet Gold Marquess had imprinted his soul flame on the ghosts to prevent them from rebelling. So, when he died, these ghosts perished as well.

Hun Mengji had no combat ability whatsoever, so it was likely that the Violet Gold Marquess had not worried that she might rebel. He had not imprinted his soul flame onto her soul, so they were not bound together, allowing her to escape dying with him.

When Chu Liang reached into the storage enchanted tool again, he pulled out a letter from the few remaining items.

"Huh?" Chu Liang uttered. Curious, he opened the letter. "Why would the Violet Gold Marquess keep a letter?"

Upon opening it, he found the contents of the letter to be quite astonishing.

Marquess, I heard that you've recovered and emerged from closed-door cultivation. I assume you are now more powerful than before. Congratulations.

The Assembly of Immortal Sects is approaching, and we, the West Sea Forces, will gather in the capital of Yu. We will strike like lightning, overturning the heavens and the earth.

We sincerely invite the Eminent Ones of the Dark King Sect to join us in this grand event.

The letter was signed, Immortal Yuan Lu.