

## Villain 981

### Chapter 981: The Three Pillars of the Heaven Slaying Alliance, Qing Feng returns

In the grand hall of the Heaven Slaying Alliance headquarters, a multitude of individuals stood, their expressions ranging from surprise to confusion. Among them were leaders from various ethnic groups who had convened to deliberate and decide on matters. Though some had not yet departed, they were now drawn to attention by the unusual comportment of Gu Wuwang, Ming, and Jiu Jianxian, the deputy leaders of the Alliance.

As “Wang Wushang,” the Daoist representing the Heaven Slaying Alliance, stood with his arms folded behind him, his presence exuded an unfathomable depth and an unmistakable, intimidating power. Facing his assembled followers, he surveyed the hall, maintaining an outward appearance of calm despite any inner disquiet.

“It appears an unexpected visitor has arrived in the Dao Chang Realm. Our esteemed seniors must have sensed it, prompting their early departure,” he remarked coolly. “We shall await their return here. If they cannot handle the situation, my hastening there would be futile.”

As he spoke, his eyes seemed to shimmer with myriad visions, evoking the rumbling of distant stars and the celestial dance of sun and moon, symbolizing the vast power he held. In the absence of the three ancient cultivators, he emerged as the de facto voice and pillar of the gathering.

Behind him, Cen Shuang furrowed her brow, harboring dissatisfaction with the current “Wang Wushang.” Similarly, Ao Teng, Ao Ling, Shen Xian’er, and others shared subtle creases of concern upon their brows.

However, at this juncture, they maintained their silence, preferring not to incite unwarranted disturbances. Gu Wuwang, Ming, and Jiu Jianxian had already departed through the air, seemingly bound for the outer reaches of the sky. This departure stirred emotions within the hall, leaving the younger and middle-aged generations murmuring in uneasy tones.

Upon hearing Ni Chen's words initially, many were startled, their worry palpable. As the three ancient cultivators vanished seemingly into thin air, there was no opportunity to inquire further into the situation.

From "Wang Wushang's" remarks, it appeared indeed that a formidable entity had descended upon the Dao Chang Realm.

"If only the Alliance Leader were present at this moment. With them at the helm, I would feel assured," murmured a leader of an ancient clan, unable to contain his thoughts.

His sentiment found resonance among many present, who held Gu Changge in the highest regard as the paramount figure in the Dao Chang Realm, possessing an inscrutable level of cultivation. With Gu Changge leading the charge, even against an indomitable and formidable foe, there was confidence in overcoming any challenge.

Yet, despite Gu Changge's presence, a lingering fear and shadow persisted among many, a testament to his imposing influence over their lives.

However, this also carried the benefit of alleviating concerns and fears about the presence of external parties.

"Didn't you hear what the deputy leader said? The current state of the Dao Chang Realm calls for vigilance. All may be within the purview of our leader. What cause for worry remains? Rather than fretting, it would be wise to contemplate how to address this situation. Must we constantly rely on one individual?" spoke one voice, urging reflection.

Yet, there were leaders of ethnic groups who remained vigilant even in times of apparent peace, questioning the validity of such thinking. They knew that Gu Changge always projected an aura of detachment, as if the affairs of the world held no sway over him. They pondered whether relying solely on Gu Changge was prudent, forgetting the lessons of the forbidden era.

They remembered the cataclysmic upheavals in the upper realms, the annihilation of countless immortal forces and ancient universes, with billions perishing in the aftermath—all attributed to Gu Changge. While Gu Changge's leadership had ushered in a more conducive environment for cultivation, fostering peace and growth among the various ethnic groups, many seemed to have conveniently forgotten his true nature—the demon lord.

In the main hall, leaders of ethnic groups engaged in hushed discussions. Some harbored worry and unease, while others remained composed, awaiting the return of the three ancient cultivators.

Meanwhile, “Wang Wushang” paced the hall with measured steps, hands clasped behind his back, lost in thought. His gaze swept slowly across the assembly, silently observing.

“Fear not, everyone. As a Daoist of the Heaven-Slaying Alliance, should any mishap occur, I vow to find a means to safeguard you all. All races and Daoisms are integral members of our alliance,” he declared, projecting an air of confidence. “I stand on the cusp of ascending to the ranks of immortal emperors. Even in the face of a Dao realm existence, I possess the strength to resist. You’ve witnessed my talents firsthand. In a matter of years, I shall match the prowess of several esteemed seniors.”

His words, spoken with an air of superiority, aimed to win over hearts. However, the presence of the other two Dao realms, aside from Gu Wuwang, posed the greatest obstacle to his plans for the Dao Chang Realm. Thus, Ni Chen saw the absence of the three Dao realms as an opportunity to enlist the leaders of all ethnic groups and Daoisms to support him, paving the way for his future schemes.

Ni Chen pondered earnestly. The destruction of the Underworld Realm, his original domain, during an invasion by external forces left few surviving clansmen. Only by attaining Gu Changge's level could he hope to revive his kin, a process that could only proceed gradually. Upon seizing control of the Dao Chang Realm, he planned to immediately resurrect his loved ones, welcoming the remaining clansmen from the small world to multiply and thrive in their new home.

With his status as a Daoist of the Heaven Slaying Alliance as a foundation, the prosperity of the Underworld clan seemed within reach. Bolstered by the fortune of the real world and ample cultivation resources, his path to advancement would hasten. As his strength burgeoned, he envisioned a complete transformation of the Dao Chang Realm into the Underworld Realm, cementing his dominance.

Thus, in this endeavor, he resolved to seize control of the Dao Chang Realm, viewing it as imperative to his grand design.

Among the followers trailing behind “Wang Wushang” stood numerous leaders of prominent clans, their voices now echoing in agreement. “You’ve witnessed the Daoist’s talent, and his astounding rate of advancement will soon rival that of the three Seniors. The future is boundless.”

“Moreover, the Daoist enjoys the favor of the alliance’s leader and has been bestowed with the most coveted treasure, the Hongmeng Myriad Root, a supreme artifact with myriad extraordinary uses. Rest assured, our leader will surely entrust the Heavenly Alliance to the Daoist in due time...”

“I urge everyone to consider the long-term perspective and not sacrifice future prospects for fleeting gains.”

The divide between Daoist “Wang Wushang” and the two Dao realm entities, Jiu Jianxian and Ming, was well-known within the Heaven-Slaying Alliance. Some leaders of ethnic groups endeavored to maintain a neutral stance, avoiding offense to either faction. However, with Jiu Jianxian, Ming, and others having departed the hall, “Wang Wushang” seized the moment to articulate his position, the implications clear to all.

The complexion of many attendees in the hall subtly shifted, and the murmured discussions ceased. The ongoing power struggle within the Heaven-Slaying Alliance had intensified.

Despite the oversight of Gu Wuwang, the deputy leader, the underlying issues remained unresolved. The alliance encompassed a vast expanse, comprising ancient forces and ethnic groups across numerous universes and worlds. The stakes were immense, impossible for even a Dao Realm entity to disregard.

The conflict over the Hongmeng Myriad Root had exacerbated tensions between Ming, the others, and Daoist “Wang Wushang,” leading to a hostile and competitive dynamic among the factions they represented.

In the grand scheme of things, while such actions weren’t conducive to the stability of the Heaven Slaying Alliance, they did foster the development and maturation of its constituents.

“These words today aren’t meant to rush your decision-making but to remind you that the journey ahead is long, and foresight is essential,” Ni Chen remarked, clasping his hands behind his back with an air of superiority.

In him, many glimpsed shades of Gu Changge, causing those who sought neutrality in the power struggle to reconsider. With Gu Changge’s implicit support, Ni Chen held a position of unassailability, even though he couldn’t yet match the might of the two Dao realm ancient cultivators. Neither Jiu Jianxian nor Ming dared to challenge him, recognizing his innate invincibility. Moreover, “Wang Wushang” represented hope for the Dao Chang Realm as a wildcard in the equation.

Cen Shuang, Ao Teng, and others observed with icy detachment, understanding the futility of further discourse at this juncture. “Wang Wushang” continued to assert his dominance, disregarding even the Ancient Immortal tribe’s immortal emperor, “Uncle Yi.”

“Wang Wushang, don’t presume to control everything. Are you not concerned about alienating your cousin with these actions?” challenged one voice. “He founded the Heaven Slaying Alliance from nothing, and now you’ve thrown it into disarray. Do you truly believe your cousin will remain

indifferent? He raised you to your current stature, but he could just as easily cast you down irreparably.”

However, it was only Shen Xian’er who boldly confronted “Wang Wushang,” expressing no fear despite his overwhelming power. Her defiance elicited a shift in many attendees’ expressions, recognizing her formidable background and hesitating to provoke her.

Ni Chen dared not retaliate against Shen Xian’er.

He turned on his heel, the smile vanishing from his face as he spoke lightly, “Miss Shen needn’t concern herself with such matters. The leader’s foresight surpasses your understanding. It takes more than mere speculation to comprehend his intentions. Besides, do you truly believe the leader would be bothered by this?”

“To him, the Heaven-Slaying Alliance may be no more than a whimsical diversion. If my efforts serve to strengthen the Alliance, do you think he would censure or punish me upon learning?” Ni Chen’s tone reflected the confidence of one who had lived through many ages, convinced that he understood Gu Changge’s mindset. As long as he didn’t cross Gu Changge’s boundaries, wouldn’t he be granted free rein over the Alliance?

Moreover, with Gu Changge absent from the Dao Chang Realm, Ni Chen reasoned, he wouldn’t be involved in Alliance affairs. This rebuttal left Shen Xian’er momentarily speechless, a trace of frustration crossing her features. Despite her master’s disparagement by “Wang Wushang,” as an apprentice, she felt powerless to intervene.

“If only my sister were here...” she thought, her spirits sinking further.

Silence enveloped the main hall as onlookers refrained from comment, even those aligned with “Wang Wushang,” wary of offending Shen Xian’er. In their eyes, she was a direct descendant of Gu Changge, while “Wang Wushang” was akin to an “heir.”

Outside the hall, another disturbance rippled through the distance, the void quivering slightly. Terrifying auras clashed and then receded, unsettling the world’s equilibrium.

“The seniors have returned...” Amidst the collective relief at sensing the familiar auras, joy spread across many faces.

“Wang Wushang” departed without further ado, striding out of the hall.

In the void, the laws continued their tumultuous dance, while in the distant sky, a golden path materialized, spanning the multi-dimensional universe like a bridge connecting several worlds. Gu Wuwang, Ming, and Jiu Jianxian stood upon this path, accompanied by an old ape with white brows clad in a cultivator’s robe, his gentle features and dignified presence betraying kindness in his eyes.

Following closely behind them were numerous figures, their features obscured by either chaotic mist or dense miasma, shrouding the surroundings.

“Senior Brother Qing Feng...” Cen Shuang exclaimed upon spotting a familiar figure on the Golden Road, unable to contain her surprise and excitement. Her fellow immortal clansmen, who had resided in the City of No Return since childhood, recognized the figure as well, their excitement palpable. “It’s Senior Qing Feng, he’s truly returned!”

“I never imagined Mr. Qing Feng would still be alive, let alone return,” remarked the silver-robed man beside Cen Shuang, known as “Uncle Yi,” who was unfamiliar with Qing Feng’s backstory.

“Uncle Yi, Brother Qing Feng was apprenticed to my grandfather. He hailed from the Sea of No Return and suffered amnesia. He lived in the City of No Return afterward and was on par with my senior siblings. Senior Brother Qing Feng embarked on a quest to find the former sages of the Immortal Palace who journeyed to the Nine Heavens, seeking their aid in our current crisis...” Cen Shuang explained, her joy evident at Qing Feng’s safe return.

Chapter 982: All clans face war, the eve of catastrophe

In the sky, the golden road extended directly, with Qing Feng positioned behind the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan. Spotting Cen Shuang in the hall, Qing Feng couldn’t contain his excitement, a weight lifting from his heart. As long as his junior sister remained safe and sound, he could breathe easy. He had journeyed with apprehension, fearing the worst.

“It seems this is the junior sister you’ve spoken of, Senior Brother Qing Feng,” observed Fen Ruo, noting Qing Feng’s expression with a hint of amusement.

“Junior sister’s penchant for worry is quite something. I feared she might act rashly in my absence. Seeing her now puts my mind at ease,” Qing Feng remarked wryly.

The other disciples of the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan remained silent, their disdain for the denizens of this real world thinly veiled. Hailing from the Nine Heavens, their perspective differed vastly from that of the natives of the Dao Chang Realm.

While the Nine Heavens housed numerous powerful individuals, including Dao realm existences who pursued Daoism in seclusion, they paid little heed to worldly affairs. Despite the uniqueness of the Dao Chang Realm, it remained a fledgling realm, lacking the prestige to capture their attention.

Although Gu Wuwang, Ming, and Jiu Jianxian were aware of the purpose behind the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan’s visit, they maintained their vigilance. After all, Yuan Chan was also a Dao realm existence, and Gu Wuwang sensed that the ancient cultivator’s strength seemed only slightly inferior to his own.

The ancient cultivator Yuan Chan clasped his hands together, a solemn aura emanating from him, infused with a compassionate essence. “Fear not, esteemed Daoists. I have been entrusted by my disciples to venture into this world and aid in resolving this calamity. Knowing that you three Daoists are present here brings me great reassurance.”

“Many years ago, I, too, emerged from the Immortal Domain and unexpectedly found myself in the Nine Heavens. It has been a journey of twists and turns, blessed with good fortune,” he added, reflecting on his own unexpected trajectory.

Initially, Yuan Chan had been taken aback, assuming that this fledgling realm housed no more than half-step Dao Realm entities, including the feared demon lord mentioned by his disciple, Qing Feng. With his senior disciple, Fen Ruo, capable of handling such entities, there seemed no need for his intervention. However, upon closer inspection, he discovered the presence of three Daoists, one of whom surpassed him in strength.

This revelation surprised Yuan Chan, prompting him to realize the significance of Daoist Eternal Monarch’s observation. “With the aid of the Daoist, our prospects for victory in the Dao Chang Realm are greatly improved,” Gu Wuwang acknowledged with a nod. Having established their identities during their earlier interaction, he acknowledged the unexpected encounter. It was a revelation for him to learn that Yuan Chan hailed from the Nine Heavens.

It was imperative to ascertain whether the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan was aware of the Gu family lineage in the Nine Heavens. However, the answer eluded “Wang Wushang” as the proceedings unfolded swiftly. Soon, everyone convened in the main hall, their anticipation palpable, tinged with surprise and skepticism.

The leaders of various ethnic groups, along with the unfamiliar faces accompanying Yuan Chan, including several whose auras resonated with a palpable intensity, seemingly transcending worldly confines. It was evident that they were immortal emperors, their cultivation spanning countless eras.

“Senior, may I inquire about their identities?” “Wang Wushang” ventured cautiously, his heart racing with uncertainty.

Gu Wuwang regarded him briefly before addressing the assembly. “This ancient cultivator, Yuan Chan, hails from the Nine Heavens. He has come to aid us in the face of external threats and forestall impending disaster. The individuals accompanying him are his apprentices, formidable in their own right.”

Apart from Yuan Chan’s prominent disciple, Fen Ruo, on the cusp of achieving Dao realm status, the remainder boasted Immortal Emperor or Quasi-Immortal Emperor status, ranking among the Dao Chang Realm’s elite.

“Old monk Yuan Chan extends his greetings to all,” Yuan Chan offered with a serene smile, his presence exuding a tranquil Buddha nature capable of soothing like a gentle spring breeze. His words seemed to inspire those around him, prompting some to consider the path of Buddhism.

The leaders of the ethnic groups in the hall reacted with astonishment, many struggling to conceal their disbelief at the turn of events.

“From the Nine Heavens?” “Wang Wushang” echoed, his astonishment mirroring that of the assembled leaders. The revelation of their origins was beyond his expectations, leaving him grappling with the magnitude of their backgrounds.

In his time in the Underworld Realm, Nine Heavens had already held legendary status as the cradle of Immortal Dao, shrouded in mystique and boasting unfathomable secrets. Its prestige eclipsed even the mightiest of realms, rendering them insignificant in comparison.

The arrival of ancient cultivator Yuan Chan exceeded “Wang Wushang”’s expectations, signaling a shift beyond his control. Throughout the hall, leaders from various races and factions struggled to digest the astounding news, while figures like Ao Teng and Ao Ling’er, steeped in the lore of innate mythology, shared in the collective astonishment.

Unlike the typical aloofness associated with Dao realm existences, Yuan Chan remained affable as he elucidated his origins within the immortal domain. Qing Feng, too, rose to recount his journey to the Nine Heavens, guided by clues left by the former sages of the Immortal Palace, culminating in his apprenticeship to Yuan Chan.

With doubts dispelled, jubilation swept through the gathering. The realization that Yuan Chan, akin to Gu Wuwang and others, possessed formidable disciples imbued the assembly with renewed hope for the Dao Chang Realm's defense against foreign incursions.

While Yuan Chan initially maintained a detached demeanor, upon hearing the mention of the "Heaven Slaying Alliance," his countenance shifted, brows furrowing in consternation. His benevolent expression gave way to solemnity, eliciting a sense of foreboding among his disciples, whose expressions mirrored his own disbelief.

"Brother Dao, please don't be alarmed. The choice of name was not ours, but that of our leader himself," Gu Wuwang reassured, sensing the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan's unease. He understood the weight carried by the three words "Heaven Slaying Alliance." Even he had been taken aback initially, recognizing the magnitude of the karma it entailed.

"It's audacious indeed, to adopt such a name and witness its establishment with such grandeur. This enigmatic leader must be an extraordinary figure," remarked Fen Ruo, the great disciple of Yuan Chan, her surprise evident.

In the Nine Heavens, the immortal force established by the Daoist Eternal Monarch bore the name Heavenly Sect, symbolizing a defiance against the heavens and rallying powerhouses for a celestial battle. As for the Lord of Immortality, his appellation hinted at an epoch-spanning existence, unparalleled in cultivation.

Only an individual of such caliber could shoulder the weight of such karma without succumbing to fear of repercussions like Dao collapse or heavenly resistance. The Heavenly Sect's reputation reverberated through the Nine Heavens and beyond, instilling awe in many powerful realms.

To witness a nascent realm dare to adopt such a name without apparent repercussions intrigued Fen Ruo. Only the mysterious Eternal Monarch's fortune seemed a plausible explanation. This realization piqued her curiosity, indicating that the demon lord mentioned by Qing Feng transcended mere approaching Dao Realm status.

With the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan regaining his composure, he offered, "If given the chance, I must meet this mysterious leader in person." Qing Feng, too, found himself stunned by the staggering changes that had unfolded since his departure from the Immortal Domain.

"Senior Brother Qing Feng, I'll fill you in on all the details later," Cen Shuang assured him. Even she found the recent changes akin to a dream.

The arrival of the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan caught everyone off guard. Once it became clear that no immediate danger loomed, the leaders of various ethnic groups departed one by one, taking their clansmen with them to prepare for what lay ahead.

For the time being, the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan and his companions remained within the Heaven Slaying Alliance. Ni Chen found it challenging to ascertain their origins immediately, so he opted to observe the situation and focus on addressing the impending catastrophe.

This event sparked ripples throughout the Dao Chang Realm, quickly disseminating across all universes. Every race commenced preparations, and a palpable sense of tension pervaded the cosmos. Armies, clad in armor and wielding an array of weapons, surged through the starry expanse from all corners, converging for the imminent conflict.

An air of solemnity permeated the hearts of beings across all races as they braced for the impending war. Many observed a strange, foam-like substance looming on the horizon, its desolate emptiness seeming to engulf the light itself.

Buzz!

Across various universes and within the depths of different races' territories, among divine islands, bright gates of light began to open, immortal mist billowing forth, and the air was permeated with the power of teleportation.

From these gates emerged ancient soldiers, as if they were emerging from a realm of death and bloodshed. These formidable immortal warriors, renowned for their prowess in ancient wars, brimmed with murderous intent as they rallied once more to confront the impending catastrophe.

Rumble!

Elsewhere, in distant regions of the sky, a multitude of ancient warships and flying vessels converged. Strange beasts galloped below, while raptors soared overhead, their vast numbers obscuring the sun. Divine light soared into the heavens, creating a spectacle of magnificence.

Additionally, countless knights and warriors assembled, forming dense formations comprised of hundreds of millions of giants. These individuals were trained by various tribes and factions within the Dao Chang Realm.

A haunting wail echoed through the sky as massive ancient copper warships streaked across the heavens, hurtling towards the expansive battlefield of the Immortal Domain. These vessels teemed with cultivators and warriors exuding a palpable aura of aggression and determination. Leading them were formidable figures at the pinnacle of immortality, guiding their forces into the fray.

Across mountains, rivers, marshlands, and vast ancient forests, a multitude of powerful ancient beasts roamed freely, their colossal forms casting imposing shadows over the landscape. Mounted atop these primordial creatures were towering figures adorned in animal skins, their sinewy frames and pulsating energy evoking an aura reminiscent of ancient deities.

Originating from a distant and remote universe, these individuals bore the hallmarks of ancient gods, distinguished by star-shaped markings between their brows. Elsewhere, divine light pierced the heavens, emanating from an ancient planet situated within the cosmos. Here, the Ancient Immortal Clan, Heavenly Dao Sect, True Immortal Academy, and other prestigious factions congregated, marshaling their most formidable forces in preparation for the impending cataclysm.

Throughout the ages since the era of taboo, countless powerhouses either secluded themselves or immersed themselves in cultivation. Now, spurred by the urgency of the situation, they emerged from their retreats and embarked on the journey to confront the looming threat.

Even ethnic groups from the era of innate mythology, such as the Jin Peng, Huang Niao, Shi Long, and Shi Qilin, mobilized their strongest warriors. It was widely understood that the impending catastrophe spared no one. In the face of such peril, unity was paramount, for the downfall of the Dao Chang Realm would bring devastation to all.

In a remote corner of the universe, a brilliant flash of divine light caught Gu Xian'er's attention. Having just arrived from the upper realm to the immortal domain, she hadn't yet had the chance to inquire about Gu Changge's whereabouts at the headquarters of the Heaven Slaying Alliance. However, she swiftly learned of the impending battle.

Throughout the Dao Chang Realm, all ethnic groups were mobilizing and amassing their forces in preparation for the imminent catastrophe.

As Gu Xian'er traversed the immortal domain, she witnessed numerous ancient warships hurtling past, their momentum shaking the very fabric of the universe as they surged towards the depths of the immortal domain. These vessels were commanded by at least a few real immortals, with countless cultivators filling their ranks.

This development forced Gu Xian'er to recalibrate her priorities. Whether she sought to locate Gu Changge or rescue Tao Yao, she first needed to address this pressing challenge. Failure to do so would not only imperil the Dao Chang Realm but also jeopardize her own survival and any subsequent endeavors.

"I've learned that these ancient warships and armies are bound for a place known as the Boundless Battlefield," Gu Xian'er reported, swiftly gathering information. "There, an outpost for foreign enemies is stationed, and all ethnic groups are continually dispatching powerful warriors to defend it."

Though her current strength might not decisively sway the outcome of the battle, Gu Xian'er recognized that she still had a role to play in the unfolding events.

Chapter 983: The tribulation begins with endless wars, terrifying war

The warships blanketed the sky like clouds, stretching across the vast expanse. Thousands of these ancient vessels adorned the universe, while hundreds of millions of cultivators surged forth from ancient planets, swiftly gathering in the starry expanse.

Simultaneously, Immortal Kings opened expansive cosmic tunnels, facilitating the direct descent of these ancient warships. In adjacent universes, immense tunnels tore through the fabric of space, carved open by colossal hands. A torrent of cultivators poured forth, converging at the edge of the vast battlefield and forming formidable formations.

Gu Xian'er trailed behind an ancient warship, hurtling towards the boundless battlefield. Her emotions weighed heavily upon her. This catastrophe marked a daunting threshold for the Dao Chang Realm, one that would require prolonged struggle spanning years, if not decades. Many would perish in the process, and even her own safety couldn't be guaranteed.

Furthermore, the ultimate outcome remained uncertain, shrouded in the fog of war.

Rumble!

In the vast expanse ahead, a colossal hand emerged, grasping at stars and clutching the moon. It was of titanic proportions, tearing through the void as boiling spiritual energy surged, distorting and collapsing time and space until a stable passage materialized.

An Immortal King manifested, opening a grand cosmic tunnel for numerous ancient warships to surge towards the boundless battlefield. Similar scenes unfolded in multiple locations, with Immortal Kings tasked to open temporal and spatial channels to transport armies from various races.

Meanwhile, within the boundless battlefield, some Immortal Kings had already arrived, strategizing on how to confront the enemy and fortify their defenses.

The atmosphere was grim, shrouded by terrifying black clouds that blanketed the sky in every direction. Tragedy, war, and bloodshed suffused the land, with even the soil tarnished dark brown, stained black by endless blood and littered with countless bones and weapon remnants.

Once, this place had been the site of the Heaven Slaying battle, a realm ravaged by ceaseless conflict where no living beings had survived.

Gu Xian'er trailed the army to the boundless battlefield, soaring high above the sky, surveying the desolation below.

"I wonder how long this catastrophe will endure. Gu Changge, where are you now? Are you still within this realm?" she murmured softly.

A torrential army traversed the battlefield, akin to a cosmic serpent surging towards the edge. The tumultuous sounds from beyond the boundless sea echoed clearly, as if the heavens themselves quivered, the sun and moon revolved, and the world teetered on the brink of collision, with blood ready to boil and souls trembling.

Though the army that descended upon this realm was vast, comprising true immortals and Immortal Kings, the majority were below the rank of true immortals, relegated to cannon fodder and destined to serve as vanguards in the forefront of resistance and contention.

The immortal king ancestors of many ethnic groups also followed orders, leading their armies and guarding various locations, awaiting the arrival of foreign enemies.

The oppressive atmosphere preceding the impending war enshrouded the hearts of every being in the Dao Chang Realm. Even ordinary cultivators felt the tension, their nerves constantly on edge, sensing that a significant shift was occurring in the world.

Each day, soaring auras emerged across the realm, eclipsing stars one by one, with countless figures rushing toward the outer domain.

Outside Green Mountain Village, Su Qingge stood calmly in the courtyard, gazing up at the sky. Even in this remote mortal settlement, the residents could perceive the changes unfolding in the world—an inexplicable sense of foreboding hanging heavy over their heads.

“Daddy, does this mean the catastrophe is coming and the world will be destroyed?” queried the curious children in the village, addressing their father.

Her heart heavy with sorrow, Su Qingge sighed inwardly, realizing that even children devoid of cultivation could not escape the influence of the impending calamity.

This catastrophe appeared to be a formidable trial for the Dao Chang Realm. With war looming on the horizon, the very fabric of reality seemed to shift, and the once-strong aura underwent profound transformations.

However, for those blessed with great fortune, this crisis also presented an opportunity for ascension. The seeds planted by Gu Changge's actions were beginning to bear fruit.

In one of the immortal sects that had endured for millions of years, a young man rallied many elder disciples to discuss strategies for navigating the impending catastrophe, striving to ensure the sect's continuity and prevent the rupture of its legacy.

Though the sect's ancestors had once attained the rank of true immortals, that was in a bygone era. Presently, the most formidable figure within the sect was merely an enlightened individual.

An enlightened individual, facing such a catastrophic event, was likely as inconsequential as dust, not even worthy of being considered cannon fodder.

Nevertheless, this young man remained undeterred, speaking with unwavering confidence as if he could safeguard the sect throughout the crisis.

As the senior brother of the sect, he had a remarkable backstory. In his youth, while practicing martial arts in the back mountains, he had a close brush with death when pursued by a ferocious tiger. Fleeing for his life, he stumbled into a frigid pool where he chanced upon a mysterious ancient bell imbued with auspicious energy.

The enigmatic ancient bell compelled him to forsake martial arts in favor of Daoist cultivation. Over time, he ascended to his current level, his cultivation nearing that of all the sect's ancestors.

“My mysterious ancient bell contains within it mountains and rivers. By absorbing sufficient matter, I can condense a genuine world within it, rivaling any so-called ancient realm. With mastery over the mysterious ancient bell, I can create and control a world inside it. Protecting our sect during this war is entirely feasible.”

“In this conflict, many will perish. Yet, those shattered weapons are prime materials, enabling me to ascend and advance swiftly. In no time, I could attain the rank of true immortal, or even immortal king.”

The young man exuded confidence, having encountered numerous strokes of good fortune along his journey. Despite danger, he often turned adversity into advantage, truly embodying the essence of luck. Amidst the tumultuous world, survival came more easily to him than to other cultivators, fostering his rapid growth and development.

Elsewhere, a woman garbed in somber black attire, her countenance icy and indifferent, eradicated nearby sects engaged in reckless and malevolent deeds due to the impending catastrophe.

Her black garments were stained with blood, the path she trod littered with dismembered limbs and corpses. A crimson stream flowed like a river, and the once-grand mountain gate lay in ruins.

“You brought this upon yourselves,” the woman in black declared, embodying the ethos of the Dao through her merciless and detached approach. She took lives daily, whether of virtuous or wicked individuals, driven solely by her whims.

She was often dubbed the Black-Clothed Demoness by many cultivators for her ruthless and efficient killing methods, having mastered the art of dispatching adversaries with a single hand. Her skill had reached a state of perfection, with each life she claimed bolstering her cultivation, ensuring continuous improvement.

“This catastrophe presents the ideal environment for my cultivation. Once I condense the prototype of the Dao of Slaughter, I could even slay an Immortal King,” she mused, her tone dispassionate and composed.

“Ruthless good fortune truly lives up to its name. I’ve ascended to the seventh level already. Ordinary true immortals may not pose a challenge. Mastering the way of killing at the ninth level will enable me to confront Immortal Emperors horizontally, potentially becoming the Slaughter Immortal Emperor. It’s indeed a stroke of extraordinary fortune,” she contemplated aloud, her demeanor unaffected by emotion.

Once a meek girl, tormented by her aunt and maidservants, she credited her current standing to the fortuitous acquisition of the extraordinary skill known as Ruthless Good Fortune. Her journey began with the slaughter of fowl, gradually crystallizing into the prototype of her murderous intent. Subsequently, she turned her sights on those who had mistreated her, eliminating them without regard for morality, solely focused on her cultivation.

This transformation birthed the formidable entity known as the Black-Clothed Demoness, her actions driven solely by personal agenda, devoid of considerations of right or wrong. She speculated that Ruthless Good Fortune might have been crafted by the Demon Lord of the Dao Chang Realm, the former apex being.

Despite harboring doubts about attaining the Demon Lord’s level even if she reached the ninth level and subsequently created the tenth level herself, she remained steadfast in her belief. Bolstered by her auspicious fortune, she envisioned a future unbounded by the confines of this exercise. The impending catastrophe facing the entire Dao Chang Realm served as a catalyst for her exponential growth.

Similar scenes were unfolding in various locations across the Dao Chang Realm.

Individuals blessed with remarkable fortune, known as the Acting System, diligently gathered and scrutinized information regarding the origin and exploits of the “demon lord.” Their aspiration was to emulate the most formidable entity in the Dao Chang Realm, striving to embody even a fraction of their power. They spared no effort in scouring ancient records and conducting exhaustive searches for any semblance of resemblance.

Simultaneously, others fortunate enough to acquire relics of ancient heroes marshaled their resources and assembled their own factions in preparation for the impending catastrophe. Their objective was to confront the looming threat head-on, leveraging the power of these legendary artifacts.

....

At the headquarters of the Heaven Slaying Alliance, Gu Wuwang, Ming, and other Dao Realm entities convened, utilizing a clandestine artifact to analyze the situation beyond the vast expanse and predict the imminent arrival of foreign adversaries.

Finally, the rounded ancient warship approached from the expanse, revealing some indistinct outlines. Yet, just as anticipation grew, radiant gates materialized abruptly, disgorging an equally formidable army of warriors. Like a cosmic deluge, they surged forth toward the forefront of the Dao Chang Realm.

This unexpected assault caught everyone off guard, devoid of any forewarning. Though the exact numbers of this approaching force remained unknown, it surely numbered in the millions. Emerging from the luminous gates, they exuded malevolent energy, brimming with murderous intent.

“Sentries on the boundless battlefield, prepare for action!” issued the command throughout the hall, prompting immediate readiness.

Simultaneously, millions of runes streamed forth from the perimeter embankment encircling the boundless battlefield, harnessing the celestial power and radiating boundless luminosity.

Originally silent, the embankment's origins were shrouded in mystery, erected to withstand the relentless assault from the boundless sea's forces. Yet now, it surged to life, akin to a torrent breaching its banks. Transforming into formidable energy beams, it surged toward the onrushing army of immortal civilization.

Witnessing this scene, many cultivators and creatures stationed on the edge of the boundless battlefield were utterly shocked. They had never fathomed that the boundary embankment harbored such astonishing power, reawakening at such a critical juncture.

"The origin of the boundary embankment is shrouded in mystery. Its creator remains unknown. Countless ancient runes adorn its surface, invoking formidable power to repel foreign adversaries..." murmured the immortal kings within their bunkers, visibly stirred by the revelation. Clearly, they hadn't anticipated the existence of such a natural barrier surrounding the Dao Chang Realm.

The onslaught of terrifying energy beams decimated the army of immortal civilizations rushing toward the forefront, reducing many figures to ash in an instant. However, these were mere cannon fodder for the immortal civilizations, eliciting no remorse.

Yet, more figures emerged from the light gates anew.

Meanwhile, aboard the colossal ancient warship resembling a flying shuttle, a horrifying figure shrouded in black mist materialized. Extending a hand adorned with various scales resembling those of dragons and iron, this entity surpassed the Immortal King in power. Though not a member of the immortal civilizations, it served as a war servant, enslaved and manipulated.

With a swift motion, the entity shattered the tens of thousands of symbols resonating across the sky, reducing them to rubble that cascaded like a deluge. Such a display rendered even the Immortal King insignificant, instilling chilling dread in the hearts of the Dao Chang Realm's forces.

The sheer terror of this entity's power rendered the boundary embankment's light beams utterly futile in its presence.

Boom!

At that moment, the fabric of time and space outside the boundless battlefield contorted, and a blurred figure emerged, enveloped in the same black mist. Extending a hand, they countered the massive hand horizontally, seeking to obliterate it.

"Foreign Immortal Emperor!"

Across the vast battlefield, numerous figures couldn't contain their astonishment upon recognizing this being. Their eyes betrayed a mixture of awe and anticipation.

This was a genuine Immortal Emperor tasked with safeguarding this region, and they had swiftly intervened to confront the opposing figure. Despite past conflicts and ceaseless wars between the foreign realm and the immortal domain, in this critical moment, the emperor of the foreign realm didn't hesitate to act, determined to prevent the adversary from drawing closer.

Chapter 984: Gu Xian'er's Resoluteness, the Talent that Glows in the Past and the Present

The battle had just commenced, with a genuine Immortal Emperor emerging from the distorted time and space, unleashing a formidable strike.

The majestic spiritual energy threw the universe into chaos, with fragments of time lingering and countless Daoisms intertwining, carrying ultimate power as they shot across the sky, aiming to halt the terrifying figure aboard the warship.

In an instant, hundreds of millions of divine powers surged forth, each evolving and descending in attack.

The colossal hand of the formidable figure descended unimpeded, devoid of emotional fluctuations, seeking to bombard the boundary embankment, shattering countless ancient runes and causing the army to descend.

Upon being obstructed, the figure's cold, ruthless gaze swept across like a celestial sword, capable of severing the universe and evaporating the river of time, forcing them to engage the foreign emperor in combat.

Rumble!

This was a battle destined to transcend time and space, unfolding amidst distorted and shattered realms, spanning eras.

Fortunately, it took place within the boundless sea, sparing the real world from devastation. Otherwise, a mere burst of energy would have obliterated countless universes.

In the hands of an immortal emperor-level being, even extending a finger could pierce the universe and crush all life.

The two combatants employed terrifying techniques, illuminating the once lifeless universe with vibrant light.

Countless armies of immortal civilizations surged forth from the gates of light, advancing once more toward the Dao Chang Realm.

The boundary embankment once again blazed with brilliance, each ancient rune reflecting dazzlingly, exuding an aura of past and present. Every rune bore innate significance, constantly forming combinations that transformed into beams of light, bombarding the army of immortal civilization.

At the moment of impact, these armies, like snow meeting a scorching sun, couldn't resist and disintegrated into powder instantly.

Except for those beyond the Immortal King's power, creatures at other levels were like ants under this beam of light, their numbers unable to compensate for their vulnerability.

Witnessing this, the army on the vast battlefield couldn't help but cheer. Many immortal kings also displayed joy on their faces. They never imagined that the boundary embankment, existing for an unknown age, possessed such power. It not only resisted the impact of the boundless worlds but also repelled foreign enemies.

The boundary embankment, stretching to nowhere, resembled an immortal city wall at this moment, standing tall and exuding an ancient and magnificent atmosphere, dominating the heavens.

"Since ancient times, only those surpassing the immortal king have had the qualifications to approach and leave their mark there. I thought it was to impede our progress, but I never imagined it was to safeguard us. Did the ancestors who constructed the boundary embankment foresee such a day?" Many Immortal Kings were immensely excited and greatly encouraged.

The ancient warships, shrouding the sky and sun, lay across the vast battlefield, with countless cultivators and creatures also witnessing this scene, feeling moved.

“These inscriptions hold the secrets of the Immortal Dao civilization, and I never imagined they would be utilized to form a large formation. This is precisely the ember of the Immortal Dao fire that I’ve been seeking...” Inside the circular, flying ancient warship, Zhuo You’s eyes blazed as he gazed at the boundary embankment, paying no heed to the countless armies of the immortal civilization, which vanished in an instant.

To her, the loss was inconsequential. The immortal civilization had nurtured countless races. This time she ventured out to explore, and the races she brought with her numbered in the hundreds of millions.

This loss was not even a scratch; it was merely sacrificial fodder to gauge the opponent’s strength.

“Recreate those ancient runes. By constructing combinations, perhaps we can unlock scriptures dedicated to the origins of the immortal civilization...” Zhuoyou commanded her subordinates to decipher and replicate those ancient symbols. Each rune represented the foundation of an ancient script in the Immortal Civilization, its worth immeasurable.

Thus, it was due to the existence of these ancient runes that the boundary embankment became immortal and impregnable, absorbing the laws of the universe and enduring endlessly, capable of repelling foreign enemies. Only with the concerted effort of many immortal emperors could it possibly be destroyed.

Yet, the true powerhouse of this realm had yet to emerge, and Zhuoyou remained cautious. Though her grandfather had divined for her, she could distinctly sense the presence of Dao Realm entities in this nascent realm. And there were many.

Thus, she wasn’t planning to make any decisive moves just yet, still in the phase of testing. This realm held many mysteries. Though it was newly born, giving rise to a Dao Realm existence was already an incredibly arduous task, depleting the resources of epochs past.

However, presently, their number was assuredly more than one.

“Zhuosheng, monitor the activity in the other direction. If you detect the aura of the Dao realm, intercept it immediately and prevent it from approaching the mother ship,” Zhuoyou continued issuing directives.

Behind her stood an extraordinarily tall figure, emanating a mesmerizing silver light that seemed to shift and change constantly. “Yes, Miss,” the figure responded.

This individual was a powerhouse comparable to the beings of the immortal civilization, having undergone a spiritual transformation akin to the early stages of the Dao realm.

The formidable army of the immortal civilization, akin to a torrent breaching a dam, surged towards the Dao Chang Realm with an unyielding determination.

Observing from a distance, one would see that the army of immortal civilizations had inundated the vast expanse of void around the Dao Chang Realm. Despite the boundary embankment emitting radiant beams of light, it struggled to repel the overwhelming force of the immortal civilization’s army. From the gaps in the defensive barrier, they poured through recklessly, converging towards the boundless battlefield.

Originally, the Boundless Battlefield marked the juncture where the Boundless Sea intersected with the Dao Chang Realm, leaving a vast area unprotected by the boundary embankment. This area was typically guarded by the Immortal King families. Now, however, countless armies of immortal civilizations were forcefully breaching through this gap.

On the ancient warships, runes flared to life as the armies of the Dao Chang Realm prepared to form ancient formations and push forward into battle.

The conflict erupted into a cataclysmic war, engulfing the realm in chaos, yet every cultivator and creature present on the vast battlefield was determined to fight.

Beyond the boundless sea, the battle between the two immortal emperors raged with equal ferocity, akin to the world being rent asunder.

In the midst of this chaos, Gu Xian'er found herself facing a formidable adversary—an Immortal King commanding an army, charging forth from the gap and colliding head-on with the ancient warship she was aboard.

The Immortal King on their ancient battleship had already redirected their attention to defend against the opposing army, leaving Gu Xian'er vulnerable and unprotected.

The number of Immortal Kings in the Dao Chang Realm was sparse, comprising those who had long guarded the vast battlefield and those who had hurriedly arrived.

“If you dare to stop me, you will die,” declared the immortal king from the immortal civilization with a thin, cruel visage, emanating an aura of death from an unknown race.

Confronting the ancient warship, which was under the command of only a true immortal, he aimed a palm strike to obliterate all living cultivators.

“The opposing immortal king is approaching...” murmured the cultivators and creatures aboard the ancient warship, their desperation palpable, even among the true immortal.

Yet, in that moment, Gu Xian'er intervened. She appeared to manipulate time itself, wielding a terrifying power over the ages. In an instant, she traversed through space and struck with her petite, white fist. The chaotic aura surged as her blow landed with a resounding impact. The immortal king's palm trembled violently, exhibiting signs of bone fractures before erupting with a deafening explosion.

Without a flicker of emotion on her face, Gu Xian'er pressed on, her slender form enveloped in the immortal light of the Dao. She resembled an unrivaled exile immortal—detached and free from worldly concerns, yet exuding an awe-inspiring killing intent.

In just one exchange, the immortal king of the immortal civilization sustained severe injuries, instilling horror within him as he was forced to unleash his full power.

“Is that a female immortal king, and she appears so young...” murmured the stunned creatures and cultivators aboard the ancient warship, their disbelief palpable. They had resigned themselves to despair, never anticipating such a sudden rescue.

All eyes were fixed on Gu Xian'er.

The true immortal commanding the ancient warship was filled with even greater excitement. “Wonderful, wonderful! Another immortal king, and she's so young, yet her strength is astounding. I never knew such a peerless genius was hidden on this battleship.”

Gu Xian'er's face was enveloped in immortal light, making it difficult for even those of the same level to clearly discern her features. Even if they could, many might not recognize her identity. After all, she had disappeared from the Dao Chang Realm for quite some time. These cultivators hailed from various universes and worlds, and not all of them were acquainted with her existence.

At best, they could only discern that she was remarkably youthful, with a bone age that belied her accomplishments. Achieving such feats at her age was unprecedented and groundbreaking.

However, Gu Xian'er paid little heed to these matters. In her sight, there was only the Immortal King—an opponent seeking her obliteration.

Since departing from the Heavenly Tomb, she had yet to engage in earnest combat against her peers, leaving her uncertain of her own capabilities.

The immortal king before her might just serve as her sparring partner.

Boom! Gu Xian'er struck again, weaponless, delivering a powerful punch that emitted a fierce and overwhelming light, evaporating everything in its path. Countless energy particles were disintegrated, seemingly capable of cleansing all things and piercing through the heavens. The Immortal King opposite her shifted colors rapidly, unwilling to engage directly, feeling a sense of dread.

The prolonged battle in this location was incredibly intense and tumultuous, with numerous Dao laws reduced to dust. The Immortal King from the immortal civilization, initially cold and ruthless, sought to obliterate all the ancient warships in the vicinity to create an opening. However, he hadn't anticipated encountering Gu Xian'er.

Despite employing various techniques, he found himself steadily retreating, sustaining injuries and coughing up blood. After hundreds of exchanges, a burst of blood mist filled the air as Gu Xian'er relentlessly battered the immortal king. However, despite his grievous wounds, the Immortal King's soul attempted to tear through time and space to escape.

Anticipating this move, Gu Xian'er produced a slightly weathered ancient pagoda. Gleaming with a crystalline white radiance, it emitted a cascade of orderly Dao energy, suppressing the primordial spirit and drawing it in, planning to gradually dissipate it.

This peculiar treasure was retrieved from the celestial tomb, its level unknown but possessing seven of its original nine levels, capable of sealing anything.

The spectacle of this fierce battle reverberated throughout the region, alerting all parties. Immortal kings in other areas were similarly engaged in combat, each sustaining injuries. However, it was challenging for them to truly vanquish one another. At the level of immortal kings, true death was elusive unless vastly overpowering strength was wielded.

Gu Xian'er's seamless handling of an immortal king was truly remarkable and shocking.

Especially considering that she hadn't fully unleashed her strongest power yet.

"In this great catastrophe, the unexpected emergence of such a young and mysterious female immortal king is a testament to the profound blessings and enduring luck bestowed upon the Dao Chang Realm. We are destined not to perish," remarked some traditionalist immortal kings, unable to contain their laughter and excitement.

While the sudden onset of the catastrophe left many bewildered about the motives behind the enemy's assault on the Dao Chang Realm, it didn't dampen their resolve to resist. They were prepared to exact a heavy toll on their adversaries, even if it meant sacrificing themselves.

The elimination of an immortal king from the immortal civilization greatly bolstered the morale of the Dao Chang Realm's forces. They became emboldened, displaying a fearlessness that surged through their ranks.

Gu Xian'er received voice transmissions from other immortal kings expressing concern for her safety. Recognizing her terrifying talent and status as a figure transcending time, they urged her to retreat to headquarters.

Acknowledging the well-intentioned advice, Gu Xian'er understood that, at this critical moment, she couldn't afford to leave the front lines. Like her first life as a heaven-slayer, she led the armies of the real world of mountains and seas, fought celestial battles, and resisted the impending liquidation.

Moreover, she saw this battlefield as an opportunity for self-improvement and deepening her understanding of the Dao. It was a chance to expedite her cultivation toward the light of the quasi-immortal emperor, her ultimate goal.

Chapter 985: Ages ago, Chan Hongyi's Dao Demon

The tragic clash between the immortal civilization's assault on the Dao Chang Realm had begun in earnest. The massive, tumultuous army, akin to locusts swarming, transformed into a terrifying deluge, surging towards the Dao Chang Realm in an attempt to breach its defenses. Meanwhile, aboard ancient warships, the Dao Chang Realm's forces valiantly fought back, showing no fear in the face of adversity.

The thick crimson light stained the universe, creating a scene of immense tragedy. Corpses littered the battlefield, and stars were reduced to ash and oblivion in an instant. Amidst this chaos, the leaders of various factions convened at the headquarters of the Heaven-Slaying Alliance, observing the conflict through enchanted relics.

Simultaneously, a series of decrees were issued, commanding reinforcements from across the realm to bolster the defense. It was clear to all that this battle would exact a heavy toll, even claiming the lives of Immortal Kings.

"I fear this conflict will be protracted, and we must remain vigilant. For the Dao Chang Realm, this catastrophe is not merely a trial but an opportunity for rebirth, a transformation into immortality,"

remarked Deputy Leader Gu Wuwang, before dispelling the image of the enchanted relic before him.

Prepared for a prolonged engagement, the forces aboard the ancient warships braced themselves. Yet, despite their readiness, the true power behind the enemy's assault had yet to reveal itself. The Immortal Emperor who led the charge may have been merely a pawn, sent to gauge the Dao Chang Realm's strength. The identity and capabilities of the true adversary remained shrouded in mystery.

With the arrival of external aid, including the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan, the Dao Chang Realm counted only four Dao Realm existences among its ranks. As the final battle loomed, the outcome remained uncertain, and whether they could withstand the onslaught was a question that hung heavy in the air.

"Master Deputy Leader, do you have any insight into why these civilizations from the rest of the real world have launched such massive invasions? Is there a specific goal driving their actions?" questioned some of the ethnic leaders in the main hall, voicing the doubts that many harbored.

Gu Wuwang found himself unable to provide a definitive answer to their inquiry. Instead, it was the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan who spoke up, clasping his hands together as he offered his perspective. "The expanse of the universe knows no bounds, birthing countless civilizations. Conflict is an eternal and unending refrain. It is weakness that invites invasion."

His words weighed heavily on those gathered in the hall, resonating with a sense of powerlessness. The realization that their weakness had made them vulnerable to such aggression weighed heavily upon them all.

"Regardless of the reasons, now is the time for all of us to focus on strengthening ourselves," asserted Gu Wuwang plainly, addressing the assembly. "I've recently examined the fate of the Dao Chang Realm, and there are no signs of it faltering in the face of this sudden calamity."

As the war raged on, there was still no sign of Gu Changge's appearance, leading Gu Wuwang to speculate that Gu Changge may have indeed ventured into the Boundless Sea. However, he remained skeptical, knowing that Gu Changge likely had other resources at his disposal, especially considering his ties to individuals within the Dao Chang Realm.

The sweeping conflict, reminiscent of divine retribution, threatened to annihilate the world. Its tremors extended beyond the realm's borders, unsettling universes and worlds alike. Like leaves in the wind, cultivators and creatures of all levels couldn't help but quake in the face of its impending devastation.

Every day, legions surged forth from various universes, times, and spaces, converging on that front line. Since the second calamity in the Dao Chang Realm, they had been recuperating for countless epochs, and overall conditions were not too dire.

In the shadows, True Spirit Qing Yi employed various methods to aid former mighty heaven-slayers in reincarnation or safeguarding their true souls, facilitating their resurrection and body reconstruction. Across epochs, individuals cultivated in diverse locations and times, quietly convalescing, awaiting their return to glory.

The outbreak of this war prematurely roused them. In ancient locales, auras constantly pierced the heavens, rending the fabric of the universe. Beyond the boundless battlefield, the clash between the foreign realm's immortal emperor and the one dispatched by the immortal civilization raged tumultuously for an extended period.

Some entities, originally hidden in ancient times and spaces for cultivation, were alarmed and emerged from other eras. Countless years had elapsed since the Forbidden Era, including a dark period deemed untouchable. Even those surpassing the level of an immortal king dared not brave the boundless reasons and traverse to this era, risking backlash, scourge, and disappearance.

This was a chaotic spacetime, where nodes shattered, and exact coordinates were indiscernible.

For cultivators, entering it meant eternal banishment, unable to locate the coordinates of the current world and condemned to perpetual wandering within it.

In this chaotic space, filled with fragmented time, two figures sat cross-legged, eyes closed in meditation. One, adorned in red with a hint of cinnabar between her brows, possessed a delicate face capable of bringing both blessing and calamity upon the land. Beside her, demonic energy surged intermittently, intertwining with fragments of immortal light and Dao.

The other figure, clad in white with azure silk reminiscent of a daisy, radiated a purity that transformed the void around him into a sacred realm. Within it, a spectral peach tree took root, its blossoms scattering like a gentle rain of transformation.

Separated by a sea of time, they observed each other but could not draw near, ensnared in an eternal cycle. The tumultuous Dao storm posed no threat, dissipating upon reaching their vicinity. Their auras fluctuated between frailty and dread, while a glow emanated from the center of their brows, hinting at something gestating within.

These two figures were none other than Chan Hongyi and Tao Yao. Trapped in these prehistoric fragments, they were lost without the coordinates of the present world, consigned to imprisonment and exile in the ceaseless chaos of time and space.

With the guidance of Xiao Ruoyin, the High Priest of Destiny, they traversed the forbidden era preceding eternity, seeking the truth of that time. Though they eventually attained their goal, Gu Changge exiled them to this tumultuous realm, like prisoners unable to break free from the confines encircling them. ❖

Chan Hongyi, dressed in red, opened her eyes as a sudden upheaval disrupted the tranquil sea of time. Time fragments scattered across the sky, and a tempest of Dao energy surged, brimming with unparalleled terror and destruction. Yet, this storm, capable of annihilating all life, dissipated upon nearing her.

“Is this the Master’s gift, the prototype of the seed of the real world?” Chan Hongyi’s demeanor remained composed as a small seed between her brows shimmered brightly, holding endless mysteries of fortune.

Observing Tao Yao in the distance, who also bore a radiant seed between her brows, Chan Hongyi noted her companion’s unroused state. Tao Yao appeared immersed in a peculiar realm, undergoing profound changes in her life essence.

In this primordial chaos, akin to the era before time, various substances akin to primordial matter and innate laws abounded, greatly aiding in their Dao imprint condensation.

While Chan Hongyi couldn’t fathom how the world seed traversed countless time and space to land upon them, she suspected Gu Changge’s involvement. Learning the truth preceding the forbidden era, she harbored no resentment toward Gu Changge. Nearly lost to a karmic backlash during her journey through time, she was rescued by Gu Changge, prompting a change of heart.

As Tao Yao previously surmised, if Gu Changge sought her demise, he could have accomplished it in the Forbidden Era. Instead, he chose to seal her in the Demon Burying Abyss, later releasing her himself and orchestrating a demon-slaying conference to aid in her recovery.

In the face of potential retaliation, Gu Changge consistently approached her with peace and tolerance, never resorting to aggression.

During her years of exile and confinement in this realm, Chan Hongyi had come to clear realizations about various matters. She had been mistaken, perhaps irreversibly so. Uncertain of Gu Changge’s intentions or motives, she was certain that everything in the Forbidden Era had been orchestrated by him and Qing Yi, the grand master of the Immortal Palace.

Since that era, Gu Changge had become vilified by the world. Even his most trusted disciple had betrayed him, transforming into the dreaded demons of legend. Betrayal seemed to be a recurring theme, with even his closest confidants turning against him, willing to exact any cost for vengeance.

In this world, Chan Hongyi believed that no one truly understood Gu Changge's heart, comprehended his struggles, or stood by his side. "I wonder," she mused, "when Master faced my vengeance, what emotions churned within him? His once loyal apprentice now his bitter foe..."

A wry smile tugged at the corner of Chan Hongyi's mouth as she pondered these thoughts. Yet, despite it all, Gu Changge had still come to her aid when danger loomed. Had she not persisted in uncovering the truth of the past, she would have remained ensnared in a cycle of hatred and pain.

As for why she and Tao Yao found themselves exiled and imprisoned before eternity, Chan Hongyi held a vague understanding of the truth. Because they possessed knowledge of the forbidden era preceding eternity, they were aware of Gu Changge and Qing Yi's grand scheme. Their presence in the current world would undoubtedly disrupt their plans and interfere with the grand design.

To avert potential mishaps, Gu Changge had no recourse but to exile and imprison them for eternity.

"But even so," Chan Hongyi murmured, "he still bestowed upon us the seeds of the real world. Master, are you not concerned about this oversight? Or perhaps, despite restraining yourself outwardly, you cannot truly remain indifferent to us."

With a gentle motion of her jade hand, Chan Hongyi dislodged the world seed from between her brows, allowing it to land softly in her palm. Though not a genuine world seed, this prototype still brimmed with boundless fortune. Within it lay a mysterious substance, born from the chaotic collision of countless elements, evolving into the essence of the real world.

“I will not disrupt your plans, Master. I only seek to atone for all that has transpired,” Chan Hongyi declared, her gaze tranquil as she regarded the world seed. Devoid of hostility, her demeanor resembled a serene sea.

In an instant, her brow illuminated, and a primordial spirit doppelgänger, identical to herself, emerged and consumed the world seed. Eschewing the conventional method of refinement, Chan Hongyi assimilated the world seed directly into her primordial spirit.

Considering Qing Yi as the innate true spirit of the real world of mountains and seas, why couldn't she harness this to ascend as an acquired true spirit, becoming a prominent figure in the real world? Though this path was arduous and unprecedented, the world seed offered Chan Hongyi insight into her future trajectory.

“Today,” she proclaimed amidst the chaotic expanse of time and space, “I, Chan Hongyi, make a solemn vow to transform into the Devil Dao Realm... When I undergo this transformation, millions of beings, all life forms, shall follow me in becoming demons... As a demon, the heavens, countless particles of dust, and beings of the River's sands will join me, ushering in an era where the Dao and demon coexist.”

Rumble!!!

In the vast expanse of eternity, Chan Hongyi's invocation of her Dao Demon's great wish resonated with terrifying force. Within the darkness, an immense and awe-inspiring power seemed to echo her profound declaration.

Devilish energy surged forth like a boundless river, engulfing her entire being in its cosmic embrace. The once radiant world seed, now merging with her primordial spirit, underwent a swift transformation, turning pitch-black as it assimilated with her essence.

Each syllable of her great wish reverberated with immense magnitude, echoing through every corner of time and space, stirring the chaotic sea of temporal currents to a boiling frenzy. Despite the relentless assault of the Dao storm, Chan Hongyi remained serene, her eyes closed as she allowed the surging devilish energy to envelop her completely.

Chapter 986: Gu Changge's cherished person, what a surprise

In the grand palace of the Spiritual Royal Family, Gu Changge, amidst his concentration on condensing immortal substance and good fortune substance, abruptly opened his eyes.

"Hongyi..." His gaze held a hint of contemplation, as if sensing something significant.

Before departing from the Dao Chang Realm, he deliberately sought out a secluded and unrestrained location to refine the World Seed. Dividing it into several parts, he transformed them into streams of light, directing them towards Yue Mingkong, Jiang Chu Chu, and others.

The World Seed, comprised of immortal and good fortune substances, encapsulated the ultimate essence of Dao. While it could potentially propel them to celestial heights in one fell swoop, imbuing them with remarkable spiritual energy, its primary purpose was to lay a sturdy foundation, serving as a steadfast cornerstone for their future entry into the Dao realm.

Moreover, Gu Changge discreetly marked each seed of the real world, ensuring he could monitor the safety and well-being of Yue Mingkong and the others, thus preempting any potential dangers.

Though not renowned for his altruism, Gu Changge never skimped on care for those dear to him. While he may not have interrogated them about their cultivation endeavors, he remained vigilant, ever-watchful over their progress.

For instance, Gu Changge found Yue Mingkong's self-devised Great Dream Returning to the Immortal Technique particularly intriguing. To him, it held an air of mystery, delving into the profound interplay between reality and dream. Her cultivation and Dao comprehension within her

dreams were entirely contingent upon her mastery over the ethereal realm of “dreams,” a domain subject to fleeting existence, lasting eons or vanishing in the blink of an eye.

With the aid of creation matter and immortal substance, once fully awakened, her strength could potentially skyrocket to a formidable level.

Throughout the years, Gu Changge had diligently probed into the truth behind Yue Mingkong’s rebirth, entertaining the notion that she might be a reflection of someone else’s body. Yet, each conjecture he entertained was systematically refuted.

The most plausible explanation emerged: Yue Mingkong inadvertently intersected with the trajectory of an alternate worldline, granting her access to memories from a divergent future. These future recollections resembled a dream within a dream, signaling an eventual awakening.

From this awakening sprang the opportunity for Yue Mingkong to craft her own Great Dream Return to Immortal Technique. Despite her innate brilliance, her radiance dimmed in the shadow of Gu Changge’s presence, a sacrifice she willingly made to remain by his side.

Gu Changge conceded that Yue Mingkong held a significant place in his heart, surpassing all others. Yet, thoughts of Yue Mingkong inevitably led to considerations of Gu Xian’er, Jiang Chuchu, and the others.

Jiang Chuchu, always docile and compliant, exhibited heightened deference in Gu Changge’s presence. Later, she willingly renounced her status as saintess of the Human Ancestor Hall, forsaking her deeply held beliefs and betraying her former allegiance. Gu Changge, not one to turn a blind eye, could not remain indifferent to her sacrifices.

Jiang Chuchu’s talent equaled her astonishing nature; she had already tapped into the power of luck, embracing her faith without Gu Changge’s concern for her cultivation. Even without the prototype of the world seed, Jiang Chuchu possessed a strong likelihood of ascending to the Dao realm in due time.

As for Gu Xian'er, she originally presided over the real world of mountains and seas, inheriting the fortune of an entire realm and reincarnating three times. By amalgamating the Dao fruits from her previous lives, she was destined to reach greater heights in her current incarnation. Additionally, Gu Changge had paved another path for Gu Xian'er, awaiting her emergence to assume control over everything.

During his time in the upper realm, Gu Changge amassed numerous followers and subordinates. Among them were Alpha, born from absorbing the true blood aura within the Demon Burying Abyss, background figures from the destruction of Hell and Buddha, numerous dark puppets crafted during the establishment of the Dark Heavenly Court, and the ancient heavenly lord of reincarnation's puppets refined later on. Gu Changge had meticulously arranged for their upbringing, and over the years, their strength had reached formidable levels.

"The fluctuations in Hong Yi's imprint signal unexpected changes in her life level. It appears she's planning to surprise me," Gu Changge mused, sensing the imprint's fluctuation. However, he remained unperturbed. Having journeyed through time and witnessed the so-called "truth" firsthand, it was inconceivable for Chan Hongyi to harbor resentment towards him again. On the contrary, she might feel remorseful and seek to make amends.

Gu Changge didn't anticipate the form Chan Hongyi's restitution would take. Aware of her initially impure motives and subsequent missteps, he found some of the present outcomes beyond his expectations. For now, his primary concern was ensuring Chan Hongyi's commitment to safeguarding the grand design without error.

Buzz!!!

As he rolled up his sleeves, a golden vial materialized, adorned with intricate traces of the Great Dao. Its weight, akin to Chaos Immortal Gold, caused the palace to tremble violently.

Before Gu Changge, clusters of magnificent, ethereal galaxies of matter assumed fluidic forms, oscillating between mist and liquid states, undergoing myriad transformations, eventually coalescing into chaos and manifesting as the Three Thousand Daos.

From the many worlds governed by the Spiritual Royal Family, Gu Changge extracted inextricable threads of luck, condensing these substances into the golden vial.

Though scarce in quantity, even a small amount proved invaluable to him. The vastness of luck inherent in an ancient real world rendered the extraction of even a trace of immortal substance and good fortune substance a Herculean task. Extracting such from a nascent real world was even more improbable, barring significant accumulation over time.

“Such a diminutive vessel may yet spare me from certain troubles,” Gu Changge remarked as he stowed away the golden vial, intending to contemplate its utility when time permitted. He resumed the condensation of these substances.

From Gu Changge’s perspective, immortal matter and creation matter symbolized the evolution and essence of matter on the Dao path, serving as both its genesis and culmination. They represented the source of all existence, the genesis of chaos, the inception of grandeur, and the “origin” preceding lawlessness.

For other Dao Realm entities, comprehending the significance of these substances proved insurmountable. They could only fumble through the protracted cultivation process, attempting to glean an aura, a prototype, or a semblance of truth from them.

Even if Gu Changge were to instruct others on the condensation of immortal matter and creation matter, they would remain incapable of achieving it in their lifetime. Only beings detached from existence, possessing profound wisdom and a true comprehension of detachment at the life level, could fathom the existence of these substances, let alone attempt to condense and utilize them. ㊦

This truth, though complex, could be likened to explaining the nature of matter and elements to a bug. No matter how elaborate the explanation, expecting a bug to grasp it would be futile.

While Gu Changge acknowledged his current strength might equate to that of a bug, his life level stood apart. He could harness and manipulate these substances to enhance his life realm and strength, as well as aid other Dao Realm entities in their cultivation and advancement.

“Condensing immortal matter and creation matter on my own is tediously slow. Finding a vessel capable of condensing these substances would be ideal,” Gu Changge mused. However, the likelihood of such a container existing in the vast expanse of the world was infinitesimal. Only those with ties to the original world, inadvertently stumbling upon clues and refining them, stood a chance. Yet, such occurrences were exceedingly rare.

Furrowing his brow in contemplation, Gu Changge pondered the possibility of creating such a treasure by returning to his prime as the Demon Lord, leveraging suitable materials, fueling it with the Dao, and harnessing the power of numerous civilizations. However, lacking the requisite materials even with his current strength rendered this endeavor unfeasible.

As for relying on the Dao Chang Realm and the Spiritual Realm, such hopes were even more unrealistic.

The materials required for such a treasure had to be sourced from potent real worlds, and even then, acquiring enough might necessitate venturing into the real land. Gu Changge harbored no expectations of the Spiritual Realm possessing such a treasure. After all, condensing immortal matter or good fortune substance from luck could potentially spawn numerous formidable beings. It was inconceivable that the Spiritual Realm would allow itself to be decimated by him.

“For now, the matter of condensing immortal matter and creation matter can be set aside. Ling Huang can gather the Spiritual Royal Family’s luck accumulated over the years for me,” Gu Changge decided, rising from his seat and departing the grand hall.

Awaiting him outside was the Bone Ancestor, transformed into a black-robed old man, who stood with utmost respect.

“Greetings, my lord,” he greeted respectfully, assuming the demeanor of an old servant.

Accompanying him was a delicate woman clad in a green skirt, exuding a natural charm and possessing the strength of an immortal king.

“Liu Mei pays respects to my lord,” she greeted, serving as Ling Huang’s confidante, stationed outside the palace to convey Gu Changge’s orders.

“Where is Ling Huang now?” Gu Changge inquired, nodding at her as he glanced around.

Wan Yanxiu and the other ancestors were tasked with recruiting armies from the Great World under the Spiritual Royal Family’s jurisdiction. Ling Huang, assigned to assist Gu Changge, aimed to ingratiate herself with him. However, she had withdrawn from his side during the condensation of immortal matter and creation matter, choosing to attend to other matters.

“Your Majesty has left the palace to attend to other matters,” Liu Mei reported respectfully, withholding nothing in Gu Changge’s presence.

Even the ancestors of the Spiritual Royal Family harbored profound fear of Gu Changge. Despite possessing the power of an immortal king, they were no more than ants before him.

“Is there something urgent?” Gu Changge inquired, arching an eyebrow slightly. He wondered if Ling Huang had alternative plans during the crucial army recruitment period for the Spiritual Royal Family.

Aware of the rifts and conflicts between Ling Huang and the Spiritual Royal Family's ancestors, Gu Changge wasn't particularly concerned as long as it didn't interfere with his own affairs.

"Yes, before Your Majesty departed, she instructed the servants to assist Your Lordship directly should you have any orders," Liu Mei replied nervously, sensing Gu Changge's slight displeasure.

"Understood," Gu Changge responded after a moment of consideration, opting not to press the matter further. He wasn't in a rush to gather the Spiritual Royal Family's luck, but he recognized Ling Huang's importance as a Dao realm figure overseeing the entire clan. Moreover, her knowledge of events across various realms was extensive, making her indispensable.

Although Ling Huang's status afforded her vast influence, there were still matters that intrigued her, likely requiring her personal attention. Gu Changge mulled over his thoughts and speculated about Ling Huang's activities, aware that her existence transcended the constraints of causal fate, obscuring past, future, and all dimensions within an enigmatic fog.

Gu Changge couldn't ascertain everything he desired to know; he merely sought to discern subtle signs.

"The celestial secrets are in disarray, with variables disrupting the Spiritual Royal Family's fate... It appears unexpected variables have indeed emerged, much to my surprise," Gu Changge mused, retracting his thoughts. He cast a gentle gaze at the slightly uneasy Liu Mei.

"You must know Ling Huang's current whereabouts. Guide me to her," he instructed softly. Gu Changge preferred direct engagement rather than continued espionage, avoiding the risk of alerting Ling Huang.

Recognizing the Spiritual Realm's value as a formidable ally, Gu Changge aimed to minimize unnecessary complications. He didn't want to cause undue trouble, now that he wielded influence over the Spiritual Realm.

Liu Mei, feeling flustered by the request, suggested, "Your Lordship, if you wish to see Her Majesty, you could simply summon her. There's no need to search for her in person."

Gu Changge dismissed the notion with a wave of his hand. "It's fine. Just lead the way."

The Bone Ancestor, observing the exchange, sensed an air of secrecy surrounding Ling Huang. He speculated that there might be hidden secrets concerning her. Ling Huang likely didn't anticipate Gu Changge's early departure from the hall and swift completion of his cultivation.

Chapter 987: The role of Ball of Ambitions, the lord wants to come in person

"This great mountain and river fields originally belonged to the homeland of my ghost clan, but now they are deserted. There are desolate mountains everywhere. "

"This hatred, I must let the Spiritual royal family pay back with their blood."

In the mountains, Chu Lian, clad in armor, strode ahead with a sturdy horse. His junior Ming Xiu rode behind him, observing a desolate mountain veiled in clouds. Faintly visible were the outlines of pavilions, which upon closer inspection appeared dilapidated and deserted. Many had succumbed to ruin long ago, overgrown with vines, moss, and shrouded in miasma.

"Ghost clan? Could Chu Lian be a member of the ghost clan?" Ming Xiu mused.

"I've heard the ghost clan excels in forging weapons. All the artifacts here are said to be crafted by them," she added.

Behind them, Ling Huang, her face veiled with a light scarf, rode a white horse. She seemed surprised, unable to contain her curiosity.

Accompanied by maids and guards, Ling Huang possessed an air of authority, resembling a young lady from a prominent family on a training excursion.

Her intention was clear – she sought to uncover Chu Lian’s secrets. To allay any suspicion, Ling Huang concocted a tale of a chance encounter, claiming to be heading in the same direction as Chu Lian.

Unbeknownst to Chu Lian, Ling Huang had been observing him closely. However, he paid her words little heed. In his eyes, Ling Huang’s cultivation was merely mortal, and her guards posed no threat. As he neared the threshold of immortal Dao, Chu Lian remained unconcerned with Ling Huang’s opinions.

Now filled with both the thrill of encountering beauty and the joy of advancing in cultivation, Chu Lian was elated. His journey had brought him to the ancestral home of the ghost clan to absorb the residual luck concentrated in this place using the Orb of Ambitions.

The Orb had the unique ability to capture the world’s luck and distill it into the optimal energy for Chu Lian’s cultivation, promising swift progress. However, the process was fraught with danger. Constant vigilance was required, as powerful Daoist factions possessed divine or ancestral weapons specifically designed to suppress stolen luck. Any indication of theft would surely provoke their wrath and prompt an investigation.

Despite his rapid advancement, Chu Lian was keenly aware of his limitations. He knew he was no match for the formidable factions. The consequences of being caught could spell disaster, potentially exposing the secret of the Orb of Ambitions. While the Orb was a relic of an ancient and powerful civilization, Chu Lian viewed it merely as a supplementary tool, offering little in terms of defense against enemies.

Therefore, utmost caution was necessary to conceal the Orb's existence. After careful consideration, Chu Lian determined that the family of the ghost clan, his childhood home, was the ideal location for his endeavors.

Originally, this land was a flourishing paradise. Majestic pavilions, towering immortal mountains, ancient forests stretching tall, and numerous small worlds and dimensions of time and space adorned its landscape. However, with the decree of the Spiritual Royal Family, a large contingent of the ghost clan was forcibly taken away, stripping the land of its guardians and causing it to gradually fall into desolation. Subsequently, it endured the pillaging of remaining ethnic groups, dwindling into a wasteland. Yet, as long as the ghost clan persisted, so too did the vitality and luck of the land.

Chu Lian had come to this place seeking the assistance of the ghost clan in his cultivation. Leading the way, he turned to address Ling Huang. "I won't conceal this from you, Miss Huang. I am indeed a member of the Ghost clan. My parents were summoned by the Spiritual Royal Family to the palace, ostensibly to repair an ancient formation. However, they vanished without a trace. I suspect they fell victim to the machinations of the Spiritual Royal Family, their souls consigned to oblivion."

His expression darkened with pain and resentment as he recounted the tragic loss. Though young, the memory was etched deeply in his mind, unforgotten.

Ming Xiu, seated behind him on the horse, mirrored his somber mood, her thoughts drifting to her own parents.

Beneath her veil, Ling Huang's brow furrowed slightly, her complexion momentarily strained before composing herself. She was well aware of these events, not merely by knowledge, but by her own directive.

However, the recruitment of members from the ghost clan and the Heavenly clan by the Spiritual Royal Family to repair the ancient formation was not solely Ling Huang's decision; it was a decree passed down by numerous ancestors. Ling Huang, feeling the weight of the burden, had voiced her

objections and suggested alternative approaches, but her counsel fell on deaf ears. She was instructed to comply unquestioningly, bearing the brunt of criticism from all quarters.

The impending approach of the Spiritual Royal Family toward the location of the new real world, the realm of mountains and seas, necessitated the preemptive repair of the grand formation and initiation of the grand sacrifice. The ghost clan and the Heavenly clan possessed unparalleled expertise in formation casting, making them the most suitable candidates for this task. Furthermore, given the billions of sacrifices required and the need to draw upon the essence of life and the vast coordinates of the Spiritual Realm, the revelation of this undertaking would undermine the authority of the Spiritual Royal Family.

Thus, to prevent the leakage of information and ensuing chaos, the ancestors of the Spiritual Royal Family resolved to eliminate those involved in repairing the grand formation.

“While the Spiritual Royal Family continues to recruit members of the ghost clan and the Heavenly clan for the construction of ancient formations, it is regrettable that I lack the power to lead a rebellion against them,” Chu Lian lamented, leading the way with resolve evident in his bright eyes and righteous words. Had anyone been present, they would have surely admired his determination and sensed his potential as a future leader.

Observing Chu Lian, Ling Huang couldn’t help but wonder about the source of his confidence. Even she, as the queen, was uncertain about the true extent of the Spiritual Royal Family’s heritage and the prowess of its Dao realm ancestors.

Despite being ancient clans of the Spiritual Realm with profound legacies and even Dao realm existences, the ghost clan and the Heavenly clan had dwindled in power. Once formidable, they were now reduced to a mere shadow of their former selves, their ranks depleted to a handful of individuals. Nevertheless, Chu Lian, as a wildcard, possessed the potential to change this trajectory. Yet, his bold declarations, given his current strength, risked inviting disaster, as Dao Realm beings could swiftly eliminate any potential threats.

Although Ling Huang harbored dissatisfaction and resentment toward the ancestors of the Spiritual Royal Family, as the queen, her foremost concern was the family's interests. She admired Chu Lian's courage and audacity, contemplating the possibility of sparing his life once she learned the secrets of his potential.

"The actions of the Spiritual Royal Family are indeed intolerable. Retribution will inevitably come," Ling Huang reassured Chu Lian, her tone measured. She suggested that perhaps his parents were not in imminent danger but merely trapped somewhere.

Currently, the members of the ghost clan and the Heavenly clan enlisted by the Spiritual Royal Family were not in jeopardy as long as they remained obedient. Ling Huang explained that they were detained in a specific location, required for the maintenance of the grand formation and the forthcoming grand sacrifice.

Although Gu Changge's intervention halted the Spiritual Royal Family's plans to reach the "Real World of Mountains and Seas," their efforts to revive the Spiritual Realm persisted.

Chu Lian, however, remained resolute in his acceptance of his parents' fate. "Miss Huang, there's no need to console me. I've come to terms with reality. I received news of my parents' demise long ago," he asserted, surprising Ling Huang, who had failed to uncover any information regarding Chu Lian's master among the personnel she dispatched. This revelation prompted her to keep a closer watch on him.

As Chu Lian approached the homeland of the ghost clan, standing atop a hill, his emotions churned as he gazed upon the dilapidated relic before him. The remnants of the past had vanished, leaving only crumbling walls, overgrown with vines, and a temple reduced to rubble and charred beams.

"Is this where you lived as a kid, Brother?" Ming Xiu, perched on the horse's back, couldn't help but inquire, her curiosity piqued by the sight of the relic.

Ling Huang, though taken aback, remained silent, observing Chu Lian intently, eager to discern his intentions. She pondered the potential consequences of attacking him, wary of invoking an unforeseen backlash of luck.

Knowing the risks, Chu Lian was cautious not to reveal his true purpose. The Orb of Ambitions was his most closely guarded secret, essential for his ascent. He couldn't afford to divulge it, even to his sister. Despite their seemingly close bond, Chu Lian hesitated to place complete trust in Ling Huang, whose background remained shrouded in mystery.

"I left behind something of great importance from my parents before departing our homeland. I wonder if it's still here after all these years. I intend to retrieve it," Chu Lian explained, a hint of regret coloring his tone. "It holds significant sentimental value to me."

Understanding his plight, Ming Xiu offered her assistance eagerly. "I'll help you find it, Senior Brother. What are we looking for?"

Chu Lian shook his head. "There are too many venomous insects there. It's best for you to stay here and save me the trouble."

At the mention of venomous insects, Ming Xiu's face paled, clearly apprehensive.

Ling Huang remained skeptical of Chu Lian's words, but she was in no rush to uncover his true intentions. She believed that in her presence, his motives would eventually become apparent.

"Why don't I send some people to assist Chu Lian in the search? The area here is quite vast. With just your strength, it might take a while to find it," Ling Huang suggested, despite her doubts.

Chu Lian waved off her offer. “This matter doesn’t require your assistance, Miss. Only I can sense its presence. Even if you send help, it won’t be of any use.”

Chu Lian’s ability to perceive luck was a result of the Orb of Ambitions, a treasure of immense power.

Accepting his decision, Ling Huang signaled for her maids and guards to stand down. Soon, Chu Lian transformed into a luminous figure and darted ahead, leaving Ming Xiu and the others waiting atop the mountain.

Meanwhile, Ling Huang returned to her carriage, closing her eyes to focus on Chu Lian’s movements. To her surprise, his aura vanished completely after he disappeared from her sight, as if evaporating into thin air.

“It seems he truly possesses a remarkable treasure, capable of concealing not only his own presence but also celestial opportunities. It’s truly remarkable,” Ling Huang mused, her eyes betraying a hint of intrigue.

Just as she contemplated her next move, a transmission reached her ears from a distant source.

“What... The lord has left the palace and is coming to see me in person...”

Ling Huang’s initial displeasure morphed into intense agitation and disbelief. She struggled to comprehend the news, her expression reflecting her inner turmoil.

Chapter 988: There is no difference between the so-called anomaly and the child of luck, cousin

Sitting cross-legged in the carriage, Ling Huang’s expression suddenly darkened and grew uncertain. She also tightly clenched her bare hands.

“Didn’t he say he’d be in seclusion for a while and told me not to disturb him? Why did he suddenly leave the palace and come to find me in person?”

A trace of unease crept into her heart as she thought of Gu Changge’s unfathomable and terrifying strength, which even the Bone Ancestor and all the ancestors feared. In Gu Changge’s presence, she didn’t dare entertain any improper thoughts.

Ling Huang also doubted that Gu Changge would visit her for no reason; it was more likely that he had noticed some anomaly. After all, the existence of variables contradicted destiny, and for beings in the Dao realm, discerning such changes was particularly challenging. It was natural to detect a hint of deviation in destiny’s course.

This realization heightened Ling Huang’s unease. Mishandling this situation could lead to significant trouble, not only in explaining to Gu Changge but also facing the wrath of the ancestors if they found out. Ling Huang harbored no illusions about the cruelty, indifference, and ruthlessness of those ancient beings. They had long forsaken familial ties in pursuit of power.

“If nothing else, I must first appease him. His visit must be related to this matter.”

“I was negligent before, assuming he’d remain secluded for an extended period. I left the palace and came here to strategize about the treasure on Chu Lian’s person.”

Various thoughts raced through Ling Huang’s mind, but she quickly regained her composure. Rising from her seat, she exited the carriage, intent on meeting Gu Changge on the hill.

As for how to explain it later, that would depend on the situation, and Ling Huang felt a twinge of unease. Despite Gu Changge's apparent calmness, she knew his ability to discern the Spiritual royal family's existence with a mere thought, and his mood swings were inscrutable.

"Miss Huang..."

Ming Xiu, who also lingered atop the mountain, couldn't help but be a bit surprised when she spotted Ling Huang emerging from the carriage. This area was rife with miasma and poisonous insects; even Ming Xiu sought refuge. The daughter of a prominent family like Ling Huang might struggle in such an environment, yet she remained there, patiently awaiting the return of her senior brother, Chu Lian. Ming Xiu admired Ling Huang's empathy and righteousness, which kindled affection within her. Ling Huang's polite, dignified, and gracious demeanor spoke of her noble upbringing.

Glancing at Ming Xiu, Ling Huang paused for a moment before offering a smile. "I'm stepping out to meet someone, Miss Ming Xiu, no need to worry."

Ming Xiu hesitated briefly but refrained from probing further. Watching Ling Huang vanish from view, she strolled to the opposite side of the hill, stealing glances at the ruins.

"What is brother searching for? He's never mentioned such things before..." She mumbled to herself.

Alone, Ling Huang ascended the other side of the mountain, devoid of attendants or maids. Gazing skyward, she sensed a subtle ripple descending towards her location.

Buzz!

At that moment, the sky seemed to blur, resembling a mirrored surface, as if piercing through endless time and space. From it emerged a slender, tall, handsome figure akin to an immortal – Gu

Changge. Behind him, the Bone Ancestor appeared disguised as an elderly servant, while Liu Mei, Ling Huang's confidant, trailed along.

"Greetings, my lord..." Ling Huang hastily pushed aside any distracting thoughts, respectfully addressing him. She wore a veil, her cascading blue hair reminiscent of a waterfall, her skin as flawless as jade, presenting the image of a perfect immortal.

Gu Changge nodded faintly, casting a glance her way before descending from the air. "There are some matters I wished to discuss with you, but to my surprise, you had already departed the palace. I took the initiative to seek you out. I hope my visit hasn't inconvenienced you."

The Bone Ancestor and Liu Mei followed respectfully behind him. As Ling Huang's confidant, Liu Mei glanced at her with concern, while the Bone Ancestor wore a half-smile that sent a shiver down Ling Huang's spine.

Upon hearing Gu Changge's words, Ling Huang felt a chill creeping up her back. She hastened to respond, "Certainly not, my lord. It is an honor for you to visit me personally. Your presence could never disrupt my affairs. May I inquire if there is a task you wish to assign?"

She sensed that Gu Changge had more to convey than a mere command. His visit held deeper significance.

Noticing slight traces of sweat on Ling Huang's forehead, Gu Changge offered a casual smile and said, "No need to be so nervous. Like I mentioned before, you can act as you normally would in my presence. As for why I sought you out, I'll fill you in later."

Encountering an anomaly was a matter of chance, not pursuit. Even in those worlds with deep-seated foundations, passed down through countless epochs, anomalies were rare occurrences. They

defied logic, were unswayed by innate abilities, and their emergence was often a result of external factors such as celestial gifts, treasures, or inexplicable and profound transformations.

During his time in the Dao Chang Realm, Gu Changge had designated Ni Chen as a variable, employing him as a Daoist to manipulate heavenly fate. This decision stemmed from the unacceptable nature of anomalies in the shadows, condemned to endure countless trials and tribulations.

However, a variable's essence could carry an immensely vast amount of luck. Despite facing numerous twists and turns and experiencing countless hardships, they could ultimately grasp the profound truths of the universe, attain knowledge beyond imagination, and reach heights inaccessible to ordinary individuals.

However, overcoming the three disasters and nine declines along the way was not guaranteed.

Ni Chen had been cultivated as a "variable" by the Dao Chang Realm, an intention originally set by Gu Changge. His true purpose was to allow Ni Chen, as a genuine anomaly, to endure much suffering and calamity, paving the way for a smoother future.

Encountering a suspected "variable" figure within the Spiritual royal family truly surprised Gu Changge. The bodies of variables often carried treasures and extraordinary luck. Despite facing numerous twists, turns, and catastrophes, they typically resolved them without peril. Many disasters seemed to vanish along their journey.

Dealing with variables safely meant calculating and planning. Resorting to robbery and plunder only disrupted fate and invited backlash from unknown quarters. This concept bore some resemblance to the notion of the Son of Luck.

Despite Gu Changge's words, Ling Huang dared not relax. Nonetheless, she mustered the courage to respond, "Yes, my lord."

Gu Changge glanced at her but remained largely silent. Ling Huang took the lead, her expression shifting several times as she already surmised the purpose of Gu Changge's visit.

"My lord, is that why you've come?" Ling Huang eventually mustered the courage to ask. She had already considered that once Gu Changge noticed the existence of the variable, that treasure might no longer be hers. It was a realization Ling Huang had carefully contemplated. Thus, rather than concealing it, she believed it wiser to voice it, perhaps earning Gu Changge's respect and appreciation.

At that moment, even if all the ancestors were aware of it, they wouldn't dare to speak up. Moreover, given Gu Changge's abilities, he likely already knew everything, yet he refrained from directly addressing it.

Upon hearing Ling Huang's words, the Bone Ancestor's eyes immediately narrowed. In truth, he harbored a keen interest in such matters. If Gu Changge hadn't been present, he might have seized Ling Huang and subjected her to interrogation.

"Oh, really?" Gu Changge strolled behind at a leisurely pace, offering only a faint smile in response.

His nonchalant reaction to Ling Huang's revelation wasn't surprising. She was a clever woman who understood how to act in critical moments. Her solitary pursuit of the treasure without informing any of the ancestors also spoke volumes about her ambition.

Observing Gu Changge's lack of anger, Ling Huang breathed a sigh of relief and continued, "To be honest, my lord, I left the palace and ventured here alone in pursuit of a treasure. While I don't have

full knowledge of its nature yet, I am certain of its extraordinary properties. It has the potential to transform an ordinary person into an extraordinary variable.”

She dared not withhold anything and forthrightly disclosed all she knew. With Gu Changge’s prowess, she harbored no illusions about keeping secrets from him.

“A treasure capable of transforming ordinary individuals into extraordinary variables?” The Bone Ancestor’s complexion shifted noticeably, his expression betraying a hint of shock, his breath quickening.

At his level, there were naturally few things that could pique his interest or desire.

In this moment, he grasped why Ling Huang had ventured out from the palace alone. With the treasure within reach, who wouldn’t entertain the notion of seizing it?

Liu Mei, Ling Huang’s confidant, appeared bewildered. Despite being an immortal king, she remained ignorant of the concept of a variable.

“A treasure?” Gu Changge’s expression cleared somewhat. After all, Ling Huang was a genuine Daoist, possessing keen insight. From this perspective, the emergence of this variable shouldn’t have occurred long ago. If it were a fully developed anomaly, it would be challenging to manipulate. Such individuals typically boasted extraordinary wisdom, easily discerning and evading hidden dangers and disasters.

“Yes, but I stumbled upon it by chance. After several encounters, I confirmed its existence. You must understand, my lord, the nature of variables is elusive, and fate is unpredictable. While they bring unforeseeable catastrophes, the potential gains outweigh the risks. Hence, I devised a plan to gradually unravel the mystery...” As Ling Huang walked, she elaborated, also sharing some insights into Chu Lian.

She had relinquished her original plan to seize the treasure, realizing that being valued by Gu Changge might prove beneficial. Offering flowers to Buddha, so to speak, was a shrewd and prudent choice.

Listening attentively, Gu Changge simply nodded in acknowledgment.

Forcibly plundering the variable would disrupt fate, potentially unleashing disaster in the shadows. For beings in the Dao Realm, such catastrophes were even more daunting, as they could hasten the onset of heavenly decline. Without corresponding strength, they risked annihilation. Yet, even with formidable power, there were still numerous reservations.

“This individual named Chu Lian hasn’t reached maturity yet. Even if he possesses a treasure, it’s unlikely he’ll wield its full potential,” Gu Changge mused, considering his options based on the circumstances.

“So, have you made any headway?” he casually inquired, glancing at Ling Huang.

Observing Gu Changge’s lack of reproach for her earlier concealment, Ling Huang breathed a sigh of relief, feeling a weight lift from her shoulders. Her anxiety dissipated, and her demeanor returned to normal as she responded, “My lord, during my interactions with Chu Lian, I’ve grown quite acquainted with him. Under the pretense of getting close, I’ve learned a fair bit about him. Despite his youth and vigor, he harbors grand ambitions, aspiring to overthrow the rule of my Spiritual royal family. Currently, he holds favorable sentiments towards me and harbors no suspicions about my true identity and intentions.”

“Up ahead lies the former territory of his Ghost clan. Although he claims to be searching for a relic belonging to his parents, I suspect it’s merely a pretext. He likely has other motives.”

The past and future of variables were shrouded in thick fog, making deductions challenging. Otherwise, Ling Huang wouldn't have resorted to such methods.

As Ling Huang spoke, Gu Changge's mind conjured the image of a young, confident, and upright face. Possessing treasures and harboring lofty ambitions, this individual could easily overthrow the rule of the Spiritual royal family in the future, becoming a new generation of great emperors and sages. In essence, this so-called variable resembled the child of luck, albeit with even more astonishingly potent fortune, having already undergone a transformation.

As Ling Huang discussed these matters, they arrived at the mountain where Chu Lian had disappeared. Ming Xiu was taken aback to see Ling Huang accompanied by such a young and handsome man, as if a figure from a painting had stepped into the present world. Ming Xiu's persistent stare at Gu Changge bordered on rudeness, prompting a frown from Ling Huang, who worried about upsetting Gu Changge.

However, Gu Changge simply waved his hand and addressed Ming Xiu in a gentle tone, "Cousin, is this the junior sister of the little brother you mentioned to me?"

Ling Huang quickly grasped the situation and explained, "Yes, indeed. This is Miss Ming Xiu."

Chapter 989: Great terrifying existence, wisdom is the most powerful force in the world

Initially, Ling Huang felt a twinge of concern about overstepping her status by addressing herself as "cousin," but she quickly regained composure. As they ascended the mountain, Gu Changge remained silent about their next course of action, prompting Ling Huang to proceed according to his unspoken wishes.

"Is this young man Miss Huang's cousin?" Ming Xiu finally spoke up, realizing she had been staring at Gu Changge for quite some time, feeling a bit embarrassed by her impolite behavior.

When Gu Changge smiled at her, Ming Xiu shyly averted her gaze. Ling Huang nodded in response, stating, "I had some business to attend to on this trip, so I'm here waiting for my cousin to arrive."

"Ah, I see," Ming Xiu replied, not doubting Ling Huang's explanation, though she couldn't help stealing glances at Gu Changge.

In Ming Xiu's eyes, being from a prominent family, Ling Huang's cousin must also come from an extraordinary background. His noble appearance and refined demeanor set him apart from ordinary individuals.

Ling Huang added with a smile, "My cousin has heard about Mr. Chu Lian and admires him greatly. He wishes to meet him. Since we're traveling together this time, we decided to wait here for Mr. Chu Lian."

Upon hearing this, Ming Xiu nodded, withdrawing her gaze from Gu Changge. It wasn't ignorance on her part; it was simply astonishment at encountering such a young man who seemed like a figure from a painting scroll in such a desolate place.

"If my brother knew about this, he would be thrilled. He's brimming with ambition and ideas, just needing to find like-minded allies," Ming Xiu remarked with a laugh, regarding Gu Changge as someone with lofty ideals dissatisfied with the actions of the Spiritual royal family, much like Ling Huang.

She believed that those who found their path would be of greater assistance, while those who had lost their way wouldn't be as helpful. Many powerful factions were already discontented with the Spiritual royal family, nursing long-held grievances. However, they lacked leadership. Chu Lian had previously stated that with the right timing, numerous forces would rally behind him, overthrowing the Spiritual royal family and establishing a peaceful world for the common people.

Ming Xiu admired her senior brother's ambition and didn't perceive it as mere talk. With enough friends, resources, and connections, she reasoned, one needn't fret over future plans.

"Brother Chu Lian's lofty ambitions are truly inspiring. I've heard Ling Huang speak of them, and I too admire them. People with such noble ideals, like Brother Chu Lian, have long suffered under the Spiritual royal family. Given the right opportunity, they will undoubtedly be able to overthrow its rule," Ming Xiu expressed, her tone earnest.

Upon hearing this, Gu Changge's face lit up with a gentle smile, and he engaged in conversation with Ming Xiu. Initially wary and nervous around Ling Huang and the others, Ming Xiu gradually relaxed under Gu Changge's deliberate guidance. Soon, they found themselves discussing their admiration for Senior Brother Chu Lian.

In truth, such discussions were not uncommon. However, many clans hesitated to challenge the authority of the Spiritual royal family, even their leaders refraining from intervening. The fact that Senior Brother Chu Lian was willing to confront them head-on greatly impressed Ming Xiu. Furthermore, his actions often surpassed those of others, earning him even more admiration.

"He not only possesses lofty ambitions but also foresight. He's already contemplating how to confront the Spiritual royal family next..." Ming Xiu's enthusiasm grew as she spoke, her eyes bright with admiration for Chu Lian.

With a subtle smile playing on his lips, Gu Changge interjected with a few words now and then. It seemed that individuals like Chu Lian, born at the right time or blessed as the sons of luck, all shared a common trait: a sense of purpose and duty, whether for personal goals or the greater good of the world and its inhabitants.

Meanwhile, Ling Huang, standing nearby, couldn't help but feel a sense of disapproval.

Even though Chu Lian possessed the most precious treasure, facing the entire Spiritual royal family, he seemed like nothing more than an ant trying to halt a speeding car with his own strength. Now

that he had attracted attention, there was no chance for him to grow. His future seemed bleak, and his aspiration to overthrow the Spiritual royal family appeared naive and futile.

Initially indifferent, Gu Changge gazed at the ruins below with his hands clasped behind his back. However, a flicker of interest crossed his face as if he had sensed something. Ling Huang noticed his expression but failed to discern anything herself. She couldn't even detect Chu Lian's aura, let alone perceive anything significant.

Meanwhile, deep within the miasma-shrouded ruins, Chu Lian rummaged through the crumbling walls, his expression grave. "Are you the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions?" he communicated silently, his face reflecting a mix of disbelief and astonishment.

"Yes, you can refer to me as the Artifact Spirit, the Eleventh Host," came the voice in Chu Lian's mind, devoid of emotion or fluctuation.

"In light of the current circumstances, it's advisable for the host to escape from this location as soon as possible," the voice continued, its tone indifferent.

Upon hearing this, Chu Lian experienced a tumult of emotions, endeavoring to maintain composure. He was puzzled by what transpired as he searched for the remnants of luck belonging to the Ghost Clan.

Suddenly, an indifferent, mechanical voice echoed in his mind, warning him of an impending threat and advising caution. This unexpected voice jolted Chu Lian, taking him some time to regain his composure and realize it emanated from the Ball of Ambitions.

The voice claimed to be the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions, identifying Chu Lian as its eleventh host. Prior to him, the Ball of Ambitions had ten hosts. Chu Lian hadn't anticipated the existence of such an artifact spirit within the Ball of Ambitions. Despite the lack of perceptible changes upon its

recognition of him, Chu Lian's mind buzzed with various thoughts. Fortunately, his experiences had acquainted him with the mysteries surrounding the Ball of Ambitions, preventing him from reacting impulsively.

With a composed demeanor, Chu Lian inquired in a deep voice, "What do you mean by warning me of an impending threat and advising caution?" He sought clarity on this matter. Aware that only the ruins of the Ghost clan adorned the desolate mountainside, Chu Lian questioned the source of this supposed terror. Could it be the lingering spirits of the Ghost Clan's ancestors? With his current strength nearing the realm of the Immortal Dao, could he not contend with them?

Once again, the indifferent voice of the Ball of Ambitions resounded, explaining, "It means that within a radius of ten thousand miles from the host, an extremely menacing aura is approaching, undetectable by your current strength."

Chu Lian was taken aback by the revelation. His scalp tingled with apprehension, an impulse urging him to glance behind him. However, his strong willpower suppressed any overt reactions, though cold sweat continued to bead on his forehead. He forced himself to remain calm and engaged with the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions, seeking guidance. "What should I do now? Where is this terrifying presence? Is it watching me?" he inquired, his mind racing with questions. "Has it been residing in this area all along? Did my arrival startle it, or was its approach sudden?"

Relying on the Ball of Ambitions for guidance, Chu Lian pinned his hopes on the artifact. With his current capabilities, he stood defenseless against an adversary he couldn't even perceive. Moreover, if the other party desired his demise, it would be effortless. The fact that the Artifact Spirit of the Ball of Ambitions had detected the impending threat suggested it might offer a solution.

"Don't rely on me. I'm merely a weapon spirit, existing due to special substances, devoid of the power to aid you. If I hadn't sensed the sudden approach of that menacing aura, I wouldn't have awakened. The fluctuations of that aura are reminiscent of those from the first master; it's astonishing that such a being exists in your civilization," the Artifact Spirit of the Ball of Ambitions responded indifferently, though a hint of emotion colored its latter words.

Chu Lian noted the use of “the first master” instead of “the first host,” indicating a matter of significance. However, he shelved his curiosity for the moment. Unable to decipher the Ball of Ambitions’ cryptic words, Chu Lian remained uncertain of his next course of action.

He vaguely grasped the extraordinary and unimaginable strength possessed by the terrifying entity that had suddenly approached. The Ball of Ambitions was the catalyst for this realization. Had the other party sensed the Ball of Ambitions’ presence and arrived abruptly? Or was it merely a coincidence?

“The Ball of Ambitions can obscure the causality of celestial secrets, rendering deduction and divination futile. Even if my first master were reborn, discerning the Ball of Ambitions’ existence would be impossible. As the eleventh host, your aura is shielded by the Ball of Ambitions, ensuring that no one can perceive you. Therefore, our communication remains undetected by others,” the Artifact Spirit of the Ball of Ambitions assured Chu Lian. “Though the menacing aura has dissipated, you must remain vigilant.”

Chu Lian felt a wave of relief wash over him at the news of the aura’s disappearance. Had the threat subsided? Had the entity departed? As long as the adversary wasn’t targeting the Ball of Ambitions, he could find solace. Yet, a lingering doubt lingered in his mind: What if the Artifact Spirit of the Ball of Ambitions was mistaken? What if the entity’s purpose was indeed the Ball of Ambitions?

His upbringing in such a perilous environment left Chu Lian with a lingering sense of suspicion and concern. “If our conversation remains hidden from others, why insist on my immediate departure from this place?” he questioned.

The spirit of the Ball of Ambitions responded dispassionately, “The Ball of Ambitions is a coveted treasure sought by numerous powerful individuals. Can you, with your current strength, safeguard it should its existence be discovered? Even with your acumen as the host, can you ensure there are no oversights that might arouse suspicion? Despite the Ball of Ambitions concealing your aura, observant individuals may still discern irregularities. Wisdom is the most formidable power in this world; the slightest anomaly invites scrutiny and conjecture. Your task now is to evade detection as much as possible. Even if the entity has departed, retrospection may reveal discrepancies.”

“Wisdom?”

Chu Lian’s heart raced at the implication. Perhaps he had been too conspicuous of late. If someone were to scrutinize him closely, they might indeed uncover something amiss.

The thorough reminder from the Artifact Spirit of the Ball of Ambitions spurred Chu Lian into action. Regardless of the reason for the terrifying entity’s presence, he knew he had to flee this place immediately.

“I had intended to refine the remaining luck here, but it seems that time is not on my side,” Chu Lian conceded, his resolve firm despite lingering fear.

Yet, another question nagged at him. “As the weapon spirit of the Ball of Ambitions, it seems illogical for you to disclose this information. Why help me?”

The Artifact Spirit paused before responding, “Your selection as the Ball of Ambitions’ host was destined in the shadows. Moreover, the Ball of Ambitions lacks the energy to select another host. Your fate is intertwined with it; should you perish, so too will the Ball of Ambitions.”

Chu Lian found solace in this unexpected answer, albeit with a sense of responsibility weighing on him.

With his emotions in check, Chu Lian resolved to maintain his composure and headed toward the mountain with Miss Huang and his junior sister in tow. His plan was to vacate the premises promptly.

If there were opportunities elsewhere to absorb and condense the remaining luck, he would seize them. Though the Ghost clan's residual luck was scarce, he felt no remorse in abandoning it under these circumstances.

Meanwhile, at the mountain's summit, Ming Xiu stood on tiptoe, her gaze fixed on the ruins below.

With a swift motion, Chu Lian emerged from the deserted forest, his arrival marked by a divine light streaking through the air.

"Ming Xiu!" Ming Xiu's joyous greeting rang out as she spotted Senior Brother Chu Lian, her smile wide and inviting. Unaware of Chu Lian's perturbed expression, she waved enthusiastically.

However, Chu Lian's attention was fixated on the unfamiliar young man who stood alongside Ling Huang atop the mountain. Sensing something amiss, he maintained his composure and descended gracefully.

"May I inquire about the identity of this young man?" Chu Lian directed his question at Gu Changge, respectfully clasping his hands in greeting. He was acutely aware of the two figures accompanying Gu Changge, a stoic old man clad in black robes and an enchanting woman. Their strength eluded his perception, hinting at a formidable prowess beyond his own.

Chapter 990: The causes and effects come first, so the past isn't that important.

Chu Lian felt a mix of confusion and doubt, but his primary emotion was caution. He attempted to reach out to the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions in his mind, but it seemed to be in a deep sleep and did not respond. With no solution, Chu Lian could only calm himself and wait for things to unfold. He was uncertain if the terrifying presence described by the Ball of Ambitions was among the people before him.

Chu Lian observed the Spirit Emperor and the young man nearby, noting their close relationship as if they were well-acquainted.

The two remained at the mountain's peak, conversing quietly. The powerful and mysterious dark force accompanying them was likely responsible for the young man's protection and safety. The woman with a gentle demeanor and elegance was probably his wife. From this, it appeared that the young man was wealthy and significant.

When Chu Lian asked questions, his wise mentor explained:

"This is the honored guest. He represents the noble family and will be waiting here due to important matters."

"Representative?"

Chu Lian was puzzled and wondered about the Spirit noble family.

It was rare to encounter such a noble presence. He had never heard of a family with such influence. Was this family really that significant?

He felt a growing confusion.

At that moment, the honored guest met Chu Lian's gaze as if sensing his thoughts. He smiled slightly and said, "It's truly an honor to receive your attention. I am deeply grateful and feel very honored."

The honored guest then added, "Chu Lian, don't worry. The representative you're referring to is just a person like yourself. For those with noble aspirations, mutual respect is key. I have previously mentioned your situation to the representative, who is very respectful and understands the importance of this meeting. He will certainly come to see you."

“This time, if you and the representative have a good rapport, it will be very convenient for you to wait here until he arrives.”

Chu Lian’s gaze shifted between the honored guest and the Spirit Emperor, sensing they were not what they appeared to be.

The honored guest’s gaze toward Chu Lian remained calm and indifferent, with a little hint of emotion.

It felt like the honored guest was maintaining a high-level, distant demeanor, as if looking down from a lofty position and giving only minimal attention.

“Is this how it is? Is the honored guest really so indifferent to the Spirit Emperor’s situation?”

Chu Lian wondered to himself before posing the question.

Regardless of the relationship between the honored guest and the Spirit Emperor, Chu Lian’s priority was to leave this place as quickly as possible.

The spirit of the Ball of Ambitions remained unresponsive to his inquiry.

Chu Lian speculated that perhaps the powerful and mysterious force had returned after a period of absence. The spirit of the Ball of Ambitions showed no unusual signs, but he had to stay cautious and attentive to his surroundings.

Water can both carry and guide a boat, but it can also sink it.

The Spirit Emperor's situation might provoke dissatisfaction and lead to resentment. The honored guest appeared very indifferent. He seemed to have other interests. During this tense period, it was evident that he was focused on something else.

Thus, Chu Lian remained calm and showed no unusual signs in response to the situation.

The honored guest observed that this might be the true significance of Chu Lian's predicament.

In tense circumstances, someone who is genuinely powerful usually takes control.

When a person of great power arrives, they typically assert their presence and lead. Often, it is not the individual who chooses a high position but rather the high position that selects the individual. Even though Chu Lian's situation is somewhat special and difficult to predict, his current strength is undeniably too weak. Even if someone helps him attain a high position, he still lacks the strength to sustain it.

The high position might choose to issue a warning due to some external factors. For now, selecting another individual for the role seems unfeasible.

Alternatively, did Chu Lian earn the recognition of the high position?

The second possibility, according to the honored guest, seemed unrealistic.

He was attempting to find an opportunity and establish a connection with this high position. If Chu Lian could become an extraordinary figure through this process, assessing his current strength would still be challenging. It was unlikely to be straightforward.

Just now, when Gu Changge observed Chu Lian, he was largely certain that Chu Lian's abilities had indeed surpassed ordinary limits and could be considered an anomaly.

However, this anomaly was unlike the "false anomaly" of those in the Dao chang Realms who manipulate fate to create such beings. Instead, it was due to Chu Lian being chosen by a supreme treasure—a real anomaly in every sense.

"Has Chu Lian found that important relic left by your parents?" Ling Huang asked, gently shifting the topic with a hint of concern.

Chu Lian quickly responded, shaking his head, "I went to the most likely place where it might have been and searched but found nothing. Someone must have taken it, or perhaps it fell elsewhere."

His expression showed a trace of disappointment.

Ming Xiu stepped in to comfort him, "Brother, don't be discouraged. Maybe one day you'll find it. It's possible it wasn't lost, or maybe you just forgot where you put it."

Chu Lian forced a smile, his mood dampened.

Although he doubted Gu Changge's identity, Chu Lian did not feel comfortable asking directly. Neither the mysterious old man in black nor the beautiful woman seemed like individuals he could confront.

Later, Chu Lian decided to leave the area and asked Ling Huang where she was headed next. If their destinations were along the same path, they could travel together.

Ling Huang, aware of Chu Lian's itinerary due to having someone track his movements, mentioned a location directly.

"That's great! We can travel together again!" Ming Xiu happily chimed in.

Chu Lian had a good impression of Ling Huang and was pleased to travel with someone so agreeable. However, he couldn't quite understand the relationship between Gu Changge and Ling Huang. Not only did they share the same carriage, but when boarding, Ling Huang even stepped back half a step to let Gu Changge board first.

This detail caught Chu Lian's attention, making him more curious about Gu Changge's identity. Additionally, Ling Huang seemed to show considerable respect and fear toward the man in black.

Since they were supposed to be cousins, logically, Ling Huang and Gu Changge's statuses shouldn't differ significantly. So why was there such a display of respect and deference?

"Unfortunately, the spirit of the Hongyuan Ball isn't responding to me right now. Otherwise, I could ask for its opinion," Chu Lian thought as he mounted his horse and fell to the back of the group as they left the grassy hills.

He hadn't considered that Gu Changge might be the terrifying presence described by the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions. The mysterious figure in the black cloak or the graceful woman seemed more likely candidates to him.

Inside the carriage, there was far more space than it appeared from the outside. Gu Changge sat quietly on a cushion, deep in thought, while Ling Huang, seated ahead of him, delicately sipped her tea, careful not to disturb his contemplation.

The space around them was sealed with powerful restriction formations, isolating it from external perceptions or divination. Even for those with great power, it would be difficult to understand what was happening inside.

"How is the army that's been summoned?" Gu Changge suddenly asked, snapping out of his thoughts and glancing at Ling Huang.

"The elders have already issued commands. Powerful figures from across the vast realms are responding. It won't be long before they assemble," Ling Huang replied respectfully.

To this day, she still didn't know which faction Gu Changge planned to target. If the provocation had come from the other realm, it wouldn't require such a large army.

Although the Dao Chang Realm wasn't among the most powerful ancient realms, it had deep foundations and could easily sweep through most realms with plenty of strength to spare. However, Ling Huang didn't dare to ask too many questions about such matters.

Gu Changge nodded slightly, his gaze settling on the veil covering Ling Huang's face. He smiled faintly and extended his hand, as if intending to remove it.

Ling Huang, who had been brewing tea, froze, her movements becoming stiff. She didn't dare to react or even move.

“Si

Her voice trembled slightly with fear, unsure why Gu Changge was making such an abrupt gesture. She didn't want to be seen as just another pawn or become dependent on him. Besides, Gu Changge had previously stated that he wasn't interested in her.

“I don't like it when others cover up before me. There's no need to be so tense. It looks better this way—easier on the eyes.”

Gu Changge maintained his calm, faint smile, disregarding her discomfort and unease. He simply removed her veil with ease.

Ling Huang let out a sigh of relief and tried to calm herself, but a strange feeling stirred within her, making her face flush.

She had never experienced such a sensation in all her years of cultivation. Unable to help herself, she glanced at Gu Changge, only to quickly avert her gaze.

“When I leave the imperial palace, I wear a veil and rarely show my true face to others. It's not out of disrespect for you...” Ling Huang explained softly.

However, Gu Changge seemed not to hear her. His gaze was fixed outside the carriage as he spoke casually, “I understand your fears and concerns. Your clan is curious, wanting to learn about my past, my plans, and why I’ve gathered such a large army.”

Ling Huang quickly pushed aside her scattered thoughts and focused her attention. She had no idea why Gu Changge was suddenly discussing these matters with her.

Normally, Gu Changge maintained a calm, quiet demeanor whether interacting with her or the elders of the Linghuang clan, speaking very little.

Was he revealing his thoughts now?

“Your strength is immeasurable. In the entire Upper Realm, you likely have no equal. In the Dao Chang Realm of the Ghost Clan, we do not wish to oppose you and risk being wiped out, buried in the endless flow of time,” Ling Huang responded cautiously, choosing her words carefully.

She had gathered some information from the elders. Most believed Gu Changge was an inheritor of demonic art, wandering the Upper Realm. Wherever he went, that place became the forbidden ground. After long ages, he had awakened again, searching for suitable Dao Chang Realms to feed on, regaining his strength and vitality.

If the Realm of the Ghost Clan resisted, they would surely be devoured and become mere sustenance for him.

“Those who follow will thrive; those who resist will perish. Your Ling Huang Clan is indeed wise, and so are you,” Gu Changge remarked casually.

“However, I’ve always believed it’s better to earn respect than fear. After all, standing too high can be quite lonely,” he added with a faint smile.

For some reason, Ling Huang felt lonely from his words, as if he sat alone at the heights of the nine heavens, gazing down at all of existence with no one by his side.

She carefully considered her words before replying, “But I don’t believe you would do such things. You have a larger goal... the Dao Chang Realm must seem insignificant in your eyes.”

“Is that so? I didn’t expect you to think that way,” Gu Changge said with a smile, indifferent as ever.

Ling Huang realized that her clan had likely misunderstood and feared Gu Changge initially. But after interacting with him, she sensed a change in his mood. This man must have been through much despite his youthful appearance. His actions and demeanor all seemed to serve a larger purpose.

Otherwise, why would he seem to reveal his heart now, saying such words to her?

At that moment, Ling Huang felt much pressure lift from her shoulders. It was as if the heavy weight she had been carrying had lessened, and she no longer felt the same fear when speaking with Gu Changge. There was no longer a need to tread as cautiously as before.

Gu Changge noticed the shift in Ling Huang’s emotions, but his face still carried the same faint smile.

Yet there was no ripple of change within his heart—calm and still as always.

Since he had decided to use the name of the Heaven Alliance to respond to the Dark Abyss, he had to carefully craft a legitimate goal that would align with his intentions.

As for Ling Huang, she appeared to be an ideal opportunity in his eyes.

These seemingly heartfelt words were meant to draw her closer, to close the distance between them. But in reality, they were meant to plant a seed in her mind, shaping a perfect image of himself in her heart.

The Bone Ancestor, symbolizing a “madman,” would undoubtedly bring terrifying consequences and face endless challenges. But why, without any apparent reason, was he willing to establish the Bone Ancestor and seek the path to “madman”?

As the Demon Lord, he had once traversed the Dark Abyss, confronting entities within the Origin Realm. Had he perished, with his body and soul extinguished? Was that why he harbored such deep resentment?

That wasn’t all. Before becoming the Demon Lord, his past was a complete blank, unknown to anyone.

So naturally, this led him to trace his even more distant past.

As for what that past entailed, it didn’t matter. It was sufficient for others to know that such a past existed—enough to explain his motivations.

Because of this past, Gu Changge had sworn a great vow: to establish the Bone Ancestor and unite the entire power of the Dark Abyss in pursuit of the path to “madman.”

Gu Changge had always conducted his affairs meticulously, never leaving loose ends. Every cause would inevitably lead to an effect. He was focused on perfecting the cause to ensure the desired outcome.