

Villain 991

Chapter 991: I Want to Unify the Boundless World, recruiting troops and gathering sages

“My lord, have some tea,” Ling Huang respectfully poured out the teacup in front of Gu Changge.

Upon hearing these words, she also felt the gap between them diminish, no longer as apprehensive as before. She had heard snippets, tales of those who stood within the confines of the restricted area, enduring the ravages of lost homelands, watching kin and comrades perish, buried in the annals of time, yet utterly powerless.

In contrast to the “madman” who forsake all, like the Bone Ancestor, the so-called masters of the restricted area appeared more akin to solitary souls adrift in an unending sea, tethered to an unyielding fixation. Some sought vengeance, others sought the resurrection of loved ones, while a few endeavored to alter the relentless flow of time and rewrite history.

Though the two may appear similar, their essences diverged significantly. A “madman” such as the Bone Ancestor, for better or worse, could forsake all in the pursuit of survival, willing to demean himself before Gu Changge, discarding dignity without hesitation.

Gu Changge, on the other hand, solitary in the vast expanse, driven by a singular obsession, likely possessed a more conventional temperament. Yet, when that obsession consumed him, he would stop at nothing to achieve his aims.

After coming to this realization, Ling Huang found Gu Changge to be much less intimidating, inexplicably easing her mood.

Initially, she had perceived Gu Changge as a brooding monster, capable of launching a dark upheaval across the vast expanse, sacrificing countless lives to restore his vitality and blood.

This misconception had instilled a deep-seated fear within her.

However, now that she understood better, she realized her perception of Gu Changge, shared by generations before her, was entirely mistaken.

“You seem less fearful of me now,” Gu Changge remarked with a faint smile as he lifted the teacup. Returning the smile, Ling Huang replied, “I had a profound misunderstanding of you, my lord. It wasn’t until recently that I realized the fear I harbored stemmed from the actions of the Bone Ancestor after boarding the ship...”

After boarding the ship, the Bone Ancestor had resorted to direct violence, slaying an ancestor and consuming him. Ling Huang was well aware of this incident, which had also fueled her fear of the Bone Ancestor.

Even the Great Ancestor found himself compelled to acquiesce to the Bone Ancestor’s actions in the face of his formidable presence. Gu Changge, however, surpassed the Bone Ancestor in terror many times over. How could she not have been afraid of such a being initially? Especially when her ancestors relied on her to gain favor with Gu Changge.

Despite her trepidation, Ling Huang possessed a strong resolve, often maintaining a composed demeanor outwardly. Gu Changge took a sip of tea, offering no immediate response. He knew he had achieved the desired effect. Fearing power without virtue was not the ideal path to imperial authority.

Recognizing that he couldn’t handle everything alone, Gu Changge’s words planted a seed in Ling Huang’s heart, making her future service to him easier. As a confidant of Dao Realm’s strength with commendable talent, Ling Huang held promise. With the bestowal of immortal and long-lived substances, Gu Changge hoped she might ascend to a higher level, rivaling the current spiritual royal family ancestors.

Facing a shortage of capable individuals, Gu Changge couldn't rely solely on the Bone Ancestor, who, despite his respect, harbored fear of his strength. Ling Huang, though less experienced and innocent, offered a more earnest alternative.

"My lord, you're unlike the Bone Ancestor in every way. He's a true lunatic, reckless and lawless. You, however, possess your own principles and remain unswayed by external influences," Ling Huang remarked with genuine respect.

Her words weren't merely flattery; they were based on her observations during their interactions and the insights gained today. Gu Changge exemplified such traits.

"Really? My own heart? But how long can it endure? Thousands of years? Tens of thousands of years? Billions of years? Or even longer?" Gu Changge smiled noncommittally.

Ling Huang was slightly taken aback, interpreting Gu Changge's remark as a reference to his obsession. How long could his obsession endure?

"My lord, if I may inquire, could you share your plans with me?" Ling Huang hesitated briefly before posing the question. In the past, she wouldn't have dared to ask such a thing even at the cost of her life.

Upon hearing her question, Gu Changge gave her an odd look before offering a faint smile. "I've laid it all out, so there's no need for you to be nervous or reserved around me. I've never been fond of complexity. Many times, I prefer those around me to engage with me as equals."

“Just the act of you removing your veil earlier startled you so. If I were to pursue other endeavors, how would you respond?”

“From now on, in my presence, you need not address me as ‘my lord.’ You may simply refer to me as ‘young master.’”

“Yes, young master,” Ling Huang replied, feeling an inexplicable joy at the address, akin to that of a maid. In a sense, wasn’t this a sign of her growing closeness with Gu Changge?

“If the young master decides on other actions, Ling Huang will certainly not dare to intervene. However, I would implore you not to, young master,” she responded, feeling that her cultivated mindset of many years had been completely disrupted in this moment.

The queen of a generation within the Spiritual royal family, overseeing all universes and billions of creatures, found herself behaving like a young girl in this moment, her words unexpectedly coy.

Gu Changge smiled and remarked, “It seems you’ve become quite familiar with me.”

“I simply believe it’s inconceivable for you, young master, to resort to coercion. However, if you were to express a desire for Ling Huang to accompany you intimately, she would willingly oblige,” Ling Huang spoke with newfound boldness, free from the worries and fears that had plagued her before.

Despite the disparity in status and power, Gu Changge actually met her criteria for a potential partner.

“Let’s not dwell on this topic any longer,” Gu Changge interjected with a smile, waving his hand to dismiss the matter.

“Yes, young master,” Ling Huang replied, feeling a twinge of inexplicable disappointment and dejection. Though she couldn’t claim to be the foremost beauty of the Spiritual Royal family, within her domain of influence, her allure was unmatched. Yet, Gu Changge appeared indifferent to her charms.

Sighing softly to herself, Ling Huang cast her gaze upon Gu Changge. He sipped his tea, his countenance exuding a handsome and refined air, reminiscent of an innocent youth untouched by the worldly affairs.

“Aren’t you curious about my intentions? Allow me to elucidate,” Gu Changge stated, setting down his empty teacup, sensing that the moment was ripe and that Ling Huang was now less guarded against him.

Upon hearing his words, Ling Huang’s energy surged, her attention fully captivated.

She couldn’t contain her curiosity as she fixed her gaze on Gu Changge.

“I aim to unite the boundless world,” Gu Changge stated calmly, adding the second half of the sentence unhurriedly.

“What?” Ling Huang exclaimed, startled. Initially, she thought she had misheard, but judging by Gu Changge’s expression, he wasn’t joking.

Frozen in place, her small mouth slightly agape, Ling Huang's face registered shock and disbelief. In the vast expanse where the edge remained unknown, where countless civilizations and eras had flourished across time and space, the Spiritual Realm, though ancient and formidable, was but a minuscule speck in the grand scheme, liable to be crushed and submerged at any moment.

And yet, Gu Changge proposed to conquer the entire boundless world?

Ling Huang had never conceived of such a notion; it seemed utterly fantastical. Yet, here was Gu Changge, speaking of it as if it were within reach.

"Young master..." It took Ling Huang a while to realize her mouth was dry, not due to doubting Gu Changge's strength. Rather, the idea seemed too surreal, beyond the realm of possibility. Even in ancient legends, those who had attained the pinnacle of power would have struggled to achieve such a feat.

Moreover, within the boundless world, how many True Realms existed? Beyond the True Realm, numerous undiscovered powerhouses lurked in obscure corners, and perhaps entities stood at the apex of the Ninth Decline in its truest form. The boundless world harbored countless unknowns and mysteries, surpassing speculation and imagination.

"If I can't accomplish even this, how can I contend with the heavens?" Gu Changge smiled, seemingly anticipating Ling Huang's reaction and remaining unfazed.

"Contend with the heavens?" Ling Huang was once again taken aback by these words.

The way of heaven was not benevolent; before calamity struck, all sentient beings would face annihilation. During such times, many real worlds would rebel against the heavens, giving rise to heaven-slayers. But who could truly defeat the heavens? Such endeavors amounted to choosing death to postpone demise.

If not for their inherent weakness, incapable of resisting calamity, heaven-slayers would not exist.

Clearly, Gu Changge's notion of defeating the heavens now and facing them during calamity were distinct.

"My lord, are you intending to confront calamity head-on and challenge the way of heaven?" Ling Huang struggled to regain her composure, still reeling from the shock. In a way, Gu Changge was a more fearsome "madman" than the Bone Ancestor. How could he dare declare such a thing and deem it an obsession?

"Defeating the heavens and attaining Dao" was not a feat achieved through mere determination and resolve. The true "heavens" in that realm were beyond their reach.

Gu Changge paid no heed to Ling Huang's reaction; he merely sought to prepare her psychologically. The earlier the notion of battling the heavens was introduced, the better. Ling Huang's astonishment was expected and understandable.

At the time, when Gu Wuwang broached the subject to Gu Changge in the Dao Chang Realm, Gu Wuwang's reaction mirrored Ling Huang's—shocked and incredulous. Not everyone possessed the fortitude to confront the potential repercussions, even just contemplating them.

Observing Gu Changge fall silent, Ling Huang turned her gaze to the undulating mountains outside, gradually calming herself. Ling Huang was no ordinary individual; after the initial shock wore off, she pondered the matter seriously.

Even though the revelation had initially left her speechless with disbelief, Ling Huang recognized the enormity of the situation. Even if all the ancestors were privy to such knowledge, they would be shaken to their core. Yet, Gu Changge spoke of it with such nonchalance, as if it were inconsequential.

“My lord, what should we do about Chu Lian? Should we allow him to continue his growth, or...?” Ling Huang hesitated to broach the topic of challenging the heavens and redirected her inquiry toward Chu Lian.

“Let him continue to develop. If an opportunity arises, I’ll engage in a conversation regarding that item he possesses,” Gu Changge replied casually.

As things stood, Chu Lian likely remained unaware of Ling Huang’s true identity. Gu Changge harbored a curiosity about the treasure in Chu Lian’s possession. Since it possessed spiritual intelligence, a direct confrontation might not yield results. Gu Changge preferred a more diplomatic approach; forcibly seizing the treasure could lead to unnecessary complications and risks, given its apparent connection to Chu Lian.

Coincidentally, it would take some time for the Spiritual royal family to mobilize all their forces.

Meanwhile, trailing behind the team, Chu Lian found himself in a state of restlessness.

“Artifact spirit...” He attempted to communicate with the spirit within the Ball of Ambitions, but it remained unresponsive, seemingly plunged into a deep slumber. Though this left Chu Lian feeling helpless, he found solace in the fact that it didn’t affect the ball’s functionality.

His strength continued to increase steadily and discreetly, wary of drawing attention from the old man in the black robe accompanying Gu Changge.

Several days later, they arrived at Juxian Village, nestled deep within lush green mountains, its grandeur striking.

The village bustled with diners from diverse ethnic backgrounds, their mysterious strengths hinting at a hidden potential akin to a unicorn concealed within the mountains.

This revelation surprised both Chu Lian and Ming Xiu.

Ling Huang explained to them that the village was a covert establishment of her cousin, dedicated to recruiting peculiar individuals from across the world to plot the overthrow of the Spiritual royal family. Additionally, it served as a hub for recruiting soldiers and acquiring resources, crucial for future endeavors.

This news both astonished and thrilled Chu Lian. It aligned perfectly with his own goals and aspirations. He hadn't anticipated that Ling Huang's mysterious cousin was already orchestrating such plans, surpassing his expectations.

Chapter 992: Then lead the show for him, who is planning?

The grandeur of Juxian Village was concealed within the depths of the mountain and ancient forest. Surrounding it were numerous formations veiled in mist, making it challenging for outsiders to navigate successfully.

Chu Lian and Ming Xiu were in awe of the intricate buildings before them. The diners bustling about emitted a palpable aura, their eyes flickering with divine light, exuding an oppressive presence that seemed to weigh down on those around them.

Ling Huang instructed someone to guide Chu Lian and Ming Xiu inside, arranging accommodations for them in a nearby residence. With a serene smile, she quickly disappeared into the courtyards.

“Senior brother, I never imagined such a magical place existed here. It seems to attract talented individuals from all corners of the world,” remarked Ming Xiu, his eyes filled with wonder and curiosity, unable to tear himself away from the surroundings.

Chu Lian felt a sense of relief upon arriving, silently nodding in agreement. The village was teeming not only with foreign beings but also cultivators clad in Daoist robes, engrossed in calculations with compasses in hand.

Had it not been for Ling Huang’s guidance, they might never have discovered this mysterious place. Moreover, Chu Lian couldn’t shake off the thought of what Ling Huang had mentioned earlier.

Wasn’t Ling Huang her cousin, the enigmatic Mr. Gu who established this village long ago? Did this imply that he had harbored intentions of overthrowing the rule of the Spiritual royal family from an early stage?

This notion aligned with Chu Lian’s own beliefs.

However, Chu Lian realized that his current strength and resources were insufficient to support such grand plans.

“Young Master Gu really trusts us by bringing us here.”

“It seems he values us greatly,” Ming Xiu exclaimed happily.

Chu Lian smiled and scanned their surroundings, noticing no one trailing behind them. He shook his head and replied, “It’s not so simple. Mr. Gu is exceedingly enigmatic. He commands a legion of skilled individuals. He likely brought us here not out of trust, but because he believes we won’t uncover anything significant before the storm hits.”

“Even if we were to inadvertently reveal the secrets of this place, he could easily dispatch someone to eliminate us without any repercussions or loss on his part.”

Ming Xiu’s mood soured upon hearing this. “Senior brother, how can you think so poorly of others? Haven’t you witnessed how they’ve treated us on this journey?”

Chu Lian knew his words would upset Ming Xiu, but he couldn’t deny the reality of their situation. Plotting to overthrow the Spiritual royal family was a grave offense punishable by severe consequences.

If their intentions were exposed and the Spiritual royal family caught wind of it, even Mr. Gu’s mysterious influence might not suffice for his protection.

He doubted that Mr. Gu placed complete trust in him and his junior sister based solely on Ling Huang’s commendation.

However, Chu Lian knew he couldn’t divulge too much about his suspicions.

“I have a feeling that Mr. Gu may be attempting to recruit me. The individuals under his command are quite formidable. Many of them possess strengths beyond my comprehension.”

Upon parting ways with his junior sister and returning to his designated courtyard, Chu Lian conducted a thorough surveillance of his surroundings, wary of prying eyes. He then retreated into the house, ensuring all doors and windows were securely shut.

Simultaneously, he produced a simple and unassuming banner, no larger than the size of his palm, and cast it outward. The banner trembled briefly before emitting a faint brilliance, enveloping the area. Its misty aura blurred the surroundings, rendering them impervious to surveillance, even by entities far surpassing his own strength.

“The Eight Directions Cloud and Rain Banner, acquired through the Ball of Ambitions’ sign-in, can ward off the prying eyes of other spirits, but it has additional uses...” Chu Lian breathed a sigh of relief, his childhood experiences instilling a deep sense of caution within him. While Mr. Gu had shown no malice toward him thus far, Chu Lian remained vigilant against others.

In particular, he couldn’t forget the words imparted to him by the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions within the Ghost clan.

“Be cautious sailing for ten thousand years. Mr. Gu’s origins are shrouded in mystery. The presence of the old man in the black robe beside him unnerves me. I constantly feel as though he’s been spying on me with ill intentions.”

“The ominous entity that the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions warned me about... could it be the old man in the black robe next to Mr. Gu?”

Seated cross-legged on the bed, Chu Lian’s complexion shifted. The Ball of Ambitions was his most prized possession and closely guarded secret—it must not fall into the wrong hands. If the old man in the black robe sensed anything and reported it to Mr. Gu, could Chu Lian still safeguard the Ball of Ambitions?

“Artifact spirit...” Chu Lian attempted to summon the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions in his mind, intending to seek answers. Yet, despite his efforts, the spirit remained unresponsive. Ever since leaving the territory of the Ghost clan, it seemed to have lapsed into a profound slumber, ignoring all calls for communication.

Even with the Eight Directions Cloud and Rain Banner concealing their surroundings, the spirit remained unresponsive.

“Could something be amiss? Has it truly fallen into a deep sleep?” Chu Lian pondered, but found no solution apart from waiting.

Meanwhile, in a serene courtyard elsewhere, Ling Huang conversed with Gu Changge about Juxian Village. Unbeknownst to Gu Changge, the village was Ling Huang’s clandestine creation, attracting talented individuals from far and wide.

The purpose was to surveil the world and discreetly address issues that proved challenging on the surface of the Spiritual royal family. Ling Huang considered it her secret weapon, reserved for matters that required a delicate touch.

As for why Gu Changge instructed her to inform Chu Lian and others that Juxian Village was established to overthrow the rule of the Spiritual royal family? It was all part of ensuring smooth sailing.

After all, Chu Lian aspired to be a savior, dedicated to rescuing the common people and souls in distress. Gu Changge saw an opportunity to fulfill Chu Lian’s ambitions and make his dreams a reality. Not only could he assist Chu Lian in achieving his goals, but he could also orchestrate the downfall of the Spiritual royal family, establishing his own dynasty in the process and positioning Chu Lian as the contemporary era’s savior.

Gu Changge envisioned himself directing the drama of dynastic change and salvation, all while seeking an audience with Chu Lian’s treasure. To achieve this, he first needed to demonstrate sincerity. By doing so, he could pave the way for more transparent negotiations, allowing for open and honest discourse.

In the realm of the Ghost Clan, Gu Changge recognized the treasure's sentient nature and devised a plan. Initially restraining his aura, he waited until the artifact spirit relaxed its vigilance before suddenly revealing his aura once more.

Indeed, this action thoroughly startled the artifact spirit, prompting it to swiftly sever all connections and perceptions with the outside world, plunging into a state of eerie silence. Consequently, it remained unaware of subsequent events and was oblivious to the fact that Gu Changge was the source of its fear.

"I will proceed as instructed by the young master," Ling Huang declared, faithfully carrying out Gu Changge's directives despite her lack of understanding regarding his intentions.

As Ling Huang retreated, Gu Changge's gaze grew profound, and with a wave of his sleeves, ripples spread through the void, transforming into a smooth surface resembling water. This surface acted as a mirror, reflecting events unfolding in another location.

In the Dao Chang Realm, a terrifying army akin to a swarm of locusts inundated the landscape. From the ancient battleship of the immortal civilization, countless soldiers poured forth incessantly, seemingly endless in number.

Outside the Dao Chang Realm, the boundary embankment quaked as runes shimmered, forming ancient characters that evolved and intertwined. A beam of light erupted, shaking the universe and disrupting the fabric of reality, causing vast swathes of time fragments to dissipate into nothingness.

It was a harrowing battle, with both sides fighting fiercely. Corpses plummeted into the boundless darkness like rain, while others disintegrated into powder and blood mist on the battlefield.

In the distant depths of time and space, immortal emperors clashed, their battle sending shockwaves rippling across the entirety of existence, from one end of the long river of time to the other.

Throughout the duration of the conflict, the long river remained illuminated, and amidst the swirling fog, beings stood with dharma bodies spanning millions of feet. When a colossal hand descended from the heavens, it tore apart a segment of the vast universe, unleashing a torrent of blood that flooded the surrounding cosmos.

While the battle raged on, the presence of Dao Realm entities loomed, observing with keen interest. Such levels of conflict were rare, capable of disrupting the fabric of time and space, reducing worlds and universes to naught in the blink of an eye.

On the ancient battleship of the immortal civilization, shadowy figures resembling ancient spirits surveyed the Dao Chang Realm, biding their time for opportune intervention. Their auras matched those of the immortal emperors embroiled in battle.

As the conflict persisted, the immortal civilization continued its assessment, while leaders of various ethnic groups within the Dao Chang Realm remained vigilant.

Gu Changge observed the battle with a composed demeanor, his expression unwavering. However, his countenance shifted when he noticed a skirmish beyond the boundary embankment. "Absurd," he muttered.

A figure, tall and slender like an invincible female sword immortal, traversed the battlefield with graceful agility. Their swordplay spanned vast distances, resonating with a resounding clang that reverberated throughout the universe. Each strike tore through adversaries with unparalleled force, unleashing torrents of boundless sword energy that illuminated the heavens with dazzling brilliance.

Even beings with comparable cultivation found it challenging to withstand her swordplay, often being effortlessly dispatched, their primordial spirits exploding upon impact.

The battlefield erupted with voices of encouragement, rallying behind the slender figure as more troops converged around her from beyond the Dao Chang Realm. Even the specters aboard the ancient battleship took notice, casting their gaze upon her.

“With me present, none shall trespass into the Dao Chang Realm,” she declared, her tone frigid as she leaned upon her sword that stretched across the sky, exuding an ethereal and magnificent aura. Though her voice wasn’t loud, it reverberated throughout the battlefield.

“Attack!!!” came the resounding cry as additional armies surged toward her, coalescing into a formidable formation that intensified their power.

The actions of this mysterious figure alleviated pressure for the other powerhouses within the Dao Chang Realm, eliciting expressions of gratitude and concern from them.

As Gu Changge observed the scene reflected in the mirror, his typically calm expression took on a hint of seriousness.

“Gu Xian’er, you never cease to amaze me. Keep following the path I’ve set for you, step by step, all the way to the top, alright?” Gu Changge murmured softly.

“Do you truly wish to be tethered by my side?” he pondered.

In the vast expanse, that figure stood tall, her blue silk and white dress now stained with blood, yet it did little to impede her speed or the fierce determination etched across her brow.

Once radiating with an air of immortal grace, she now resembled a war goddess, her form bathed in the crimson hue of battle. Her tactics were as merciless as her appearance suggested, honed through countless conflicts over the years.

Observing her, Gu Changge noted her measured approach, recognizing the steady progression of her strength. Despite her seemingly aloof demeanor, he knew she wasn't foolish enough to engage in reckless endeavors.

While the battlefield teemed with life-and-death struggles, it served as the perfect crucible for her rapid growth.

Understanding Gu Xian'er's nature well, Gu Changge refrained from further comment. He knew she would never allow the army of the immortal civilization to breach the Dao Chang Realm's defenses.

Yet, despite the secure path he had paved for her, Gu Xian'er seemed to prefer the perilous road, fraught with challenges, crises, and the unknown.

Buzz!

Gu Changge swept his sleeve once more, banishing the image from his mind. Despite the passing time, thoughts of her lingered, stirring restlessness within him. Though he missed her, his current inclination was to reach through the expanse of time and space and throttle her.

"However, it appears that certain individuals have extended their grasp into the Dao Chang Realm. No one is permitted to interfere in my domain," Gu Changge declared, refocusing his attention.

In his recent scan of the Dao Chang Realm, he had inadvertently detected another presence within it. While he maintained a law body at the Heaven Slaying Alliance headquarters for emergencies, his usual practice was detachment from worldly affairs, deep in meditation within the boundless expanse.

Had he not sensed this intrusion, he would have remained unaware of this audacious plot against the Dao Chang Realm.

Gu Changge resolved to identify the daring individual behind this scheme. “I want to know who dares to plot against the Dao Chang Realm under my nose,” he muttered, his gaze penetrating deep into the void.

With a profound stare, he delved into countless iterations of thought, traversing endless dimensions in search of every corner of existence.

From past to future, he meticulously traced the threads of causality, seeking the intricate web of connections.

While this individual schemed against the Dao Chang Realm, they were linked to him through a chain of causation. Without this connection, Gu Changge would find it exceedingly difficult to uncover their existence, particularly if they were among those Dao realms untethered by the bonds of karma, free from the influence of time and space.

Chapter 993: Aura from Nine Heavens, Breaking Out in a Cold Sweat

Gu Changge’s eyes were deep, his mind racing through countless scenarios in an instant, canvassing every corner of time and space in an attempt to discern the mastermind behind the plots within the Dao Chang Realm.

In truth, he had sensed something amiss long before, back when he first encountered Barbara within the Dao Chang Realm. However, at that moment, he dismissed it as mere coincidence, attributing Barbara's presence to chance.

He reasoned that while variables existed, they were rare occurrences. Surely, a genuine variable wouldn't manifest itself in other realms? Particularly considering Barbara was undergoing a reincarnation trial, lost within a dream within a dream. Without Gu Changge's intervention, she might have remained ensnared in that unbreakable dream, forever chasing truths beyond her reach.

Gu Changge wasn't entirely surprised by such trials. Rather, he sensed a rich history surrounding Barbara. It seemed plausible that she had stumbled into the Dao Chang Realm from another realm, undertaking a trial there.

In the vast expanse of the world, disciples from the most powerful realms were often dispatched to remote locations for trials. Success in these trials was a prerequisite for advancing one's status, ascending to become an inner sect disciple, or even a true disciple, to delve into the profound teachings and divine powers of the sect.

At that moment, Gu Changge intentionally left a mark on Barbara, hoping to confirm her origins, perhaps to leverage her in the future.

Barbara herself hailed from a realm outside the Dao Chang Realm, untouched by its distinctive aura.

The land she found herself in, known as the Desolate Continent, was originally one of the birthplaces of the barbarians, with no inherent connection to her.

It was unfortunate that across numerous reincarnations, she consistently forgot her past, always believing herself to be a member of the barbarian tribe. As the last princess of the barbarian clan,

she bore the weighty responsibility of saving her people and opposing the immortals. Simultaneously, she yearned to uncover the truth behind the disappearance of the barbarian god.

Unbeknownst to her, the true generation of barbarian gods observed them dispassionately from another realm, regarding the patriarchs of the barbarian clans—those who sought the real barbarians and other generations of barbarian gods—as mere sustenance. This included her adoptive father, the patriarch of her current generation of the barbarian clan.

Even her beloved Grandpa, whom Barbara had always revered, was revealed to be the true mastermind behind a previous generation of the Barbarian Gods, orchestrating the elaborate illusion that ensnared her.

Through countless cycles of death and rebirth, she gradually lost touch with her past and true origins. When Gu Changge stumbled upon her, he harbored little sympathy. To him, she was merely a pawn to be trained for his own purposes, a source of future fortune.

Yet, as time went on, he recognized in Barbara echoes of Chan Hongyi from bygone eras—stubborn, resilient, and enduring.

Additionally, Gu Changge was moved by compassion. He pointed out falsehoods, carefully instructed Barbara, imparted techniques, and aided her in breaking free from her predicament.

Moreover, Barbara harbored a demon heart, foretelling her eventual transformation into a demon. Gu Changge deliberately triggered her demon heart prematurely, facilitating her transition.

He reasoned that if left unaddressed, Barbara would inevitably uncover the truth and endure profound anguish. Only through intense hatred could her demonic heart be truly awakened—a process that might have been orchestrated by the unseen orchestrator behind the trial.

Initially dismissing Barbara's trial as happenstance, Gu Changge now reconsidered, sensing a deeper motive behind the planner's actions. Barbara's appearance in the Dao Chang Realm seemed less coincidental, perhaps orchestrated by the same individual.

"Beyond this individual, others are now conspiring against the Dao Chang Realm. Could it be that secrets lie within the Dao Chang Realm unbeknownst to me?" Gu Changge pondered, his mind racing from Barbara's ordeal to the ancient cultivator who emerged within the realm.

His encounter with Qing Yi, a true spirit, while assuming the mantle of a demon lord and traversing the world, seemed serendipitous. At the time, he hadn't settled on a secluded abode in the mortal realm or initiated his grand plan. It was witnessing Qing Yi lead the resistance against a formidable threat that spurred him into action.

As Gu Changge drew closer to Qing Yi, allowing their relationship to develop naturally until her retreat to the real world of mountains and seas, he remained passive, flowing with the currents of fate.

"This aura, it seems different from what I anticipated. It emanates from the Nine Heavens..." As the thought crossed Gu Changge's mind, he finally discerned the causal link, confirming the identity of the individual scheming against the Dao Chang Realm.

However, if the threat originated from the Nine Heavens, he could afford to defer action for the time being. After all, within the Nine Heavens, he possessed another pawn with deeper strategic significance.

While Gu Changge opted to remain uninvolved with the affairs of the Nine Heavens for now, he knew he would eventually need to address them. The Nine Heavens occupied a unique position in the vast expanse, revered in legends across realms as the origin of immortal Dao. Yet, to Gu Changge, they seemed more like a final resting place for celestial incarnations interred during the great upheaval—a perspective that set them apart from the supremely powerful realms.

With the culprit behind the Dao Chang Realm's plots identified, Gu Changge formulated alternative plans, leveraging the situation to his advantage. He intended to mobilize the Spiritual royal family's army for an assault on the immortal civilization. ♦

While the immortal civilization might not rival the most formidable civilizations, it still ranked among the upper echelons of ancient civilizations, surpassing the Spiritual civilization by far. Conquering the realm of the immortal civilization would expedite resource acquisition for Gu Changge's ambitions, crucial for executing his grand design that would reshape the entire world.

Without sufficient resources, his endeavors would falter. Thus, consolidating power and gathering resources became paramount, laying the foundation for a monumental undertaking that would reverberate throughout the boundless world.

The matter concerning Chu Lian was but a minor episode, one that he wouldn't invest much energy into.

Meanwhile, within Juxian Village, Ling Huang personally visited Chu Lian's courtyard, settling herself on the stone bench. Following Gu Changge's instructions, she broached the subject with Chu Lian.

"Cousin holds Mr. Chu Lian in high regard. He believes you possess the qualities of a skilled general and will undoubtedly achieve great feats in the future. With Mr. Chu Lian's assistance, overthrowing the rule of the Spiritual royal family would be within reach."

Ling Huang's smile exuded elegance and dignity, her posture poised and graceful. Adorned in wide sleeves and with hair like clouds, her neck was slender and her legs straight and slender. Her attire, with a trailing skirt, hinted at her refined upbringing.

While Chu Lian pondered the unresponsive spirit orb of ambition, Ling Huang's unexpected visit lifted his spirits inexplicably. The presence of the beautiful woman before him, coupled with her soothing words, brought a sense of ease.

"Senior brother, Miss Huang's personal recruitment speaks volumes about Mr. Gu's high regard for you," remarked Ming Xiu, Chu Lian's junior sister, with a smile. Observing her senior brother's favorable impression of Miss Huang, she discreetly monitored the interaction.

"Step aside, Miss Huang and I have matters to discuss," Chu Lian waved off his attentive junior sister, eager for a private conversation with Ling Huang.

At last, he seized the opportunity to engage in a confidential dialogue with Miss Huang and address his queries.

Ling Huang maintained a serene smile, exuding an air of elegance and composure. The stone table between her and Chu Lian maintained a subtle distance, neither too close nor distant, reflecting a sense of mutual understanding.

As Ming Xiu departed, Chu Lian settled onto the stone bench, unable to suppress his thoughts. "Miss Huang, our conversations during this journey have been quite pleasant. I believe you've gained some insight into my character. I'm not one to be swayed or reliant on others. While I appreciate Mr. Gu's generosity and admire his actions, I've always harbored similar aspirations, albeit lacking the means to realize them."

"I would also ask that Miss Huang convey my gratitude to Mr. Gu upon her return."

With the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions remaining silent, Chu Lian couldn't discern whether their current location posed a threat. Was the cloaked old man the source of its concern? Without clarity,

he deemed it prudent to decline Ling Huang's offer temporarily, focusing instead on securing their departure from the area.

Although he also wanted to achieve a great cause, overthrow the atrocious rule of the Spiritual royal family, purge the world, and bring peace.

"Master Chu Lian, there's no need to rush your decision," Ling Huang interjected calmly, her smile unwavering. "You can take some time to reconsider. My cousin's influence surpasses imagination. As his guest secretary, he can provide you with countless benefits, both in terms of strength and resources."

"And I suspect Mr. Chu Lian is in dire need of resources. Even if you don't require them personally, your junior sister could certainly benefit. Moreover, Mr. Chu Lian likely has other connections behind him..."

"You can mull it over later," Ling Huang suggested with a knowing smile, unsurprised by Chu Lian's immediate refusal. This reaction aligned with Gu Changge's instructions and expectations. Her primary objective was to convey Gu Changge's interest in recruiting Chu Lian, fostering trust and dispelling any wariness he might harbor.

Chu Lian found himself somewhat swayed by Ling Huang's words. Despite assistance from the Ball of Ambitions, the costs of cultivation remained a daunting hurdle. Ling Huang's reminder regarding his junior sister's needs further tugged at his conscience.

Acknowledging Ling Huang's advice, Chu Lian replied, "Since Miss Huang has brought it up, I'll give it further consideration."

However, his curiosity about Ling Huang's relationship with Gu Changge outweighed his thoughts on the recruitment offer. "But I must admit, I'm more intrigued by the connection between Miss

Huang and Mr. Gu. You two don't seem like cousins. Your reverence for him, especially when you remove your veil in his presence..."

Had Chu Lian not been so observant, he might have missed these subtle cues. Ling Huang's veil altered slightly each time she exited the carriage, hinting at moments of unveiled exposure upon her return.

In their encounters, Ling Huang consistently veiled her appearance, concealing her true visage from view. She was slightly taken aback by Chu Lian's astuteness, not anticipating his direct observation of her subtle habits. How had he managed to discern such details?

While Ling Huang prided herself on her performance, maintaining composure throughout their journey, Chu Lian's insight was unexpected. Yet, he had a point. Ling Huang indeed wore her veil at all times except in Gu Changge's presence. After all, how could the empresses of the illustrious Spiritual royal family, the youngest entities in the Dao Realm, unveil their faces to outsiders?

"Young Master Chu Lian possesses keen observation skills to notice such nuances," Ling Huang remarked, mildly impressed. "However, it's difficult to divulge the nature of my relationship with my cousin. I hope you understand."

"My cousin's stature and standing far surpass my own. While he's typically affable, he maintains the respect and decorum befitting his status," Ling Huang added with a smile, evading further explanation.

Chu Lian's realization mirrored his earlier speculation, although the enigmatic presence of the cloaked old man remained beyond comprehension. Yet, hearing such words from someone he held affections for stirred a discomfiting sensation within him.

The conversation veered toward other topics before Ling Huang bid her farewell, returning to make her report.

Left with a tinge of regret, Chu Lian couldn't shake the feeling of being sidelined. While he harbored a favorable impression of Ling Huang, her deference and admiration toward Gu Changge during their discussion left him feeling somewhat envious.

However, Chu Lian wasn't one to dwell on interpersonal relationships; he had more pressing matters on his mind. Shortly after Ling Huang's departure, Chu Lian was pleasantly surprised to notice the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions stirring, responding to his inquiries.

Swiftly, he employed the Eight Directions Cloud and Rain Flag to shroud their surroundings in secrecy, warding off prying eyes. With urgency, Chu Lian bombarded the spirit with a flurry of questions and doubts that had accumulated during this period.

During this time, the Artifact Spirit of the Ball of Ambitions had severed its connection with the outside world, rendering it unaware of recent events. It wasn't until Chu Lian provided a detailed account that the spirit grasped the situation.

"At the time, within your clan's territory, the abrupt disappearance of a formidable aura raised alarm bells. It appeared to sense something amiss and doubled back. Fearing potential danger, I swiftly severed all external connections to avoid detection by the owner of that ominous aura," the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions explained, shedding light on the circumstances.

Chu Lian was jolted by this revelation, breaking out in a cold sweat at the realization of the gravity and peril of the situation. Had it not been for the spirit's explanation, he might never have comprehended the severity of the threat looming over them.

Chapter 994: The ball of ambitions' guesses, the tip of the iceberg revealed by Mr. Gu?

The spirit of the Ball of Ambitions, like a flickering ball of light, floated in Chu Lian's mind, emanating a mysterious aura. Its tone had always been indifferent, without much fluctuation. But now, there was a faint trace of fear.

"If we hadn't severed the connection with the outside world in time, neither you nor I would have been able to leave that place. I have only witnessed such terror in the powerhouse of the civilization that created the Ball of Ambitions—the Lord of Ambitions, the first master of the ball..."

"I don't understand how a weak civilization can harbor such a terrifying aura."

"Do you think the great terror you mentioned noticed the anomaly between us?" Chu Lian asked, unable to suppress his fear. Had he not acted decisively or stayed a moment longer, he might have drawn the attention of that unspeakably terrifying being.

However, he still remembered to ask the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions about the current safety situation of Juxian Village. He was genuinely worried, as the mysterious Mr. Gu and the black-robed old man beside him always instilled a sense of unease in Chu Lian.

"Probably not. If he had noticed, the owner of that terrifying aura wouldn't let you leave safely," the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions explained. If it were truly captured by that unknown entity, it would mean destruction for both itself and the Ball of Ambitions.

The remaining energy within the Ball of Ambitions was insufficient to bind another host. Moreover, according to the rules set by the civilization that created the Ball, once the treasure recognized its owner, it was obligated to focus on protecting the host's life, discarding all else. As the Artifact spirit of the Ball of Ambitions, it could not interfere with the Lord's selection; it could only serve as a guide for the host.

Additionally, its existence was intrinsically linked to the Ball of Ambitions and the host. Unless it could truly banish the Ball of Ambitions, it would have to adhere to the rules and face destruction alongside the host.

The spirit of the Ball of Ambitions was an independent consciousness that had experienced many hosts. If all went well, Chu Lian should be the last host. Previous hosts had never reached the level of the first host and had fallen along the way. Meanwhile, the Ball of Ambitions had endured unimaginable damage, nearly irreversible.

“I’ve already sensed Juxian Village, and it doesn’t harbor the dangers you feared. As for Mr. Gu, he is indeed mysterious. He likely possesses some form of heaven and earth treasure that conceals his cultivation—so much so that even I couldn’t see it clearly.”

“As for the black-robed old man, judging by the aura he exudes, he is not far from the Dao Realm. Having a being on the verge of entering the Dao Realm as a servant suggests that Mr. Gu’s origins are not simple. I suspect he may not be a creature of this civilization but could come from another ancient and powerful civilization. In this age, to have a servant nearly at the Dao Realm level is remarkable; even the former inheritors of the civilization that created me may not have received such treatment.”

The spirit of the Ball of Ambitions elaborated, providing insight into the situation.

Although it couldn’t harness the energy within the Ball of Ambitions, it could use its own wisdom to deduce perceptions and assess the strength of Gu Changge and the old man in black. For it, wisdom was indeed the most magical and powerful force in the world.

When Chu Lian heard this explanation, he was momentarily stunned. This was a direction and possibility he had never considered.

“Artifact spirit, are you suggesting that Mr. Gu might come from a more powerful and ancient civilization on the other side? Isn’t he from the Spiritual Realm?” He couldn’t help but ask, shocked and struggling to believe it.

If this were true, it would mark his first encounter with beings from another civilization, and in such a manner. Until now, Chu Lian had only learned about other civilizations from the master who had taken him in. But those were all from ancient texts; he had never imagined he would actually come face to face with them.

The spirit of the Ball of Ambitions replied confidently, “The possibility of this is over 90%. If he were a creature of the Spiritual civilization, no matter how great his background, it would be impossible for someone on the verge of entering the Dao Realm to be closely protected. Even the Spiritual royal family you wish to overthrow lacks such background and qualifications.”

This realization was quite striking. During his period of deep sleep, Chu Lian had unexpectedly come into contact with such a person. Could this be what they called a variable, a stroke of incredible luck that allowed him to encounter someone so significant?

Chu Lian was utterly stunned. He had never anticipated that the mysterious Mr. Gu would possess such a terrifying background. In comparison, the Spiritual royal family seemed trivial.

He swallowed hard, suddenly grasping why Miss Huang had said those words to him. She likely knew of Mr. Gu’s origins. Yet for some reason, they referred to each other as cousins.

At this moment, Chu Lian began to piece many things together. However, he still had other questions lingering in his mind and couldn’t help but ask, “Artifact Spirit, since you said Mr. Gu has such a terrifying background, why does he still appear in the world where the Spiritual civilization exists? It seems like he’s staying here intentionally.”

This was what puzzled him the most.

The Artifact Spirit of the Ball of Ambitions, unsurprised by the question, calmly replied, “Host, your perspective is still too limited. You only know about the Spiritual civilization, but you are unaware of how many ancient and terrifying civilizations have been nurtured in the vast, boundless universe. In front of those civilizations, the Spiritual civilization is insignificant.”

“These giant civilizations govern territories that span countless dimensions of time and space—beyond imagination. Even the ancient real world can only serve as an attachment to them. The successors or disciples of these great powers, before ascending to higher unity, are often sent to various worlds for tempering and trials.”

Hearing this, Chu Lian suddenly understood. He nodded and said, “I see. Mr. Gu is likely here in the Spiritual Civilization as part of the tempering and trials arranged by the powerful forces behind him. And that black-robed old man must be his protector, ensuring his safety during the process.”

The Artifact Spirit of the Ball of Ambitions said, “You are fortunate to have appeared before such a person. Moreover, he is still very young and has a bright future ahead of him. You should value this connection. If you have the chance in the future, leave the Spiritual civilization. Traveling through the boundless world could be a great destiny for you.”

Chu Lian understood its meaning, but his current focus was on overthrowing the rule of the Spiritual royal family and restoring peace to the world.

And yet, how should he put it? He always felt a bit uncomfortable around Mr. Gu. There was something in Mr. Gu’s tone and expression—a calm, detached gaze, as if he stood in a higher realm, overlooking all living beings. His voice was always so steady and composed, as though nothing could truly surprise him. Even the woman Chu Lian admired seemed to hold Mr. Gu in high regard.

“If I have the opportunity in the future, I will definitely leave the Spiritual civilization and explore other worlds...” Chu Lian thought to himself, his eyes filled with longing.

With the explanations provided by the Ball of Ambitions, Chu Lian felt completely at ease now, no longer preoccupied with thoughts of leaving Juxian Village.

“At the same time, for the sake of my junior sister, I have to stay and become a guest.” After making his decision, Chu Lian was straightforward and went to find Ling Huang to explain his intentions. However, he pretended to deliberate for a long time before reluctantly agreeing to stay as Mr. Gu’s entourage.

“Cousin has many disciples, each with varying capabilities. They are categorized into three levels: heaven, earth, and mortal. The salary and benefits for each level of guest ministers differ.”

“Originally, according to the rules, if Mr. Chu Lian were to become a guest minister, he would need to undergo certain trials to receive a guest honorary token. However, since Mr. Chu Lian and I are relatively familiar, my cousin made an exception and directly elevated Mr. Chu Lian to a heaven-level guest official, granting him the highest salary and resources.”

In the courtyard, Ling Huang stood with a graceful figure and jade-like skin that shimmered with a captivating luster, accompanied by a large group of people. With a smile on her face, she read aloud the rules and requirements for guest officials to Chu Lian, explaining the details of his salary.

At the same time, people presented Chu Lian with an ancient token engraved with the word “Heaven.”

As Ling Huang spoke, her group brought in boxes filled with exotic treasures and placed them in the courtyard. These included divine artifacts, Dao treasures, secret techniques, and jade bones. Instantly, a celestial glow illuminated the area, and the mist of treasures surged as if they had stepped into a land of riches, with vibrant light covering the ground.

Some treasure chests were opened, releasing a rich medicinal fragrance that filled the air, making one feel as if they could unfurl their pores and transform into a flying immortal.

“This is your starting salary...” Ling Huang said with a smile.

These treasures were exceptionally precious and rare within the Spiritual civilization, often considered priceless. Cultivators and creatures at the immortal king level would fight fiercely for them.

Chu Lian stood speechless for a long time, gazing at the courtyard filled with light and the fragrant scent of medicine. Although he had prepared himself, he was still taken aback, his mind buzzing with disbelief.

What did it mean to be rich and powerful? This was the true definition!

Even with the treasure of the Ball of Ambitions, he found himself swallowing quietly at the sight before him, unable to tear his gaze away. He began to understand why the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions had made those comments. If the salary alone was so astounding and terrifying, how immense must the treasures and wealth Mr. Gu possessed truly be? He could hardly imagine it.

And this was merely the tip of the iceberg that Mr. Gu had revealed.

“Brother...”

In the courtyard, Ming Xiu, who was also witnessing this scene, struggled to regain her composure. It was the first time she had seen such a vast display of wealth, and she wondered if her eyes were deceiving her.

In particular, many of the treasures were suitable for her cultivation. At that moment, Ming Xiu felt envious of her senior brother. This was just the first day he had become Mr. Gu's disciple, and he had already received so many treasures. If Mr. Gu valued him, what kind of incredible rewards awaited him? She didn't dare to imagine.

"Miss Huang, I want to know what I need to do to become Mr. Gu's disciple. It can't be that he gives out so many treasures for no reason," Chu Lian asked, still in awe. He didn't believe that Mr. Gu was simply performing good deeds without ulterior motives; rewarding him with a salary while supporting a group of followers seemed unlikely.

"Mr. Chu Lian will learn more about this matter in the future. I can't disclose anything at the moment. For now, focus on cultivating and improving your strength. However, as a doorman, Mr. Chu Lian will need to follow your cousin's orders in the future. There are rules associated with this token; if Mr. Chu Lian accepts it, you can refine it..."

"And once it is refined, it means that the agreement binds Mr. Chu Lian, so you must be clear about that," Ling Huang said, her smile still gentle as she explained and kindly reminded him.

Chu Lian had anticipated that there would be no excessive constraints, so he immersed himself in the token and quickly read the content of the agreement. It was an equal agreement, ensuring he would not be forced to act against his sense of benevolence, righteousness, and morality.

He kept his eyes wide open and asked the Artifact Spirit of the Ball of Ambitions to help him verify if there were any issues with the agreement. After receiving a clear affirmation, he felt confident enough to refine the token, effectively signing the agreement and generating a binding force in the background.

Once he completed this process, Ling Huang returned to her own affairs, looking content. Chu Lian had intended to keep her there and talk a little more, but seeing her leave filled him with sadness and regret.

“I suggest the host refrain from developing any feelings for this woman. She is not simple and seems to be highly valued by Mr. Gu. Getting too close may cause Mr. Gu to feel displeased. Creating too many connections could hinder your current progress.”

“Now that the host is reliant on others, it’s best not to overstep boundaries; there is an order of respect,” the voice of the spirit of the Ball of Ambitions echoed in Chu Lian’s mind, reminding him.

Chu Lian was well aware of this, and he was not the type to let personal feelings overshadow important matters.

“With these resources, my strength can be greatly improved, and I’ll soon break through to the immortal level...” His eyes sparkled with excitement as he gazed at the piles of wealth shimmering with immortal light and mist.

Meanwhile, Ling Huang returned to Gu Changge to report on her recruitment of Chu Lian.

“You did well,” Gu Changge said approvingly. “Soon, find some people to create a bit of trouble for him. Don’t let him feel too stable or comfortable. Arrange some challenges for him to face, so he doesn’t grow suspicious.”

“After that, set up encounters with more powerful opponents to give him practice and experience. When the time is right, you can bring them into the fold and let them fight.”

Gu Changge nodded, issuing further instructions.

Chapter 995: Can't help but think of Yin Mei, that be of great use

“Yes, sir.”

Although Ling Huang was puzzled by Gu Changge's orders, she refrained from questioning him. To her, Chu Lian was an anomaly, and thus he couldn't be treated like an ordinary person. Gu Changge's current actions seemed to suggest he was plotting something.

He felt pleased with Ling Huang's efficiency and intelligence, which reminded him of Yin Mei. Back in the upper realm, she had similarly anticipated his needs without requiring extensive explanations or instructions, so wise women found it easier to gain his favor.

I have a substance here that will significantly benefit your cultivation. Once you return, thoroughly refining it will increase your chances of successfully surviving the second heavenly decline by 80%.

With that thought, Gu Changge gestured, and a crystal jade bottle the size of his palm appeared in his hand.

The speckled starlight permeated the sky, evoking a sense of magnificence and mystery. This was the immortal substance and good fortune essence that Gu Changge had condensed some time ago, capable of helping those in the Dao Realm break through their bottlenecks and enhance their cultivation strength.

However, both immortal substances and good fortune essences were scarce, with only a tiny amount able to be extracted from the vast power of luck. Given Gu Changge's current capabilities, condensing these substances required considerable time and was tedious. He bestowed a wisp upon Ling Huang because he believed she was brilliant and would prove valuable in the future.

“Young master?”

Ling Huang was momentarily taken aback. She looked at him with confusion, still unsure of the meaning behind his earlier words. Her puzzled gaze fell upon the crystal white jade vial.

A substance that could increase her chances of surviving the second decline by 80%? Ling Huang had never encountered such mysterious substances in this world. All those who reached the Dao Realm were formidable figures with peerless talents, having overshadowed entire epochs.

On this path, they had sought to grasp the essence of Dao and methods of detachment, enduring countless hardships and catastrophes. She had never heard of any mysterious substance that could aid Dao Realm beings in their cultivation, as they typically needed to continuously accumulate spiritual energy and breakthrough numerous restrictions and shackles.

Gu Changge was not surprised by Ling Huang’s reaction.

The existence of the Dao Realm could not fully grasp Dao’s essence and development, nor matter’s evolution. This understanding was inherently a cognitive process tied to Dao cultivation.

Only by transcending the limitations of their life levels could they attain the inconceivable wisdom necessary to comprehend what Dao was and how matter functioned. At that point, even the most elaborate explanations would only confuse and disorient them.

“The substance in the vial is essential for cultivation in the Dao Realm. It doesn’t matter if you don’t fully understand it; simply refine it, and you’ll naturally experience its benefits.”

“Do you think I’m going to harm you?”

Gu Changge smiled, his expression easygoing.

Ling Huang didn't believe Gu Changge would hurt her, but she pursed her lips and smiled, "Of course, I don't think the young master will harm me. I just feel a bit touched by how patiently you explain things."

She took the white jade vial but hadn't opened it yet. Even without touching the substance, an instinctive urge within her compelled her to consume it. This sudden sensation caused the smile on Ling Huang's face to fade as she stared at the vial in her hand, her expression shifting to shock, surprise, and disbelief.

It was an indescribable feeling, akin to a person who had been hungry for a long time suddenly encountering a delicious meal. Or like someone who had wandered in a desert for ages without water, only to find a shimmering lake before them. This instinct, which seemed to arise from her soul, was beyond containment or explanation; it felt innate.

"Young master, what kind of substance is in this vial? Why do I feel such an urgent instinct to refine it? My consciousness tells me it's incredibly important to me."

Ling Huang's voice trembled slightly, filled with disbelief.

Those in the Dao Realm could completely obscure their cause and effect, free themselves from fate or karma, and detach from all thoughts and ideas. So why was she unable to control this instinct? She struggled to rein it in, desperate not to act impulsively. At that moment, she finally grasped the meaning behind Gu Changge's earlier words.

There were indeed substances in this world that could aid Dao Realm cultivators in their cultivation. Such treasures could incite fierce battles among those in the Dao Realm, as even a mere wisp could lead to devastation, staining the boundless world with blood across endless time and space.

“Even if I explain it now, you might not fully grasp its essence. Think of it as the spiritual energy perceived by mortals and the immortal energy recognized by cultivators. Spiritual energy can aid cultivators in their practice and allow mortals to be reborn or prolong their lives. Immortal energy enables cultivators to comprehend the transformations within the immortal Dao and undergo incredible changes.”

Gu Changge’s gaze remained calm as he smiled lightly. His explanation was simple; common understanding could not adequately capture the mysterious nature of immortal and creation substances.

However, Ling Huang grasped the significance of this substance, understanding its preciousness, albeit somewhat vaguely. Unable to hide her excitement, a glow of anticipation lit up her beautiful, fair face.

“Thank you for providing me with such invaluable material. I am truly grateful and will do my utmost to serve you and live up to your respect.”

Her sincerity was evident, and it was difficult for her to remain composed. She and all the ancestors, including the Bone Ancestor, struggled to contain their excitement.

What worried those in the Dao Realm most was the threat of insurmountable catastrophe. While there were five declines for mortals, Daoists faced nine, each capable of triggering earth-shattering changes in their strength. If they failed to survive the catastrophe of heavenly decline, they would lose both body and spirit, their physical forms would perish, and their Dao would vanish.

Among those who faced decline, most turned to dust and simply dissipated. Without a fortuitous opportunity or a way to alter her fate, Ling Huang would likely meet her end before the second catastrophe. Thus, upon learning that Chu Lian possessed a treasure, she was determined to find a way to obtain it.

“You work hard for me, so naturally I won’t treat you poorly,” Gu Changge said with a smile.

At that moment, Ling Huang was excited, eager to return and refine this mysterious substance. As a result, Gu Changge did not insist on having her stay by his side. Although it was merely a wisp of immortal and good fortune substance, it would keep her occupied for a considerable time.

For Gu Changge, this was just the beginning. The developments and transformations that would follow were what he truly valued. Once Ling Huang refined this strand of immortal substance, her strength would undoubtedly experience a significant leap. While it wouldn’t be enough for her to immediately confront the second Heavenly Decline or advance to the middle stage of the Void Dao Realm, it would provide her with greater confidence and a higher probability of success.

All the ancestors of the Spiritual royal family, as long as they weren’t blind, could see the changes in Ling Huang. Similarly, the Bone Ancestor, who had devoted his life to pursuing strength, would also notice them. These changes in Ling Huang had emerged only after she began to follow Gu Changge and serve him faithfully.

What did that imply? The Bone Ancestor and all the ancestors of the Spiritual royal family should be able to piece it together.

“Next, they will certainly seek ways to test Ling Huang,” Gu Changge mused.

“But with her intelligence, she would never reveal anything. They can only approach it from my side. The only route available is that those whom I value and who serve me faithfully are the ones who can be rewarded...”

Gu Changge let out a chuckle, its meaning shrouded in ambiguity.

A wisp of immortal and good fortune substance was sufficient for the entire Spiritual royal family to be fully under his influence, proving far simpler and more effective than any threats or oppression. After all, what could be more important than enhancing one’s strength to sustain the legacy of the Spiritual Realm?

Time passed swiftly, and half a month had passed since Ling Huang received the immortal and good fortune substances from Gu Changge and returned to the palace to refine them. Although Gu Changge resided in a simple place at Juxian Villa, he remained attentive to the overall movements of the Spiritual royal family.

Currently, he lacks the energy to extract and condense more immortal and creation substances. Therefore, he can only wait for Ling Huang to emerge from her retreat, ready to harness the power of luck that the Spiritual royal family has accumulated over the years.

During this period, the Spiritual royal family continued to recruit forces. In the vast world, light streams shone brightly, energy clouds soared into the sky, and flying boats and warships traversed the space, converging continuously.

The mighty army was assembled, gearing up for the monumental battle ahead. This force was formidable, comprising nearly a hundred Immortal Kings, capable of sweeping away many emerging civilizations.

However, this army differed from the one currently engaged in combat with the Dao Chang Realm. On this ancient warship, the full might of the Spiritual Realm was gathered. In addition to the hundred Immortal Kings, there were many Immortal Emperors and other powerful figures.

This was a command issued personally by the oldest ancestors of the Spiritual royal family, and all the mighty forces across the eight great worlds dared not defy it. Over the years, the Spiritual royal family had supported countless fighting groups, numbering in the hundreds of millions.

These groups lacked wisdom; they simply required enough food and resources to flourish, growing rapidly like leeks—each harvest allowing for another. Countless such groups existed in the small worlds under the jurisdiction of each Great World. Unless a small world was destroyed or its resources completely depleted, these groups could develop and multiply at an astonishing rate in a very short time.

In the Civilization War, these mobilized groups often served as the foremost weapons of war. Gu Changge was quite satisfied with the current overall situation of the Spiritual royal family. He was now merely waiting to pinpoint the boundless coordinates of the immortal civilization, ready for a large-scale invasion and capture.

He was also keeping a close eye on Chu Lian. Through the many actions the latter had taken recently, Gu Changge suspected that the treasure Chu Lian possessed might be linked to the power of luck. For a powerful civilization in the boundless world, when it reached the zenith of its prosperity, it typically cast one or several treasures to stabilize the long river of luck and prevent decline.

The treasures of each civilization varied, each possessing its mysteries and focusing on different aspects, resulting in distinct strengths and weaknesses. Some treasures prioritized offense, while others were geared toward defense. Treasures associated with the power of luck were exceedingly rare.

Furthermore, Chu Lian's acquisition of such a treasure was no small feat. Based on what Gu Changge had learned, the Spiritual royal family lacked the qualifications and background necessary to cast such treasures.

Judging by the current situation, it seemed that neither Chu Lian nor the precious weapon spirit he possessed had reacted yet. Their vigilance against Gu Changge was not particularly strong; they likely viewed him as a young disciple from an ancient civilization participating in the trial.

Initially, Gu Changge had not intended to adopt such an identity. However, during his interactions with Chu Lian's junior sister, he had gained some insights and formed a few hypotheses. While Chu Lian remained cautious and guarded around him, his junior sister appeared quite innocent.

Gu Changge had sent someone to provide her with some trivial items to show his concern, which she appreciated. In their subsequent conversations, she often mentioned things that Chu Lian had shared with her, including speculations about Gu Changge's origins.

Of course, it wasn't that Ming Xiu was foolish. It was simply that her senior brother, Chu Lian, had been sent away by Gu Changge for some reason, tasked with leading the remaining disciples to subdue some troublesome demons in a certain area. As a result, Ming Xiu was left alone in Juxian Village, where, aside from her cultivation, she often found herself quite bored.

Recently, to establish his authority, Chu Lian gathered a group of disciples to publicly recognize him as "The Heavenly Guest," which involved considerable effort and resources. This move also led to Ming Xiu being somewhat sidelined in Juxian Village, leaving her with few friends. Given her age, she was naturally lively and sociable, and she was not particularly wary of Gu Changge, especially since he had showered her and her brother with wealth.

Upon learning all this, Gu Changge took cues from Chu Lian and the weapon spirit, sending people to arrange tasks for them. These insights sparked inspiration in him. Given his current strength and the power of the army he commanded, capturing the supreme Realm that the next party had noticed would be quite challenging. Just as Wan Yanxiu, the patriarch of the Spiritual royal family, had

mentioned regarding the Xudan Realm, a direct assault would not be ideal. Why not change his angle and approach?

Chapter 996: Immortal Civilization makes the final move, abandoned this place

Chu Lian and the artifact spirit's insights had indeed inspired Gu Changge. After considering their perspectives, he found their suggestions highly feasible, simplifying his upcoming plans. However, he had yet to identify a second suitable target, so he would need to set that matter aside for now.

After half a month, Ling Huang emerged from her seclusion. Previously, she had been in the early stages of the Void Dao Realm, having only recently passed through the first major looting. Her strength was still far from reaching the threshold of the second heavenly decline.

However, while refining the immortal and creation substances, she had significantly stabilized her power, reaching the limit she could sustain. This marked a small degree of success in the early stages of the Void Dao Realm.

While Ling Huang was still far from the second decline threshold, the strength improvement was obvious. She had absorbed less than one percent of the immortal substances and could not yet refine them fully.

Ling Huang estimated that, with her current power, it would take thousands of years or even longer to fully utilize the forces at her disposal.

She was pleased with her progress but not overly ambitious; she focused on digesting these newfound energies and advancing step by step. After emerging from seclusion, she sought out Gu Changge. Following his instructions, she dispatched people to construct a large formation and forge containers within the palace to gather the luck of the Spiritual royal family accumulated over the years.

Naturally, Wan Yanxiu, Bone Ancestor, and the other ancestors perceived the changes in Ling Huang's aura and were surprised. This was especially true for Bone Ancestor and Wan Yanxiu, who had closely observed Ling Huang's growth. They had witnessed her cultivation journey, supported by numerous resources, and reflected on her remarkable talents, feeling a deep sense of nostalgia and admiration for how far she had come.

Initially, it was already reasonable for Ling Huang to enter the Dao realm and successfully pass the first decline. However, after following Gu Changge, her strength had improved significantly beyond expectations. This transformation was almost impossible and astonishing for Wan Yanxiu and the others.

As a result, many of the ancestors began to speculate and were eager to find Ling Huang to inquire about the reasons behind her remarkable progress. Ling Huang, considering herself to have benefited immensely from Gu Changge, felt strongly loyal to him. Not only did he trust her, but they had also shared heartfelt conversations, making it unlikely that she would divulge any details to them. Furthermore, with Gu Changge standing behind her, she felt secure in keeping this information.

Ling Huang needed to be polite and cautious around her ancestors in her daily interactions. Several were dissatisfied, their frustration simmering beneath the surface, and they felt increasingly helpless. They had invested in cultivating Ling Huang, hoping to support a puppet they could control to better manage the Spiritual royal family, ultimately saving them time and collecting more resources.

Now, with the backing of Gu Changge, Ling Huang seemed to disregard their authority entirely, leaving the ancestors both resentful and powerless.

This lord's origin is mysterious, and he may possess resources to aid my cultivation. From a certain perspective, he likely wants to guide me for his own benefit.

Wan Yanxiu mused, demonstrating his wisdom as an ancestor of the Spiritual royal family. He quickly instructed the other ancestors to refrain from disturbing Ling Huang, recognizing the need to avoid displeasing Gu Changge.

Ultimately, Ling Huang was seen as Gu Changge's ally, not merely a puppet to control. If she remembered her old ties, she might even speak favorably about the Spiritual royal family before him, which could lead to significant trouble for them. Gu Changge was not surprised by this outcome. The ancestors were no different if even the means of enhancing strength could not exempt them from challenges.

As the army assembled, some Spiritual royal family ancestors visited him occasionally, eager to express their loyalty. Many foresaw that they were approaching the second heavenly decline, and with their current strength, survival was unlikely—death was a near certainty. The notable improvement in Ling Huang's strength gave them a glimmer of hope.

However, Gu Changge could not easily distribute immortal and creation substances. The time and effort required to condense such resources were considerable, and he felt he also needed them for his cultivation.

Gu Changge intentionally allowed Ling Huang to collect the power of luck, as he understood its significance. The ancestors of the Spiritual royal family wore their hopes on their faces, with some even considering surrendering their soul lights, willing to serve Gu Changge like loyal beasts. For them, survival had become more important than anything else.

However, Gu Changge firmly rejected these notions. He had no desire to waste resources on these individuals; for now, having Ling Huang and Bone Ancestor was sufficient. In future conflicts against other civilizations, he viewed the ancestors of the Spiritual royal family as little more than cannon fodder.

Meanwhile, the war between the Dao Chang Realm and the immortal civilization raged for several years. Outside the vast battlefield, the sounds of fierce combat echoed daily, with blood and light flooding the universe. Large blocks of debris fell from the sky like rain, a testament to the ferocity of the struggle.

The runes on the boundary embankment had been significantly damaged, losing their former brilliance. Powerhouses from the immortal civilization diligently studied the ancient runes, analyzing their meanings and gradually uncovering some of their mysteries.

During this process, a powerful being who surpassed the Immortal Emperor directly tore open a horrific breach in the edge of the vast battlefield. From this gaping maw, a massive army surged forth. The various ethnic groups of the Dao Chang Realm were forced to retreat, taking positions in the expansive battlefield to engage in a fierce competition with the immortal civilization.

Both sides suffered significant losses in this war, with several Immortal Kings from the Dao Chang Realm falling in battle. The foreign emperor who had fought previously was severely injured and had to retreat to recover. The immortal civilization also faced considerable casualties; the terrifying divine shadow commanding the ancient warships had personally torn through the barrier of the vast battlefield to facilitate their army's entry.

However, at a critical moment, an ancient cultivator Yuan Chan apprentice intervened, unleashing a devastating sword strike that shattered the world and forced the formidable divine shadow to halt its advance. ¶

In the years that followed, the immortal civilization refrained from launching an all-out attack, opting instead to engage with the heritage of the Dao Chang Realm gradually. Yet, the various ethnic groups within the Dao Chang Realm faced severe losses, especially as multiple Immortal Kings from several major factions perished in the conflict, leaving countless dead. Even if the fighting ceased, recovery would be a long and arduous.

Many ancient existences in the Dao Chang Realm began to discern the enemy's intentions: the opponent would continually drain the Dao Chang Realm's power as long as the battle continued.

In particular, the ancient warship loomed ominously, harboring many terrifying auras that remained dormant. The outcome often hinged on the peak combatants in such a life-and-death conflict. A single powerful individual could take down an Immortal King, traverse vast worlds, and defeat countless cultivators and creatures.

“I sense four auras that surpass the Dao Realm in this world. The strongest is likely on par with me. If he truly attacks, he may not be my match,” Zhouyou remarked, his voice calm and indifferent.

“As for the other three auras, one is indeed formidable, but we only need to send two who have achieved the second transformation to handle the other two.”

His eyes gleamed with a strange substance, reflecting a depth of power and determination.

In front of her stood a crystal wall radiating a soft glow, vividly displaying the tragic war outside the Dao Chang Realm. Countless creatures fell like leaves caught in an autumn wind, yet her expression remained unchanged.

Before her, the powerful figures of the immortal civilization stood calmly, closely observing the battles unfolding on the crystal wall. On this journey, she had left her family behind and brought many solid allies from her lineage. Among them were six individuals who had transformed, making a total of seven.

In other words, she now commanded seven existences beyond the Dao realm. This invincible force could sweep away any new civilization or realm. However, she remained cautious, even after her grandfather’s divination aimed at gauging the strength of the Dao Chang Realm. She intended to assess their true heritage before launching an attack, with a focus on destruction.

You can truly achieve it; the other side’s Dao realm existence does not hold an advantage in numbers. Plus, I carry a secret treasure from my family that can disrupt their minds at a critical moment.

Her eyes flickered with cold determination as a crystalline armor materialized around her, transforming into a streamlined aesthetic suit that shimmered with brilliance.

With her words spoken, she vanished from the ancient warship, appearing in the vast universe outside. The remaining figures on the battlefield quickly donned their armor, weapons in hand, and disappeared alongside her.

In the Dao Chang Realm, within the headquarters of the Heaven Slaying Alliance, leaders from various ethnic groups gathered in the magnificent palace. Their faces were grave as they convened to discuss pressing matters, the atmosphere heavy with tension. Ancient cultivators like Gu Wuxian and Jiu Jianxian were present, each wearing expressions that reflected their concerns.

Before them, a crystal flat ancient mirror flickered with light, displaying images from outside the Dao Chang Realm. The great army resembled a cosmic torrent, relentlessly attacking with an intensity more formidable and horrifying than ever before. Most alarming was the movement of the terrifying divine shadow that had previously loomed on the ancient battleship; now, it was drawing closer to the Dao Chang Realm as the army advanced.

“The opponent has launched their final assault. Do they intend to cease testing?” an old-fashioned quasi-immortal emperor remarked, his expression heavy with apprehension.

“It seems they must have gauged the reality of the Dao Chang Realm today. They wouldn’t take such risks otherwise,” another ancient being remarked, his tone heavy with concern.

Many in the room felt a chill in their hearts, uncertain about how to respond. Faced with such formidable foes, was there any way to mount a defense?

The atmosphere in the hall grew increasingly oppressive, with Dao realm existences falling into silence. All ethnic groups had endured significant losses in recent times, and while they had hoped to delay the inevitable, the enemy's ferocity had shattered that expectation.

"It appears we can only take drastic measures, letting the boat sink," one individual sighed, despair evident in their voice.

They felt the chances of victory were slim, bordering on hopeless. The adversary had clearly understood the reality of the Dao Chang Realm and, armed with that knowledge, had chosen to launch an all-out assault. Despite all ethnic groups rallying their forces, it seemed futile given the tremendous losses they had already suffered.

Although the younger generations from all ethnic groups were rapidly maturing, producing many talented individuals, the cost of the current situation was too great for anyone to bear.

At this moment, a leader from an ancient sect couldn't help but ask Gu Wuxian and the others, "Vice Lord, do we have any updates on the Leader's whereabouts?"

This question lifted the spirits of many in the hall, and a wave of hopeful eyes turned toward them. Even the young talents, who had emerged in recent years, looked on with curiosity. The rumored Leader, a figure who evoked both fear and respect, intrigued them immensely.

These young individuals, both men and women from various races, had all displayed remarkable prowess in the fight against the immortal civilization. They were brought into the Heaven Slaying Alliance and received focused cultivation.

Gu Wuxian, wearing a black robe that shrouded his face in shadows, stood in the hall. His expression remained hidden as he shook his head. "The Leader is currently handling a significant matter. We cannot rely on him for this incident."

His response cast a shadow over the room, darkening the hopes of those present.

Over the years, Gu Wu's consistent, arrogant response was that Gu Changge was occupied with important matters whenever the question arose. Initially, everyone accepted this at face value, but doubts began to creep in as time went on. Perhaps even the deputy leader didn't truly know Gu Changge's whereabouts.

Whispers began to circulate in the hall.

"It seems he's likely no longer in the Dao Chang Realm and has abandoned it altogether. Some speculated that his establishment of the Heaven Slaying Alliance was merely a passing interest; he never intended to manage it seriously..."

"Yes, with the strength of the Alliance Leader, he could easily find peace in the boundless sea. Why would he bother with all this effort?"

As these murmurs spread, the already heavy atmosphere became even more oppressive. In the past, such discussions would have been unthinkable—no one would dare to slander or question Gu Changge.

But now, with Gu Changge absent and calamity looming, it was uncertain whether the Dao Chang Realm would even survive. Who among them felt secure in this situation? Even Gu Wuxian frowned but chose not to intervene.

Their only remaining hope rested on the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan and his apprentice. The weight of despair hung heavily as they faced the impending crisis with dwindling confidence.

Chapter 997: Many parties attack and fell, A tragic battle with no retreat

Many people's eyes were drawn to the Dao Realm in the hall, eager to hear their opinions. Gu Wuwang remained silent, his gaze shining brightly as he contemplated something. Jiu Jianxian had shed his previous disheveled appearance, now wearing a dignified expression as he observed the battle reflected in the ancient mirror.

The great universe on the frontier was collapsing, its laws shattered, and it seemed to be on the verge of returning to ruins.

Uncle Gu isn't the kind of person they say he is. He treated people well in Green Mountain Village; why would he abandon the Dao Chang Realm?

Wang Xiaoniu, now grown and resembling a young swordsman, stood beside his master, Jiu Jianxian, speaking softly to himself in disbelief.

He had shone brilliantly in the battle against the immortal civilization, taking down many enemies. Among his exceptionally talented peers, he truly stood out.

At this moment, many young people in the hall, who had good relationships with him, couldn't help but engage in conversation and ask questions. Most knew that Wang Xiaoniu, accepted as an apprentice by Jiu Jianxian, referred to Gu Changge as Uncle Gu, which made his identity quite special. However, Wang Xiaoniu had never shared the reason for this designation with anyone.

When he uttered the words "Uncle Gu" today, many people looked at him with curiosity. Wang Xiaoniu shook his head, choosing not to elaborate on the topic. Gu Changge had once lived in Green Mountain Village for a time, but aside from him and Master Jiu Jianxian, only a few others knew it.

The atmosphere in the hall remained heavy and oppressive, as if thick clouds were pressing down on everyone, making it hard to breathe.

Watching the tragic battle reflected in the ancient mirror, many felt a deep sense of sorrow and anguish.

“I wonder if Daoist has any news about the lord. The lord highly values him, and during this time, his strength has grown tremendously. He nearly killed a quasi-immortal emperor of the immortal civilization. Given enough time, he will surely surpass the deputy lord and the others.”

“The leader has trained Daoist as his successor; it’s unthinkable that he would neglect Daoist’s safety.”

“Moreover, I heard that the one the lord regards as Ni Lin was also fighting against foreign enemies on the boundless battlefield recently. It’s even more unlikely that the lord wouldn’t care about her.”

“That’s true, but the leader might not feel the need to look after us. He has the skills and backing to protect those around him. Why should we worry?”

Many began to murmur in low voices, bitterness etched on their faces.

The most talked about figures were “Wang Wushang,” the Daoist of the Heaven Slaying Alliance, and Gu Xian’er, who had recently appeared on the boundless battlefield and performed remarkably.

Anyone familiar with the Upper Realm and Gu Changge’s past recognized Gu Xian’er’s identity. Consequently, when news spread that she had killed enemies on the boundless battlefield, many ancient existences from the Heaven Slaying Alliance were alarmed. They went there personally, concerned for her safety, fearing something might happen to her.

In that place, even an Immortal King could struggle to protect themselves. Despite her talent, she was still too young to confront the army of the immortal civilization. Unfortunately, Gu Xian'er ignored their warnings and chose to remain, continuing to fight the enemy, while no one dared to force her to leave.

The Heaven Slaying Alliance had no choice but to monitor her situation constantly, worried that accidents could occur.

On the other side of the boundless battlefield, Gu Xian'er performed exceptionally well, taking down several immortal kings of the immortal civilization. This greatly boosted the morale of the Dao Chang Realm's army and allowed her to accumulate considerable prestige, with many strong warriors eager to follow her into battle.

The news of her exploits spread back, prompting many young and middle-aged talents to rush to join the fight against foreign enemies. Even Hei Ming, another Daoist from the Dao Chang Realm, appeared in person to protect Gu Xian'er. A figure from the age of innate mythology, he was among the oldest in the Dao Chang Realm and understood that Gu Xianer's previous life was that of the lord who once led the Heavens.

Although Gu Xian'er had been reincarnated, she may not have cared much about her past.

For Ming, Gu Xian'er remained a lord deserving of admiration and respect. However, Gu Xian'er was resolute in her decision to forgo his protection, believing that this battle served as vital training that would help her grow and make up for the years she had missed.

When Gu Xian'er was mentioned, many in the hall wore strange expressions. Ming, sensing their thoughts, glanced around indifferently and said, "Miss Xian'er's experiences on the vast battlefield are her own decision and have nothing to do with the lord. It's best not to impose your views on her."

In his opinion, Gu Changge would never ignore Gu Xian'er and the others. However, protecting family and confidants was one thing, while safeguarding the entire Dao Chang Realm was another, and those should not be confused. Gu Changge had made it clear before: what did the whole world have to do with him?

After Hei Ming spoke, everyone in the hall fell silent, hesitant to voice any further opinions.

At this moment, the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan wore a solemn expression, his face reflecting compassion as he clasped his hands together.

“I came here to help the Immortal Domain through this crisis, but I never anticipated the enemy's strength would be so formidable. As an old cultivator with limited power, I may not be able to contribute much in the end.”

He spoke candidly, wanting everyone to understand his position. If it came down to a life-and-death situation, he would certainly not fight to the last breath. Before arriving in the Dao Chang Realm, Yuan Chan had never imagined that the enemy he would face would be so powerful.

During this time, the immortal civilization had been probing the Dao Chang Realm's strengths, but had this side not also assessed the enemy's capabilities?

“Master...”

Qing Feng's expression grew somber. Despite having the strength of an Immortal King, he realized he might not have much impact in this battle.

The ancient cultivator Yuan Chan glanced at Qing Feng, shook his head, and said, “If you keep the green hills, you need not worry about firewood. This catastrophe will be difficult to navigate, and you must be mentally prepared. Though Nine Heavens is far away, as a teacher, you still possess capabilities, as do your clansmen—all of them are there.”

Had he not responded to Daoist Eternal Monarch’s orders, he would not have concerned himself with Qing Feng and the Dao Chang Realm. It was a truly helpless situation. Yuan Chan’s words only deepened the distress on everyone’s faces; many felt hopeless, unable to see any hope.

“In any case, this catastrophe is something we all must face, and it’s useless to entrust our fate to anyone at this time,” an ancient existence in the main hall sighed. “Even if we perish, we will make the invading enemies pay the price.”

No one could guess Gu Changge’s thoughts or plans, leaving them uncertain whether he intended to protect the Dao Chang Realm.

Previously, Gu Changge had a poor reputation; whenever his name was mentioned, it was often accompanied by fear. Instead of placing their hopes on the elusive expectations of Gu Changge, many felt it would be better to rely on themselves.

“I don’t know what the deputy leader’s plan is, so I can only depend on you now,” someone said, turning their attention to Gu Wuwang. Apart from the ancient cultivator Yuan Chan, Gu Wuwang was regarded as the strongest expert in the Dao Chang Realm. If he could turn the tide, there might be a chance for a turnaround.

“The long river of fate has not dried up. Even in the face of catastrophe, it still holds vitality,” Gu Wuwang said calmly.

At that moment, as his words echoed, a terrifying scene suddenly unfolded in the ancient mirror.

A terrifying black hand suddenly descended in the star field at the edge of the vast battlefield. Along with fragments of time and the Dao, the universe was torn apart and plunged into chaos.

Not good! The existence of the Dao Realm is directly attacking; the fairy civilization is about to launch a full assault.

As this scene unfolded, Hei Ming and Jiu Jianxian's expressions shifted simultaneously, and their figures vanished from the hall in an instant.

The leaders of all ethnic groups were equally shocked, transforming into divine lights that rushed out to observe the vast battlefield. Even from an immense distance, they could see the sky above was shattered and completely breached.

The overwhelming fluctuations crashed down, causing the Dao to tremble, and the light above the boundary embankment was rapidly extinguished. Beams of light that could have easily annihilated armies collapsed instantly, turning into a rain of light that burst through the embankment and scattered in all directions.

A terrifying figure appeared to loom in the depths of multiple layers of time and space, overlooking the entire Dao Chang Realm with indifference. He stretched out his massive black hand, piercing the universe layer by layer, covering the world. Mountains and rivers collapsed, stars exploded, and the universe was instantly reduced to ashes.

No living beings or cultivators could withstand it; they disintegrated like smoke blown by the wind, vanishing into thin air.

Boom!!!

With a slight shake of that immense hand, many fragmented universes on the edge of the vast battlefield collapsed and disintegrated. The ancient warship that lay there erupted in an explosion, completely shattering, while the long river of time evaporated instantly.

No creature, regardless of its nature, could resist such overwhelming fluctuations, which stemmed from complete levels of crushing strength. This was the power of an existence from the Dao Realm. Just extending a hand, without even employing any divine powers, was enough to be called an act of world-destruction, reopening the chaos.

Rumble!

The laws of heaven and earth collided, and the Dao was obliterated, creating a violent, turbulent sound. Behind this terrifying figure, more armies of the immortal civilization descended, high and mighty, obscuring the sky and sun.

A thick, boundless fog stretched across the horizon as if it had no end. Dense black clouds covered the sky, enveloping all directions. Standing behind this army were many fearsome figures, immense sizes and overwhelming auras leaving no room for breath.

The immortal civilization launched a massive invasion, with endless troops pouring out from the ancient warship. One side of the world opened up, releasing countless creatures that flooded forth, completely submerging the realm.

“Everyone, listen to my orders! Break through the barriers of this world, annihilate this true world, and kill all beings above the immortal realm!” commanded the terrifying figure. His colossal hand did not retreat; instead, it continued to strike down, determined to breach the world’s barriers, allowing the army to surge forward.

Boom!!!

A loud tremor echoed, as if it were about to destroy every vast universe.

“You are courting death!”

Jiu Jianxian charged forward, unleashing a sword energy capable of slicing through time and space and annihilating the Dao, aimed at the descending hand.

The existence of the Dao Realm from the immortal civilization had made a move, and Jiu Jianxian knew he had to fight to the death against this formidable opponent. His figure pierced through multiple layers of space and appeared in the endless world.

“It’s ridiculous! With this power alone, you think you can stop us?” a voice taunted.

“In countless years past, the real worlds my kind has obliterated are many times stronger than yours. If you are sensible, don’t resist. Submit and serve my people, and you may continue to survive.”

Another figure, comparable to the Dao realm, emerged from the ranks of the immortal civilization. He radiated a strange fluctuation, as if he didn’t truly exist, instead woven into the fabric of the universe itself.

On the edge of the vast battlefield, Hei Ming surged forward, his expression indifferent as he directly confronted this being. When the clash erupted, the aftermath alone was powerful enough to blow away even an Immortal King.

Boom!!!

At this moment in the Dao Chang Realm, figures surged forth from various directions, their cultivation levels varying—some comparable to Immortal Kings, while others reached the level of quasi-immortal Emperors—all engaged in fierce combat. The world was overturned, the universe collapsed, and the army of the immortal civilization appeared invincible and unstoppable.

In another direction, an existence comparable to the Dao Realm made its presence felt. With just a shake of its massive hand, time and space shattered. Not only did Immortal Kings struggle, but even Immortal Emperors coughed up blood and were torn apart by the force.

Amidst the chaos, ancient cultivator Yuan Chan had no choice but to rally his apprentices to fight alongside him, attempting to delay the Dao Realm figures as much as possible. Fortunately, his cultivation was relatively strong, second only to Gu Wuwang. These enemies were only at the early stages of the Dao Realm, allowing them to hold their ground—barely.

This final battle had arrived too suddenly, catching everyone off guard and leaving them unprepared.

Many people in the Dao Chang Realm hadn't fully grasped the situation yet, but in an instant, the boundless battlefield had fallen, and a vast area of the universe crumbled. Regions collapsed and disintegrated instantly, turning the cultivators and creatures within them into mere light rain, unable to react in time.

Countless battles raged on, from Immortal Kings to cultivators of the human realm, the sounds of combat echoing through every small world. Gu Xian'er fought fiercely, drenched in blood as she faced several Immortal Kings alone, still managing to lend support to others on the battlefield.

In another area, her younger sister Shen Xian'er was also engaged in battle, her hair matted with blood and numerous wounds covering her body. No one was spared from this monumental conflict that engulfed the entire Dao Chang Realm.

The army of the immortal civilization advanced with a ferocity unmatched by any previous offensive. Alongside them was a plundering formation from the Dao Realm, breaking through the barriers of the universe. The army of the Dao Chang Realm could only continue to retreat in the face of this overwhelming onslaught.

In an instant, numerous universes outside the Immortal Domain were captured and fell. Many people's eyes were filled with rage as they fought desperately; retreating any further would mean the collapse of their last line of defense.

A devastating blow loomed in the heart of the Dao Chang Realm, where all races and forces coexisted. The impending destruction threatened to engulf their world and universe, forcing everyone to confront the grim reality of their situation.

Chapter 998: The civilization behind you will face catastrophe, unable to appease the lord's anger

The world was in great turmoil, with endless blood rushing to the sky as vast sections of the universe crumbled under the weight of the battle. The cultivators residing within it faced the relentless assault of the immortal civilization's army, resulting in their bodies and spirits being obliterated.

Many figures emerged from the Dao Chang Realm, determined to resist this invading army. They fought with everything they had, regardless of the cost. Even in death, they were resolute in ensuring that their foes would pay a terrible price.

Boom!!!

In the depths of the distant universe, blood filled the air. Confronted by two opponents of equal strength, an Immortal King ultimately found himself defeated and chose to self-destruct. The Dao fruit collapsed, unleashing a terrifying power that shook the entire river of time, injuring both combatants and forcing them to retreat.

Yet, even this drastic measure failed to halt the advance of the immortal civilization's army, which continued its relentless assault without the slightest delay.

In deeper layers of time and space, a world-shattering battle raged on, with fluctuations resonating at the level of Immortal Emperors. Among the few remaining Immortal Emperors in the Dao Chang Realm, some were engaged in fierce combat against their foes.

At this moment, a terrifying aura erupted, transforming into a black light that shattered the chaotic dust and mist, revealing a figure. It was a middle-aged man with long black hair, brimming with energy and vitality.

His eyes resembled a sea of thunder, capable of penetrating the void of time and space in all directions. This was the first time he had shown his true face to others, but he appeared injured, with wounds marking his body.

On the side of the immortal civilization, someone at the same level sensed his fluctuations and descended once more, intent on killing him alongside their companions. The aftermath of the battle at the level of Immortal Emperors rippled through other layers of time and space, affecting realms beyond this one.

Even a slight escape from the battle's chaos would spell disaster for the remaining living beings. Compared to the immortal civilization, the background of the Dao Chang Realm was alarmingly weak, especially as it had yet to recover from the devastation of the second calamity.

On the other side, the Great Commander of the Immortal Palace's survivors was locked in battle with his peers. His silver armor was stained with blood as he wielded a silver spear, its light piercing through the universe and shattering the fabric of reality.

His opponent, also of the same level, had previously fought against an Immortal Emperor from a foreign land and had companions by his side. Together, they pressed the attack, gaining the upper hand even before exerting their full strength. The Immortal Emperor who had fought this commander outside the boundless sea had sustained serious injuries and had yet to fully heal, making it difficult for him to unleash his peak combat power.

This was the caliber of the Immortal Emperor that the Dao Chang Realm could contend with now, a stark contrast to the strength of their adversaries. Meanwhile, on an ancient warship shaped like a flying shuttle, a few figures shrouded in chaotic dust and mist remained passive, observing the battle unfold with indifference.

There was no doubt that this was also an Immortal Emperor, surrounded by fragments of space-time and mist, exerting pressure that caused the universe to collapse and explode. The disparity between the newborn real world and the ancient real world was insurmountable; the Dao Chang Realm could not withstand these forces after exhausting its current strength.

This was only a fraction of the power wielded by a single family within the immortal civilization. If the immortal civilization were to invade with full force, the Dao Chang Realm would have no chance of resistance.

Moreover, two figures comparable to the Dao Realm stood by, choosing not to intervene. The weight of their presence created an oppressive atmosphere that left the army of the Dao Chang Realm gasping for breath, trembling with fear and despair.

Do you still want to resist? You are no match for my immortal civilization at all. Be smart—seal your hands and feet, suppress your spiritual energy, and you might just save your life.

My immortal civilization has fought against countless worlds, and we have slaughtered innumerable realms far more powerful than yours, turning them into dry bones and ashes, buried at our feet.

It is an honor for you to be enslaved by our clan; why not thank us?

Zhuoyou, clad in armor that shimmered with an otherworldly glow, stood outside the Dao Chang Realm, her expression indifferent. The resonance of her voice spread across the universe, reaching every corner of the vast world.

Countless creatures and cultivators looked up in horror upon hearing her words. She emanated a terrifying aura that eclipsed even the strongest figures of the Dao Realm, filling the sky with her presence.

Various ominous substances coalesced around her—streams of light, bolts of thunder, and flickering flames—all lacking a definite shape, as if she were an unknown god transcending the world.

“It’s truly a rare bloody feast. The crimson flowers are blooming beautifully, but it’s a pity they will wither soon,” remarked another vague figure beside Zhuoyou.

With a cruel, cold smile, he viewed the battle as an exquisite spectacle, admiring the bloody flowers blossoming across the universe. This was another Dao Realm existence who had yet to make a move; he was the most powerful being in the immortal civilization, second only to Zhuoyou.

“We have no hatred with you. Why did you descend to slaughter our world?” an ancient figure from the Dao Chang Realm cried out, his eyes filled with rage.

Having lived a long life, his cultivation was no more than that of a true immortal, rendering him little more than cannon fodder in this great battle. He watched in anguish as many familiar faces perished, collapsing and disintegrating into blood mist. His heart overflowed with hatred and pain, yearning for the day when all future enemies would be suppressed and killed to quell the resentment within him.

“What are you talking about? Even if the old man fights to the last drop of blood, he won’t give in and will make you pay the price!”

In another vast universe, ancient cultivators roared with hatred, their bodies glowing as they chose to self-destruct to take down their enemies.

Across the remaining worlds, the scene was equally tragic. Some fighters, covered in scars and nearly drained of blood, fought fiercely against their opponents.

“Master has gone, and after all these years in this realm, it’s difficult to make any progress.”

“We’re ashamed of our teacher’s kindness.”

“Today, I hope to save my master’s homeland with my own body.”

In one fallen sect, several old men, their energy and blood nearly exhausted, summoned their last reserves of strength. The celestial spirit surged from the crimson glow, leading all the disciples into a final, desperate charge against their foes.

“Even if I burn the last bit of my residual fire, so what? My generation of cultivators follows the will of heaven and our own hearts. Why should we fear battle? We will live and die with the Dao Chang Realm!”

In another vast world, elderly figures with gray hair and unshaven beards stood resolute. Their vitality had long since waned, yet they faced death without fear. They possessed varying cultivation levels; some had reached the heights of immortality, while others remained at the human level.

“Attack!”

Countless cultivators and creatures surged forward, disregarding life and death, their eyes filled with madness.

“The ignorant creatures, like mayflies shaking trees, think they can challenge the inevitable,” the figure beside Zhuoyou sneered, his gaze filled with disdain.

Zhuoyou remained indifferent, devoid of any emotion. She had witnessed too many such scenes; in the real worlds captured by the immortal civilization, countless souls fought to the bitter end to protect their homelands. But what did it matter? Nothing would change.

“However, it’s kind of strange...” Zhuoyou felt a flicker of doubt. She noticed anomalies among the fallen creatures; they didn’t seem to have truly perished, physically or mentally.

A mysterious power shielded these souls in the dark, preventing their complete dispersal.

“If you want to slaughter this world, then consider the price you must pay,” Gu Wuwang’s figure emerged, standing resolutely opposite Zhuoyou.

His voice was calm, though he refrained from attacking immediately. Despite his strength being on par with Zhuoyou's, the immortal civilization operated in difficult ways to fully understand or combat. Moreover, beside her stood another formidable presence, Zhuohua, whose strength was only slightly inferior. A direct confrontation would surely spell his defeat.

Zhuoyou showed no surprise at his appearance, responding coolly, "I hail from the immortal civilization, which has ruled the vast expanse for countless epochs. This is the first time I've heard the newborn real world threaten us." Beside her, Zhuohua sneered, his disdain palpable.

"Do you really think you alone can stop us?"

Zhuoyou challenged, her tone laced with disdain.

It's not easy for you to reach this point, so don't seek your death. Allow us to leave a spiritual imprint for our clan to control; perhaps there will be an opportunity for transformation in the future.

Despite the spark of the Immortal Civilization evident in the Newborn Realm, it had yet to grow and develop fully. Even if it reached the level of the ancient real worlds, it would still fail to attract the immortal civilization's attention. After all, the immortal civilization ranked among the most powerful under the supreme civilizations, with the Zhuo clan alone possessing the strength to sweep aside several ancient realms.

Gu Wuwang remained calm, undisturbed by their words.

"I'm merely reminding you that if you halt your aggression now and provide sufficient compensation to all races—kneeling and sincerely repenting—there might still be a chance for you.

Otherwise, the civilization behind you will face a great catastrophe. You will come to regret your actions today.”

His tone was steady, as if he were discussing a straightforward matter rather than the fate of their worlds.

“I think you’re crazy,” Zhuohua scoffed, his voice echoing through the vastness of the universe.

“When will you stop saying such foolish things? Do you really believe there will be a catastrophe? Do you think we’re so naive that we would fear a newly born realm that can’t even resist one of our warships?”

He leaned into the derision, his laughter ringing out, as if mocking Gu Wuwang’s confidence.

“It’s truly ridiculous. You’re just grasping at straws, trying to find hope in the face of inevitable death. It’s nothing more than a fantasy.”

The powerful figures of the immortal civilization engaged in battles across various fronts couldn’t help but join in his laughter, reveling in the belief that the Dao Chang Realm was no match for their might.

Many onlookers from the immortal civilization looked on with pity, as if watching an ant’s final, futile struggle before death. On the other hand, though understanding the weight of Gu Wuwang’s words, the powerhouses of the Dao Chang Realm found their fleeting hope quickly fading. What glimmer of expectation appeared in their eyes dimmed just as fast.

However, Zhuoyou's eyes flickered with a subtle realization. She recalled the unique nature of this realm. Since there was once a spark of immortality left behind, there had to be an unfathomable existence that had once passed through this world. Could Gu Wuwang's warning be referring to that mysterious being?

But Zhuoyou quickly dismissed the thought. "Grandfather did a divination for me," she reminded herself. "He saw no danger ahead. This man is simply trying to deceive us. If such an existence truly protected this realm, why would he reveal himself now and waste words?"

Her face returned to its cold, indifferent demeanor. She sneered, said, "Unfortunately, your ploys won't work on us. I've seen through your little game, and you won't deceive me."

Gu Wuwang sighed inwardly. He hadn't truly placed much faith in his words swaying them. His real aim had been to buy time, but it seemed Zhuoyou had seen through the ruse all too quickly.

Gu Wuwang remained calm, despite the tense situation.

"I hope you won't regret it later. The wrath of that lord is beyond what even your civilization can bear."

Zhuohua's expression turned icy. To continue speaking such words without fear only fueled her anger, and she lashed out without hesitation. She and Gu Wuwang clashed in an instant, their figures filling the universe, tearing through worlds as they fought.

Zhuoyou, observing this, knew that Gu Wuwang was the strongest remaining force in the Dao Chang Realm. If he fell, the last glimmer of hope for their resistance would be extinguished, and the battle would conclude in the immortal civilization's favor.

With this realization, she too made her move. Her aura was overwhelming, far surpassing any previous Dao Realm combatant. Time and space shattered under the force of her attack, and even the chaotic void became unstable.

Countless beings across the Dao Chang Realm witnessed this terrifying scene, their hearts filled with fear and dread. They knew that the fate of their world hung precariously in the balance.

Even Ming, Jiu Jianxian, and others locked in battle with the forces of the immortal civilization couldn't ignore the clash between Gu Wuwang and Zhuoyou. The air was thick with tension.

In a distant universe, Gu Xian'er noticed the turmoil, her gaze sharpening with determination. She set aside her worries, her eyes cold and resolute as she sped across the vast expanse. With a single stroke, her sword light sliced through the heavens, spanning thousands of miles, cleaving stars and shattering galaxies. The oncoming army of the immortal civilization was torn apart and annihilated under her sword's brilliance.

Despite fighting two Immortal Kings simultaneously, Gu Xian'er still had enough strength to stave off the advancing army, her will unyielding.

"Xian'er, if this goes on, there's no way to turn the tide! There are too many of them. No matter how powerful you are, you'll run out of energy eventually," Da Hong shouted anxiously beside her, his voice thick with worry.

"Retreat now, don't risk it any longer!" He urged, deeply concerned. Gu Xian'er might hold her own against Immortal Kings, but the consequences could be disastrous if she encountered a being beyond their level.

Chapter 999: Gu Xian'er's transformation, I will be invincible in this world

“I can’t retreat. If I do, who will protect the villagers of Peach Village? Who will safeguard the masters and the village chief?”

Gu Xian’er replied, shaking her head. Her breathing remained steady, and her tone was resolute. As she spoke, she unleashed another wave of sword energy, sending it soaring across the vast distance, roaring past to intercept the advancing army.

“You girl, why are you being so foolish? Even if you stay here, don’t you realize you can’t change anything?”

Da Hong exclaimed, frustration evident in his voice. [Ed note: Da Hong is the name of the Red Big Bird]

“It’s truly reckless. With your talent, you could easily surpass these foes if you took the time to cultivate in a safer place for a few hundred years.”

Da Hong’s anxiety mounted; it seemed as though Gu Xian’er was lacking in judgment. At this critical moment, she still refused to flee and insisted on fighting. If the other Immortal Emperors redirected their attention toward her, how would she stand a chance?

He knew all too well that the life-saving items Gu Changge had given her were long depleted after her trials in the Heavenly Tomb. Gu Xian’er had nothing left to protect herself now.

Previously, she had a group of masters and Tao Yao to shield her, but now, if she truly faced a life-threatening situation, she would find herself with no escape.

“I understand what you’re saying, but I can only do my best. I can’t just stand by and watch these people die,” Gu Xian’er replied, her face calm as she made swift movements to fend off the attackers.

Besides, I was once the Daoist of the Mountain and Sea Realm. This world has given me so much fortune to help me grow, and it has been kind to me.

She was aware of the risks involved. However, choosing to escape now would feel like a betrayal of her Dao’s heart. That was simply not in her nature or her choice.

At the moment Gu Xianer’s words fell, she sensed a mysterious power blessing her from somewhere. Her primordial spirit began to shine, and the essence of the heavenly incarnation she had absorbed previously was being transformed into majestic mana.

“Your primordial spirit is evolving into the light of the quasi-immortal emperor. Although it’s just a trace, this is a significant opportunity...” Da Hong remarked, unable to hide his astonishment.

It was evident that Gu Xian’er was destined to respond to a catastrophe, and amidst the chaos of battle, her primordial spirit had unexpectedly found a chance for transformation. If all went well, she could break through and become an Immortal Emperor, leading to an earth-shattering change in her strength.

Chi!!!

At that moment, from the opposite direction, tens of thousands of icy sword lights surged forth, attempting to cleave through the vast universe. The two opponents, their faces contorted with fury, were caught off guard by the young girl’s resistance; they found themselves unable to defeat her quickly.

Comparable to immortal kings, they were among the most powerful figures in the immortal civilization, ruling over many worlds with immense strength. The young girl before them, though evidently not very old, possessed both remarkable fortune and formidable power, matching their own.

“We need to work together to take this girl down quickly. If we allow her to complete her transformation, we won’t stand a chance against her,” one of them warned, his voice echoing through the universe as he observed Gu Xian’er’s transformation.

In response, Gu Xian’er raised her jade hand, allowing the fluctuations of Daoism to permeate the air. This formed an ancient immortal shield that radiated brilliance to withstand their attack. The intensity of the battle between the layers of the Absolute Immortal King was truly terrifying.

Boom!!!

A massive explosion erupted, resembling the detonation of countless stars. The dazzling light was blinding, powerful enough to make all the Dao collapse. Gu Xian’er’s figure trembled slightly as she was forced to retreat tens of thousands of miles into the universe to regain her balance.

Then, she swung her sword once more, unleashing a torrent of sword energy that spread across the sky in billions of strands, shaking the long river of time and washing away the ancient and the modern.

Once again, Gu Xian’er clashed with her opponents, sword energy and sword light raging throughout the shattered universe. The Dao was obliterated, reduced to ashes in an instant. ❖

At that moment, even other immortal kings would find themselves in danger if they ventured into this place. The inexhaustible aura of destruction spread relentlessly, annihilating everything in its path.

The void was already riddled with holes, filled with shattered rift valleys, and the howling winds pierced the very soul. The two immortal king-level powerhouses from the immortal civilization were both overbearing and powerful.

One wielded a black heavenly sword capable of severing the light of the vast universe. Its brilliance was endless, descending like an icy autumn wind that swept across the sky, carrying an air of destruction. The other was no less formidable; with a wave of his hand, he unleashed a barrage of terrifying techniques that flew across the sky, annihilating time and space as they directly targeted Gu Xian'er, revealing his murderous intent.

The overwhelming laws of the Immortal King suddenly descended upon the battlefield.

In an instant, the battlefield was flooded with energy, causing the endless void to erupt suddenly. Then came another slash, peculiar in nature; the aura seemed to emerge from the long river of time, releasing the immortal will and killing intent of the Immortal King, shaking the entire world!

The two Immortal Kings had known each other for many years, often discussing strategies to cooperate and combat their enemies. Together, they could even contend against three Immortal Kings of the same level.

Gu Xian'er frowned as she found herself in a perilous situation. She quickly retreated toward the vast universe behind her, covering hundreds of millions of miles in an instant. However, the lethal attacks from the two Immortal Kings pursued her relentlessly, causing the star fields along her path to explode and collapse in a devastating manner.

The entire universe was on the brink of explosion, unable to withstand such catastrophic aftermath.

“I warned you not to be brave! If something happens to you, Gu Changge will undoubtedly obliterate my true soul!”

Da Hong exclaimed, fear evident in its humanized eyes.

Gu Xian'er had no time to heed its words; she unleashed a series of Dao runes, each as large as a star, in an attempt to counter the ultimate moves of the two Immortal Kings. However, these opponents were significantly stronger than any she had faced before, giving her the unsettling impression that they were approaching the quasi-Immortal Emperor level.

Under the full force of their assault, other Immortal Kings were reduced to blood mist, exploding in an instant. If it weren't for Gu Xian'er's extraordinary strength, far surpassing that of ordinary Immortal Kings, she would have sustained injuries long ago.

From the heavenly tomb, many of the divine weapons she had acquired were summoned at this moment, but most shattered upon contact. Pagodas and ancient tripods transformed into brilliant divine lights, launching a counterattack against the two powerful foes.

Boom!!!

The universe trembled as the black sword light sliced through the air, causing the divine weapons to explode one after another, turning into powder and dissipating.

“Where do you think you're escaping to?”

The Immortal King who had struck bore a cold expression, with what appeared to be massive stars spinning in his eyes, capable of obliterating everything in their path.

It was imperative for them to prevent Gu Xian'er from completing her transformation, so they exerted their full strength at that moment, even sacrificing their own Immortal King divine weapons, unleashing terrifying fluctuations of power.

“Puff...”

Gu Xian'er coughed up a mouthful of blood, and her blood-stained skirt appeared even more vividly red. She continued to retreat toward the vast universe behind her, navigating the blurred boundaries of time and space to evade another Immortal King's ultimate attack.

Many onlookers across the battlefield noticed this scene and expressed their concern. However, at that moment, they lacked the energy to assist Gu Xian'er; they were like bodhisattvas crossing a river, unable to protect themselves.

The struggle on Gu Xian'er's side was merely a microcosm of the larger battlefield. The background of the Dao Chang Realm was far inferior to that of the immortal civilization, and the disparity in the number of powerful beings was glaring, marked by a distinct divide. The immortal civilization could deploy two or even three of the same level simultaneously to engage against the Dao Chang Realm.

At this moment, even someone with exceptional talent, capable of battling multiple opponents simultaneously, would eventually exhaust themselves. Meanwhile, the great battle raged on, astonishing in its intensity; the clashes between the Dao Realm existences were beyond the comprehension of cultivators at the Immortal Dao level.

Countless time and space were shattered, and only vague, massive hands could be seen slapping across the sky. Even the long river of time had evaporated, with fragments of Dao swirling and rushing toward the broken universe.

“Miss Xian’er...”

Hei Ming, engaged in combat with his opponent, frowned as he noticed the situation on Gu Xian’er’s side.

“While you fight me, you still have the presence of mind to worry about others? Focus on your own life and death first,” his opponent sneered, a figure resembling a foreign race who kept their true form hidden behind a flat expression.

They stood in a realm outside the world, a lawless space where the aftermath of their battle could give rise to the powers of both creation and destruction. As they fought, one could witness the evolution of vast worlds and the collapse of entire universes. The light of their conflict washed over the entire long river of time, reflecting from ancient times to the present.

This clash transcended Daoism and divine powers; it became utterly unpredictable. It had the potential to create worlds, as well as to annihilate them.

The world before them appeared intact, but in the eyes of the Dao Realm, it had been reincarnated countless times.

Hei Ming sighed; although Gu Xian’er was in a precarious situation, he had no time to look after her. Held back by his opponent, he could not offer any assistance.

“Xian’er, it’s best not to be reckless. When it comes down to it, saving your life is the most important thing,” Da Hong urged, fluttering its wings. As the spirit of Gu Xian’er’s weapon, it currently lacked the strength to aid her.

Watching the two Immortal Kings attack with renewed vigor made Da Hong increasingly anxious and worried.

Gu Xian'er, however, ignored the warnings, focusing instead on condensing the light of the quasi-Immortal Emperor while deftly evading her opponent's strikes.

The great universe trembled and began to collapse, quickly torn apart under the impact of the Immortal King.

"I see, you girl, are you willing to risk your own life to draw Gu Changge out?" Da Hong suddenly realized something and shouted loudly.

Gu Xian'er was on the verge of unleashing her Dao sword when the figure delivering the ultimate blow nearly staggered. Frustrated by the incessant chatter of the large red bird, she clenched her delicate white fists, wanting to toss it aside.

"Shut up. I am more than capable of dealing with these two enemies without needing that guy to save me. But you do remind me of something..." Gu Xian'er lightly scolded Da Hong before muttering under her breath. Even in the face of such a crisis, she still felt no genuine concern about retreating.

"Wandering without a shadow..."

In the next moment, she took a deep breath, her eyes steady, and a drop of bright blood flew from between her eyebrows, landing on the Dao sword she held.

Terrifying rays of light shot up into the sky, as if attempting to tear the world apart. Without hesitation, Gu Xian'er wielded the Dao sword again, its clang resonating as if it were about to shake the very sky and earth.

At that moment, endless sword shadows emerged from her side—not illusions, but manifestations condensed by the ultimate rules of swordsmanship.

In an instant, countless flying swords crisscrossed through the great universe; some were as red as blood, some as yellow as the morning glow, and others as blue as the sea. They were as fierce as the sun and as bright as the moon. Countless sword shadows fell like a rainbow piercing through the universe, densely packed and endless, creating a universe of swords.

“Why did she suddenly become so much stronger?”

The expressions of the two Immortal Kings pursuing her changed, surprised by the girl's unexpected power.

This great battle in the Dao Chang Realm had expanded from the vast battlefield to encompass all universes and worlds, sparing almost no ethnic group, as they all engaged in the fight.

At that time, at the headquarters of the Heaven Slaying Alliance, on an island bathed in a glowing light and a surge of immortality, “Wang Wushang” sat cross-legged. The bright light of a quasi-Immortal Emperor emerged from his sea of consciousness, and astonishing changes seemed to unfold throughout his body.

The tragic battle outside appeared to have no effect on him.

“In this conflict, the more people die, the better. When I come to clean up the mess, I can harness the power of these fallen remnants to restore the vitality of my Underworld Clan...”

“It’s time to initiate the grand scheme of seizing the Dao Chang Realm.”

“Wang Wushang” was actually Ni Chen. He gazed at the scene outside, his expression neutral, neither happy nor sad, as he chose not to engage in the battle.

On this island, many auras comparable to Immortal Kings lay dormant.

In addition, several quasi-Immortal Emperor-level existences sat within the fortress, allowing them to resist any attacks from the army of the Immortal Civilization without fear. As a Daoist of the Heaven Slaying Alliance, Ni Chen had attracted many ethnic groups over the years, including some super masters who surpassed the Immortal King level.

However, it was unfortunate that there were no existences comparable to the Dao realm nearby at present.

Nonetheless, Ni Chen recognized the optimal opportunity presented by the ongoing battle, where the Immortal Civilization descended to capture the Dao Chang Realm. With the sky in chaos and all the powerful beings occupied with their opponents, even Gu Wuwang and others had no time to pay him any attention, making it easier for him to execute his plans unnoticed.

Now, with the strength of a quasi-Immortal Emperor, as long as he could completely seize this side of the real world, his power would leap to a level comparable to the Dao realm.

At that time, he would become the new true spirit of the Dao Chang Realm, and the strength he could wield in this realm would be even greater. After this battle, neither the Dao Chang Realm nor the Immortal Civilization would be at their peak again.

Leveraging the unique talents of the Underworld Clan, Ni Chen could seize the opportunity to capture and refine other existences within the Dao Realm. As long as he successfully won over even one person, his advantage would soon grow stronger, like a snowball gathering momentum.

“At that time, I will be invincible in this world,” Ni Chen declared, ambition shining in his eyes.

In that moment, his primordial spirit unfurled like a thick fog, enveloping millions of miles in an instant as it began to extend in all directions, taking advantage of the chaos. The arrangements he had made over the years began to bear fruit.

Chapter 1000: Sublimated in the Extreme Realm, the Immortal Emperor shot out at Xian'er

The surging mist spread from the island to the world in an instant. Ni Chen sat cross-legged, having already condensed the light of a quasi-immortal Emperor. His brows glowed, and his cheekbones became translucent. Every inch of his flesh and blood emanated an inexplicable Dao rhyme and an aura of immortality, establishing a connection with the world around him.

Beside him, a total of forty-nine ancient bronze lamps flickered to life. The scorching flames danced as if reflecting a specific constant number. The Dao consisted of fifty, the sky of forty-nine, and the mortal realm represented one of them.

At this moment, Ni Chen would become that one mortal, completely obscuring his existence so that no one would be aware of his true intentions. Seizing the Dao Chang Realm could not be accomplished in an instant, requiring patience and strategy.

With the sky drastically changing and even more battles raging outside the boundless battlefield, no one would notice this anomaly. This was the best opportunity for him, leaving no room for error.

In an instant, his soul transformed into billions of wisps of soul mist, enveloping the great universe and the vast world, seeking to occupy the hazy will of this realm.

The true spirit of the Dao Chang Realm.

It still exists; its fall has not been eliminated. Yet, for some reason, its aura has become extremely weak, nearly nonexistent in this world.

During this process, Ni Chen encountered a surprising revelation. The original Dao Chang Realm—previously known as the Mountain and Sea Realm—had always been in a state of separation from the world. The true spirit of this realm was undoubtedly still alive, but it existed uniquely, not confined to the Dao Chang Realm itself.

In other words, the real world before him was not the dead shell he had once believed it to be. The true spirit of the Dao Chang Realm had long existed in an alternative form. The relationship between the two could be understood as that of an instrument and its spirit; now, the spirit could exist independently without needing to be attached to the instrument.

This meant that the true spirit of the Dao Chang Realm had transformed into an independent life form with little connection to the realm itself. However, some residual auras and connections still lingered in this reality.

Seizing control will inevitably disturb the true spirit, but I don't care about that now. This situation is beyond my expectations. But if anyone tries to stop me, I will kill them—no matter if it's the true spirit of the Dao Chang Realm, so what?

Ni Chen gritted his teeth, his eyes reflecting a sense of madness. At this critical juncture, he could not afford to make any mistakes. One wrong step could lead to his eternal doom, leaving him no chance of rebirth.

Buzz!!!

The forty-nine ancient bronze lamps beside him emitted a dazzling light to protect his true soul. Ni Chen's thoughts fully spread into the soul mist as many layout methods were activated, beginning to encroach upon the Dao Chang Realm. Each of these ancient bronze lamps had been forged from the remnants of the former Underworld Realm, and every lamp represented one of his true lives, safeguarding him during this perilous process of seizing control.

With each ancient bronze lamp that extinguished, it meant he lost one true life. When all forty-nine lamps were completely extinguished, Ni Chen would die, his body and spirit annihilated.

As Ni Chen concentrated on seizing this world, he failed to notice that the primordial root he had nurtured was emitting a faint radiance, appearing in the void. This Hongmeng Myriad Root had grown into a small tree.

Strands of primordial purple aura lingered on the branches, appearing remarkably miraculous and seemingly containing the true meaning of the Dao. Each branch and leaf had transformed into a small crystal mirror, reflecting Ni Chen's figure. Everything he had learned, felt, and cultivated, including his quasi-immortal emperor Daoism, was visible within these reflections.

Meanwhile, outside the island, many figures had gathered—masters from various races—anxiously urging Ni Chen to leave his secluded state and join them in fighting against foreign enemies. As a Daoist of the Heaven Slaying Alliance, the power surrounding Ni Chen was not to be underestimated.

At the beginning of the war, Ni Chen aimed to win the people's hearts by bringing many powerhouses to the vast battlefield for support. He even took action himself, nearly killing a quasi-immortal emperor of the same realm. This battle earned Ni Chen considerable fame, but he only made such a move once.

"The Daoist is at a critical moment in retreat, and no one can disturb him. This is an order from the Daoist; everyone please go back," said several individuals who had already been ordered by Ni Chen, looking at the many figures rushing toward them indifferently. They then acted decisively, driving everyone away.

Outside the island, a hazy layer of seven-color formation rose up, creating a blurry barrier that seemed to hide within endless time and space.

"When do you retreat if not now? This is a refusal to act—let everyone fight desperately while he hides here..."

"He's still called the Daoist? All the ethnic groups poured resources into helping him grow, but they never thought he would turn out to be a white-eyed wolf."

Witnessing this scene, the figures who had rushed over were completely stunned, unable to comprehend the outcome. After regaining their composure, many began to curse, their faces filled with anger and shame.

Boom!!!

But before they could finish their curses, a massive hand emerged from the formation, striking across the air with a resounding thud. Everyone coughed up blood and was sent flying, with many exploding into misty remnants of flesh. ㄟ

“Those who disturb the Daoist’s retreat will be killed without mercy.”

The indifferent voice echoed, carrying a chilling ruthlessness. Ni Chen had anticipated this reaction, so he controlled many individuals as puppet clones, ensuring they would not interrupt him.

Outside the Dao Chang True Realm, chaos reigned. Endless battles erupted, and many great universes along the way were shattered, soaked in blood. The most powerful beings from all races fought desperately, willing to pay the ultimate price, even if it meant turning to ashes.

Still suspended mid-air, many figures exploded and disintegrated, collapsing into shimmering light particles. The number of high-end combat forces was far too small, leaving everyone at a complete disadvantage. Whether it was the Dao Realm existences or the immortal emperor-level combatants, the immortal civilization was suppressing them all.

Despair loomed over the battlefield, but amid this desperation, some individuals transcended their limits, shining like beacons across the heavens and the universe. The brilliant light of a quasi-immortal emperor pierced through everything, drawing the attention of many combatants. Gu Xian’er experienced a breakthrough during the battle, forcibly beheading two opponents already on the cusp of becoming quasi-immortal emperors.

However, the victory came at a cost. She struggled, her dress stained with blood, and she continued to cough up crimson droplets. Meanwhile, in the vastness outside the Dao Chang Realm, an immortal emperor aboard the ancient warship of the immortal civilization took notice of her.

“Born in response to the catastrophe, breaking through in the extreme, but unfortunately, it will also end in splendor,” the immortal emperor observed indifferently.

Though he had not participated in the battle thus far, he now chose to strike, extending his hand to slap at Gu Xian'er from a great distance.

This palm was utterly terrifying, infused with the lingering essence of Dao fragments. It descended like a dark universe collapsing upon itself, stretching far and wide, crushing everything from the ancient to the modern. The river of time boiled, and a massive surge of energy light particles roiled in its wake. Under the immense power of the immortal emperor, even the long river of time risked being completely evaporated.

In the face of such overwhelming might, even an Immortal King would find themselves helpless, likely to perish in an instant without hope of leaping beyond their limits. Gu Xian'er, having braved the danger of death and sublimated in the extreme realm, had just eliminated her two opponents. She was on the verge of recovering from her injuries while simultaneously beginning to grasp the power of the quasi-immortal emperor.

Although Gu Xian'er had not seen the immortal emperor's attack, she could feel the overwhelming murderous intent descending from above. The heavens seemed to wither, and vitality decayed rapidly, like autumn winds sweeping through fallen leaves. This terrifying scene was the direct result of the Immortal Emperor's thoughts.

"Xian'er, run away! The opponent's Immortal Emperor figure has noticed you. Regardless of the difference in strength, he will kill you," Da Hong shouted in horror, sensing the world-destroying aura looming nearby.

"I can't escape. The Immortal Emperor's aura has already locked onto me. Even if I instantaneously flee to another time and space, it would be useless," Gu Xian'er replied, shaking her head, blood trickling from the corner of her mouth.

An almost insurmountable threshold exists between the Immortal Emperor and the Quasi-Immortal Emperor. Not to mention, I have just entered the realm of the Quasi-Immortal Emperor. If he wants to kill me, it's only a matter of one palm.

Despite the dire situation, Gu Xian'er remained composed. She stood firm in the starry sky, her eyes exuding an unprecedented calmness in the face of impending doom.

Da Hong flapped its wings in distress, feeling helpless in the face of the impending disaster.

"It's over, it's over... It turned out to be the Immortal Emperor making the move... This is too shameless," it lamented.

On the rest of the battlefield, many powerhouses from the Dao Chang Realm were equally alarmed, their expressions filled with fear and concern. In this fierce battle, Gu Xian'er had relied solely on her strength to eliminate numerous foreign enemies, earning their deep admiration.

Although strong in their own right, the younger generation of geniuses could not step onto the front lines to confront the Immortal Kings. Many of them depended on Gu Xian'er's assistance, and even while engaged in her fierce fight, she had still found the energy to support them.

An Immortal Emperor was intent on attacking Gu Xian'er, showing no regard for the disparity in strength or face. This infuriated many observers, yet they felt powerless, their hearts heavy with sorrow. The overwhelming difference in power left them no chance to resist.

"You are courting death!"

Hei Ming, engaged in battle with his opponent in another realm, noticed this dire situation. Rage surged within him, causing his spiritual energy to ripple through the entire river of time. A brilliant light broke through the darkness as he unleashed powerful techniques to repel his opponent and rush to Gu Xian'er's aid.

In his past, before becoming the commander of the Heaven Slaying Army, he had relied on Gu Xian'er's first life to defeat a group of enemies with a single blow. That moment remained vivid in his memory, even after countless years. No matter the circumstances, he could not allow this esteemed figure to fall here.

The theory of reincarnation was elusive and difficult to grasp; he couldn't tell if Gu Xian'er would fall this time or if there remained a chance for her rebirth.

"Your opponent is me. How dare you be distracted while fighting me?" The figure from the immortal civilization, comparable to the Dao Realm, sneered. He raised his palm and struck, causing time, space, and the universe to collapse and reorganize. In an instant, they engaged in a battle that felt like billions of clashes, reshaping and collapsing the world countless times.

The earth, water, wind, and fire morphed anew, and chaos unfolded, opening up the world again.

Boom!

Ultimately, the place erupted again, plunging everything into chaos as countless rules intertwined, resembling the primordial land at the dawn of creation. Hei Ming found himself blocked, coughing up blood, unable to escape, let alone assist Gu Xian'er. Anxiety surged within him.

"Xian'er... Run away!"

Across the battlefield, veteran Immortal Kings grappling with their formidable foes also changed expressions, exclaiming alarmingly. A chilling sensation coursed through their bodies, and their

souls trembled. The gaze of the Immortal Emperor descended, emanating a world-destroying aura that swept across the heavens, bringing with it the desolation of autumn's withered leaves.

Simultaneously, that enormous hand descended from a distant point, moving slowly yet covering the entire universe. How vast the universe may be, but before this colossal hand, it seemed painfully small.

All the star fields disintegrated and collapsed as massive stars exploded one after another, transforming the creatures within into flying ash before they could even scream. At that moment, even the long river of time vanished, and the Dao trembled, on the verge of collapse.

Initially, he had merely observed the battle among his peers, ready to intervene if something went awry. However, Gu Xian'er shone too brightly in this conflict, beheading several Immortal Kings at a young age. Among them was a being whose light was on the cusp of condensing into a quasi-Immortal Emperor, having sublimated to the utmost and taken a crucial step forward.

If such a genius were placed within the Immortal Civilization behind them, she would be regarded as one of the most exceptional of all time, destined for accomplishments far beyond the ordinary. Therefore, it was inconceivable for him to allow her to grow stronger. He was deeply invested in obliterating geniuses in their infancy, unhesitating in his resolve to erase all traces of their existence from this world.

"Only those conceived by the blood of peerless geniuses appear delicate and beautiful; eternity has passed, yet only this moment remains."

The Immortal Emperor of the Immortal Civilization observed the scene from beyond the world, a cruel smile playing at the corners of his mouth. His tone was calm and breezy, echoing through the heavens and all walks of life.

A chill coursed through everyone present, the astonishing malice in his words unmistakable, revealing his intent to annihilate the geniuses. Many powerhouses in the Dao Chang Realm were filled with rage, their eyes tearing with frustration, but they felt powerless to change the outcome.

“Damn it! It’s infuriating that an Immortal Emperor would disregard all pretense and target a young junior!”

Veteran fighters roared in anger, their blood boiling as they strode forward, filled with an unquenchable fury. They clashed against the enemy with relentless killing intent, fully prepared to disregard their lives.

“Fight with them! We can’t let the blood of the young flow in vain!”

“Attack!”

The battlefields in the Dao Chang Realm erupted with fury and tragedy, blood staining the ground as emotions surged.

“They’re nothing more than ants. Faced with the fear of death, all they can do is scream.”

The powerhouses on the other side, part of the Immortal Civilization, sneered disdainfully, treating their opponents like mice caught in a trap.

“They fail to understand that this desperate roar is the most beautiful melody in the world. Every corner of the sky should resonate with it...”

Laughter erupted among them, wanton and unabashed, their malice and mockery laid bare.

To them, this war was no accident. Even if the Dao Chang Realm fought with desperation, it would only cause them minor inconvenience—it could not halt their relentless advance.