

Grasping 1011

Chapter 1011: Boundary Seal Between Two Realms

Upon hearing that the hundreds of War Soul Masters before him were all Soul Cultivators, Ning Fan immediately dismissed his underestimating thoughts.

In the cultivation world, the cultivation of the Spirit is regarded as orthodox, Body Refinement is considered unconventional, while Soul Cultivation is deemed entirely eccentric. The demon race is viewed as anomalous because they cultivate souls. These people before him exclusively cultivate Medicine Souls, which is even more eccentric than the demon race.

But this does not mean that these people can be underestimated, even if they all are merely at the Enlightenment, Shedding Void cultivation levels!

Ning Fan could feel the immense soul power within the bodies of this group of War Soul Masters; almost every one of them has reached the Golden Core Level Ninth Turn Medicinal Soul tier! Of course, this does not mean each one of them is a Ninth Turn Golden Core Alchemist.

Though their Medicine Soul is formidable, it has been forcibly enhanced through special methods, resulting in significant flaws—it can only be used in battle to display War Spirit Techniques but cannot be employed for Alchemy or the identification of Spiritual Medicines.

"Hand over Chulie Duolan! Otherwise, die!"

A hundred War Soul Masters roared in unison, and immediately the entire soul power of heaven and earth surged; that pressure didn't sway wind and clouds nor startle the heavens and earth, but directly assaulted each person's soul, comparable to the might of an Immortal Venerable's shout!

Duolan and the surviving cultivators here couldn't bear such pressure, vomiting blood under its force; the disparity in strength is too great! Only Ning Fan remained unchanged, ignoring the threats from the War Soul Masters; he calmly raised his hand, extinguishing the eons of momentum, and said to those behind him,

"Hide here; I will handle matters here alone!"

Having said this, he drew a line on the ground. Instantly, a golden line appeared, resembling a serpent, moving continuously along with Ning Fan's finger, forming a great circle that encompassed all the surviving cultivators behind Ning Fan. Although it appeared slow, it was completed in the blink of an eye. This golden light circle immediately caused a change in the great momentum of heaven and earth, responding to the heavens and invoking the earth as momentum, becoming a mighty Earth-element defensive formation!

Upon closer inspection, one would find the Earth Movement Great Formation resembling many formation arrays of Ancient Cultivators' Holy Domain Grotto Mansions, clearly a mimicry after Ning Fan's repeated observations.

Numerous Shattered Thought Fire Souls, under the control of War Soul Masters, attempted to charge into the golden circle to capture Duolan but were blocked by vast formation power; despite having Fragmented Thought Cultivation, they couldn't breach it by even half a step!

Duolan was greatly surprised by this; he didn't expect Ning Fan would protect him, even if it meant risking conflict with Sanyan Guard.

"Oh? This man sets formations not using external materials but uses land as the formation, and his set formation is extremely powerful. It seems his understanding of great momentum has reached a high level indeed. For not every Eternal Immortal Venerable in the Dabei can achieve forming a layout with land..." said the white-haired stalwart man underground, gravely.

Ning Fan's act of forming a layout with land likewise caused many exclamations above ground, which he ignored, only ordering people to keep watch over the formation, maintaining its operation. Since the formation wasn't meticulously arranged, it lacked Dao Crystals for upkeep, requiring communal mana to sustain its consumption. Despite appearing awe-inspiring, it was highly flawed and immensely challenging; its powers would be greatly reduced. Without mastering the Momentum Character Secret, Ning Fan could never have achieved this act given his current cultivation ability. And if not for the urgency, he wouldn't have employed such unconventional means.

Seeing that Ning Fan not only refused to hand people over but also set up a great formation to protect Duolan, the faces of the War Soul Masters turned sinister, filled with killing intent.

"Since you refuse to hand her over, we shall kill you too! Soul Technique, Act of Sealing!"

A hundred War Soul Masters simultaneously initiated techniques, and instantly a force of soul binding encased Ning Fan.

Ning Fan's expression slightly changed, he found himself encased by their soul power; his steps felt heavy as if cast in lead, unable to move an inch! This was also due to his limited cultivation, making movement impossible, but he estimated that even if his cultivation were intact, his speed would be severely impaired by such overwhelming soul power.

"Soul Technique, Seal of Thought!"

Ning Fan's unfailing spirit sense from his Ice Rain Technique was sealed, unable to disperse from his divine sense!

"Soul Technique, Extinguish Fire!"

The twelfold darkness evil fire within him began to show signs of extinguishing!

"Soul Technique, Extreme Darkness!"

The scenery before him grew darker, gradually losing his sight!

All this occurred in an instant; with a hundred War Soul Masters simultaneously casting spells, Ning Fan was inflicted with nearly a hundred negative statuses!

Before he could engage with these War Soul Masters, he lost the ability to act, his spirit sense capability was sealed, and his mana circulation became unprecedentedly sluggish; his resistance to Five Elements drastically weakened, and every few breaths suffered an attack from Illusory Art...

Such peculiar duel experiences were undoubtedly the first time Ning Fan had ever encountered in his cultivation journey; barely engaging, he was completely suppressed, entirely defenseless!

More than a hundred War Spirit Techniques followed, each with colossal destructive power, fiercely struck towards Ning Fan!

Ning Fan couldn't see the enemies assaulting him from all directions; his sight was sealed. He couldn't hear any sound, but the persistent chill radiating from behind reminded him that after adding negative statuses on him, the enemies launched their attacks. Standing idle would only turn him into a target, slain by these not highly cultivated but incomparably strong soul-powered foes!

Ning Fan secretly activated the Extinction Shield within him, embracing the Body-protecting Golden Light to its fullest. Though unable to move, under the protective golden light, he stood like a mighty tree in the wind, unmoved and unscathed.

"What kind of golden light is this? Such defense—is that something that a restricted Immortal Venerable could exhibit?!" The underground white-haired stalwart man frowned heavily.

The War Soul Masters' various soul techniques, each no less than the power of a Shattered Thought strike, could not be endured even by an Eternal Immortal Venerable without harm; yet Ning Fan, despite bearing various negative statuses, stood undefeated merely through his Body-protecting Golden Light, to the astonishment of the War Soul Masters!

Ning Fan also discovered that upon activating the Body-protecting Golden Light, he not only defended against enemies' attacks but gradually rendered the negative statuses diminishing in effect!

Vision slowly returned! Spirit sense gradually normalized! The heaviness of his steps dissipated! All reduced attributes replenished!

So this is how it is!

Ning Fan discovered how to defend against the Soul Fusion Technique.

Soul Fusion Technique diminishes others, provided one's soul power is affixed to the target; if the opposing soul power is strong enough, it could directly eliminate some negative statuses. If there are special defensive means, it can isolate any negative soul power.

Ning Fan's Medicine Soul wasn't strong enough, but fortunately, he possessed the Extinction Shield—a Heaven-Opening Artifact—to defend against the Soul Fusion Technique from a group of Shattered Thought Rank experts effortlessly. However, this meant when facing these War Soul Masters, he must continuously maintain the state of the Body-protecting Golden Light, not neglecting it for even a moment.

Duolan and the others are protected by the formation he laid, only needing to maintain the formation diligently. For a short period, there will be no immediate danger to their lives. There are other stranded cultivators on the prairie, but Ning Fan is too lazy to rescue them. With the body-protecting golden light activated, he rushes straight towards hundreds of War Soul Masters. Having suffered a minor loss earlier, he naturally intends to reclaim it!

These War Soul Masters form the formation together, unwilling to separate, for a reason! With Ning Fan's intelligence, he easily sees through the key signs.

Although these people possess strong soul power, when you set aside the soul power, at the end of the day, they are merely a group at the Enlightenment and Shedding Void Stage. Theoretically, each of them can wield powerful soul techniques comparable to a Shattered Thought attack, with impeccable offensive capabilities that can intimidate even the Eternal Immortal Venerables in group combat. However, their defense isn't high, and their cultivation speed isn't fast. If isolated, they are extremely difficult to protect. Hence, they gather together in one place! If the enemy closes in, they also face mortal danger, as any single Shedding Void Divine Skill can take their life. This is why they maintain their distance and carefully guard against close proximity!

Now seeing Ning Fan rushing towards them head-on, the War Soul Masters are all shocked, frantically using soul techniques to block him, but how can they stop Ning Fan with his body-protecting golden light?

Ning Fan's Ancient Demon body is already exceptionally strong, and now with the body-protecting golden light defense, he faces the Divine Skills coming his way head-on without dodging or evading, almost aggressively charging forward. He breaks through magical techniques with force, crashing into the powerful Divine Skills directly, easily breaking into the War Soul Masters' formation. With a great wave of his Ancient Demon palm, he kills a War Soul Master, and with a swift point of his devilish finger, another War Soul Master perishes. Manipulating the Thirty Million Sword Sea like a flurry of pear blossom rain, he causes a large number of War Soul Masters to suffer casualties.

Killing these War Soul Masters is as easy as exterminating youthful Enlightenment cultivators!

In less than ten breaths, more than forty War Soul Masters have died at Ning Fan's hands, while the remaining are horrified, retreating in succession and continually shouting strange words Ning Fan cannot understand, causing the surrounding Fire Souls besieging the formation to suddenly give up their line of assault, turning to surround Ning Fan instead.

Why would Ning Fan fear these Shattered Thought Fire Souls? Thirty Million Flying Swords sweep through, with several Shattered Thought Early and Intermediate Stage Fire Souls falling dead. Even those Half-Step Eternity Shattered Thought Fire Souls, fearing the terror of the Thirty Million Sword Sea, instinctively retreat slightly, not daring to rush in directly; if caught within, even if not killed, they would still suffer injuries!

In terms of defense, Ning Fan's mana is abundant, almost placing him in a position of innate invincibility. Even that day's Immortal King Firebird was stopped, so what would he fear from these terrifying War Soul Masters and Fire Souls?

In terms of attack, Ning Fan's thirty million flying swords to these Shattered Thought beings are practically an insurmountable method, potent even in battles between Immortal Sovereigns, causing many Immortal Sovereigns to see it and lose their courage.

A white-haired burly man under the ground could no longer sit still. It was one thing for the Fire Souls, but these War Soul Masters were the elite among his many subordinates; under this situation, the longer it dragged on, the more likely Ning Fan would wipe them out clean, which was something he could not tolerate.

"I thought it'd be a sure thing, but who knew this person would cause trouble? Hundred-li Stone Dragon, swallow this person!" The white-haired man said viciously.

Moo!

The response the white-haired man received was a strange roar akin to an ox or elephant.

Then, a massive object rose continuously from the depths of the earth; moments ago, it was in the absolute darkness underground, and in the next instance, it surged to the surface, suddenly thrusting out a giant head from the earth!

It was a head as huge as a small city, remarkably similar to a pangolin's, yet different from ordinary pangolins; its scales were blue-gray, with a pair of strange sharp horns growing on its head, a massive nose ring locked on its nose, and eyes unable to open, seemingly degenerating due to long-term underground living.

"Not good! It's the Hundred-li Stone Dragon!"

Many surviving cultivators exclaimed in astonishment, but before their cries could spread, everyone sensed the darkening of the sky, and even the land below them was ferociously swallowed by the mighty beast.

With just one bite, the giant beast devoured several dozen miles of the prairie, leaving behind an empty pit thousands of zhang deep and tens of miles wide, and then timidly burrowing back underground!

Ning Fan, the War Soul Masters, countless Fire Souls, as well as Duolan and the cultivators hidden within the formation, were all swallowed!

Even the Thirty Million Sword Sea filling the sky and the Four Emperors Arhat Pine at its center were swallowed clean!

Ning Fan's expression was somewhat astonished.

He was aware of the beast rising from the depths, but before he could respond, he was already swallowed into its belly. It's undeniable that the beast's speed of emerging from the ground defied understanding, completely contrary to its enormous size, and thus Ning Fan was caught off guard!

"It's over. We're all doomed! The belly of a Hundred-li Stone Dragon is incredibly firm; even if an Immortal King is swallowed, it's difficult to cut open to escape, leaving only the fate of being trapped!"

"A Hundred-li Stone Dragon from the Stone Flame Sect at least holds the title of Demon Child or higher; there must be a Stone Flame Demon Child hidden inside this dragon's belly!"

"This dragon is here for the Chulie Holy Maiden, and now that it has succeeded, it surely intends to return to Stone Flame! With the burrowing speed of the Hundred-li Stone Dragon, in no more than three days, it must return to Stone Flame; are we to be captured and taken back to Stone Flame?"

"If merely captured alive, it might not be such a bad thing; at least there's a chance to defect to Stone Flame and preserve our lives. The fear is that the Demon Child will simply disregard us, directly eliminating us on the way..."

Some Southern Frontier cultivators, seeing the situation as a lost cause, even contemplate defecting to Stone Flame!

The Sanyan Guard cannot freely enter and exit the Fierce Realm, a rule set by the Saint before his death, but there are two types of people among them who can move freely! One type comprises the very few cultivators who've passed the Ancestor Flame Trial, gaining the chance for free passage; the other type includes those who are not of Sanyan Guard's bloodline but are Prairie Cultivators who have defected from Dabei to join Sanyan. These individuals are not restricted by the Fierce Realm's rules and can move freely.

Conflicts and clashes abound between the Sanyan Guard and the Dabei Clan, often resulting in Dabei cultivators being alive captured by the Sanyan, among whom some highly talented individuals are regularly recruited by the Sanyan, as defecting to Sanyan guarantees preserving their lives.

However, defecting to Sanyan also requires qualification; at least among the many cultivators here, those qualified enough to spark Sanyan's interest are exceedingly rare.

"Never did I expect, in my lifetime, to be captured by the Stone Flame sect a second time!" Xianyu Chun closed his eyes with an unwillingness; he would rather die than defect to Sanyan, simply because there is a deep vengeance of bloody mist between him and the Sanyan, as his mother died by their hands!

"Can't escape!" Duolan turned pale; she knew if they were here for the secret, then even if she confessed, she'd still be silenced; after all, the matter involves great significance, and the fewer people who know, the better.

"Where have those Fire Souls, War Soul Masters gone, and even the Four Emperors Arhat Pine isn't here..." Ning Fan ignored the varied expressions of the people, instead furrowing his brows, observing his surroundings.

Here in the belly of the Hundred-li Stone Dragon, considering its massive body, its interior is naturally extremely spacious.

Ning Fan and the others were swallowed along with the War Soul Masters, yet apart from them, he cannot see any traces of the War Soul Masters here. It appears the Hundred-li Stone Dragon makes distinctions when swallowing; likely upon swallowing those people, distances were directly manipulated, causing them to appear elsewhere.

This also explains the disappearance of the Four Emperors Arhat Pine!

Probably his Thirty Million Flying Swords and the Four Emperors Arhat Pine were forcibly taken away by someone the moment they were swallowed into the dragon's belly.

The Hundred-li Stone Dragon greatly restrains spirit sense; within its belly, Ning Fan can't freely spread his spirit sense. Once spread, the spirit sense would unexpectedly ignite without flame, getting burned away strangely, hindering Ning Fan from searching the dragon's belly expansively.

Suddenly, footsteps were heard from afar.

Gradually, a group of people emerged from the darkness, led by a white-haired strongman, whose aura was quite formidable, just barely reaching the Timeless Realm, seemingly having just broken through to the Eternal Immortal Venerable.

Behind the white-haired strongman, followed more than sixty War Soul Masters, the remaining group after Ning Fan had killed, each one looking at Ning Fan with hatred and fear.

Further back, a neatly arranged group of over one hundred and thirty Shattered Thought Fire Souls followed, originally one hundred and seventy-five, those not present here had been killed by Ning Fan, turning into exam scores. These Fire Souls were not very intelligent, but their gaze toward Ning Fan also bore instinctive fear.

Ning Fan's gaze briefly passed over the white-haired strongman and fell upon the object in the man's hand, his expression suddenly darkened.

His Four Emperors Arhat Pine was now being played with by the white-haired strongman, completely intact, seemingly forcibly taken by this person!

"So, it's him! Stone Flame Seventh Fiend, Meng Zhen!" As soon as the white-haired strongman appeared, many Southern Frontier cultivators recognized him, their despondency intensified.

This was a Stone Flame Demon Child with Immortal Venerable's cultivation! With such a formidable enemy surrounding them, everyone was trapped inside the Stone Dragon's belly, truly without hope of surviving.

Many Southern Frontier cultivators showed expressions of fighting to the death, while some entertained different thoughts.

Zhaofeng Sect's Nan Zhilong gritted his teeth and suddenly walked out from behind Ning Fan, kneeling before the white-haired strongman. Among those acting similarly, there were not fewer than fifty people, including the White Ghost Sect's White Ghost Sorcerer, Heishan Sect's Sorcerer Heishan... many old monsters who had oppressed the Tamo Clan were among them!

This was hardly surprising; those who constantly sought to step on others would naturally not be good people. When such people faced life and death, betrayal was only to be expected.

"Ah, it's Lord Meng Zhen, my apologies! We fell into Lord Meng Zhen's hands due to our inferior skills, and we humbly ask Lord Meng Zhen to show mercy, allowing us to join Stone Flame and serve the Stone Flame Clan!"

Ning Fan frowned, never having much patience for such spineless beggars.

The white-haired strongman known as Meng Zhen laughed heartily, and after a laugh, he struck suddenly with lightning speed, and in the next moment, Nan Zhilong and the more than fifty others all had their bodies explode, dying miserably.

"Thinking of joining Stone Flame? Without weighing your own strength!" Meng Zhen's gaze swept over the sea of corpses, speaking disdainfully.

Among the Southern Frontier cultivators, some faces showed horror, others felt compassion, and some secretly rejoiced; those who rejoiced evidently despised Nan Zhilong and others' behavior of switch sides.

Meng Zhen's gaze scanned over Ning Fan and the others, pausing slightly on Xianyu Chun, Sorcerer Minghai, and Duolan, finally resting on Ning Fan, with a faint smile, raising the Four Emperors Arhat Pine in his hand.

"A fine magical treasure, it's a pity the user's cultivation was sealed, otherwise, even with a Hundred-li Stone Dragon, I couldn't have taken this treasure so easily..."

His gaze carried three parts unease, yet seven parts inherent arrogance. Arrogance, because he was a dignified Stone Flame Demon Child, while the other was merely a foreign cultivator. Unease, because of the mysterious body-protecting golden light.

In Meng Zhen's life journey, those who made him feel uneasy were few!

In Meng Zhen's understanding, Ning Fan was an Eternal Immortal Venerable whose cultivation was sealed, limited by Dabe's rules, Ning Fan would certainly not destroy the Punishing Ring, but if pushed, one could not say for sure.

For an ordinary Eternal Immortal Venerable, Meng Zhen wouldn't be concerned; if they dared to resist, they would just be killed. But Ning Fan's body-protecting golden light truly left Meng Zhen uneasy. With that light, even restrained, he faced hundreds of War Soul Masters and Shattered Thought Fire Souls unharmed; if he broke the Punishing Ring and regained full strength, boasting the divine skills of the protective golden light, the Hundred-li Stone Dragon would likely be unable to suppress him!

According to the task, he must search Chu Lie Duolan's memory, find that secret, and then kill Duolan to keep his silence, but evidently Ning Fan harbored a protective sentiment towards Chu Lie Duolan, making the job difficult; to complete the task, he must first find a way to take down Ning Fan...

"Do you wish for death or survival?" Meng Zhen inwardly chanted spells, yet outwardly narrowed his eyes, abruptly asking.

In this place, those qualified to be addressed as "Excellency" by a Timeless Realm expert like him were naturally only Ning Fan!

"And what if I wish for death, and what if I wish for life?" Ning Fan asked expressionlessly, yet inwardly he suddenly let out a soft "Oh," glancing imperceptibly at the soil beneath him.

"If you wish to live, you hand over Chu Lie Duolan, and obediently submit to Sanyan, becoming my Stone Flame slave. Once Meng plants the restraint, I'll open the Stone Dragon's mouth, granting you a path to survival; even that Four Emperors Pine could be returned to you! If you wish for death, well, Meng can fulfill your wish now! Even with that strange protective golden light, Meng has considerable confidence in killing you, whether you believe it or not!" Meng Zhen spoke highly confidently, paused, and continued,

"Perhaps you think you can destroy the Punishing Ring and escape with your original cultivation, but be aware, if you truly destroy the Punishing Ring, even if there's a one in ten thousand chance of escaping Meng's grasp, you can't escape the pursuit of the Da Bi Celestial Emperor. Those old things won't ask why you destroyed the Punishing Ring, nor will they give any foreign cultivator respect or understanding; they'll simply pursue you for this matter endlessly. With your strength, can you survive the chase by the Celestial Emperor!"

"And Meng doesn't shy away from telling you, you won't even have a one in ten thousand chance of fleeing! Do you know, Meng's Hundred-li Stone Dragon's belly has been tempered with countless treasures, capable of trapping even an Immortal King! And do you know where this Hundred-li Stone Dragon is headed? Not directly back to Stone Flame, but first going to the Two Realm's Seal to return the borrowed Shattered Thought Fire Souls. Tell me, isn't the Two Realm's Seal terrifying? If you go there, even if your divine skills are powerful, Meng killing you would be easy as pie, needing only for the Stone Dragon to spit you into the Two Realm's Seal, can you survive!"

Meng Zhen slightly smirked, wanting to see fear in Ning Fan's eyes; pity Ning Fan's expression remained calm, as he had no understanding of the so-called Two Realm's Seal, naturally without fear.

Rather, those Southern Frontier cultivators showed drastic changes in expression upon hearing the name Two Realm's Seal.

"It seems you don't know what land the Two Realm's Seal is? Fine, Meng doesn't mind explaining in detail..."

Yet as Meng Zhen was about to speak more, he suddenly noticed Ning Fan's lips curving into a mocking smile, his face growing immediately darker, "Ah, didn't expect you to discover it! Truly let Meng's efforts all go to waste!"

"Won't Excellency continue explaining the Two Realm's Seal..."

Ning Fan looked at Meng Zhen with slight sarcasm, his Spirit suddenly emerging from beneath the ground, along with eighteen flame-enveloped skeleton puppets, already annihilated by Ning Fan's Spirit!

Nine large and nine small, the large are adult female skeletons, the small ones are boy and girl skeletons!

"Mother-Child United Heart Puppet!" A few of the Southern Frontier cultivators recognized the origin of the puppets, slightly exclaiming in fear, glancing fearfully at Meng Zhen. This Mother-Child United Heart Puppet was extremely sinister stuff; even the Timeless Realm experts would suffer immensely if taken by surprise!

Most people were still in the dark, completely unaware when Ning Fan's Spirit departed his body and burrowed underground, nor did they understand the underlying scheming in Meng Zhen and Ning Fan's conversation, much less why there were eighteen skeleton puppets underground.

Meng Zhen, however, had no more desire to waste words with Ning Fan! He himself wasn't one to enjoy banter, the previous exchange with Ning Fan was merely an attempt to stall while dividing Ning Fan's attention so that the Mother-Child United Heart Puppets could stealthily move beneath Ning Fan and the others, then launch a sneak attack. Situated inside the Stone Dragon's belly, outsiders couldn't expand spirit sense, granting Meng Zhen the chance to launch a sneak attack.

The blame lay on Ning Fan's protective golden light being too formidable, making Meng Zhen, feeling uneasy, choose to resort to underhanded methods.

Unexpectedly, Ning Fan saw through it all, failed the calculation, and even wasted eighteen Mother-Child United Heart Puppets!

"Hmph! Since the schemes have failed, I, Meng Zhen, will personally take your life!"

Meng Zhen never intended to let Ning Fan live from the beginning. Now that the words were revealed, he immediately displayed a murderous intent, put away the Four Emperors Arhat Pine in his hand, and his figure flickered as he charged straight towards Ning Fan.

The numerous War Soul Masters behind him simultaneously cast spells, bestowing augmentation states on the white-haired strong man.

Meng Zhen is a body cultivator, and with the enhancement of numerous War Soul Masters, his strength surged by thirty percent. Facing this person, Ning Fan dared not be careless. He once again pointed to form an array on the land, protecting Duolan and the others, then activated the body-protecting golden light, and met Meng Zhen head-on.

The two engaged in a direct confrontation, colliding with pure body force!

At the collision, Ning Fan was sent flying backward. In terms of sheer physical strength, the gap between him and this white-haired strong man was substantial. Fortunately, with the body-protecting golden light, he did not suffer any injuries, but the three-zhang protective golden light was indented by half a zhang by the white-haired strong man!

Ning Fan's expression grew more serious.

Meng Zhen's gaze became even more sinister. It should be known that even among the old-generation First Calamity Immortal Sovereigns, few could withstand this frontal collision, yet it was not enough to completely breach Ning Fan's three-zhang protective golden light. This indicated that the defensive capability of this golden light was far beyond his expectations!

"Your thirty million flying swords are already in my possession. No matter how remarkable your defense is, so what! Nine-Breath Subjugation Technique, First Breath Fire Subjugation!"

Meng Zhen muttered incantations and suddenly flipped his hand to take out a fiery crystal core. With a rub of his palm, it turned to powder and was scattered to the sky, instantly transforming into a boundless sea of fire.

The crystal core looked identical to the Fire Crystal that Ning Fan acquired from slaying a Fire Soul, differing only in the fiery power contained within.

Meng Zhen inhaled fiercely towards the sea of fire, instantly absorbing nearly one-third of it, then inhaled another third, reaching what seemed like a limit and unable to absorb more, causing the sea of fire to disperse.

With each fire breath, Meng Zhen's body swelled, becoming more robust and filled with explosive power.

Meng Zhen's form charged out and again clashed with Ning Fan. Ning Fan could clearly feel that after Meng Zhen used the nine-breath subjugation Secret Technique, his physical prowess had significantly increased, now able to breach nearly a zhang of the protective golden light!

"Unfortunately, my comprehension is limited. I can only manage a two-breath subjugation. If I could achieve over six breaths, it would probably be enough to break this kid's golden light..."

After exchanging hundreds of blows, Meng Zhen still couldn't take Ning Fan down. His gaze grew even more somber as he flipped out two more Fire Crystals, crushed them into powder, and used them to perform a divine skill.

Without any visible change in Meng Zhen's gestures, flames burst from his hands, and from within the fire, a three-foot-long fiery Precept Blade appeared, with black Immortal runes flowing over it.

The Precept Blade was a Buddhist item, yet the Precept Blade summoned by Meng Zhen possessed no Buddhist essence, instead exuding a demonic aura!

This blade was not a magical treasure but a manifestation of a divine skill, entwined with extremely pure Fire Traces. Without seeing how the white-haired strong man acted, it seemed as if he merely controlled it with spirit sense, then the fiery Precept Blade vanished abruptly, moving so fast that its trace was indistinguishable. Then, an immense jolt of energy was transmitted from Ning Fan's left shoulder. The fiery blade had reached his left shoulder but was blocked by the protective golden light.

Even with the fiery blade blocked, Ning Fan's protective golden light was breached over two zhàng, incredibly sharp indeed!

"How could this person's defense be this strong!" Meng Zhen's confidence was greatly shaken.

This fiery Precept Blade was one of his trump cards, and after using this technique, his already pale complexion became much paler, showing significant exhaustion. This art was the eleventh technique of the Twelve Stones of the Ancestor Flame, and with his yet-to-stabilize cultivation, he could hardly use it several times, as even once was the limit. Previously, using it caused severe injuries to a First Calamity Immortal Sovereign, yet it could not even break through Ning Fan's protective golden light!

This is with Ning Fan's cultivation suppressed. If he were at full cultivation, Meng Zhen would probably be completely outmatched before Ning Fan!

After hundreds of more rounds, as more techniques were exhausted, Meng Zhen felt increasingly frustrated, the pride of the Seventh Fiend diminishing more and more. He had to admit, Ning Fan's turtle shell was too hard, and his mana seemed endless, inexhaustible, making it impossible to deplete his opponent's mana. Instead, Meng Zhen's mana was heavily consumed, fearing great losses if the battle continued...

"Are you truly determined to protect Chulie and Duolan, opposing our Stone Flame in doing so!" Meng Zhen said gloomily.

Ning Fan could hardly be bothered to respond to Meng Zhen, leaving Meng Zhen feeling vain and choosing not to exchange further words with Ning Fan.

Suddenly, the ground within the Stone Dragon's belly quaked violently, as if the swiftly moving Hundred-li Stone Dragon had collided with something and came to a sudden stop.

Perceiving this tremor, Meng Zhen suddenly sneered. After exchanging one more blow with Ning Fan, he suddenly disappeared with the War Soul Masters and Shattered Thought Fire Souls from Ning Fan's sight.

They had exited directly from within the Stone Dragon to the outside world!

"The Two Realms Seal has arrived. I, Meng, cannot break your protective golden light, but I do not believe the power of the Sage of the Two Realms Seal cannot kill you!"

Meng Zhen, taking along a group of his subordinates, appeared in the dark underground exterior.

This underground location harbored a large area of space without soil, such that even the massive form of the Hundred-li Stone Dragon could move freely within.

In the near distance, there lay a chasm of flaming abyss, its depths unseeable, with an unknowable connection, exuding an enormous power that prevented anyone from investigating nearby the abyss and capable of obliterating anyone entering!

"Oh? Has Meng Zhen Demon Child returned? But I wonder if Chulie Duolan has been captured?"

From within the abyss, four ghostly green flames suddenly shot forth, landing outside it and transforming into four figures: some elderly, some burly, all were specters rather than corporeal forms.

Although not physically present, from their aura, it could be discerned that the original bodies of these four were at least Immortal Emperor cultivation!

These were phantoms of four Immortal Emperors, stationed at this location! Moreover, judging by their appearance and aura, the true bodies of these four belonged to the Fire Soul Clan, unquestionably powerful figures of the Fire Soul Clan!

"Pleased to report success, though the secret from Chulie and Duolan's mouth has yet to be extracted. Currently, there's a trouble inside the Hundred-li Stone Dragon's body hindering me..." Speaking of Ning Fan, Meng Zhen found himself troubled as well.

"A trouble? Meng, my young friend should know that we of the Fire Soul Clan cannot cross the Two Realms Seal and descend externally without the fire talisman's summons. Even if you bring this trouble to us, do not expect us to help you slay this intruder!" Upon hearing Meng Zhen had not completed his task, the four Immortal Emperor phantoms promptly expressed displeasure.

Chapter 1012: Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command

"Of course, I understand this point. To kill this person, there is no need for the esteemed Emperors to trouble yourselves; I will personally find a way to resolve this troublesome matter!" Meng Zhen glanced meaningfully at the fiery abyss.

The four Immortal Emperor phantoms immediately understood, exchanged knowing smiles.

The fiery abyss was laid out by the Herb-gathering Sage before his death, containing a sealing barrier that eternally bound the Fire Soul Tribe underground, known as the Two Realms Seal!

The Two Realms Seal is a fire elemental barrier, composed of inner and outer layers, encompassing extremely complex transformations of fire principles. Even a lifetime of studying fire within the Dabei Clan would not allow an Immortal Emperor to fully comprehend its fire transformations. Setting foot within is fraught with danger.

In fact, the Immortal Emperors of the Holy Mountain were not unaware of the existence of the Two Realms Seal. Precisely because of its perilous nature, it remained a secret. Dabei boasts a total of 108 grasslands, each with an underground realm containing a Two Realms Seal. However, to be privy to the seal's locations requires at least the status of Eternal Immortal Venerable; the tribal cultivators in the Southern Frontier steppe certainly do not have the qualifications to know.

To any member of the Dabei people, the Two Realms Seal is unequivocally a lethal land!

In ancient times, there was once a Holy Mountain Immortal Emperor who attempted to cross the Two Realms Seal to explore the location of the Fire Soul Tribe but could not even penetrate the outer seal, let alone the inner seal. This Immortal Emperor was inadvertently trapped within the outer seal and expounded a decade before extricating himself. Yet, upon escaping, his physical body was destroyed; his magical treasures consumed; his Spirit suffered incurable burns, forcing him to linger for hundreds of

years until the injuries intensified beyond the limit, unable to bear it, he perished in anguish – his Spirit burned to ashes.

This event shocked the entire Holy Mountain! It ultimately made everything about the Two Realms Seal a secret, only those above the eternal could hear a little, never transmitting to lower-level cultivators, fearing those unaware of their mortality would run to the Two Realms Seal to meet their end.

Thus, lower-level cultivators often only know that the Fire Soul Tribe is sealed beneath the Dabei Grassland underground, but few can find the specific positions of the fire soul seals in each grassland. If not for Meng Zhen's capture of Ning Fan's group to this place, Ning Fan alone would find it extremely challenging to locate this area.

The outer seal is already perilous; the inner seal is even more dangerous. It's said there are remnants of the Saint's Fierce Thoughts within, and those who trespass are killed without mercy!

The Fire Soul Tribe trapped in the underground must first break through the inner seal, then the outer seal to escape to the outside world.

Sadly, in the long river of the Fire Soul Tribe's history, no strong fire soul has ever been able to break open the inner seal by their own strength. The outcome of forcibly entering the inner seal is solely death; not even the Fire Soul Immortal Emperors are immune, entering the inner seal means death with no chance for survival!

As for these four Fire Soul Immortal Emperors, they dare only manifest a phantom to linger not far outside the Two Realms Seal, which is already the limit. To break from the Two Realms Seal into the outside world with their true selves is absolutely impossible.

The Fire Soul Tribe harbors resentment towards the Two Realms Seal, yet more than that, reverence, akin to veneration of a deity. In the Fire Soul Tribe's understanding, the inner seal is an absolute land – death awaits all who enter; the outer seal is barely considered perilous – should an Immortal Emperor step in, there might be a slight chance to escape, but for an Immortal Venerable or Immortal King, certain death remains.

"It appears Little Friend Meng Zhen plans to use the Hundred-li Stone Dragon's Earth-Sky Technique to directly toss that troublesome person into the Two Realms Seal to burn to death. But speaking of, this

time Little Friend borrowed a total of 175 Shattered Thought Fire Souls, why have only these returned..." Asked one fire soul Emperor phantom, shifting the conversation, frowning.

To the Fire Soul Tribe, Shattered Thought Fire Souls may be plentiful, but not so much that they can ignore the casualties. This fire soul Emperor phantom glanced over the returned Shattered Thought Fire Souls, found only just over a hundred returned, reasoning that those unable to return must have been killed, showing dissatisfaction.

This is no small matter!

If it were Southern Frontier cultivators who killed the Shattered Thought Fire Souls, this fire soul Immortal Emperor would never believe it! Southern Frontier is a small place; the cultivators here have limited power and might jointly kill a few Shattered Thought Fire Souls, but to kill seventy is impossible! Surely, others intervened, bringing casualties beyond the expectations of the fire soul Emperors!

As he spoke, the fire soul Great Emperor continuously took out one talisman after another. These talismans were somewhat similar to summoning fire talismans but different. Uttering chants to activate them, Meng Zhen's brought back Shattered Thought Fire Souls vanished into flickering earth flames, reversed summoned back into the Fire Soul Tribe.

"The losses are severe – obviously someone interfered with our plans. That person is the troublesome one I spoke of. His cultivation is that of an Eternal Immortal Venerable, but being an external cultivator, subject to the Holy Mountain's Punishment Ring Seal, so his strength cannot be manifested even by fifty percent..." As he said this, Meng Zhen clearly saw the eyes of fire soul Emperors across showing disdain and felt deeply ashamed.

The dignified Stone Flame Demon Child cannot even kill an Immortal Venerable external cultivator at fifty percent strength, which struck a blow to Stone Flame Demon Child's always proud spirit; if it weren't for the prowess of the Hundred-li Stone Dragon, the capture of Duolan would surely end in failure.

Luckily, Duolan was ultimately captured!

"An external cultivator, hmph, dares to kill seventy of my kin, I wish I could kill him with my own hands, but sadly my true self cannot escape!" Resented one fire soul Great Emperor hostile towards outsiders.

"Though the losses on this expedition are not light, fortunately, Chulie Holy Maiden was brought back. If her memory truly seals the [Stone Throne Coordinates], our Fire Soul Tribe will be closer to breaking the seal and emerging! Comparatively, such losses are insignificant!" Another fire soul Great Emperor said.

As for the Stone Throne Coordinates, several fire soul Great Emperors were invigorated, while Meng Zhen seemed hesitant, only after a long while did he continue,

"Hehe, esteemed Emperors need not rush; with the Two Realms Seal here, killing the troublesome one is a matter of moments, no need to hurry. The critical issue is after the troublesome one dies, how should Chulie Duolan be handled, demands appropriate discussion. According to the previous agreement, we'll split Chulie Duolan's memory-stored Stone Throne Coordinates, half between the Three Flames and your Fire Soul each; however, I recently obtained intelligence, heard from a reliable source from a Holy Mountain Emperor saying that Chulie Duolan's memory holds not four, but seven coordinates... so, dividing them evenly seems unfeasible."

As Meng Zhen finished speaking, the four Fire Soul Great Emperors, all well-versed in strategy, couldn't help but reveal expressions of joy.

"It's not four coordinates, but seven! If it's true, then the time for our Fire Soul Clan to break the seal is even closer!"

"But if there are seven coordinates, the agreement we previously set must be changed. Seven coordinates cannot indeed be evenly divided."

"How about our clan takes four, and you Three Flames take three, and our clan will compensate you Three Flames with some Fire Crystals, is that acceptable!"

"If you ask this old man, it's better for our clan to take five and for you Three Flames to take two! Haha! Anyway, according to the agreement, you Three Flames were originally only supposed to get two coordinates!"

Meng Zhen knew these Fire Soul Great Emperors would make unreasonable demands and said displeased, "Though the Fire Crystals of the Fire Soul Clan are good, we Three Flames still prefer to get

more coordinates. Five to two is absolutely impossible. Four to three is plausible, but not with your clan taking four—it's us Three Flames taking four!"

"How presumptuous! A mere Immortal Venerable child dares to bargain with us!"

"We speak kindly and call you Demon Child out of respect, do you really think you can stand on equal footing with us!"

"If there was no dispute, that would be one thing. Now that there is a contention, you are not qualified to handle this matter. Let your Three Flames Immortal Emperor speak with us!"

"Even if your Three Flames Immortal Emperor comes, it's absolutely impossible for you to get more coordinates than our Fire Soul Clan. At least it should still be four for you and three for us!"

The few Fire Soul Great Emperors spoke with an imposing manner.

Facing the aura of the Four Emperors, Meng Zhen displayed no fear. If his opponents were the true bodies of four Immortal Emperors, that would be one thing, but mere spirit forms of four Immortal Emperors without any cultivations—why would Meng Zhen fear them? After a slight cold smile, he suddenly spat out a golden light and reached out to grab a Crimson Gold Token.

The token's shape was peculiar, like an open palm with five fingers spread, even with vividly changing palm patterns on it.

"Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command! How do you have this token!"

Upon seeing the token, the Four Emperors gasped in shock and exhibited surprise, losing any prior domineering demeanor. Looking at Meng Zhen now, their eyes were filled with dread.

"With this command, does Meng Zhen have the qualifications to discuss this matter!" Meng Zhen said proudly.

"I never expected Young Friend Meng to be one of the Flame Ancestor's inheritors. In that case, everything shall proceed according to your demands." The few Fire Soul Great Emperors looked at each other and sighed, no longer having any objections about the coordinates!

Meng Zhen felt even more triumphant, casting a glance at the colossal Hundred-li Stone Dragon behind him, with murderous intent hidden in his eyes.

It was time to kill Ning Fan. After killing Ning Fan, he would have to search Duolan's memory...

"According to the agreement, the spatial coordinate will be read by me according to the ancient Three Flames method, while the temporal coordinate will be handled by your Fire Soul Clan, using your ancient Fire Soul method. Now that the coordinates have increased to seven, I'm not sure if you are adequately prepared with the materials necessary for the spell. If not, it might be somewhat troublesome." Meng Zhen inquired.

"Rest assured, Young Friend Meng, our clan started preparing for this months ago, with several additional sets of spell materials fully ready for use. It's best to quickly get rid of that nuisance and search Chulie Duolan's memory!"

"Good! Please step aside a bit, Great Emperors; Meng Zhen is about to perform the Earth-Sky Technique!"

Confidently, Meng Zhen transmitted a message to the colossal Hundred-li Stone Dragon and issued a command, forming a seal with both hands and beginning to wield Divine Skills.

Curiously, the Hundred-li Stone Dragon did not respond to Meng Zhen's command. It did not perform the act of casting Ning Fan into the Two Realms Sealed Fire Abyss.

"Hmm? Why is the Hundred-li Stone Dragon not obeying commands? Could it be that the taming time was too short, and it still harbors rebellious thoughts against me?" Meng Zhen muttered strangely to himself, resent his command once more, but still saw no reaction from the Hundred-li Stone Dragon.

After several attempts, Meng Zhen's expression suddenly turned extremely grim. He realized that something had undoubtedly happened to the Hundred-li Stone Dragon.

"You possess admirable skills! Despite your cultivations being sealed, you were able to escape from the Stone Dragon's body. I have truly underestimated you!"

As Meng Zhen spoke, the enormity of the Stone Dragon's head, as large as a continent, suddenly transformed and a figure appeared.

It was Ning Fan!

"Is this the troublemaker you mentioned? The Stone Dragon's belly can trap an Immortal King, yet he is merely an Immortal Venerable, even under the Punishing Ring seal, and managed to escape!"

"It seems there must be unknown methods on this person!"

"Do not underestimate!"

Several Fire Soul Emperors were secretly amazed, but even more astonishing events were yet to come.

Ning Fan suddenly spoke, commanding, "Use your Earth-Sky Technique, swallow these people, and throw them all into the two realms seal to burn!" He was issuing orders to the Stone Dragon!

Strangely, the Stone Dragon that wouldn't obey Meng Zhen's commands was now listening to Ning Fan!

Moo!

The Stone Dragon let out a strange roar similar to both a cow and an elephant. At the instant the roar echoed, Meng Zhen and the War Soul Masters behind him, as well as four shadows of the Fire Soul Emperors, couldn't even begin to evade. First, their vision darkened, then they felt the world spinning, being swallowed into the Stone Dragon's mouth!

This time, after the Stone Dragon swallowed them, it did not imprison them within but instead released Meng Zhen and the others into the flames of the two realms seal!

The four Fire Soul Immortal Emperors were mere illusions without any cultivation, thus naturally perished almost instantly upon falling into the fiery abyss, although their true forms remained unscathed.

Those War Soul Masters, despite their powerful Medicine Souls, had truly weak physical defenses; one by one, they turned to ash outside the seal of the two realms, their screams filled the sky.

As for Meng Zhen, fear had overtaken him. He couldn't comprehend why the Stone Dragon would betray him and listen to Ning Fan's orders! Even more terrifying was that in the blink of an eye, he had been spat into the depths of the two realms seal, continuing to fall!

Unable to fly, unable to ascend, only able to fall, his Divine Skills were no match for the forbidden force of the two realms seal!

This was a seal laid by a Saint!

In the ghostly green sea of fire, the temperature was overwhelming, burning Meng Zhen's insides to charcoal almost instantly, even his strong physical defense couldn't withstand the earth fire's might!

Why, why, why! It was supposed to be him throwing Ning Fan into the two realms seal, why had the situation reversed!

With one defensive Divine Skill after another, Meng Zhen could only barely maintain himself, striving to not be burned to death by the outside flames, yet he continued to fall irreversibly.

He initially had several magical treasures at his disposal but found with despair that they had all disappeared! It was certainly in the moment of being swallowed that the Stone Dragon, adept at snatching treasures, must have taken them! Damn it! Even the Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command was taken! It's over now. If he had the Golden Palm Command in hand, there might still be a glimmer of hope, but now there is only one path to death!

Not knowing how long he fell, just as Meng Zhen was about to faint from the fire's smoke and lose consciousness, the sound of waves crashing on a shore finally came from the deepest part of the two realms seal.

That was the range of the inner seal!

Amongst the fiery waves there was a small mountain emerging from the sea, and on the mountain sat an elder with murderous eyes, devoid of reason, emotion, only filled with a blood-red gaze of slaughter!

That was the Guardian Spirit of the inner seal, transformed by the fierce thoughts of a Saint!

The small mountain was formed by a heap of skulls, and if you looked closely, among the thousands of skulls, there were many belonging to Immortal Emperors!

"Boundary crosser, kill!"

Bang!

Suddenly a loud noise erupted, and the invincible Meng Zhen's physical body exploded into a mist of blood, dying instantaneously without even managing to see the fierce elder's appearance!

It was the elder's fierce thoughts that killed Meng Zhen! His body seemed to move, or perhaps did not move at all, eternally sitting atop the skull mountain. In that instant, Meng Zhen with Immortal Venerable cultivation level died at his hands!

He had no cultivation, no reason, no joy or anger, and did not understand thought.

He was merely a fierce thought left from eons ago, as it was a Saint's creation, even an Immortal Emperor was not his match!

What of the Stone Flame Demon Child, mere ants!

"So this is the fierce thoughts of a Saint! A thought passed down from eons, a thought that can kill an Immortal Venerable!" Ning Fan forcibly performed the Rain Technique, witnessing the moment in which the elder's fierce thoughts destroyed Meng Zhen, secretly startled.

It was merely a fierce thought from a Saint, but it gave Ning Fan the feeling it was comparable to the sheer might of Xiang Mingzi!

Underneath the hundred and eight grasslands of Dabei, there is a two realms seal, could it be that every two realms seal contains such terrifying fierce thought spirits guarding it!

"Intruding thoughts, kill!"

As soon as the fierce elder's cold voice rang out, outside the inner seal of the two realms, numerous deeply hidden raindrops were forcibly revealed, then exploded one by one in mist.

Ning Fan felt a pain in his divine sense; a thread of spirit sense that descended with Meng Zhen into the two realms seal was extinguished! Fortunately, only a small thread of spirit sense entered the two realms seal, minimizing the damage to almost nothing.

Moo!

As if sensing Meng Zhen's death, the Stone Dragon let out a mournful wail, yet it still could not defy Ning Fan's command.

Ning Fan descended from the gigantic head of the Stone Dragon, landing near the fiery abyss's mouth of the two realms seal, looking down into its abyssal depths, his expression grim.

The Eternal Immortal Venerable enters the two realms seal and dies; it's indeed not an empty boast. Meng Zhen was not weak either, but in the two realms seal, he didn't last long before perishing...

The terrifying elder's fierce thoughts, the seal the Fire Soul Clan has been unable to cross for generations...

Fortunately, he subdued the Stone Dragon at the critical moment, otherwise, it would be Ning Fan, not Meng Zhen, burnt to death in the two realms seal...

"I didn't expect such a change to occur in the Southern Frontier contest, and by chance, I have learned so many hidden secrets of the Great Humble Ones..."

Ning Fan's gaze momentarily deepened.

After Meng Zhen and the others left the Stone Dragon's belly, Ning Fan began to move within the Stone Dragon's belly.

First, he tried breaking the Stone Dragon's abdominal wall to escape but discovered the Stone Dragon's belly was as fortified as golden soup, a perfect cage refined with countless golden treasures, capable of defending against attacks at the Immortal King level; naturally, he couldn't break it with his sealed cultivations.

Thus, Ning Fan had to think of another way to escape. While his cultivations were inadequate, he still had many methods and began to traverse within the Stone Dragon's belly, ultimately reaching the position of the Stone Dragon's head!

Beyond layers of solid defenses lay the Stone Dragon's divine sense!

The belly of the Stone Dragon had been specially refined, and its divine sense was exceptionally fortified, even a pinnacle Immortal King might not harm its divine sense within it. Without such skills, the Stone Dragon wouldn't dare swallow people at random.

But it swallowed Ning Fan!

If everything goes smoothly, Ning Fan doesn't plan to use his trump card, but now the situation is special. He doesn't know where Meng Zhen went, yet he faintly has a crisis feeling. Obviously, Meng Zhen's claim that he could kill him wasn't an empty threat. If he doesn't escape from Stone Dragon's belly quickly, great danger awaits!

Thus, Ning Fan didn't hold back at all and directly took out Origin Qi, which was his greatest reliance now!

Because his cultivations were restricted, the Water-Flooding Realm Bottle could not be used.

In the Supreme Pill Sacred Domain, the Slaughter Emperor's jade scroll could not be used.

If Origin Qi were to explode, it would release a force capable of seriously injuring the Immortal Emperor, and exploding within the Hundred-li Stone Dragon would be no problem.

Now it has come to a point where using Origin Qi is inevitable. Ning Fan chose not to blow open the stone dragon's abdominal wall for escape. If he only did that, using his trump card would yield no reward. Moreover, his Four Emperors Luohan Pine is still in Meng Zhen's hands, even if he blew up the stone dragon and escaped, under restricted cultivation, he lacked the confidence to kill Meng Zhen and retrieve the pine.

Ning Fan is not one to take losses willingly!

Thus, he maximized the utility of Origin Qi, choosing to blow open the defenses outside the stone dragon's divine sense, rather than annihilate it!

The stone dragon's greatest mistake was swallowing Ning Fan because it gave Ning Fan an opportunity to face the dragon's divine sense directly!

What is a divine sense? It's where a Master's spirit resides. If the divine sense is destroyed, the Master dies, and so do beasts.

If outside the stone dragon, Ning Fan admits he couldn't do what he did now, but now inside, facing the divine sense directly, he did something crazy.

He invaded the stone dragon's massive divine sense directly, using Illusory Art on it!

Ning Fan's Illusory Art was formidable, rarely used due to the many trump cards he possessed. But facing the dragon's divine sense, its terror emerged.

The stone dragon was directly manipulated by Ning Fan through Illusory Art!

Ning Fan erased various prohibitions within the stone dragon's divine sense, reducing Meng Zhen's control over it to zero, and imposed his own restrictions forcefully, subduing it against its will!

Though the stone dragon wanted to remain loyal to its master, it was confused by Ning Fan's Illusory Art, acting beyond its control. After coming to its senses, it realized Meng Zhen had been killed by its own hand!

How could the stone dragon not be sorrowful!

It nearly hated Ning Fan's ruthless actions, using Illusory Art to make it kill its master!

But it wasn't entirely Ning Fan's fault, as Meng Zhen struck first! If Ning Fan hadn't retaliated like this, it would be Ning Fan who was dead instead of Meng Zhen!

Moo!

The stone dragon's roar was filled with sorrow and determination, harboring monstrous hatred—it wished it could kill Ning Fan for its master's sake and even wished to smash its own head in remorse.

It frantically resisted the restrictions Ning Fan planted in its divine sense but found it could not resist at all. Defying would only lead to death!

It wasn't afraid of dying, but the tragedy was, it couldn't even manage to die. Under Ning Fan's Illusory Art, unless Ning Fan voluntarily released it, the stone dragon couldn't break free, and the art stripped its control over its body, making revenge and death impossible!

After all, it was Ning Fan who planted the Illusory Art directly within its divine sense!

Moo!

Moo!!

Moo!!!

"Quiet down!" Ning Fan commanded coldly, and immediately, the stone dragon's roar came to an abrupt stop, its divine sense once again confused, submissive.

Ning Fan sighed; the stone dragon was indeed loyal, but alas, can't be used by him.

With a turn of his hand, a pine seedling, a Golden Palm Command, and a storage pouch appeared in his hands.

The pine seedling was the Four Emperors Luohan Pine. According to Ning Fan's overheard conversation, the Golden Palm Command seemed to be called Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command, and apparently, it carried significant weight, causing four Fire Soul Clan's Immortal Emperors to be extremely apprehensive and forced to compromise...

Upon closer inspection, Ning Fan suddenly exclaimed lightly, then smiled slightly. The token's divine skills still needed verification, but if he wasn't mistaken, using Origin Qi might not have been a loss after all.

The storage pouch belonged to Demon Child Meng Zhen. Not too many good things, not too few, Ning Fan just nodded slightly, finding nothing too eye-catching.

Ning Fan put away the spoils, then turned around to look at the stone dragon, suddenly speaking,

"Whether you want to or not, no matter how unwilling you are, from today, you have become my slave, Ning Fan. This is the harshness of cultivation. From the moment you laid hands on me, you must be prepared to face the consequences."

After saying that, Ning Fan didn't care whether the confused stone dragon heard those words, he directly shook his figure and flew back into the stone dragon's belly.

With another command, the stone dragon dazedly used the Earth Escape Skill, moving underground, gradually drifting away from the boundary between two realms.

Although encountering such an accident, Ning Fan remained concerned about the results of the Southern Frontier tournament. Naturally, he wanted to return to the surface to check the situation now. After all, he had slain so many Shattered Thought Fire Souls, and just by looking at his score on his token, he had reached a terrifying 77,000 points. If there are no accidents, he should be able to take first place in the Southern Frontier contest...

After becoming the first in Southern Frontier, the next challenge is the second round of tomb conquest, the Middle State competition. When he heads to Middle State, he should first look for Ouyang Nuan and Burying Moon...

Of course, before that, Ning Fan needs to first break through the Mid Stage of Shekong, as the sudden Mid Stage Heart Tribulation has been suppressed by him.

Inside the stone dragon's belly, Ning Fan returned, and the surviving Southern Frontier cultivators began cheering joyfully.

They actually survived, managed to keep their lives from Stone Flame Demon Child and Hundred-li Stone Dragon!

It's truly inconceivable!

No one wants to die. Previously, when facing Meng Zhen, they chose death over surrender due to their integrity. Of course, it's better to live than die!

"Thanks to Master Ning's intervention, we were able to escape from Meng Zhen Demon Child! This humble one's life now belongs to Master Ning!"

"Although you are a foreign cultivator, you are the benefactor of our Water Wolf Clan. Please accept our bow!"

"From now on, if the benefactor has missions, we will follow unto death!"

These single-minded, dim-witted Southern Frontier cultivators do indeed pledge to follow Ning Fan unto death if they say so. They don't lie or speak formally—the ones who did were killed by Meng Zhen at the beginning for their betrayal.

Ning Fan casually responded to the gratitude but didn't take it to heart. After all, the majority of these people weren't ones he initially intended to save; their survival could only be considered lucky.

Initially, he only aimed to save the Tamu Clan cultivators and those of the Evil Sheep Sect.

"Master, you're amazing, you actually killed Stone Flame Demon Child, you actually subdued Hundred-li Stone Dragon, you actually..." Blabbering praises, it's dim-witted Xianyu Chun chattering about Ning Fan's accomplishments.

Ning Fan wasn't one to enjoy flattery, but when there's genuinely a fool blabbering sincerely, despite his cold demeanor, he can't help but smile.

A helpless smile.

This fool's admiration for him seems to deepen. Yet he truly has no intention of taking any disciples.

Of course, compared to Xianyu Chun, Ning Fan is more concerned about Duolan. It's not out of care, but rather due to some things he overheard before, which made him pay attention.

What is the Stone Throne Coordinates?

To make the Three Flames and the Fire Soul Clan value them so much, and to have the Immortal Emperor of the Holy Mountain collude with enemies and send information to Stone Flame to scheme against Duolan, it must not be something simple...

According to Meng Zhen and others, within Duolan's memory are sealed seven Stone Throne Coordinates. Yet Ning Fan had clearly searched Duolan's memory before, so why did he find no trace of these coordinates?

Meng Zhen seemed to mention the different methods for acquiring 'spatial coordinates' and 'temporal coordinates.' Maybe these so-called coordinates can only be seen from Duolan's memory with special means.

"About this incident, you must have some things you want to tell me. Right now, there are too many people around, so I won't ask much yet. Once we return to the Southern Frontier, I hope to hear your honest answer." Ning Fan transmitted to Duolan, his words carrying a deep meaning.

Duolan struggled a bit, biting her lip, and finally nodded silently.

This scene fell into the eyes of some Southern Frontier cultivators, but naturally, they couldn't hear Ning Fan's telepathic communication; they only saw Ning Fan and Duolan exchanging glances.

So these foolish Southern Frontier cultivators immediately thought they were clever.

Ning Daren and the Holy Mountain Tomb Guardian definitely have something going on!

Xianyu Chun, who originally didn't think much of Duolan, even started calling Duolan "master's wife" foolishly, leaving Ning Fan speechless...

...

Urgent report from the Middle State!

A Fire Soul riot has erupted in the Southern Frontier, with casualties currently unknown, and the situation is urgent!

At Tiandu Peak, only the Heaven Capital Emperor is handling this matter now; the other Immortal Emperors have long departed. The Fire Soul riot is no small matter, but since it's only happening in such a small place as the Southern Frontier, having one Immortal Emperor address it is enough; it doesn't require all the Immortal Emperors to rush over.

After all, it's just a riot of a group of Shattered Thought Fire Souls.

The Heaven Capital Emperor sat high on a lotus throne, holding a string of prayer beads, his slightly squinting eyes suddenly opening.

People have already been sent to investigate and provide aid in the Southern Frontier. The losses in the Southern Frontier will undoubtedly be significant, but for the weak Southern Frontier, perhaps this bloody baptism is not a bad thing. The benefit of being part of a tribe is collective cultivation, low risk, and a safe environment. However, the downside is that most people lack the understanding of the harsh realities of cultivation, lacking bloody trials...

"Have you found out! What is the purpose behind the Fire Soul riot in the Southern Frontier! It is known that a Fire Soul riot requires a great cost for the Fire Soul Clan, so there must be a scheme behind this. Whether the riot this time is purely by the doing of the Fire Soul Clan or if it also involves the shadow of the Three Flames." The Heaven Capital Emperor spoke with a cold voice. Although the Southern Frontier's affair is urgent, it's only just that; he would not personally go to the Southern Frontier for such a small matter.

"There is no report received yet regarding the Southern Frontier chaos, but the results of the martial trials from various grasslands have already been coming in. After compiling the results of both the written and martial trials, the rankings of the tribes from various grasslands have also been completed. Would the Emperor like to review them?" A Heaven Capital disciple with the cultivation level of an Immortal Venerable suddenly reported.

"Fine, since it's all waiting, let's first see the results of the first round of the tomb-seizing." The Heaven Capital Emperor nodded. For the Immortal Emperors, the Southern Frontier's chaos is just a minor event, and naturally, they do not invest all their mind and spirit in it.

"Should we also send a copy to the Baihua Great Emperor?" that Immortal Venerable disciple cautiously asked.

The Heaven Capital Emperor's eyes flashed with a strange smile, replying, "Of course! Whether she wishes to look at it or not is beyond my concern."

The Heaven Capital Emperor's gaze fell on the scroll in his hand, browsing the results of each grassland. Given his intelligence, most of the tribe's results were within his expectation, not too surprising.

Suddenly, the Heaven Capital Emperor uttered a light "eh," his gaze falling on the Southern Frontier column at the end of the scroll.

"Oh? Isn't the Southern Frontier in chaos? How did the Tamu Clan secure such impressive results, perhaps benefiting amid the chaos?"

The Tamu Clan scored seventy-seven thousand points, undoubtedly the top of the Southern Frontier, exceeding the second-place Summon Wind Sect by sixty thousand points!

"The Emperor may not know, but the Southern Frontier Tamu Clan's overall score is not high; these seventy-seven thousand points were almost entirely earned by one person. It was the foreign cultivator Ning Fan, whom the Tamu Clan invited. By his power alone, he slew seventy-one Shattered Thought Fire Souls, giving the Tamu Clan such an astounding score! It must have been done during the chaos, having him around also eased the Southern Frontier's urgency."

"Oh? By his strength alone, he slew seventy-one Shattered Thought Fire Souls. Although he is an Eternal Immortal Venerable, he should have been under the Punishing Ring Seal. Could he have destroyed the Punishing Ring?"

The Heaven Capital Emperor's expression suddenly turned colder.

If this foreign cultivator dared to destroy the Punishing Ring, regardless if he contributed to quelling the Southern Frontier's unrest, he must be executed!

"Reporting to the Emperor, there is no news from the Punishment Temple about any destroyed Punishing Ring, so it seems this person did not destroy the Punishing Ring."

"If that's the case, then let it be. This person could achieve completion and accomplish such a feat even when his cultivation was restricted. He truly is good material, yet it's a pity he is a foreign cultivator..."

The Heaven Capital Emperor's eyes glowed with calculating intent; unknowable thoughts filled his mind, and the disciples did not dare to disturb him.

"Report! The full details of this incident have been clarified! Please review them, Emperor!"

Suddenly, an Immortal King-level disciple rushed in from outside, handing a secret report to the Heaven Capital Emperor.

After looking at the first few lines of the report, the Heaven Capital Emperor immediately emanated coldness. "As expected, the Three Flames have been up to mischief. Stone Flame Demon Child Meng Zhen, eh? To think Stone Flame even dispatched the holder of the Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command, a major move indeed. Are they targeting Chulie Duolan? It seems the information I received was not unfounded..."

The Heaven Capital Emperor proceeded to read further, his expression suddenly turning serious.

As he reached the last few lines, he stood up abruptly, his face overwhelmed with shock!

"The successor of the Golden Palm Command was killed! Could it have been an Immortal Emperor who made a move? Otherwise, who else could surpass Ancestor Flame's power and kill this person?"

Others might not know, but as the highest authority of Middle State, how could he not be aware of Meng Zhen's other terrifying identity!

Unfortunately, the details were not thoroughly investigated; the fragmented information just gathered from the surviving returnees from the Southern Frontier.

"Report! The latest news from the Southern Frontier has arrived; please review, Emperor!"

Somewhat out of character, the Heaven Capital Emperor quickly opened the scroll, his actions somewhat anxious.

On the scroll was the answer he eagerly sought, but this answer was utterly beyond his belief, causing him to gasp in astonishment.

"Reporting, Emperor, the slayer of Stone Flame Demon Child is the foreign cultivator Ning Fan!"

How is this possible!

A mere foreign cultivator at the level of an Immortal Venerable, with restrained cultivation, managed to kill the Stone Flame Demon Child!

He was no ordinary demon child but the holder of the Golden Palm Command; even if he, the Heaven Capital Emperor, made a move, he wouldn't be entirely certain of killing Meng Zhen!

How did Ning Fan accomplish this!

Chapter 1013: The Second Heart Tribulation

The unrest in the Southern Frontier came swiftly and dissipated just as quickly. Thanks to the absence of Fire Soul rampaging across the grasslands, the damages were limited to the Summon Wind Sect and those who participated or spectated in the Southern Frontier contest.

The biggest sufferer was undoubtedly the Summon Wind Sect. Not only did they lose their clan's Guardian Corpse Demon, but they also lost nearly a hundred thousand members during the unrest. For a clan with a sparse population, their status as the largest faction in the Southern Frontier is now untenable.

Other tribes suffered varying degrees of casualties. Those who attended the contest were all elite members, and any losses would naturally weaken the strength of the major factions significantly.

The Evil Sheep Sect was one of the few major clans that suffered minimal losses, much to the relief of their old stalwarts, who immediately warmed up to Xianyu Chun and the Tamu Clan. As for the Tamu Clan, they emerged as the unequivocal winners in this chaos.

The crown of the Southern Frontier finally fell onto the Tamu Clan, who had been at the bottom for ten thousand years, all thanks to Ning Fan's outstanding performance!

Unfortunately, due to the unrest, the complete process of the Southern Frontier contest was disrupted. Initially, the process required a summary of the literary and martial examination results, and the leading tribe would then receive a reward: thirty percent of the Fire Crystals hunted during the martial contest by all tribes.

The Holy Envoy Corpse Demon, who was responsible for overseeing the Southern Frontier contest, had perished, and naturally, no one was left to manage the rewards.

It took six days after the unrest for a new person in charge to arrive at the Southern Frontier to manage the Tamu Clan's reward. His first task was to visit all participating tribes to collect thirty percent of their martial contest Fire Crystal loot and then reward these crystals to the Tamu Clan.

The newly arrived person was not a Holy Mountain Corpse Demon but rather a disciple of the Heaven Capital Emperor from Middle State, possessing the cultivation level of Eternity's First Tribulation, named Hui Jing.

He appeared as an honest and simple Buddha cultivator. While eloquent in discussions of Buddhist scriptures, he became awkward at social interactions.

Hui Jing, not particularly fond of managing worldly affairs, found himself unable to refuse when the Heaven Capital Emperor personally tasked him with this mission.

"The Great Emperor has issued an order that while the reward distribution is minor, delivering this Sealed Ancient Buddha Assembly invitation to the foreign cultivator Ning Fan is the main objective. It's unbelievable that the Ancient Buddha Assembly, which traditionally doesn't allow foreign cultivators, is making an exception for him. It seems the Great Emperor highly values this person..."

Thinking of how much the Heaven Capital Emperor valued Ning Fan, Hui Jing couldn't help but cast aside his racial prejudice against foreign cultivators, respecting Ning Fan even before meeting him.

With Hui Jing's Immortal Venerable cultivation level, no tribe dared refuse his request when personally fetching the reward Fire Crystals from each Southern Frontier tribe. Thirty percent of the Fire Crystals is not a small amount and is highly significant for enhancing fire cultivation within a tribe. According to Hui Jing's experience, most tribes would usually tamper with the number, submitting the purported number matching their martial contest records but swapping high-quality crystals with inferior ones.

In this way, the Fire Crystals rewarded to the leading tribe were typically duds, and the one in charge often turned a blind eye, since it was a longstanding tradition.

However, this time, Hui Jing was surprised beyond measure.

The Sea Soul Sect was supposed to submit twenty-six Fire Crystals, including twenty-two Enlightenment Fire Crystals and four Shekong Fire Crystals. Instead, they submitted two hundred and fourteen Fire Crystals, with forty-four out of which were Shekong Fire Crystals, and all Enlightenment Fire Crystals were of unparalleled quality!

The Evil Sheep Sect was supposed to submit nineteen Fire Crystals but actually submitted two hundred and thirty, with thirty-seven Shekong Fire Crystals and even a Shattered Thought Fire Crystal, which was clearly not obtained during this martial contest!

Each Southern Frontier tribe, like the Water Wolf Clan and Flying Sand Clan, exceeded their Fire Crystal submissions by a significant margin!

Even traditionally opposed clans like the Summon Wind Sect and White Ghost Sect submitted excess Fire Crystals.

Ning Fan saved few cultivators this time, but they almost covered all tribes in the Southern Frontier, earning him the goodwill of the entire region!

Those previously hostile to the Tamu Clan died in the defection, and those who didn't still owed Ning Fan a debt of gratitude. When returning Fire Crystals, they spared no effort, using even their treasure vault reserves to repay Ning Fan.

"I never thought collecting the reward Fire Crystals would be this easy."

Hui Jing marveled at the surplus rewards as he arrived at the Tamu Clan.

For an Immortal Venerable like Hui Jing, the Tamu Clan dared not neglect, welcoming him in full force. After receiving Hui Jing's reward, they officially earned the glory of being the foremost in the Southern Frontier, and every Tamu person was beaming with joy, celebrating with bonfires throughout the night.

Amidst the celebrants, Hui Jing did not see Ning Fan's figure.

"Why haven't I seen the foreign cultivator your clan invited?" Hui Jing's words were calm, but they carried supreme authority when they reached Chief Tamu Tageli's ears, prompting a careful response.

"To answer, Sir Envoy, Lord Ning is currently in seclusion, seemingly attempting a breakthrough, hence his absence. Shall I notify Lord Ning to come and meet with you?"

Though he offered, Chief Tageli's eyes betrayed an unwillingness, revealing his true thoughts.

He did not wish to disturb Ning Fan's seclusion. Ning Fan was the benefactor of Tamu, the savior of the Southern Frontier, the most honored guest on the grasslands. Ning Fan's seclusion was more important than anything else, and he would not let this envoy disturb Ning Fan's cultivation.

"No problem, no need to disturb him. I'll wait here for a few days. I'm sure he will emerge from seclusion before the second round of the tomb-taking begins."

With a task from the Heaven Capital Emperor in hand, Hui Jing could only stay put with the invitation, waiting for Ning Fan to emerge at the Tamu Clan.

Ning Fan chose his place of seclusion in the clan's forbidden area—the Tamu Medicine Pool.

This is the highest spiritual energy place within the Tamu Clan and the best spot for breaking through barriers. Ning Fan chose to reside here to confront the impending Second Heart Tribulation.

On the surface, the Medicine Pool appears to be a square pond spanning a thousand feet, consecrating a water statue of the Medicine Master Buddha in the center. Outside, formations gather medicinal essence from all directions, which liquidizes to form the water in the pool.

The pool water has miraculous effects in nurturing the Medicine Soul. Successive Tamu chiefs refined their Medicine Soul here. Over time, medicinal marrows often emerged within the pool, depositing at the bottom, known for enhancing the Medicine Soul's power—the longer the accumulation, the prolonged the enhancement effect.

Generally speaking, every millennium, the Tamu extract the medicinal marrow for the clan's strong members. Other tribes have similar pools, also extracting every thousand years. When Ning Fan entered the Medicine Pool, the millennium-old medicinal marrow at the bottom was fetched long ago, leaving only a few hundred years aged ones.

These several hundred-year-old medicinal marrows offer significant aid to the Medicine Soul cultivation of a Six Revolution Pill Master but are less effective for a Seventh Revolution superior such as Ning Fan.

Ning Fan sat cross-legged in the pool, eyes closed and silent. Besides occasionally consuming Medicine Soul Stones, he did not open his eyes, and so it had been for six days.

Outside the medicine pool, Duolan, Xianyu Chun, and many of the Tamu people were waiting here, eager for Ning Fan to finish his seclusion and join in the Tamu celebration.

Outsiders only thought that Ning Fan was breaking through a minor bottleneck in his Eternal Immortal Venerable cultivation, but in reality, Ning Fan was breaking through only the Shedding Void bottleneck.

Above the medicine pool, the illusions of Ning Fan's four True Bridges had already formed.

Beneath the True Bridges, the gently flowing river reflected shadows, none of which were not constantly changing thoughts of Ning Fan.

According to Ning Fan's own viewpoint, his first Heart Tribulation should have been based on the word "promise," while this second heart strength seemed to lie in the word "gratitude."

The arrival of the Shedding Void Heart Tribulation is elusive and unattainable. If one simply focuses on bitter cultivation in seclusion, it may take millions of years without encountering a Heart Tribulation. However, if one ventures outside, an opportunity may suddenly bring it down, or the chance may never arrive.

Ning Fan was exceedingly fortunate; the heart-wrenching, insane howl of Xianyu Chun had stirred his heart, resonating with him, triggering the second Heart Tribulation directly.

That howl contained Xianyu Chun's sincere feelings for his mother, filled with longing and sorrow.

Returning to the ground, Ning Fan specifically inquired about Xianyu Chun's past before entering seclusion and learned some of Xianyu Chun's stories, including the heart-penetrating pain of that howl.

In his youth, Xianyu Chun was abducted by the Stone Flame, and his mother gave her life to save him but was killed by the Stone Flame Volcano's divine power.

The young Xianyu Chun stood outside the volcano, watching helplessly as his mother was crushed to death bit by bit, powerless to save her.

That day, Xianyu Chun realized his own weakness.

That day, Xianyu Chun vowed to leave the Southern Frontier and become stronger than anyone else.

Deep down, Xianyu Chun harbored immense hatred towards the Three-Flames, and if his cultivation ever became sufficient, he was determined to seek revenge against them...

In Xianyu Chun, Ning Fan saw a reflection of himself. And Xianyu Chun's mother reminded Ning Fan of his own mother.

His mother, too, once went to great lengths to save him.

But unlike Xianyu Chun, Ning Fan's mother was still alive, in the Rain Immortal World. Yet he was unsure if the petrification of his mother's statue had been lifted...

He was feeling a bit homesick.

The thoughts of homesickness made Ning Fan's Heart Tribulation come increasingly fast; for a full six days, no matter how the reflections in the river beneath the True Bridge changed, they were all scenes of memories with his mother.

There were false memories of pastoral life with his mother in the Purple Dou Illusion Realm.

There were pale memories of his mother painting a cocoon with blood.

There was also the memory of him sitting outside a golden house, not daring to enter, unable to face his mother's cold stone statue...

Life between heaven and earth passes like a fleeting horse through a crack.

What do we, cultivators, truly seek?

In the end, cultivators often find themselves guarding an increasingly unfamiliar world, holding onto those Daoist friends who have died, holding onto the promises they made to live forever together. Occasionally, they sift through old objects and find love letters written to a senior sister when young; passing by a market, they suddenly remember something promised to a senior brother but never bought; looking back over a lifetime, they realize those who once walked alongside them are all gone, and such solitude is overwhelming.

And those who could not travel together had long since become earth long ago.

Such stories of one person achieving the Dao and elevating their entire family are rare... The majority of cultivators of mortal origins, by the time they achieve immortality, find their parents have been dead for many years... Some, even during the Core Formation Mortal Severance or the Divinity Transformation Mortal Severance, sever the so-called parents from their hearts with a stroke of the Wisdom Sword...

But for all things in this world, there is cause and effect. If you owe your parents a debt of gratitude and cannot repay it in time, so be it. However, if you sever all memories and emotions towards your parents, it is even harder to resolve the cause and effect. These cultivators, no matter what, will never achieve true completeness.

"Core Formation Mortal Severance is a mistake..."

"Divinity Transformation Mortal Severance is a mistake..."

"Forgetting in Shedding Void is also a mistake..."

After six days had passed, Ning Fan suddenly opened his eyes, azure light flashing within them, having seen through the drawbacks of the current cultivation system from a state of completeness.

Can't forget, how could one forsake?

In this world, not all scars need to heal completely; some need to be preserved, to be forever remembered.

Previously, he was driven by sheer stubbornness, unwilling to contradict his spirit sense in the Heart Tribulation. But now, he directly saw the flaws of the Shedding Void Realm.

During the first Heart Tribulation, he could not understand Shedding Void to this extent.

But the second time... he distinctly felt that the Shedding Void Heart Tribulation was not such a simple matter.

There was also a vague feeling, indescribable and mysterious, that made him sense that the first Shedding Void Heart Tribulation was not just about the word "promise," and the second Heart Tribulation was not merely about the word "gratitude."

The Heart Tribulation is not just about the heaviest obsessions in the heart of a Shedding Void cultivator.

The heart tribulation seems to also be a significant turning point for a cultivator's spirit sense!

Ning Fan had previously been puzzled, why the first illusion of his first Shekong Heart Tribulation started with memories related to Hu Fengzi.

He does not count as a significant figure on Ning Fan's cultivation path, nor a key figure in the Rain Immortal World. However, upon reflection, this person had a profound impact on Ning Fan, marking the first transformation of his spirit sense!

When he first ventured into the magic path, Ning Fan, carrying vengeance, was nothing more than an ignorant teenager seeking revenge, only seeing the dark side of the cultivation road. But it wasn't until the incident with Hu Fengzi that Ning Fan truly realized that there are also positive aspects on the cultivation road, with cultivators persistently striving, and things more important than life itself that are worth protecting.

Perhaps from that day on, Ning Fan was no longer just a boy seeking vengeance, but a true cultivator.

This could be counted as the first transformation of the spirit sense on Ning Fan's path of cultivation!

The memories of his mother, however, began in the Zidou Illusion Realm, where the Purple Dou Immortal Sovereign bestowed Ning Fan with a segment of illusory memory, through which he spent an ordinary life with his mother. It was from this point that Ning Fan realized he was not just a demon cultivator, but also an ordinary person...

Climbing the mountain for immortality, descending the mountain as a human!

Without the guidance of the Purple Dou Immortal Sovereign, perhaps Ning Fan would have been deeply trapped in the magic path, unable to extricate himself, without a smile, only cold killings. It can be said that in this period, Ning Fan found a balance point between the magic path and human heart.

This could be counted as the second transformation of the spirit sense on Ning Fan's cultivation path!

"Two heart tribulations, if understood only through gratitude, would be rather shallow. Instead of saying heart tribulation, it's better to say each time marks a change of heart for me. But since then, my spirit sense seems to have undergone no enormous change, it's already set; if we understand it as a change of heart, what the third and fourth Shekong Heart Tribulation's change of heart will be is unknown... Aliang can also touch my heart tribulation, there must be a tribulation related to her, but my ties with Aliang transcend this lifetime, with connections in past lives, could it be that my heart tribulation is not merely in this life, but also applies to past lives, if so, perhaps I have experienced changes of heart in previous lives as well, the notion of heart change is not necessarily incorrect..."

With a comparison to the second heart tribulation, Ning Fan had new hypotheses about the patterns of his heart tribulations. His heart tribulation differed from others naturally requiring self-contemplation to find the correct road.

On the seventh day, other illusions began appearing beneath the True Bridge, with the benevolence of the old monster and other people's benevolence, corresponding to the word 'gratitude'.

By the eleventh day, the illusions ceased.

Ning Fan knew that the breakthrough of his Shekong Heart Tribulation had reached its most critical moment. He remembered the first heart tribulation, when that terrifying Withered Palm came forth, fraught with dangers. According to Ning Fan's guess, the second heart tribulation shouldn't have such an incident, but he couldn't be entirely certain, thus he was prepared, if struck by the Withered Palm again, he wouldn't sit passively by.

Fortunately, the second heart tribulation had no Withered Palm attack, the process was exceedingly smooth, almost like a matter of course, Ning Fan's cultivation of Fiendgods and ancient demons successively broke through to the Mid Stage of Shekong!

Solidifying cultivation requires a significant amount of time; unfortunately, Ning Fan, situated within the Supreme Pill Sacred Domain, can't open the Xuan Yin Treasure, temporarily unable to use the Tower of Years inside to solidify his foundation. As it stood, he could only slightly stabilize his realms to prevent decline, yet the aura of the Fiendgods and demons seemed somewhat insubstantial, still lacked solidity.

Ning Fan meticulously assessed himself.

The enhancement of Fiendgods and ancient demon cultivation did not substantially increase his overall four series power, after all, his bloodline cultivation and Calamity Blood Realm were higher, having a larger weight.

However, after the improvement in Fiendgods and demon cultivation, Ning Fan could clearly feel his four series of cultivation in him attaining more balance, like the short stave of a wooden barrel being raised, naturally causing the water volume in the barrel to rise accordingly.

"The overall power boost is not significant, but when combining multiple powers to perform Divine Skills, the Mana consumption has noticeably decreased, and the power of the Divine Skills has increased somewhat. After all, in the past when performing Divine Skills, much Mana was wasted maintaining the balance of power. If the godly demonic cultivation could continue to enhance, the four kinds of power within me could become even more balanced..."

Exhaling a thick breath, Ning Fan stepped out from the medicine pool, urging his Mana to instantly dry the dampness upon him.

Not immediately leaving the formation range of the medicine pool, Ning Fan sat atop a large rock by the pool, turning his hand to take out the Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command seized from Meng Zhen, and meticulously stroked it in his hand.

After stroking back and forth seven times, suddenly a golden light flew out from within the token, transforming into a half-bodied Golden Mist Giant in mid-air!

The aura of the giant was immensely powerful, almost not inferior to the formation spirit of the fierce thought in the two realms seal, though the giant's power seemed limited, seeming to disappear once exhausted.

"I am the spirit guardian of the Golden Palm Command, within my capabilities, I can realize three wishes for the bearer! This command's previous owner, Meng Zhen, has used the first and second wishes, you as the new bearer, can command this spirit to fulfill the last wish of this command for you! After three wishes, this command self-destructs!"

Ning Fan's eyes glimmered.

As early as obtaining this command, Ning Fan perceived a boundless, inconceivable power within it exhibiting allegiance towards him, this power so immense it gave Ning Fan the illusion that if he wished, he could directly kill an Immortal Emperor with it!

Be aware, though the Origin Qi is formidable, it only holds the potential to heavily wound an Immortal Emperor, while the strength contained in this token far surpasses a single Origin Qi!

Of course, Ning Fan could also vaguely detect that the Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command was not solely for killings, but could have multiple uses.

Before going into seclusion, he inquired a bit with Duolan about the Golden Palm Command's details, only to be profoundly astonished afterwards.

The so-called Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command is an identity symbol of the Flame Ancestor's heir, only a very few exceptional three-flame cultivators may obtain it when passing the Ancestor Flame Trial.

Flame Ancestor, the name of an evil corpse the Saint had severed, is the ancestor of all three-flame cultivators!

Legend has it, although Flame Ancestor was a Saint's Evil Corpse, his cultivation hadn't attained the Third Step, but with his cultivation as an ancient great cultivator, he had seriously injured a Saint, causing the Saint's time of fall to precede several cycles of reincarnation, showing his might!

It's said Flame Ancestor had unique insights into creation and destruction, the Golden Palm Command he created could fulfill any three wishes of the bearer!

Of course, wishes must be within the realm of the Golden Palm Command's capability!

You can ask the Golden Palm Command to enhance your cultivation!

You can request magical treasure, expensive pills, cultivation techniques from the Golden Palm Command!

You can even ask the command to kill for you; rumor has it that in antiquity, there was once a Vacant Flame Demon Child who made a wish and ultimately killed an Six Calamity Immortal Emperor from the Holy Mountain, causing a big sensation!

As long as Ning Fan makes a wish, the guardian spirit of the Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command, even if it's an Immortal Emperor, can be killed for you. Of course, whether it can be killed is uncertain, as with the passage of time, the power of the Golden Palm Command is also slowly being eroded by the years and is now far less than before.

For Ning Fan, this Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command is stronger than the self-preservation power of Origin Qi, believing that as long as he holds this command, even the Immortal Emperor of the Dabei Clan would not dare to confront him.

At the same time, Ning Fan also felt secretly relieved that if Meng Zhen had used the Golden Palm Command to kill him from the beginning, it would have definitely put him in great danger.

Unfortunately, Meng Zhen was unwilling to use it, trying to trick him with the power of the Seal of Two Realms to kill Ning Fan, but ended up having the situation reversed by Ning Fan, who threw him into the Seal of Two Realms and burned him to death, thus leaving the command to Ning Fan.

"If I wish for my Twelve Metaplasia True Fire to upgrade to Innate True Fire, can you achieve it?" Ning Fan suddenly asked.

"Of course, you can! Are you sure you want to fulfill this wish?" the Golden Giant Spirit of the Palm Command stiffly asked.

"Does this enhancement have any drawbacks?" Ning Fan asked again.

"It damages your foundation." the Golden Giant Spirit of the Palm Command replied.

The Golden Palm Command can enhance cultivation and upgrade divine skills, but it forcefully elevates in a way similar to empowerment, severely damaging the foundation.

If flames are enhanced, the upgraded flames may be forever halted at this realm, and so is cultivation.

With this, Ning Fan's heart, which had been slightly heated, cooled considerably, lamenting, "If it is based on damaging the foundation, then let's forget about it."

After thinking for a moment, he added, "If I wish for my True Fire level to reach the level of the Saint's Fire, can you do it!" This question was aimed at understanding the limitations of the Palm Command's capabilities.

"Cannot! At most, it can help you raise to Innate Mid-grade Flame!" the Golden Giant Spirit of the Palm Command replied indifferently.

"If I wish for my Fiendgod, ancient demons, and Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor cultivation to all break through to the level of Eternal Immortal Venerable, can it be achieved?"

"Indeed it cannot, at most it can only raise a single cultivation to the Zero Tribulation Celestial Venerate level, similarly damaging the foundation." It was still an extremely terrifying elevation, but the drawbacks were too great.

Ning Fan thought for a moment, then asked, "If I want to open my eyes and see the world that only the people of the True Realm can see, can you help me achieve this?"

"Cannot, this matter exceeds my capabilities by far."

"If I want you to kill someone, what's the highest cultivation level existence you can kill!"

"This command is too old, if it were in full strength, it could kill anything below a Quasi-Saint, now it can only kill those around the Sixth Calamity level Emperor cultivation. If the opponent is extremely adept at defense or escape, there's a possibility of failure."

That's still quite good... In other words, if the opponent is a Sixth Calamity Immortal Emperor with slightly weaker divine skills or is careless and off guard, there's a high chance of killing them.

Such a terrifying command token, even capable of killing an Immortal Emperor, and this is in its non-full state. In ancient times, the terror of this command is simply unimaginable.

Ning Fan did not ask more questions, and the Golden Giant Spirit of the Palm Command simply bowed and returned indifferently into the token.

No sacrifice is needed for this command, and Ning Fan directly swallowed it into his abdomen, storing it in his Dantian. He would not make Meng Zhen's mistake of letting others take the command away.

As for how to use this command, Ning Fan has not decided. After thinking about it, he decided to temporarily keep this command to serve as a life-saving item while walking in the Dabei Clan.

"Duolan, you can come in now!"

Having done all this, Ning Fan transmitted a voice to Duolan outside the Medicine Pool Formation and opened a passage in the formation.

Duolan took a deep breath, as if making a significant decision, walked into the Medicine Pool, and then the formation closed.

The Tam Tribe outside immediately began to make a fuss.

Could it be that Master Ning has finished seclusion? But why only call Lord Duolan in alone?

Indeed, indeed, Master Ning and Lord Duolan have something going on! Perhaps they want to do it in a place like the Medicine Pool... This is truly desecrating the Medicine Master Buddha!

Several hotheaded youths planned to remind Ning Fan that copulation is not allowed in a holy place, immediately arousing the anger of Xianyu Chun.

"All of you, scram, scram far away, don't interrupt Master and Mistress's business!"

Xianyu Chun resumed his usual demeanor of a wicked young lord, fiercely chasing away the Tamu people on the Tamu Clan's territory. He's a filial apprentice who could not let others interfere with Master's and Mistress's affair, whether it's a holy ground or not, if it needs to be done, then it will be done!

Inside the Medicine Pool, Ning Fan obviously could not be doing it with Duolan; he simply had no such interest.

Compared to this matter, he cared more about the Stone Throne Coordinates.

"It's time to give Ning a certain explanation. What is the Stone Throne Coordinates?" Ning Fan's gaze slightly narrowed, giving Duolan immense pressure.

Duolan's small face turned slightly pale; she dared not deceive Ning Fan, as the impression Ning Fan left on her was too merciless and brutal. If she dared lie, she did not know what fate awaited her. Knowing that this secret could not be kept anymore, Duolan unexpectedly knelt in front of Ning Fan with a thud.

"Senior Ning, the Stone Throne Coordinates can be given to you, but please promise Duolan one request. Otherwise, even if you kill Duolan, you would only get a corpse!"

"I have no interest in promising your request, and I don't necessarily desire the Stone Throne Coordinates, just curious as to why I can't sense any information about the Stone Throne Coordinates from your heart. I ask again, what are the Stone Throne Coordinates!"

Chapter 1014: Ancient Holy Stone Thrones

"No rush, Senior. Allow this junior to slowly recount the tale."

Duolan took several deep breaths, trying to calm his fears in front of Ning Fan, and then he appeared reminiscent.

"Within our Dabei Clan, there is a sacred place called the Holy Mountain Mausoleum, formed by the remnants of the Saint Ancestor after his death. Inside the Holy Mountain is a secret realm named Stone Path Secret Realm, which contains twelve tomb veins that are superb places for cultivation. They have also been the subject of fierce contention among different factions of Holy Mountain cultivators in the tomb raids held through the ages; surely, Senior knows this already. Besides the twelve tomb veins, the most intriguing thing inside the mausoleum is the Stone Throne... when you previously searched this junior's memories, you must have found the memories regarding the Holy Mountain rather vague, yes? That is the manifestation of the Holy Mountain's divine skills, especially regarding the Stone Throne Coordinates. Without special ancient methods to read them, nothing can be revealed in the memories of this junior."

Ning Fan nodded; no wonder the Soul Search did not reveal the Stone Throne Coordinates—indeed, the cause lies in the Holy Mountain.

"The Stone Throne, fully known as Ancient Holy Stone Thrones, is located within the Stone Path Secret Realm of the Holy Mountain, where the Saint Ancestor sealed his relics before his death. Each Ancient Holy Stone Throne holds relics left by saints, sometimes single, sometimes multiple, without fixed numbers. Among these relics are expensive pills, divine skills, spells, insights, and myriad bizarre items, all supreme treasures."

So the Ancient Holy Stone Thrones are where the saint sealed his relics... Ning Fan was slightly surprised.

"Inside the Holy Mountain's Stone Path Secret Realm, there are formations everywhere with intricate confusion; even the Immortal Emperor of the Holy Mountain, who has researched the mausoleum for years, wouldn't dare wander about it. Legend has it that the consequences of getting lost are grim—I heard from my father that only a few strong ones who wander off manage to return by luck, while most get their spirit awareness snatched by remnants of saints and become walking corpses, forever wandering the depths of the mausoleum till death, among which there are Immortal Emperors..."

If even Immortal Emperors turn into walking corpses upon getting lost? Ning Fan was a bit startled, the Holy Mountain Mausoleum is indeed perilous!

"Father once said that those Immortal Emperors turned into walking corpses fell under the Saint Ancestor's most powerful illusory art in life—Ten Thousand Chants Decay..." At the mention of this illusory art, Duolan's face gleamed with spirit, gravitas, awe, and a hint of deep-seated national pride.

Ten Thousand Chants Decay! The Saint Ancestor's strongest illusory art! The strongest divine skill idealized by all Great Humble Ones!

"The Stone Path Secret Realm represents the pinnacle of formation arrays and illusory arts, full of confusion and constantly shifting terrain. Without coordinates, one cannot walk through it at all. Up to now, the mighty ones of the Holy Mountain have only confirmed one hundred and seventy-four coordinates inside the mausoleum, including the entrance coordinates, the twelve tomb vein coordinates, coordinates of some ancient relic sites, and coordinates of the Ancient Holy Stone Thrones, etc..."

"The exact number of Ancient Holy Stone Thrones inside the Stone Path Secret Realm is unknown, but until now, one hundred and twenty-six have been discovered. The first discovered Ancient Holy Stone Throne contained an unnamed ancient pill, and the discoverer, a Sixth Calamity Immortal Emperor, went into seclusion after consuming it, merely a hundred years later, emerged as a Seventh Calamity Immortal Emperor!"

What kind of pill is that, enhancing an Immortal Emperor's cultivation level within a century!

"The second Ancient Holy Stone Throne contained an insight that allowed a Seven Calamity Immortal Emperor of ancient times to directly enter the first realm of Unity of Heaven and Man..."

Such benefits!

"The third Ancient Holy Stone Throne sealed an Innate Mid-grade Treasure..."

"The fourth Ancient Holy Stone Throne contained a Ten Revolutions Elixir, but unfortunately, it's merely for healing..." Truly legendary are the Ten Revolutions Elixirs!

"The fifth Ancient Holy Stone Throne was unfortunately stolen beforehand..."

"The sixth Ancient Holy Stone Throne contained a trace of Origin Qi..."

"The seventh Ancient Holy Stone Throne was also stolen beforehand..."

"The eighth Ancient Holy Stone Throne surprisingly sealed part of the formation structure of the Two Boundaries..."

"The ninth..."

"The tenth..."

Masters often remember things vividly, so Duolan recounts the details of the one hundred and twenty-six Stone Thrones with ease, not making a single mistake.

The more Ning Fan listened, the more he felt enthusiastic about the Ancient Holy Stone Thrones. Duolan had seven Stone Throne Coordinates, and if Ning Fan could read them, he would be able to enter the mausoleum to seek treasures, and find seven saint relics...

But then considering the many rogues coveting Duolan's coordinates, Ning Fan's fervor cooled. So far, those eying these seven coordinates include Sanyan, the Fire Soul Clan, and the Holy Mountain Great Emperor colluding with Sanyan... This matter is too troublesome, for if Ning Fan were to privately seize Duolan's coordinates, he would be secretly watched by countless eyes...

This mission should prioritize healing the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor. Before achieving that, Ning Fan was not planning to stir up troubles.

Moreover, Ning Fan lacks qualifications to enter the mausoleum's depths, nor does he possess the ancient methods to read coordinates... Rather than coveting saint relics, it would be better to accomplish the main objective of this trip.

"I heard that reading the Stone Throne Coordinates requires some ancient methods—is that true?" Ning Fan asked.

"Indeed. The Stone Throne Coordinates are divided into temporal and spatial coordinates. While only tribes of Sanyan comprehend reading methods for spatial coordinates, the ancient method to read the temporal coordinates is held by the Fire Soul Clan and a few Holy Mountain Immortal Emperors..."

It appears that merely wanting to read the coordinates is quite troublesome. Ning Fan shook his head. His time in the Holy Domain is exceptionally limited; he couldn't waste much effort on Stone Throne Coordinates.

"However, if a mighty one ever attacked you again, I'm not sure I could protect you..." Ning Fan said to Duolan with some helplessness.

This Duolan is definitely trouble; keeping him by his side is bound to attract the third, fourth, countless more pursuits, relentlessly closing in.

Sanyan had already failed twice, but if a third pursuit began, it would certainly target him specifically, no longer careless. It's extremely likely they might send more Eternal Immortal Venerables, or even send Immortal Kings and Immortal Emperors; how would Ning Fan handle it then?

Could he abandon this troublesome Duolan?

Duolan's face turned a bit pale, clearly sensing Ning Fan's hesitance in his voice, and bitterly said,

"If Senior finds Duolan troublesome, Duolan is willing to leave on his own, never causing Senior any inconvenience."

That's quite amusing; originally Duolan was eager to escape Ning Fan's clutches, yet now he somewhat relies on Ning Fan's protection.

Ning Fan shook his head. The fact that he killed Pi Xiong was witnessed by Duolan firsthand, so he couldn't trust Duolan completely. While bringing Duolan might add trouble, letting him go didn't assure Ning Fan either, "Letting you leave would not ease my mind. Fine, stay with me then."

Duolan felt a bit bitter; the Senior indeed didn't trust her to leave. Haha, if she were in his place, she wouldn't trust either. Forget it; being sheltered under the Senior's protection is good enough. It's certainly safer than being alone, especially since she can't return to the Holy Mountain, unless she can represent Chu Lie's lineage in the third round of the tomb fight and perform outstandingly...

"I want to rest a bit longer; you may withdraw," Ning Fan commanded.

"Yes."

Duolan respectfully walked out of the medicinal pool; just as she was about to completely exit, a purple-black stream of light suddenly flew towards her.

Duolan stopped in her tracks and reached out to catch it; it was a purple-black feather formed by the power of Illusory Art...

"While I'm resting, I can't protect you. Carry my Illusory Art feather and hide inside the belly of the Hundred-li Stone Dragon. With the sturdiness of the dragon's belly, even if there's a third assassination attempt, you'll be safe for a while."

Duolan's heart trembled slightly.

Was she being cared for? By the cold and selfish Ning Fan? Is it because of the Stone Throne Coordinates or something else...

"Don't doubt. I'm giving you a place to hide only because you're my Soul-Locked Slave. Although I don't like you, I won't allow my people to be casually killed!" Ning Fan's words carried an air of dominance.

His people, Ning Fan's people, must not be killed without reason! No one has that right!

Duolan tightened her grip on the Illusory Feather and calmly thanked Ning Fan as she left the medicinal pool, but in her heart, there was an uncontrollable warmth.

Maybe, just maybe... Ning Senior's character isn't so bad?

Suddenly, thinking of her elder brother's death, Duolan felt a bit desolate again. How could she have feelings for a demon? A demon is just a demon...

After understanding the Stone Throne Coordinates matter, Ning Fan's heart was relieved of a perplexity, and he rested in the medicinal pool for several more days before coming out.

The Hundred-li Stone Dragon, conquered that day, now lay hidden beneath the grassland. Duolan too, using the Earth Escape Skill, had hidden underground, inside the belly of the dragon.

Outside, some were still waiting for Ning Fan, among them was Xianyu Chun.

Whether Xianyu Chun was truly naive or pretending, her daily deeds were often not meticulously done, except when serving Ning Fan; in such matters, she was flawless, leaving no room for criticism.

Ning Fan found Xianyu Chun's enthusiasm overwhelming and noticed that Immortal Venerable Hui Jing was waiting for him in the Tamu Clan, so he sent Xianyu Chun back to the Evil Sheep Sect to recover.

She got pretty badly injured during the Fire Soul chaos; what was the point of hovering around him instead of recovering?

Now that Ning Fan's seclusion was over, the Tamu people showed extraordinary enthusiasm, hosting a banquet to welcome him, and during the banquet, the long-awaited Hui Jing Immortal Venerable appeared.

This person was very polite with words but inherently held some disdain for foreign cultivators, only not showing it due to Ning Fan being a guest sought by the Heaven Capital Emperor.

Ning Fan didn't mind Hui Jing's attitude, but after three rounds of drinks, the Immortal Venerable Hui Jing suddenly dismissed everyone, took out a golden invitation, handed it to Ning Fan with a smile, and said,

"This monk came mainly to reward the Tamu, and secondly to deliver this on behalf of the Heaven Capital Emperor. This is an invitation for the Ancient Buddha Assembly, three days before the Middle State comparative event. The Great Emperor expressed that if Daoist Ning has time, he might attend this Ancient Buddha Assembly."

"Ancient Buddha Assembly?" Ning Fan was both familiar with the Heaven Capital Emperor and the Ancient Buddha Assembly, hence was surprised.

The Ancient Buddha Assembly is a grand Buddhist event in Middle State, with extremely strict criteria for participants, famously known as the Three Forbidden Rules!

Immortal Venerable's cultivation and below are not invited!

Non-Dabei clan members are not invited!

Non-Buddhist masters are not invited!

Not fulfilling these three criteria, even Holy Mountain cultivators cannot be invited.

Logically, Ning Fan, being a foreign cultivator, has no qualifications to attend the Ancient Buddha Assembly, yet he received an invitation.

And the invitation came from the 'Stubborn Stone of Middle State,' the Heaven Capital Emperor!

Renowned as the Stubborn Stone because of his obstinacy, this man discriminates against foreign cultivators due to his rigid nature, is most averse to breaking rules, yet surprisingly invites a foreign cultivator to this solemn assembly...

"What is the true intention behind the Heaven Capital Emperor's act?" Ning Fan mused while rubbing the invitation in his hand.

Seeing Ning Fan still hesitating about attending the Ancient Buddha Assembly, Hui Jing seemed a bit dissatisfied.

In the Dabei clan, countless old masters long to attend yet cannot; this foreign cultivator is so lucky to have the emperor break protocol for him, yet he hesitates. Some nerve!

Hui Jing was displeased in his heart, but since he was not one to argue excessively, he didn't contend much with Ning Fan, nor did he wish to linger there.

He originally intended to exchange cultivation insights with Ning Fan, the Eternal Immortal Venerable, but now he was anxious to leave. Were it not for the unfinished message from the Heaven Capital Emperor, he would have taken his leave directly.

"The Great Emperor asked me to warn Daoist Ning that breaking through the Stone Flame Volcano has completely offended someone in Middle State. Be wary of Lou Tuo's hidden arrows when heading to Middle State..."

Hidden arrows from Lou Tuo probably refer to Emperor Lou Tuo...

Ning Fan's gaze darkened slightly but he said nothing more, only nodding.

"Furthermore, the Great Emperor asked me to warn Daoist Ning that Meng Zhen's death will not end well. Sanyan will surely pursue this matter, and according to reliable information, Daoist Ning has already become the eleventh most wanted enemy on Sanyan's bounty list!"

Oh! To be wanted by Sanyan! Thankfully, Sanyan cannot easily leave the bounds of the Fierce Realm; it would be quite troublesome if I were wanted by the Central Continent's Five Emperors.

It seems that, even without Duolan, Sanyan will not let me off. But as for trouble that cannot be avoided, would Ning Fan fear it!

"Thank you, Daoist, for informing me of this matter," Ning Fan said to Hui Jing in gratitude.

"No need to thank me, if you want to thank someone, thank the Great Emperor Tiandu."

Hui Jing's attitude turned indifferent; after casually exchanging a few words, he left.

"Is he blaming me for underestimating the Ancient Buddha Assembly..."

After Hui Jing left, Ning Fan shook his head helplessly but didn't mind Hui Jing's temperament.

Hui Jing is considered a straightforward person, showing emotions visibly on his face. Unfortunately, you can't expect Ning Fan, a demoness, to be interested in a hostile Buddha Assembly, can you?

Moreover, among this, there might just be some schemes from the Great Emperor Tiandu. Ning Fan has to think another layer; if one says there are no schemes, no person would want to believe it.

Of course, setting all aside, Ning Fan does have a slight interest in the Ancient Buddha Assembly.

As introduced by the Tamu people, at such a Central State feast, every invited mighty figure can taste the Ancient Buddha Dao Fruits, which can enhance one's cultivation quite a bit.

It's said that in addition to tasting Dao Fruits, there will be a small exchange meeting above the Immortal Venerable level... Hmm, one could exchange unwanted items for others' treasures.

This Ancient Buddha Assembly, Ning Fan will certainly attend, for if he doesn't, the Heaven Capital Emperor will achieve his goals through other means. It's better to directly explore during the Assembly; thinking that since the Heaven Capital Emperor invited openly, even if there are plans, they would not be malicious; otherwise, it would be a hidden scheme.

Of course, to attend the Ancient Buddha Assembly, one must first go to the Central State!

There is still some time before the second round of the Tomb Battle Central Competition, but since staying in Tamu is no longer beneficial, it's better to head to the Central State early.

The Central Competition, Ning Fan still needs to represent the Tamu Clan; however, no other competitors need to accompany him anymore. Unlike the first round which emphasized overall scores, from the second round onwards, personal scores are more emphasized.

It's unfortunate that the others in the Tamu Clan are too weak; going would be pointless as they will be screened out before the second round. It's better to stay in Tamu and wait for Ning Fan's good news.

Several more days passed.

"For this Central Competition, we will not accompany Master Ning. Once the master reaches Central State, there will naturally be designated personnel to receive him. These Fire Crystals are a token of our Tamu people's affection, please accept them, Master."

Chief Tamu Tageli produced a heavy storage pouch and handed it to Ning Fan.

Ning Fan's spirit sense scanned it, and he couldn't help but sigh.

Contained inside were all the Fire Crystal rewards the Tamu Clan acquired! Not only that, there were millions of Medicine Soul Stones, various expensive pills, herbs, and three bottles of Medicine Marrow!

The Medicine Marrow, nearly ten thousand years old, when combined, amounted to no less than a hundred drops!

"These items..." Ning Fan hesitated a bit and didn't immediately accept them, for in the eyes of such an Immortal Venerable like him, the Tamu Clan was too small, too poor, and he was embarrassed to exploit their resources.

"These are a token of our Tamu people's affection, Master Ning must not refuse. We Tamu people have shed off our fate of being at the bottom for ten thousand years and have attained the honor of being

the number one clan of the Southern Frontier. We are extremely satisfied; these are all thanks to Master Ning's efforts! If not for Master Ning, even I, Tageli, would have died in the Fire Soul uprising. Master Ning's kindness towards us, Tamu people, and the Southern Frontier, if left unreported, would leave us restless!"

Tageli was profoundly sincere.

Ning Fan silently paused for a moment, then accepted the storage pouch, waving farewell to each of the Tamu people.

This departure from Tamu, he probably will not return again.

"Master, can I accompany you to the Central State!" Xianyu Chun suddenly emerged from the crowd of Tamu people.

Ning Fan was at a loss for words; aren't you an Evil Sheep person, mixing in the Tamu Clan all day, what's the meaning of this.

Unlike his previous precarious status in the Evil Sheep Sect, Xianyu Chun now received unanimous praise from the stubborn elders in his clan, highly approving of his good ties with Ning Fan.

After all, Ning Fan is the benefactor of the whole Southern Frontier, including the Evil Sheep!

"I have many things; I don't have time to watch you." Ning Fan shook his head, refusing.

"No, no, no, I don't need Master to watch over me, and I am going to the Central State not just to cling to Master but because I have arranged to meet someone. Of course, when the Central Competition begins, your disciple will definitely come to cheer for Master."

"Something else?" Ning Fan was surprised; he thought Xianyu Chun wanted to cling to him.

"The journey to Central State is too far, with my cultivation, it would take at least a year and a half to travel, so I want Master to give me a lift."

"If that's the case, taking you along isn't impossible, but once you're in Central State, you'll act independently and must be careful in everything. Don't forget what happened in the Fierce Realm when you were calculated against," Ning Fan reminded him.

Xianyu Chun was indeed being watched, and traveling abroad is naturally not as safe as staying in the Southern Frontier.

"Rest assured, Master. Once we reach Middle State, there will naturally be an old man selling water tanks to protect me. He's quite familiar with me..."

An old man selling water tanks? It doesn't sound very reliable. Perhaps he's some old eccentric trying to gain insight by mingling with common folk and selling water tanks... But since Xianyu Chun has plans, Ning Fan wouldn't worry unnecessarily.

Although he didn't intend to take an apprentice, he did have some gratitude towards Xianyu Chun for his breakthrough in realms due to Xianyu Chun's shout.

"By the way, how did Master know I was schemed against in the Fierce Realm? Was it the tribe telling you? Or did you divine it, knowing the skies and the earth! Yes, it must be so! Master is truly a godly person!" Xianyu Chun's admiration grew.

Ning Fan felt a bit speechless and decided not to engage in nonsense with Xianyu Chun.

"Oh no, oh no, I forgot! The old man selling water tanks told me not to reveal his matters to others..." Xianyu Chun repeatedly pounded his chest, lamenting his inability to keep secrets. Oh well, he thought, since it was said to Master, so be it.

Ning Fan ignored Xianyu Chun's ramblings, bringing Xianyu Chun underground with Earth Escape Skill, journeying downward. After some time in darkness, they suddenly collided with something vast and as hard as iron.

It was indeed the Hundred-li Stone Dragon lurking underground!

Ning Fan swiftly led Xianyu Chun into the dragon's belly, while the Hundred-li Stone Dragon twisted its body in agony, seemingly trying to expel Ning Fan.

It doesn't permit the killer of its master to hide within its belly and control it!

"Calm down!"

A command from Ning Fan rang out, and a complex Illusory Art planted within the Stone Dragon's divine sense began to operate, causing the Stone Dragon's mind to lose clarity once again.

What a hard-to-tame creature.

From the Southern Frontier to Middle State, more than twenty grasslands had to be crossed, with the forbidden space force intensifying nearer to Middle State. If Ning Fan's cultivation wasn't sealed, he could have flown directly to Middle State, but his current cultivations wouldn't allow him to ignore the forbidden force in the nearby grasslands.

Typically, lower cultivators traveling where flight is impossible would hire a Spirit Beast Carriage to journey to Middle State.

With Hundred-li Stone Dragon's earth escape movement, Ning Fan naturally avoided such hassle. Yet, even with its cultivation speed, it would take several days to reach Middle State.

During these days, Xianyu Chun continually slept within the dragon's belly, while Duolan nearby wore a worried frown, growing more troubled as they approached Middle State. Ning Fan took advantage of the travel time to absorb the power of numerous Fire Crystal Minerals.

These crystals within the Fire Soul Clan are treasures for fire cultivators.

Ning Fan possessed a substantial amount of Fire Crystal Minerals from his examination hunting, along with those sent by the Tamu Tribe, totaling nearly four thousand Enlightenment Fire Crystals, over five hundred Shekong Fire Crystals, and ninety-some Shattered Thought Fire Crystals.

Fire cultivators can absorb the origin fire from these crystals to elevate their flame grade. For Ning Fan, whose Black Dragon evil fire possessed Twelfold Darkness, absorbing Enlightenment Fire Crystals had limited results, often needing hundreds absorbed to even refine the magic fire slightly.

Absorbing over four thousand Enlightenment Fire Crystals merely stabilized his magic fire, scarcely advancing it.

With Ning Fan's magic fire grade, absorbing Shekong Fire Crystals was also swift. After absorbing five hundred Shekong Fire Crystals, Ning Fan discovered with surprise a strand of eerie green flame amidst his Twelfold Darkness magic fire!

The number of this eerie green flame was sparse, submerged in the magic fire, nearly imperceptible, but Ning Fan dared not underestimate it.

The Dao laws within this flame were unfathomably complex, surpassing Ning Fan's understanding. He faintly recognized this green, suddenly realizing it resembled the flame from the two realms seal!

The eerie green flame from the two realms seal was left by a Saint.

The Fire Soul Clan was born from the shattered Saint's Flame.

Both were inherently linked, thus the strand of eerie green flame Ning Fan absorbed from the Fire Soul Clan's crystals naturally paralleled the seal's flame.

This flame was scanty, to the point where unenhanced vision couldn't capture it, yet Ning Fan couldn't ignore its formidable power.

If one were to pit an equivalent amount of his magic fire against this green flame, the outcome would be his magic fire inexorably consumed!

Evidently, the green flame's power exceeded Ning Fan's magic fire!

After refining the Shekong Fire Crystals, Ning Fan commenced refining the Shattered Thought Fire Crystals. Unlike the Shekong Crystals, nearly each Shattered Thought Crystal absorbed added a strand of green flame to his magic fire!

Upon refining all the Fire Crystals, Ning Fan's magic fire power augmented by almost half, and the green flames amidst it amassed to a size comparable to an infant's fist, no longer merely a strand or two.

"It's unfortunate that this barely significant amount of green flame still isn't usable in combat. If only there were more..." Ning Fan pondered for a moment.

Then resumed stabilizing the flame grade.

Two days later, Hundred-li Stone Dragon unexpectedly struck a barrier, its progress halted. The impact triggered intense tremors, sending countless birds and sheep on the ground scrambling into flight.

Ning Fan remained slightly alert, releasing spirit sense, then relaxed upon realizing it wasn't pursuit from the Sanyan faction but rather their arrival at Middle State.

"Audacious rogue, how dare you collide with the Great Formation of Zhongzhou!"

At the Middle State border, a bearded cultivator coldly snorted and with a slight gesture, formidable Yellow Turban Warriors instantly appeared behind him, all possessing at least Fate Immortal realms.

"Dive underground on my command and apprehend the one colliding with the formation, dead or alive!"

Chapter 1015: The Homeland of One Hundred Types of Flowers

The Yellow Turban Warriors responded with a bang and were about to dive underground to apprehend someone, but before they could make a move, Ning Fan's group had already emerged above ground, while the Hundred-li Stone Dragon remained hidden underground.

The Yellow Turban Warriors immediately became vigilant; it was clear that Ning Fan and his companions were the rogues who had collided with the border formation of Middle State!

Each of the Yellow Turban Warriors flickered their forms, instantly taking advantageous positions, surrounding Ning Fan and the other two, their movements subtly aligning with the principles of coordinated strikes.

Ning Fan felt a bit resigned; he hadn't expected that as soon as he arrived in Middle State, he would run into trouble before even entering the territory. Was the Hundred-li Stone Dragon intentionally crashing into the border formation? Didn't it know how to dodge...

The group of Yellow Turban Warriors, with cultivations mostly at the Life Immortal Realm, made Duolan slightly furrow her brow as she released a hint of Shedding Void presence, making them instantly wary; a Shekong Level expert, in any grassland, was not considered weak. This was proof that this group had significant origins!

But so what! After all, they were just a group of outsiders, incomparable to the distinguished Middle State cultivators! The Yellow Turban Warriors turned arrogant, carrying that innate sense of superiority belonging to the people of Middle State, often displaying regional discrimination against other Prairie Cultivators.

Ning Fan was slightly speechless; foreign cultivators would suffer discrimination from the Great Humble Ones, regionally they would also have internal discrimination, while the Holy Mountain Cultivators would further discriminate against ordinary Great Humble Ones...

This was probably a characteristic of the Dabei Clan.

"Which prairie are you three cultivators from, daring to crash into the border formation? Do you not know that such an act violates the Middle State regulations? If you cooperate and submit, accepting punishment, we might be lenient. But if you resist, don't blame us for harsh treatment!"

The Yellow Turban Warriors wore fierce and intimidating expressions.

"We are Southern Frontier cultivators, here to participate in the Middle State competition! Indeed, crashing into the border formation was our fault. According to Middle State regulations, minor offenses can be redeemed with cattle, sheep, gold, and silver. We are willing to offer gold and silver to atone for our offense." Xianyu Chun adeptly pulled out a pouch filled with gold and silver. It was not his first time in Middle State; he naturally knew what these people desired.

The expressions of the Yellow Turban Warriors immediately softened upon seeing the storage pouch filled with more than a million taels of gold and silver, casting a 'you're very sensible' smile at Xianyu Chun.

Ning Fan was slightly speechless; using gold and silver, which were essentially useless items, could actually resolve the current dispute. It made him wonder just how much the Great Humble Ones loved gold and silver...

"Only this amount of redemption silver? It's hardly enough to exonerate one person of crime; to exonerate all three, it's not enough!" The burly leader behind the Yellow Turban Warriors coldly remarked.

Xianyu Chun silently cursed the other for greed and pulled out another storage pouch filled with gold and silver, handing it to the burly leader.

Once again, it was a million taels of gold and silver! Greed flashed in the eyes of the burly leader, who still maintained a stern expression, deliberately speaking coldly, "Still not enough!"

Xianyu Chun clenched his teeth and handed over another million taels of redemption silver. The burly leader finally revealed a satisfied smile, patting Xianyu Chun on the shoulder.

"I didn't expect you to be from the Southern Frontier, with such considerable wealth. Hehe, the matter of crashing into the border formation is thus forgiven, and you may enter Middle State. By the way, do you need a Spirit Beast Carriage? I have a batch of fine Spirit Beast Carriages here, left over from some previous lawbreakers as collateral; I can sell you one cheaply..." Clearly, he had already taken Xianyu Chun as the leader of the three for his lavish spending.

"Thank you for your kind offer, but we intend to buy a Spirit Beast Carriage after crossing the border."
Xianyu Chun wore a 'I've been taken advantage of many times, don't deceive me anymore' expression.

"What a shame..." Unable to make more money off this naive fellow.

The burly leader waved his hand, commanding the Yellow Turban Warriors to let them pass, allowing Ning Fan and his group to smoothly enter Middle State.

Throughout the journey, Xianyu Chun wore a thoroughly frustrated expression, feeling heartache for losing three million taels of gold and silver as soon as he entered Middle State.

Ning Fan naturally felt no pain; to him, gold and silver were nothing more than roadside stones, troubles that could be resolved with gold and silver weren't truly troubles. He completely couldn't comprehend why the Great Humble Ones valued gold and silver so much.

Duolan felt a bit bitter.

These guard soldiers didn't recognize her identity... She was a Holy Mountain Tomb Guardian, a Saintess of the Chu Lie Lineage. If these border soldiers knew her identity, they wouldn't dare ask for gold and silver from her...

Understandably, she had left the center of power of the Chu Lie Lineage for too long, long enough for the Holy Mountain Cultivators to overlook her, long enough for these guard soldiers to not recognize the dignified Saintess...

Not far past the border was a small frontier town. The three of them walked there, not because they were unwilling to fly, but because the forbidden force in Middle State was too strong; only Ancient Cultivators could fly.

Additionally, the underground in Middle State was filled with formations, making it extremely difficult to earth-skate into Middle State, forcing Ning Fan to leave the Hundred-li Stone Dragon outside Middle State.

The small town ahead spanned only ten li, yet there was a considerable bustle of cultivators coming and going, most of whom purchased Spirit Beast Carriages for journeying here.

"Having seen the nomadic lifestyle of the Southern Frontier people, suddenly seeing towns on the grassland is quite unexpected..." Ning Fan remarked, surprised.

"Middle State Grassland is a unique exception among the Dabei Clan. In terms of vastness, Middle State is ranked first. Here, the people no longer live in tribes with a nomadic lifestyle but reside in towns connected by official roads. Within Middle State, there are tens of thousands of small towns, several hundred middle towns, and only one large city called Liuli City, the Buddha Capital of Middle State. It is a sacred place in the hearts of countless Buddhist disciples and where the Middle State competitions are held." Duolan explained respectfully, transmitting her explanation, of course, as she did not want Xianyu Chun to hear the respectful and servant-like tone.

"Liuli City... I wonder if Nuan'er is waiting for me in Liuli City or elsewhere..." Ning Fan thought with some frustration.

The entire Middle State was shrouded in a highly powerful forbidden force, making it impossible for any Immortal Venerable below Ancient Immortal Sovereign to fly. Thus, in Middle State, sightings of lights flying through the air were scarce. Instead, Spirit Beast Carriages were commonly used for travel.

Moreover, within Middle State, there was a restrictive force limiting the scope of cultivators' divine sense. Ning Fan tried to activate the Ice Rain Technique but found that it, usually unfaltering, couldn't cover much distance—at most, ten thousand li. Naturally, the limitations were so severe partly due to his constrained cultivations, but according to Ning Fan's estimation, even if his cultivations were at full strength, he couldn't extend his divine sense to cover the entirety of Middle State.

Frustratingly, Zang Yue had arranged to meet him in Middle State without leaving a specific address. As a result, Ning Fan didn't know where to begin searching for Zang Yue and Ouyang Nuan.

Fortunately, there was a faint resonance between Zi Relic and Mother Relic...

Ning Fan looked north; he could vaguely sense that Ouyang Nuan and Zang Yue were in that general direction.

"Is Liuli City in northern Middle State?" Ning Fan transmitted a question.

"No, Liuli City is located in the extreme west of Middle State; why do you ask, Senior?" Duolan transmitted her answer.

"I need to attend to matters in northern Middle State."

"So, we're not directly going to Liuli City?"

Xianyu Chun noticed Ning Fan and Duolan's transmitted conversation and automatically assumed it was part of some eyebrow-raising exchange between the two. He concluded that their transmission was likely some highly affectionate talk they didn't want him to hear. Alas, he felt muddled, standing here was completely in-between, hindering the progression of his master and mistress's relationship.

"Having arrived in Middle State, I have an appointment with an elder, and am not on the same path as my master. May I go ahead?" Xianyu Chun gave Ning Fan a wink, in a gesture of 'Brother, I can only help you this much.'

"If your path diverges, you may proceed," Ning Fan nodded, allowing Xianyu Chun to leave. With a gamboling gait, Xianyu Chun headed into the city to purchase a Spirit Beast Carriage and departed, leaving Ning Fan and Duolan alone so that they wouldn't have to transmit every word.

"It seems, Senior's student has misunderstood something..." Duolan noticed Xianyu Chun's wink and, with her astuteness, vaguely guessed Xianyu Chun had some misunderstanding.

How could she and Master Ning be that kind of relationship? She was merely a Soul-Locked Slave...

"Xianyu Chun is not my disciple; you don't need to pay attention to him, just idle thoughts. Let's get back to business. I need to head north in Middle State, not quite sure where exactly, but I'll be able to determine it as we approach. Once we buy a Spirit Beast Carriage, we'll proceed straight northward," Ning Fan remarked with a serene expression, focusing once again on the matter of their journey.

"To head north in Middle State without knowing the destination..." Duolan thought it strange but had learned to be wiser, refrained from asking further, and respectfully agreed.

There were numerous shops in town selling Spirit Beast Carriages, though most only offered low-grade carriages, drawn by Spirit Beasts at Life Immortal or Enlightenment levels, naturally yielding lesser speed. Ning Fan scouted extensively, only to find one shop selling carriages powered by Spirit Beasts over Shedding Void level.

The shop was named Thunder Sound Pavilion, with an illusionary array outside. If one's cultivations weren't strong enough, they couldn't even approach the building, merely being blocked outside.

Ning Fan, of course, wouldn't be bothered by such a trivial formation array and calmly took Duolan in with him. Each of his leisurely steps fell precisely on the formation's intricate patterns.

After three steps, the formation emitted thunderous sounds, which Ning Fan casually pointed at, making the thunder cease.

After seven steps, the thunderclaps sounded again, seemingly with great might, yet were extinguished with a single step from Ning Fan.

After nine steps, the thunderclaps sought to rise once more, but Ning Fan had already taken Duolan through numerous formations, entering the Thunder Sound Pavilion. Just nine steps, yet ultimately the thunderclaps within the formation never gathered, constantly suppressed by him.

This was quite terrifying!

Duolan was secretly shocked, the elder's mastery of formations was simply too high. This was the Thunder Sound Pavilion's secret restriction, though this pavilion was merely one of the Thunder Sound Lineage's branches, and outside there was only a portion of the formation, yet to completely suppress the thunderclaps' entrance into the formation, even for a famous Ancient Immortal Venerable, would be extremely difficult!

Yet Ning Fan could easily achieve this!

Duolan's heart couldn't help but hold a bit more respect for Ning Fan.

As the two entered, the unprepared maids were all horrified, while the shopkeeper within the Thunder Sound Pavilion, who had been lazily pretending to sleep, now opened his eyes with shock.

This was a powerful being at the Shattered Thought Early Stage, yet here serving as a shopkeeper within the Thunder Sound Pavilion! Ning Fan narrowed his eyes slightly, wondering if this person was not one of those old demons lurking in the marketplace, or if the Thunder Sound Pavilion's background was strong enough to make use of a Shattered Thought cultivator as a shopkeeper...

"Your Excellency has profound mastery in formations, able to ignore the formations and enter the Thunder Sound Pavilion. Pardon my poor eyesight; I don't think I've seen you at the Holy Mountain. Might Your Excellency be a cultivator from the Dabei Clan?" the shopkeeper politely clasped his fist in inquiry, secretly speculating about Ning Fan's identity.

Such terrifying means, directly suppressing the secret restriction and entering the pavilion, couldn't belong to someone unknown, why was he so unfamiliar...

His gaze suddenly fell upon Duolan and again showed astonishment, wasn't this the Chulie Holy Maiden? The forgotten lineage's fallen Holy Maiden... The shopkeeper retracted his gaze, and the fleeting contempt in his eyes was still caught by Duolan.

Duolan felt slightly bitter but transmitted to Ning Fan, "The Thunder Sound Lineage is the number one branch of the Holy Mountain, with four Immortal Emperors presiding, far surpassing my Chulie Lineage in strength. This Thunder Sound Pavilion is one of Thunder Sound Lineage's industries. We've come here to purchase a Spirit Beast Carriage, we must be very courteous, so as not to offend the Thunder Sound Pavilion..."

Ning Fan's gaze grew slightly grave. Number one in the Holy Mountain, Thunder Sound Lineage, four Immortal Emperors presiding... No wonder the Thunder Sound Pavilion can use Shattered Thought cultivators as shopkeepers, and it seems the Spirit Beast Carriages they sell are not meant for low-level cultivators...

"I am not a cultivator from the Dabei Clan, but a foreign cultivator, here representing the Southern Frontier Tamu Clan, participating in affairs in the Middle State." Ning Fan answered frankly, not feeling at all inferior due to his foreign cultivator identity.

The shopkeeper, however, immediately furrowed his brows, and his initial courteous attitude towards Ning Fan disappeared. Suppressing the thunderclaps within the secret restriction, so what? Just a foreign cultivator, still not as good as the fallen Chulie!

"Are you here to buy a Spirit Beast Carriage? The Thunder Sound Pavilion differs from external shops; it doesn't accept gold and silver but only takes items of equivalent value. Are you familiar with these rules?" the shopkeeper asked impatiently.

"It's the first time hearing of a Dabei Clan shop doing barter transactions." Ning Fan, with his disposition, naturally wouldn't be angry over a slight lack of courtesy from the other party.

"If a foreign cultivator wants to purchase a Spirit Beast Carriage, the transaction is more stringent. The exchange items must be equivalent pills, other items are not accepted. Heh, although our clan looks down on your foreign cultivators, we attach great importance to your pills. Here is the price list, take a look yourself, once you've decided on a carriage, you can exchange it with pills of equivalent value! Also, there are some pills that this pavilion does not accept, the types of pills not accepted are recorded in this scroll, look for yourself."

The shopkeeper casually tossed two scrolls to Ning Fan and ceased paying attention to him, resumed pretending to sleep.

The first scroll detailed all Spirit Beast Carriages available for sale within the Thunder Sound Pavilion, and marked with their prices. The Spirit Beast Carriages depicted on the scroll were not static but animated; the wheels rolled forward occasionally, showing an advancing posture, the beasts pulling the car occasionally raised their heads to cry out to the sky, the sound seemingly even emanating from within the scroll.

Ning Fan took a look at the prices of these Spirit Beast Carriages. Depending on the materials used for the carriage, the type and level of pulling beast, the prices varied greatly. However, one thing was constant, Spirit Beast Carriages at the Abandoning Emptiness Grade must be exchanged with Nine Revolutions Silver Pills, ranging from one silver pill to twenty silver pills.

If others came to the Thunder Sound Pavilion to buy a Spirit Beast Carriage, they could use other items for barter, but Eastern Heaven cultivators coming here must trade with pills.

This was naturally a deliberate means of the Thunder Sound Pavilion to procure Eastern Heaven pills. From ancient times to the present, there were likely countless Eastern Heaven pills that had ended up in the Thunder Sound Pavilion's possession, for Ning Fan was not the first or only foreign cultivator to purchase Spirit Beast Carriages here. As the pavilion restricted the types of pills, it seemed they sought not the pills themselves, but likely the refinement formulas behind those pills...

Ning Fan glanced at the second scroll which listed the pills that the Thunder Sound Pavilion refused to trade.

According to Ning Fan's speculation, these pills that were refused for trade were likely types that the Thunder Sound Pavilion had already obtained, researched thoroughly, and acquired refinement formulas, hence were no longer needed.

Excluding the pill types on the scroll, Ning Fan still had plenty of pills in his storage pouch that complied with the Thunder Sound Pavilion's exchange rules, qualifying for the exchange for a Spirit Beast Carriage.

There's just one thing that particularly caught Ning Fan's attention...

On the second scroll, thirteen kinds of Nine Revolutions Silver Pill have been newly added.

The ink is still very fresh, no more than three months old. Aside from these four kinds of expensive pills, the other pill inscriptions look very ancient...

In other words, within these three months, some outer cultivators have used Nine Revolutions Silver Pill to trade for thirteen Spirit Beast Carriages from Thunder Sound Pavilion? Besides him, have other Eastern Heaven Cultivators entered here, or perhaps, the one trading for the Spirit Beast Carriage wasn't a foreign cultivator, just happened to possess Eastern Heaven's expensive pills and traded them with the Thunder Sound Pavilion...

But if it truly was a foreign cultivator, it doesn't seem impossible. Firstly, it's certain that Ouyang Nuan's party Burying Moon has arrived in the Middle State, but even including Wu Laoba, it doesn't seem

necessary to use thirteen Spirit Beast Carriages... On the day of entering the Supreme Pill Sacred Domain, it wasn't only Ning Fan who entered, most of the entrants sought medicine on the outskirts of the Sacred Domain, but perhaps there are others who dared to venture into the inner circle...

"You have been staring at the expensive pills scroll for quite some time, could it be that you are short of funds and can't produce pills other than the ones we've refused to accept for trading?" the shopkeeper frowned.

"Expensive pills, I naturally have them. I just wonder, does your esteemed pavilion have any Shattered Thought Rank Spirit Beast Carriages for sale? If you do, I'm willing to trade with an equivalent value of Ninth Revolution Golden Pill." Ning Fan smiled faintly.

"Ninth Revolution Golden Pill! You want to use a Ninth Revolution Golden Pill to trade for a Shattered Thought Rank Spirit Beast Carriage!" The shopkeeper was slightly taken aback and extremely tempted. At the Ninth Revolution Golden Elixir Level, even the strongest of the ancient couldn't underestimate them. As a mere Shattered Thought Elder, he was naturally moved.

Unfortunately, after a moment, the shopkeeper could only force a smile and say, "Our pavilion has rules, Spirit Beast Carriages above the Shattered Thought Rank cannot be sold to outer cultivators. This rule I dare not break. If it weren't for this, so many big-spending foreign cultivators earlier wouldn't have only been able to purchase a Shedding Void Stage Spirit Beast Carriage."

Ning Fan's eyes narrowed slightly, hearing the shopkeeper's words, it seems indeed many foreign cultivators came to buy carriages to enter the Middle State...

"Forget it, in that case, I won't trouble the shopkeeper, I'll just buy a Shedding Void Stage Spirit Beast Carriage."

In the end, Ning Fan spent twenty Nine Revolutions Silver Pills to buy the best Shedding Void Stage Spirit Beast Carriage and left this small border town.

After Ning Fan's group left, the shopkeeper relayed information back to his family without another word. The information was only a short segment: The fourteenth batch of foreign cultivators has entered the Middle State, number of people: one, cultivation restricted by eons, no lightning induction

in the body, subordinate speculates this person is not here for the Primordial Thunder Cauldron, but still cannot be unguarded...

One incense stick later, Ning Fan, who had long since headed north in his Spirit Beast Carriage, suddenly opened his eyes and withdrew his retained some Ice Rain Technique left in the Thunder Sound Pavilion.

The information the shopkeeper relayed back to his family was still seen by Ning Fan.

"Am I the fourteenth batch of foreign cultivators entering the Middle State? Who were the first thirteen batches? Nuan'er and others must have entered the Middle State together as one batch, besides them, who else could the other foreign cultivators be..."

Flying Thunder Immortal King, Douxi Immortal King, Qin Xian Sha from the Maha Sect, Dark Clan representatives, and those Fragmented Thought Elders renowned in Eastern Heaven... This time, having heard the Supreme Pill Sacred Domain would open for the last time, many respected elders and powerful figures entered, among whom it wouldn't be surprising if someone aimed straight for the Middle State.

However, what the Thunder Sound Pavilion shopkeeper deliberately mentioned about 'no lightning induction in the body,' has another meaning...

Ning Fan's gaze turned slightly serious, reminded of the day the Great Emperor Chong He schemed against him with a mysterious yin thunder.

If on that day, he had greedily taken that yin thunder...perhaps today, those cultivators in Thunder Sound Pavilion might detect the lightning induction in his body.

This possibility cannot be ruled out, if this speculation proves accurate, then the scheming Great Emperor Chong He had calculated even today's events...

And the "Primordial Thunder Cauldron" mentioned in the intelligence report, what could it be... It seems that what the Thunder Sound Pavilion is guarding against is exactly the foreign cultivators targeting the Primordial Thunder Cauldron...

"Have you heard of the Primordial Thunder Cauldron?" Ning Fan asked while sitting outside the Spirit Beast Carriage, driving it while also talking to Duolan inside through the car curtain.

"The Primordial Thunder Cauldron is one of the cauldrons used by the Saint Ancestor during his lifetime. The Saint Ancestor had nine cauldrons, and the Primordial Thunder Cauldron is the first among them, refined by the Saint Ancestor using the Eastern Mountain Thunder, and further filled with all the materials from the Four Sects Marine Regions, merged with the soul into the cauldron..." Duolan explained.

"What is the Eastern Mountain Thunder, and what are the Four Sects Marine Regions?" Ning Fan asked in surprise, completely at a loss.

"I don't know either, these words are just from the scriptures, but I've heard from my father that the materials used by the Saint Ancestor to refine the cauldron were all sourced from his homeland. My father said it's a place entirely different from our world, things like the Eastern Mountain Thunder and Four Sects Marine Regions all belong to that world..." Duolan said with a face full of yearning.

She didn't understand the concept of the Real Realms or Dreamland Realm, but Ning Fan already had some understanding. It seems that this Primordial Thunder Cauldron is a magical treasure refined by a Saint using materials from the Real Realms...

An alchemical cauldron used by a Saint! From Duolan's words, the Herb-gathering Sage had nine cauldrons in his lifetime, with the Primordial Thunder Cauldron being the first, and there are eight other cauldrons besides it...

The Sect Master of the Pill Sect once obtained the Great Desolate Cauldron in the Supreme Pill Sacred Domain. That Great Desolate Cauldron is so powerful, one wonders if it is one of the Nine Cauldrons of the Saint... Regardless of whether it is or not, the Great Desolate Cauldron has already been destroyed, which is indeed a pity.

Speaking of which, that Supreme Pill Sacred Domain is truly a treasure trove: after the Saint died, his remnants turned into the Holy Mountain, preserving his relics; his flames became the Fire Soul Clan, suppressed beneath the boundary between two realms; the alchemical cauldrons he left behind are rare treasures; and his Medicine Slave's corpse was precisely Burying Moon's target for Corpse Seizing Sect...

"Speaking of which, I still don't know the title of that Herb-gathering Sage. After coming to the Dabei, I have flipped through many ancient texts, but only found titles like 'Extreme Elixir Elder' or 'Ancestor of Medicine Practitioners', which seemed fabricated and unreliable... Do you know the title of your Saint Ancestor?" Ning Fan asked casually, not expecting Duolan to know.

But Duolan's body trembled slightly as if she really knew—or rather, she recalled the moment when her father, with a stern face, took her into the Stone Path Secret Realm, solemnly informing her of the coordinates of seven stone thrones...

Echoing in her ears was the eerie illusory chanting of ten thousand corpses in front of the stone throne.

"Saint Nan Yao..."

"Saint Nan Yao?"

"Yes, it's Saint Nan Yao. 'Nan Zhan Gu recites Tao spirits' extinction, one decay into desolation, ten thousand chants into antiquity, a sword comes from the west, splitting reincarnation, forever losing the refuge of Saint Nan Yao'..."

Duolan murmured, with tears suddenly in her eyes, reminded of her father; even though that father rarely offered her warmth or care, and even rarely met.

Back then, she couldn't understand her father's guilty, helpless gaze. Now, she understood.

"What you chanted, what is it..." Ning Fan was secretly shocked. The moment Duolan spoke, he felt a slight pain in his divine sense, and multiple illusions appeared before his eyes.

Though he dispelled the illusions with a single thought, it still gave him a sense of unease.

He was quite certain that Duolan inside the carriage did not use any Illusory Art on him, nor did she intentionally channel any Mana. She merely recited a passage, yet it confused him, made him feel ensnared and sinking into it, unable to resist!

These words are by no means simple! How could ordinary words so beguile someone like him, who had undergone the Fu Li...

"I don't know what these words are either, just know that in the Stone Path Secret Realm, all the corpses chant this, numbly and unfeelingly chant this, it's terrifying, really terrifying... Father said, this is the Ten Thousand Chants Decay, a forbidden boundary I shouldn't touch..." Duolan suddenly grew drowsy, immediately leaning against the carriage and falling asleep.

Simply uttering such a sentence seemed to have exhausted all her heart spirit, leaving her utterly weary...

"Ten Thousand Chants Decay..." Ning Fan's expression grew slightly serious.

Duolan slept for an entire day before waking.

In one day's time, Ning Fan had already driven the Spirit Beast Carriage a considerable distance northward.

Duolan rubbed her bleary eyes, a bit apologetic for having fallen asleep. She should have been guiding Ning Fan since he wasn't familiar with Middle State and there were many rules he didn't quite understand.

It's crucial to know that Middle State cultivators build cities to live in, and their territorial tenacity is not typical. Ignoring the smaller cities, the City Lords of medium-sized ones tend to delineate territories, not permitting cultivators to approach indiscriminately. Should Ning Fan stumble into any City Lord's territory on his way north, that would spell trouble, and she should be helping the Senior find the path, not fall asleep...

Moreover, since the Senior was driving, it should have been her role as the Soul-Locked Slave to take the reins...

Why is it so noisy outside, it sounds like many horses and carriages are chasing behind their carriage.

"You're awake?" Ning Fan's tone seemed unhappy, could he be blaming her for falling asleep?

Duolan was immediately worried, wanting to explain why she dozed off due to inadvertently chanting that passage, but then the faint sounds of cursing from behind interrupted her thoughts.

"Bold scoundrels! You've trespassed on Thousand Armies City's territory, stop at once, face our punishment!"

"Stop! We, from Golden Thunder City, have been chasing you for a day and a night, continue running and face the consequences of our ruthlessness!"

"Shoot him, quick!"

"Use the Array Flag to stop him!"

"Damn it, we can't stop him!"

"This person is powerful!"

Arrows rained toward the Spirit Beast Carriage, burned to nothing by the magical fire that Ning Fan spat out with ease.

Array Flags soared into the air, casting formation light to try and delay the Spirit Beast Carriage, only to be extinguished by Ning Fan's casual gesture.

Unstoppable, unstoppable!

At least twelve Mid City masters were chasing the Spirit Beast Carriage, yet not one could halt its march!

Ning Fan was in a foul mood, driving his carriage peacefully, yet being unjustifiably cursed and pursued, with the pursuers only multiplying, becoming an unrelenting nuisance.

If not for considering that this was Middle State, the territory of the Great Humble Ones, he might not have resorted to a massacre, but he would certainly have imparted some lessons to those behind him.

"Senior, what's going on with these people?" Duolan felt somewhat speechless, pulling back the curtain to step out, realizing that Ning Fan's foul mood wasn't because of her.

"Don't know, seems like they're here to cause trouble." Ning Fan replied irritably.

Senior, you misconceive, it's not them bothering you, it's you intruding upon their territory, breaching taboos... Duolan wanted to explain but didn't know where to start, so she could only grin wryly.

"You're familiar with Middle State, you should know where there's a sparsely populated deserted place, guide me!"

Duolan's heart skipped a beat; could it be the Senior was too irked, intending to find a deserted area to massacre these nuisances behind into silence!

She might have surmised correctly...

"Senior, actually, actually... we're at fault... killing isn't good..." Duolan cautiously said.

"We're at fault? What did we do wrong?" Ning Fan was puzzled.

"We trespassed on their territory..."

"I've been traveling along the official roads between cities, not entering anyone's territory." Ning Fan said with a frown.

"Even the official roads are part of these Mid City's territory, crossing them requires a certain fee in gold and silver..."

"Oh, I see... I don't have any gold or silver." Ning Fan shrugged indifferently, apparently having several people attempt to stop and demand gold and silver from him along the way, who he flamboyantly ignored.

"I have some..." Duolan smirked bitterly.

"Do we give gold and silver now?"

"If we give it now, it's too late..." Duolan continued to smile bitterly.

"Then let's find a secluded place..." A cold gleam flashed in Ning Fan's eyes, scaring Duolan into quickly waving her hand.

"No, senior, please don't kill anyone, killing is not good!"

Duolan gritted her teeth. These were her own people; if Ning Fan killed them over something like collecting tolls, it would be too unjust...

Although the behavior of these Middle City cultivators was indeed a bit overbearing and needed a lesson.

"Let me handle this."

Duolan steadied her mind, asked Ning Fan to stop the vehicle, and then resumed her usual aloof demeanor.

As soon as the vehicle stopped, the cars and horses behind caught up, surrounding the spirit beast carriage. Several of the most arrogant Middle City cultivators were preparing to teach Ning Fan a lesson, but suddenly met Ning Fan's cold gaze, rendering them speechless... What a murderous gaze; it seemed they had hit an iron wall. Unfortunately, they had been chasing from behind all along and hadn't seen how terrifying Ning Fan driving the carriage was, otherwise they wouldn't have followed all the way here!

"Do you have something to say to me?" Ning Fan said indifferently.

The few Middle City cultivators immediately retreated, filled with panic.

Caught in a dilemma!

Fortunately, Duolan stepped forward at this moment.

"I am the Chulie Holy Maiden, why are you pursuing my carriage, do you intend to attack me?"

Hiss!

The faces of these Middle City cultivators turned as pale as earth with fright. The driver alone was terrifying enough, but unexpectedly, the woman in the carriage was even more terrifying!

Chulie Holy Maiden, this woman turned out to be the Holy Maiden of the Chulie lineage, a presence that even the Central Continent Five Emperors dare not easily offend. They really had hit an iron plate!

The pursuers, drenched in cold sweat, and the few elder cultivators recognized Duolan's appearance and immediately confirmed Duolan's identity, then begged for mercy.

"We dare not! How could we attack the Holy Maiden! We beg the Holy Maiden for forgiveness!"

"Retreat now!" Duolan reprimanded sharply.

A group of terrified pursuers scattered like frightened birds and beasts.

The trouble was effortlessly resolved, and Duolan heaved a sigh of relief, thankful that Ning Fan didn't get the chance to slaughter the Dabei people.

Ning Fan looked at Duolan somewhat perplexedly, "I didn't expect you to be so kind-hearted..."

"It's not me, but senior's benevolence that allows them to live." Duolan forced a smile, secretly acknowledging that her lying skills were becoming more proficient, as she could even flatter with such insincerity.

Suddenly realizing, perhaps spending more time with Ning Fan had subconsciously eased a bit of her reserve, allowing her to flatter so shamelessly.

If she were still guarded, she should have been cautious with Ning Fan, not daring even to flatter loosely...

Unintentionally, she seemed less afraid of him than at the beginning...

Ning Fan, however, did not probe Duolan's internal changes. Happy to avoid trouble, he mused, "I didn't expect your Holy Maiden status to be so useful. If it were me, a foreign cultivator, or Xianyu Chun, a Southern Frontier cultivator, even if these people feared, they wouldn't retreat so easily..."

"Of course. In front of a senior, my status naturally doesn't count for much, but in the Central Continent, even the Central Continent Five Emperors wouldn't dare easily offend the honorable Chulie Holy Maiden, let alone mere Middle City cultivators. But in the Holy Mountain, the status of the Holy Maiden wouldn't mean much..." In the first half, Duolan spoke with pride, with the latter half tinged with bitterness.

Currently, in the Holy Mountain, she doesn't count for anything anymore...

"Oh? Even the Central Continent Five Emperors wouldn't dare easily offend you?" Ning Fan was slightly surprised, feeling that he had underestimated this woman all along.

"On the surface, they wouldn't dare, but in secret, who knows. After all, they are high and mighty Immortal Emperors, push them, and who can say what might happen. Speaking of which, if there's any overt trouble for you in the Central Continent, senior, let me handle it for you; helping you is my honor." Not helping you means you might commit wanton killings of the innocent! Duolan thought internally.

"With you stepping forward, things indeed become less troublesome, so thank you." Ning Fan nodded.

Reducing trouble was certainly agreeable to Ning Fan.

And so, the spirit beast carriage continued heading north. Occasionally, when trespassing into other Middle City territories, all Duolan needed to do was reveal her identity, and the opponents would flee in terror, avoiding any disputes.

Another day passed, and Duolan finally sensed something was wrong; Ning Fan's driving direction was heading toward Baihua Peak in the Central Continent's Five Finger Peaks!

"Ahead is the Baihua Great Emperor's territory. With the Baihua Great Emperor still recovering from severe injuries, her territory has long been closed, prohibiting passage..." Duolan explained.

"Baihua Great Emperor?" Ning Fan's expression was slightly grave. Just moments ago, an extremely powerful yet extremely weak divine sense had brushed over the spirit beast carriage.

Could this be the master of the place, the Baihua Great Emperor?

"I need to find someone here. Your status should allow entry, yes?" Ning Fan inquired.

"Yes, it's possible. If senior insists on entering, I can go with you, though it might cause some trouble... oh well, it's nothing major..."

Duolan, a bit hesitant, still bit her lip and nodded.

The spirit beast carriage moved forward a little more before being halted; ahead was the boundary of Baihua Peak.

"By the order of the Baihua Emperor, within a thousand miles of Baihua Peak is forbidden territory, no ordinary person may enter!" A group of Yellow Turban Warriors blocked the way.

"I am Chulie Duolan, here on business." Duolan stepped out of the carriage, speaking calmly.

Instantly, the warriors drew a sharp breath; moments later, laughter erupted.

"Very well, since Saintess Duolan is here, you may certainly enter Baihua Peak! We have been waiting for you for quite some time. But remember, entering Baihua Peak is easy; leaving won't be so simple!"

"I have already considered that, now make way!"

At Duolan's sharp command, the warriors promptly cleared a path leading straight to Baihua Peak.

Baihua Peak, one of the Central Continent's Five Finger Peaks, the location of the Baihua Great Emperor's abode... Does this count as revisiting an old place?

In her youth, she had been to Baihua Peak; back then, she had accompanied her father to bully others...

That year, she made countless enemies... her domineering father...

Chapter 1016: Battle of Dao Images

After a simple check, the Spirit Beast Carriage was allowed to pass and enter the Hundred Flowers Territory.

Behind the carriage, a dozen or so Yellow Turban Warriors, riding strange beasts, followed closely, as if to monitor, clearly not intending to let Ning Fan's group move freely within the Hundred Flowers Peak Domain.

Within a thousand miles of Hundred Flowers Peak, every few miles there were patrolling and checking masters, the strict defense making one believe that the martial law at Hundred Flowers Peak was not child's play.

Ning Fan did not intend to cause trouble here but instead followed the path towards the main peak of Hundred Flowers Peak. If his perception was correct, Ouyang Nuan and Burying Moon should be on the main peak.

Among the Five Emperors of the Central Continent, the Baihua Great Emperor is the Immortal Emperor who least likes to get involved in mundane affairs. A thousand years ago, when this Emperor entered the tenth-grade fierce domain to search for medicine, he was besieged and seriously injured by several Immortal Emperor-level Corpse Demons. He has been recovering in seclusion to this day, causing the Hundred Flowers Peak territory to remain under martial law year-round, prohibiting outside masters from entering.

If it weren't for Duolan accompanying him, Ning Fan might have faced some difficulties trying to enter the martial law-bound Hundred Flowers Peak.

Ning Fan had heard some rumors about the Baihua Great Emperor; at this moment, recalling the messages from Burying Moon and others, he couldn't help but speculate: it seems that Burying Moon is trying to take Ouyang Nuan to save an old friend. Given her Immortal Emperor status, her friend couldn't possibly be an ordinary person... Perhaps, Burying Moon's old friend is indeed this Baihua Great Emperor...

If so, then Hundred Flowers Peak wouldn't be an adversary, but a friend.

However, the attitude of these Hundred Flowers cultivators, the atmosphere was overly charged. Along the way, Ning Fan encountered many Hundred Flowers cultivators, each looking at him with undisguised hostility.

It's not hostility towards Ning Fan's identity as an external cultivator; so far, the identity as an external cultivator hasn't been exposed. The hostility actually comes from transferred anger.

The true target of hostility for these Hundred Flowers people is Duolan! And Ning Fan, having been assumed to be Duolan's driver, naturally wouldn't receive a friendly reception...

"This driver is quite formidable, my spirit sense couldn't even get within three feet of him before being bounced back!"

"Humph! So what if he is formidable, isn't he still a lapdog for Duolan, the lowly maid!"

"...I exhausted my Heart Spirit to see through this driver's cultivations with secret technique, yet couldn't discern its depth. This person is at least a Shedding Void Stage master, possibly even higher!"

"What of the Shedding Void Stage! Worthless! To think that this lowly maid dared to bring just a Shedding Void servant to my Hundred Flowers Peak, truly daring, must give her a piece of my mind!"

Some Hundred Flowers cultivators along the way discussed, and some were eager to make a move against Duolan, yet hesitated, considering carefully, and finally gave up, clenching their teeth.

Duolan was very anxious. Being cursed was one thing, but Ning Fan, being a devil of devils, being cursed as a driver lapdog, should certainly not get angry.

She dared not truly treat Ning Fan like a driver. So she sat with Ning Fan outside the carriage, maintaining an aloof appearance as if she were the owner of this vehicle, yet carefully observing Ning Fan's expression. Seeing Ning Fan's brows furrowing deeper, her heart sank, worried that Senior Ning might truly be enraged and wants to fight these Hundred Flowers cultivators...

Anxious, anxious, anxious...

After all, this is an Immortal Emperor's territory, acting rashly here would lead to considerable losses...

"Do you have a feud with Hundred Flowers Peak?" Ning Fan suddenly asked via voice transmission.

"There's some past conflict. My father, the former Chu Lie Emperor, forcibly barged into Hundred Flowers Peak and caused a bloodbath..." Duolan replied, cautiously surprised.

"A bloodbath..." Ning Fan slightly tensed, one could imagine the unimaginable massacre and the overwhelming bloodiness from this simple sentence.

The former Chu Lie Emperor bloodbathed Hundred Flowers Peak! No wonder these Hundred Flowers cultivators are so hostile to Duolan...

"With this causal relationship, entering Hundred Flowers Peak poses considerable risk for you. Had I known earlier, I would have left you outside." Ning Fan frowned.

"Is Senior worried about me? It truly makes this junior feel honored."

Duolan's uneasy mood inexplicably improved, a slight smile appeared at the corner of her eye. "Actually, I didn't want to come to this place either, but without me accompanying, it wouldn't be easy for Senior to enter Hundred Flowers Peak during martial law. Rest assured, my safety isn't an issue. Being the Chulie Lineage Holy Maiden, even if they resent me, they wouldn't dare publicly harm my life. After all, killing the Holy Mountain Saintess is a severe crime; they would at most cause some trouble."

Since her father's death, the hardships and grievances she endured as a solitary girl were not few, some trouble was only bearable, her heart long since made unbreakable. If she could help Senior, facing some trouble is nothing. For some reason, her fear towards Ning Fan has increasingly lessened, vaguely hoping to assist Ning Fan...

Ning Fan was slightly silent, after a long while he said.

"Even if you don't help me, I am confident I can enter here. In saying this, I am neither your benefactor nor your enemy, you have no reason to go this far for me."

With his experience, how could he not feel that during these days of interaction, Duolan's feelings towards him had slightly changed? No longer as fearful of him, even having a bit of closeness, though not quite affection, but the seeds had begun to sprout.

But this feeling is actually just a misunderstanding. No grace, only enmity—there's no more succinct expression to describe his relationship with Duolan.

He killed Duolan's senior brother, Pi Xiong, and he forced Duolan to become a Soul-Locked Slave—this is the truth. Just because he had casually saved Duolan twice, offered her some kindness, and occasionally

showed her a gentle demeanor, Duolan was overjoyed, which led to a budding affection. Yet this affection is wrong.

"No grace, only enmity..." The brightness in Duolan's eyes gradually dimmed. She bit her lip slightly, her delicate face turning somewhat pale. How could she have forgotten that Ning Fan is her enemy?

Though her affection for Senior Brother Pi Xiong is scant, Pi Xiong was after all also a disciple of Chulie, yet he died at Senior Ning's hands. Senior Ning is Chulie's foe; she should not feel affection for Senior Ning. What's more, Senior Ning is an external cultivator and a madman who has kidnapped the Holy Mountain Saintess...

Only those with a weak heart would feel affection and dependence on small favors from an enemy... Has she become too reliant on Ning Fan's protection? Is she still her, or the fallen Saintess who has walked alone until today?

How can she feel affection for the villain who kidnapped her? Haha, Senior's teachings are right, this is wrong, it's wrong...

"Actually, even if not to help Senior, I wanted to choose a time to visit Baihua Peak again. The last time was with my father, and it's been many years now... Senior need not feel indebted to me for this matter. Should any trouble arise at Baihua Peak due to me, Senior need not worry. I will find a way to deal with Baihua Peak's difficulties, and will absolutely not trouble Senior." Duolan's voice became even more respectful, respectful to the point of alienation, as if forcibly extinguishing any budding affection she had for Ning Fan.

Yet it seemed like at this moment, her state of mind and cultivation had clearly improved, and her Dao heart became more steadfast.

However, the originally harmonious traveling atmosphere inevitably fell into silence.

Ning Fan understood that Duolan realized his intentions and would no longer show him closeness. She had forcibly aligned their identities from within her heart.

Master and Soul-Locked Slave, external cultivator and the Great Humble Ones' cultivator, enemy and enemy—nothing beyond this... No grace, only enmity, indeed, no grace, only enmity.

Purposely causing the Soul-Locked Slave to distance herself from him... Ning Fan sighed quietly. Was this considered doing a good deed? He didn't want this girl to sink further down the wrong path, nor for her to lose herself due to some small favors, truly adopting the mentality of a slave, humbly catering to her master... This was why Ning Fan intentionally created distance between them.

This girl wanted to help him enter Baihua Peak out of goodwill, and he appreciated that, so he reciprocated by offering guidance.

Though this guidance was somewhat harsh and ungrateful, it indeed made Duolan see clearly within herself and brought about an improvement in her state of mind, which could be considered returning her kindness.

No more words were exchanged along the way.

In Baihua Peak's territory, the stone peaks are numerous but mostly low in height, leaving only the main peak towering and imposing. From a distance, the peaks resemble a finger pointing to the sky, awe-inspiring.

On each stone peak, there are countless exotic flowers and weeds that indeed match the name of Baihua (Hundred Flowers). Many are unique to the Great Humble Ones, ones Ning Fan has never encountered.

With a flicker of Ning Fan's spirit sense, Baihua Peak's territory suddenly experienced a faint drizzle that silently nourished everything. Light rain in late spring is quite ordinary, and thus no one noticed anything peculiar about this rain. Yet they were unaware that Ning Fan's spirit sense had silently followed the rain, infiltrating various stone peaks and even the strong cultivators' caves atop these peaks.

In Baihua Peak's territory, there is but one main peak, where the Baihua Great Emperor's cave residence is located. The main peak is shrouded in mountain mist that felt extraordinarily strange to Ning Fan, much like a bewildering Heavenly Dao that his rain sense could not penetrate. Once entered, control is lost, gradually becoming disoriented until the thoughts collapse and disperse into the mist...

This must be the handiwork of Baihua Great Emperor. Ning Fan did not forcibly probe the main peak, as being discovered doing so would be a highly disrespectful provocation towards Baihua Great Emperor who sits upon the main peak.

There are seven auxiliary peaks, each presided over by Immortal Kings and Immortal Venerables, outstanding disciples of Baihua Great Emperor's sect. Ning Fan similarly did not investigate further, merely withdrew his spirit sense after a cursory glance, unnoticed by anyone.

As the Spirit Beast Carriage inched closer to the main peak, the fragrance of flowers in the air grew stronger. Until the foot of the main peak, a few youths suddenly descended from the mountain trail, blocking Ning Fan and his group's path. These youths each possessed handsome appearances, roughly with the cultivation of Mortal Immortals, yet their backs had peculiar fleshy wings that could slightly ignore the Central State's forbidden power, momentarily allowing them to fly dozens of yards above the ground, an impressive feat.

"Step aside, the Great Emperor has ordered us to escort the Chulie Holy Maiden up the mountain," said a few fleshy-winged youths with expressionless faces.

Rather than expressionless faces, it seemed that these youths had rigid faces incapable of making expressions...

Ning Fan's gaze narrowed slightly, detecting extremely concealed corpses' Qi within the youths' bodies, immediately understanding. They were Corpse Demons.

Yellow Turban Warriors trailing Ning Fan appeared extremely afraid of these youths, hurriedly paying respects then fleeing quickly. Ning Fan and Duolan alighted from the Spirit Beast Carriage, handing over the carriage to the guards stationed at the mountain's base. The youths motioned for Duolan and Ning Fan to "Follow," leading them up the mountain path.

Ning Fan's eyes flickered as he gradually followed.

"These youths were once the cauldron furnaces of Baihua Great Emperor. Baihua Great Emperor prefers handsome, intelligent youths and often practices Dual Cultivation with them. Every year, countless youths are toyed with until death by her. The most beautiful among them are further refined into Corpse Demons through secret techniques by Baihua Great Emperor, aiming to preserve their physical

bodies eternally, loving them as before, and engaging in pleasures with all the Corpse Demons. Youths transformed into Corpse Demons retain a bit of spirit awareness and hold an aloof status at Baihua Peak; even Immortal Venerables and Kings of the auxiliary peaks dare not casually provoke them because they have received Baihua Great Emperor's favor."

"Senior's appearance is also considered exceptionally handsome, and coming to Baihua Peak, if not meeting Baihua Great Emperor then it's fine, but if meeting her... there is the possibility Baihua Great Emperor might take a liking to Senior. These youths being dispatched by Baihua Great Emperor to fetch us up the mountain suggests we may inevitably have to face the host of this place... Senior must be cautious." Duolan spoke with great respect, carefully choosing her words to remind him via sound transmission.

Careful not to catch Baihua Great Emperor's eye? Careful not to be taken for Dual Cultivation? Ning Fan's mind filled with black lines as he glanced at Duolan, seeing her extremely serious expression without the slightest sign of joking.

Could there really be a risk of being taken by the Baihua Great Emperor? He came looking for Burying Moon and Ouyang Nuan, and according to Ning Fan's assessment, the two women likely arrived at Baihua Main Peak to heal Baihua Great Emperor. In that case, he should be considered a guest of Baihua Peak... But it seems there are other possibilities, as well as risks involved...

"If it doesn't work, then I'll go up the mountain alone to meet the Baihua Great Emperor. Senior may stay at the foot of the mountain. For Baihua Cultivators, if they only regard you as a junior's servant, they won't mind even if you don't ascend the mountain." Duolan transmitted this message again.

"I appreciate your kindness, but the people I'm looking for are on this peak, so I still have to make a trip up." Ning Fan replied.

"Since that's the case, I won't say much more. On the way up the mountain, if anyone gives me trouble, you can just stand aside without worrying about my safety..."

"I understand."

He understood, but he didn't say if he would help, remaining very calm.

Duolan's supposedly indestructible inner heart felt slightly bitter. What was she hoping for? For Ning Fan to domineeringly shield her behind his back and protect her unwaveringly? Impossible, that's not possible. The advice Ning Fan gave earlier was to draw a line between them, to cut off her foolish delusions. She should recognize her identity, recognize reality... There's no possibility between her and Ning Fan, and Ning Fan certainly wouldn't cause trouble for a Soul-Locked Slave like her by opposing Baihua Peak...

The journey remained silent.

The Corpse Demon Youngsters were silent, and there was no further communication between Duolan and Ning Fan. After walking along the mountain path for two hours, several Corpse Demon Youngsters suddenly ordered Ning Fan and Duolan to wait here and not leave. Then, spreading their meat wings, they flew further up the mountain, quickly disappearing from sight.

No choice, the masters had commanded, so Ning Fan could only wait here halfway up the mountain, though his heart harbored a trace of caution. He keenly sensed that after the meat-winged youths left, the mountain's shape subtly changed.

This change was almost imperceptible, and even some grandmasters who had studied the grand momentum for years would hardly notice, but it could not escape Ning Fan's ears and eyes, trained in the Momentum Character Secret.

Time slowly passed, and the mist that originally permeated the main peak suddenly grew denser, making the atmosphere feel slightly off. Gradually, the mist's density exceeded the cultivators' vision, and objects ten steps away began to blur. With a white mist obscuring the view, the mountain path became indistinct. Ning Fan frowned slightly. If he was not mistaken, the thickening mist was indeed intentional...

"Be careful, senior. This is the Bewildering Heart Formation on Baihua Peak! Someone is manipulating this formation to target us!" Duolan tensed slightly.

The Bewildering Heart Formation is the protective mountain formation of Baihua Main Peak. Without Baihua Great Emperor's permission, it is rarely activated. Could it be that Baihua Great Emperor ordered it to give her some trouble...

As expected, with her grudge against Baihua Peak, ascending the mountain smoothly was impossible.

Duolan was no incompetent; she was, after all, a Shekong Cultivator. Now aware that the formation was attacking her, she promptly displayed her divine skills, the power of the medicine soul protecting her entire body. It seemed she was using some kind of Spirit Medicine Secret Art. Duolan's long hair was originally bound with Flood Dragon's Tendon, but the tendon suddenly unbound itself and began to float and soar three feet above Duolan's head, evidently a defensive magical treasure. As the treasure ascended, wind moved around Duolan's body, her long hair, red as flames, danced with the wind, strikingly beautiful and somewhat dazzling.

"Flaming Dragon Tendon of the Vacant Dragon? Didn't expect you to possess such an item and refine it into a protective treasure... Vacant Dragon is good at illusions, naturally effective against illusion formations. Using this treasure to counter the Bewildering Heart Formation makes sense, but unfortunately, your cultivation is ultimately insufficient. This item in your hands is useless!" Suddenly a voice of scorn from an old man echoed from within the thick fog, full of a mid-phased Shattered Thought aura.

It was indeed a mid-phased Shattered Thought Cultivator, manipulating the Bewildering Heart Formation of the main peak to deal with Duolan!

"We'll see whether it works!" Duolan urged the power of the medicine soul, cleverly resonating with the swirling Flood Dragon's Tendon. Clearly, it was a unique magical treasure activated by the medicine soul.

The Flood Dragon's Tendon vibrated, suddenly sweeping out massive white haze, pushing the surrounding mist back twenty feet.

"An insignificant trick!" The old man's voice from within the fog scoffed, suddenly shouting powerfully, causing a giant shadow to appear in the mist.

The shadow was extremely ethereal, seemingly a gigantic snake formed from the mist, towering above. It was nothing else but the power of Dao Image!

It was indeed the Fragmented Thought Elders from the shadows, revealing his Dao Image!

This Dao Image, named Rising Serpent Riding the Mist, had merged into his Dao Thought Technique entirely. For Shattered Thought cultivators, during duels, they could not only utilize Dao Thought Technique but also display Dao Image to augment divine skills.

The Dao Image of Rising Serpent Riding the Mist could reach Earth-Grade sixty-fourth rank, greatly enhancing illusory arts and illusion formation power.

As this Dao Image appeared, the power of the mist formation was immediately augmented, with the mist originally pushed back by the white haze once again engulfing Duolan.

Duolan's floral countenance startled, attempting to urge the Flood Dragon's Tendon to counter the mist once more. But the old man lurking in the shadows didn't give her the chance, showing divine skills that directly seized the Flood Dragon's Treasured item!

In this way, Duolan lost her support, receiving the mist's sudden intrusion within her body, shouting inwardly at the imminent danger. Trying to expel the mist from within her body, it was already too late.

As soon as it entered, the mist flowed directly with the blood, rushing towards her Tian Ling, accompanied by severe pain forcibly tearing open Duolan's divine sense and invading it. In an instant, Duolan's expression showed confusion and daze, with scenes of illusions appearing before her eyes, drowning her in the illusion formation.

"Lan'er, these seven coordinates, you must keep them well. When your cultivation is sufficient, with the secret treasures of seven Stone Thrones, you shall revive my Chulie glory! Never forget, never forget!"

Oh, it was what her father said to her before he died.

In a daze, Duolan saw her father's weak smile, saw the guilt in his eyes, as he gently patted her head, his spirit burning to ashes bit by bit, yet it felt like a trace of liberation...

Father, don't leave Lan'er... Lan'er doesn't want to restore Chulie, Lan'er just wants to be with father...

"I don't need a fallen Saintess as a Dao companion. The marriage alliance between my Spirit Sect Lineage and your Chulie Lineage is hereby annulled!" Oh, it was the illusion of that scene where she was publicly rejected.

Spirit Sect Saint Heir, do you think you're so impressive? Yet you don't know that if it weren't for the lifeline of Chulie, I, Chulie Duolan, wouldn't care to marry you either.

Only that day on the Holy Mountain, the humiliation was unforgettable, etched into my soul... Because from that day on, I was no longer the exalted Saintess, my pride was trampled beneath others' feet, and more and more people wanted to step on me...

"Your mother is a bitch, and so are you!" Oh, it was the mocking voices of the other branch Saintesses.

That day, those other Saintesses soaking in the mother-daughter pool, mocked her, humiliated her. She could endure the humiliation, but her mother could not, so she impulsively struck first, and as a result, was surrounded and attacked by those Saintesses, leaving her seriously injured, even ruining her Saintess tattoo...

In the end, it was she, the victim, who was punished by the Holy Mountain, truly unfair.

"Lan'er, I'm sorry, I can't watch you grow up..." Oh, it was her mother's voice when she self-immolated her spirit.

Very faint, very faint, she must have been very young then, so young that she couldn't remember her mother's face and voice, but this voice remained in her memory, in her bones, impossible to forget...

What kind of person was my mother...

I never met my mother, I so wish to see her just once...

I never met my mother, I never received my father's love. I have no master, no senior, no friends, all affection is false, only the humiliation is real, only the scheming is real, only those people's greed for the Stone Throne Coordinates is real...

So tired, so tired... I don't want to restore the Chulie Lineage anymore, I don't want to struggle bitterly anymore, I want to die with my father, and my mother whom I never met...

To be freed together...

No longer be anyone's soul-locked slave.

No longer be ridiculed by anyone.

No longer... struggle bitterly...

The illusions in front of her increased, and the divine sense continued to bring severe pain, vaguely on the verge of collapse. But Duolan couldn't sense the collapse of her divine sense, she was bewitched by the illusions, unstoppable. Her heart was numb, in pain, weary, and ready to give up.

Letting those mists collapse her divine sense, she no longer wanted to stop, nor could she stop...

"Go easy, destroy half of her divine sense and leave a crack in her spirit sense, that's enough to teach this girl a lesson. If something really happens to her, it won't be easy to explain to the Holy Mountain..." In the depths of the mist, suddenly another voice of a Fragmented Thought Elder echoed, a middle-aged man's voice.

The Fragmented Thought Elder snorted coldly, just about to decrease the power of the mist formation, suddenly his eyes shook.

It was in that mist, that a series of collapsing sounds emerged, showing signs of instability in the formation.

"Impossible! Who is breaking the Bewildering Heart Formation!"

"It's that driver! How could he achieve this!"

"This is a formation laid down by the Great Emperor, although we are the ones operating it, it's not something anyone can break from the front, this person, this person..."

In the depths of the mist, exclamations suddenly erupted, clearly the ambushers hiding in the dark were not just one person.

Duolan was bewildered, pained, and so sad she could barely breathe, when suddenly a warmth spread from her palm into her body, causing Duolan's divine sense to explode like thunder, restoring clarity. Only then did she realize that she already had injuries in her divine sense, with tears on her face...

"You cried?" Ning Fan frowned, it was he who woke Duolan from the side.

"Thank you, senior, for your rescue." Duolan wiped away the tears from the corners of her eyes, not mentioning her tears, just gently biting her lip until it bled, forcibly calming her mind.

"It was just a small effort." Ning Fan frowned and casually pulled Duolan's hand, suddenly stepping forward with a strange step.

This step seemed slow, but it was obviously incredibly fast. Where it landed, a golden flame footprint was fiercely burning on the ground.

The formation's great momentum here has been disrupted by this step! The sound of formations collapsing began to echo.

Duolan had just entered the illusory formation, not fully aware, and was pulled by Ning Fan. She only realized later, feeling her ears burning; why was she being led by the senior, how could she be led by the senior, she was just a Soul-Locked Slave...

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Ning Fan stepped forward, leaving golden flame footprints on the ground. The mist here continued to collapse, dissipating wildly in all directions. Even the Dao Image of the Rising Serpent Riding the Mist

faded along with the formation's collapse. The entire Baihua Peak trembled, causing a commotion, birds scattered in flight, and numerous masters exiting their seclusion with indescribable shock.

What happened! Was the Bewildering Heart Formation broken? Which Immortal Emperor attacked Baihua Peak?

The clear sky reappeared above Ning Fan's head.

"What did this man do to tear apart the formation of the Bewildering Heart Great Formation?"

"What is this step technique? These golden flame footprints seem familiar, I've heard of them somewhere before..."

"The Ancestral Art of the Eastern Heaven! It's the untransmitted secret art of that outsider's Ancestral Emperor! I've read about it in ancient texts!"

"No, this man is not the driver; he's an outsider, an outsider who knows the Ancestral Arts of Eastern Heaven!"

Powerful figures emerged at the other end of the mountain path, appearing halfway up the mountain. They were the Baihua Cultivators who ambushed Duolan, all with looks of astonishment.

Duolan then realized again, what did Senior Ning do? He broke through the mountain-protecting formation set by an Immortal Emperor head-on with his restrained cultivation?

The depth of Senior Ning's formation mastery had reached such a level!

Ning Fan suddenly let go, Duolan felt a chill in her palm, feeling inexplicably disappointed.

"You are an outsider!"

Among the Baihua Cultivators opposite, a long-bearded old monk asked with a rather gloomy expression. He was the one who previously propelled the Dao Image, never expecting that the illusory formation he strengthened with the power of the Dao Image would still be so easily broken by Ning Fan. Given Ning Fan's cultivation, it wasn't particularly high either; it should have been suppressed by the Punishing Ring...

"Indeed, I am an outsider." Ning Fan said calmly, unfazed by his outsider identity.

Immediately, the Baihua Cultivators showed disdain.

If Ning Fan were Duolan's driver, though detested by the cultivators, he would be somewhat respected; after all, a driver of the Saintess would be considered a Holy Mountain Cultivator, a guardian of the Holy Mountain, not to be underestimated.

But if Ning Fan were merely an outsider... haha, therein lies the habitual racial prejudice of the Great Humble Ones.

"You, an outsider, who allowed you to enter Baihua Peak! And who allowed you to interfere in our matters with the Chulie Saintess!" a middle-aged cultivator sneered, possessing mid-phase Shattered Thought cultivation.

Ning Fan's brow furrowed deeper; he didn't want to become hostile with the Great Humble Ones, especially not with the Zhongzhou Immortal Emperor's forces, but his principles remained unchangeable.

Duolan was his servant; he could treat her coldly, neglect her, but others attempting to harm her was unacceptable!

"I came to Baihua Peak searching for someone; Chulie Saintess is guiding me, so I cannot sit idly by her troubles," Ning Fan responded calmly.

"Is that so? It seems you're determined to meddle. Very well, then let this old man see what other means besides formation mastery you have to justify meddling in the affairs of Baihua Peak!" scoffed

the long-bearded old monk as he stepped forward. As his divine skills unfolded, white mist immediately spread behind him, and within the mist, a giant serpent's shadow gradually emerged.

As soon as the giant serpent's shadow appeared, it opened its bloody mouth, attacking Ning Fan head-on. Ning Fan's eyes turned cold; the long-bearded old monk had actually used a Dao Image attack against him.

The Dao Image attack was malicious...

In general, during battles among Shattered Thought Masters, even with the power of a Dao Image enhancement, direct Dao Image attacks were seldom used. Dao Image battles were extremely dangerous for True Immortals, and damage to a Dao Image could lead to a fall in realms or even Dao collapse and death!

Furthermore, Dao Images couldn't easily harm others unless the opponent also used a Dao Image to counter. Otherwise, Dao Images didn't possess direct harm capabilities. Before casting this spell, the long-bearded old monk belittled Ning Fan with words, forbade him from using that strange step method, and had already used a Dao Image skill first. If Ning Fan were afraid and didn't counter with Dao Image power, it would be a tacit admission that he had no right to interfere in these affairs.

Either evade or confront with a Dao Image; no third option was given to Ning Fan!

Ning Fan recognized this Rising Serpent Riding the Mist Dao Image; it was evident the long-bearded old monk was the one controlling the formation earlier.

Did he mind that he easily broke the formation array, and thus resorted to harsh measures? Does he really want to force him to use the Dao Image to decide the victor?

At worst, it would destroy his cultivation; at best, it would cause his path to collapse and die... This long-bearded old monk had calculated well!

Ning Fan laughed.

He entered the Great Humble Ones, always seeking compromise to avoid trouble, but that did not mean he feared confrontation.

If he feared confrontation, he would not have forcibly broken the mountain's divine ability and swallowed the Ancestral Emperor Lou Tuo's innate Fire Spirit. He dared to offend an Emperor like Lou Tuo, so what fear could he possibly have for a mere Mid-Phase Shattered Thought cultivator!

"Scram!"

Ning Fan suddenly let out a cold shout, and a repressive yet powerful aura of the Dao Image instantly emanated subtly from his person. An invisible force directly shook the giant serpent Dao Image into retreating with a wretched cry, showing fear in its eyes. It trembled unusually, as if sensing a higher tier Dao Image suppression from Ning Fan.

"How is this possible!" The long-bearded old monk was greatly astonished, and after the shock came shame and anger.

His greatest pride lay in his Dao Image cultivation, which at Earth-Grade Rank Sixty-Four was already outstanding among Mid-Phase Shattered Thought cultivators, and rare for having cultivated it to minor achievement.

In a confrontation of equals in magical skills, he wouldn't dare claim to be a strong Mid-Phase Shattered Thought cultivator, but in terms of a Dao Image duel, not even a Late-Phase Shattered Thought cultivator could easily defeat him. His initial thought was to provoke Ning Fan into a Dao Image duel with words, and then rely on the strength of his Dao Image to easily eliminate Ning Fan.

Unexpectedly, the Dao Image he was so proud of was defeated in a direct confrontation by this foreign cultivator right before his eyes!

How disgraceful! To be defeated by a foreign cultivator in the field he excelled in the most!

"Devour again!"

The long-bearded old monk used some secret technique that increased the aura of the giant serpent Dao Image a bit as it once again opened its mouth to swallow Ning Fan.

However, the serpent's eyes clearly showed fear towards Ning Fan. In their brief encounter, it had sensed the terror of Ning Fan's Dao Image, even if its master still remained unaware of this...

"The first strike, I held back, out of respect for Baihua Peak. The second strike, I will still hold back, but if you remain persistent after this, I will show no mercy!"

Ning Fan didn't summon his complete Dao Image but rather just a flash of dark light around his body that seemed to push forward like boundless darkness. Not only did this strike the giant serpent into the air, but also pulled back, tearing off a piece of its illusory bloody flesh.

The long-bearded old monk groaned, coughed blood, and showed an expression full of disbelief; because the damage to his Dao Image actually inflicted significant injuries upon him, even causing a slight fall in cultivation, although, very fortunately, he did not drop out of the Mid-Phase Shattered Thought realm.

The opponent's Dao Image was indeed strong, he had to admit that much, and the opponent had indeed shown mercy, as he had to acknowledge; otherwise, his Dao Image would surely have suffered more damage, potentially causing a drop in realm, and yet his realm remained intact, proving the opponent's mercy!

Nevertheless, the opponent had torn a piece of bloody flesh from his Dao Image—this, he could not accept!

This mere foreign cultivator, so insolent, boasting so arrogantly—this was something his pride as a Baihua Peak cultivator could not tolerate!

Holding back? Did he need the mercy of a foreign cultivator? Ants! To be shown mercy by a foreign cultivator was utterly disgraceful!

He must kill him to reclaim his honor!

"Devouring Dao Technique!"

The long-bearded old monk's fingers danced to form mystical incantations, abruptly unleashing a powerful secret technique.

The giant serpent Dao Image, initially fearful of Ning Fan, suddenly had blood-red eyes filled with ferocity, as if having lost its reason, with no hint of fear left. Despite its wounded form, it opened its mouth to swallow Ning Fan for the third time.

All around, there were sounds of sharp intakes of breath, clearly recognizing the Devouring Dao Technique.

The Devouring Dao Technique, an extremely dangerous Forbidden Technique within the Shattered Thought Grade, could devour another's Dao Image to repair one's own and even enhance the power and divine skills of one's own Dao Image.

Many evil cultivators loved to hunt and devour others' Dao Images to quickly enhance their own through this technique. But can Dao Images be devoured randomly? A Dao Image is the manifestation of a cultivator's own Dao, devouring another's Dao Image essentially means swallowing their Dao. To one's own Dao, others' Dao is a contaminant. Although the Devouring Dao Technique can quickly boost one's own Dao Image, it comes with a significant side effect: it causes impurity in one's own Dao and damages the Dao foundation, impacting future cultivation prospects.

Even evil cultivators must think carefully before using the Devouring Dao Technique and be prepared to bear its side effects.

At this moment, the long-bearded old monk wished only to devour a piece of Ning Fan's Dao Image to repair his own, disregarding any issues of impurity, and no longer sought to win a Dao Image duel against Ning Fan.

It was undeniable; Ning Fan's Dao Image was exceedingly powerful. If he could devour even a small part of it, it would be enough to completely repair his own and possibly even benefit in other ways!

The long-bearded old monk was filled with greed, certain that Ning Fan's Dao Image must be of a higher grade, surpassing the Earth Grade Fifty-Three Rank; otherwise, it couldn't have caused such a crushing defeat in a single encounter.

If he could swallow a bit of the opponent's high-level Dao Image, even if it added some impurities to his own Dao, it would be worth it. Those impurities could be painstakingly removed later, but the chance to consume a high-level Dao Image was extremely rare!

This was an opportunity! The long-bearded old monk didn't intend to let it slip, also figuring that Ning Fan would restrain himself since this place was the Hundred Flowers Territory, and thus reassured.

Ning Fan slightly closed his eyes, and when he reopened them, he revealed a cold smile.

It was a smile filled with demonic thoughts, giving off a sense of callousness that was chilling to behold!

He had left plenty of face for Hundred Flowers Peak, but if the opponent remained stubbornly ignorant, he wouldn't back down either. His tenacity had been set since the beginning of his cultivation journey. If he went mad, any concerns or schemes would be cast aside!

"Capture!"

A great black radiance surged around Ning Fan, and as he clenched his five fingers, the black glow immediately condensed into a black light hand, comparable in size to a giant serpent, capturing the giant serpent into the large hand.

"He dares not fully present his Dao Image; indeed, this person has many concerns and dares not exert himself fully!" The long-bearded old monk underestimated Ning Fan even more, pushing his luck, wanting the giant serpent to break free and take another bite of Ning Fan's Dao Image.

However, after trying, the long-bearded old monk was horrified to find that his already somewhat successful Dao Image serpent couldn't break free from Ning Fan's Dao Image hand!

The opponent didn't even use a complete Dao Image, yet could easily confine his Dao Image—impossible!

A chilling realization suddenly hit the long-bearded old monk as he realized, cold sweat pouring, that the opponent didn't withhold his full Dao Image out of concern, but because it wasn't necessary!

The opponent's Dao Image was so powerful that only a slight display was enough to completely suppress his own Dao Image!

This person's Dao Image... was unbelievably strong! Competing with their Dao Image was a mistake—a grave mistake!

"I won't hold back a third time!"

Ning Fan sneered slightly, clenching his five fingers, and the giant black light hand thus exerted a huge force, directly crushing the giant serpent!

Easily obliterating the long-bearded old monk's Dao Image!

A cry of disbelief echoed, and the long-bearded monk screamed miserably, suddenly bleeding from seven orifices, falling to the ground dead, the blood flames of evil Qi dyeing the sky red!

Exclamations erupted!

The long-bearded old monk's Dao Image was renowned throughout Hundred Flowers Peak for its strength; excluding Baihua Great Emperor, those able to destroy his Dao Image in one encounter were fewer than five! This foreigner's Dao Image was formidable, possibly surpassing the ordinary Immortal Venerable! What was this foreigner's true cultivation!

Moreover, this person dared commit murder at Hundred Flowers Peak as an outsider; wasn't he afraid things would end badly!

Madman!

Lunatic!

Audacious beyond measure!

"If Baihua Great Emperor truly is a friend of Burying Moon, she could see through the long-bearded old monk's malicious intent, knowing the fault lies with him! I have already shown leniency twice, granting enough face to Hundred Flowers Peak. If she discerns justice, she wouldn't pursue this matter. If she doesn't, why should I reason with all the cultivators of Hundred Flowers!"

Ning Fan's expression remained indifferent as he casually took the long-bearded old monk's storage pouch, grabbing Duolan, and headed up the mountain.

His movements were swift as a phantom, leaving the nearby cultivators far behind with just a few steps, disappearing from view altogether. Though he couldn't completely ignore the Central State's forbidden sky power, his speed still surpassed the ordinary Shattered Thought cultivators thanks to the Vertical Golden Light divine skill.

"Capture him! He dares to commit murder at our Hundred Flowers Peak; we can't let him go!"

The group of cultivators immediately chased up the mountain, but they couldn't catch up to Ning Fan at maximum speed.

On the mountain path, the two fleeting shadows of a man and a woman surged toward the mountain's summit; it was naturally Ning Fan and Duolan.

Duolan smiled wryly, thinking that Ning Fan was indeed a lawless person, daring to cause trouble at Hundred Flowers Peak. Unusually, she didn't fear or despise Ning Fan's act of killing, but rather felt a touch of warmth.

Ning Fan engaged in conflict with the Baihua cultivators for her sake.

"I'm sorry, Duolan has caused trouble for Senior. With this, I'm afraid Senior's purpose of coming to Baihua Peak might not be achieved..." Duolan felt extremely apologetic yet very joyful, and worried for Ning Fan. She couldn't explain her feelings; the plan to distance herself from Ning Fan had long been abandoned. In her mind, it seemed there was only the thought of being led by Ning Fan and running swiftly down the mountain path.

Once again, she was led by Senior...

"It's just a small matter. I won't let my people be bullied; that's my principle. You don't need to mind this, nor feel grateful for it."

Ning Fan's tone remained indifferent, but Duolan found it extremely sweet, secretly smiling foolishly.

Ning Fan was helpless, was this woman foolish? Hadn't he warned her before? How did she still walk this wrong path, developing fondness for an enemy...

However, Duolan's concern wasn't unfounded. At Baihua Peak, there was a strong possibility of information regarding the Jiuli Ritual Vessel. Zangyue came to rescue Baihua Emperor because of this, which meant the whereabouts of the Jiuli Ritual Vessel were likely controlled by Baihua Emperor...

Having offended Baihua Peak, getting information about the vessel's whereabouts from Baihua Emperor would be difficult.

But this wasn't a big issue. If the orthodox way couldn't attain the vessel's information, then he would take it forcefully through the way of demonic cultivation. He had the Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command, a formidable weapon, which gave him the confidence to act recklessly here!

The Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command could kill a Sixth Calamity Immortal Emperor! It was said that Baihua Emperor had Sixth Calamity cultivation and was severely injured and close to death... Facing such an Immortal Emperor, the Golden Palm Command should be effective with one strike.

Of course, if Baihua Emperor truly was Zangyue's old friend, Ning Fan wouldn't go too far, even to the point of breaking off with Baihua Peak. He would always leave Baihua Emperor some leeway, only

intending to intimidate the Baihua cultivators with the Golden Palm Command, rather than actually committing regicide.

First, he would ascend to the summit of Baihua Peak to see Baihua Emperor's attitude. Zangyue and Ouyang Nuan were there, very close now. Hmm? The dark fortune soaring into the sky at the peak was Wu Laoba, indeed they were all here.

"Fellow Daoist, killing on my Baihua Peak, even if the Changran Master was at fault first, is no reason for such a vicious hand, is it? Fellow Daoist truly does not put my Baihua Peak in your eyes!"

A cold voice suddenly came from ahead.

Ning Fan felt a warning in his heart, halted his form, and narrowly darted backward, dodging a sudden cold light from ahead, which slashed into empty air.

"Oh? Your speed isn't slow, but unfortunately your cultivation is limited. If you were to engage in a direct duel with this old monk, how much confidence do you have in surviving?"

An elder with crimson eyebrows, holding a flying sword, slowly revealed his form. A hint of surprise appeared in his eyes, seemingly astonished by Ning Fan's speed.

"First Calamity Immortal Sovereign!"

Ning Fan's expression slightly tensed. At full strength, he could kill a First Calamity Immortal Sovereign, but now he was not at his peak, naturally wary of this formidable Immortal Sovereign.

"I am the Sixth Auxiliary Peak Immortal Venerable, with the dharma name Mingfeng. Since you could dodge one of my swords, I shall not rely on my cultivation to bully you. After all, it was Changran's fault first; that one sword is enough to settle the cause and effect. But you killed on my Baihua Peak, damaging our Baihua reputation; this I cannot turn a blind eye to. You seem very proud of your Dao Image, well then, I shall spar with you using my Dao Image!"

Also a battle of Dao Images, the intention of this Mingfeng Immortal Venerable wasn't to gravely injure Ning Fan, but to offer him a fair duel.

Ning Fan possessed the strength of an Immortal Venerable, but his cultivation was restricted, whereas his Dao Image was not.

Mingfeng Immortal Venerable, not using his cultivation to overpower Ning Fan but choosing a duel of equal Immortal Venerable level Dao Image, was already presenting Ning Fan with fairness. Even if he died in fairness, Ning Fan would likely die without grievance, so thought the Mingfeng Immortal Venerable.

Ning Fan's gaze softened; this person was not as malicious as the long-bearded elder, so he did not plan to kill with too heavy a hand.

However, this person erred in attempting to block him with a Dao Image! The strength of his Dao Image was beyond what this Mingfeng Immortal Venerable could imagine! Just how strong it was, Ning Fan had never truly tested, having seldom encountered a Dao Image duel; today he would try to see the extreme limits of his Dao Image!

"This old man's Dao Image is named 'Ancient Buddha Feeding Eagle,' ranked fifty-third among the earth-grade formidable Dao Images, possessing both Buddha Law power and the ability of a curse art, can you handle this?" Mingfeng's character seemed to be bright and honest, even going so far as to inform Ning Fan of his Dao Image's divine powers, unwilling to gain any advantage.

This act similarly displayed Mingfeng's conceit. Unlike the long-bearded old monk, the opponent was merely a fragmented thought cultivator, with a minor Dao Image accomplishment, whereas Mingfeng achieved great success in Dao Image cultivation!

With great success in a Dao Image, one could establish a Dao Technique!

Not every Eternal Immortal Venerable could cultivate a Dao Image to great success, and Mingfeng did not believe Ning Fan had reached such a level. Even if he had, Mingfeng did not believe Ning Fan's Dao Image rank could surpass his fifty-third earth-grade rank.

In his bones, there was still some racial pride, and a lingering contempt for foreign cultivators.

As Mingfeng unfolded his Dao Image, a golden Buddha Light shot into the sky, and an image of a sitting Buddha gradually emerged within that Buddha Light...

Chapter 1017: Rage Beneath the Ice

That was a giant Buddha sitting on a lotus seat, with a golden-green glass base beneath it, engraved with eight hundred Arhats. Apart from the seated Buddha, there was nothing else in the Dao Image.

According to Mingfeng Immortal Venerable, his Dao Image is named 'Ancient Buddha Feeding the Eagle,' supposedly derived from the Buddhist tale of offering one's flesh to feed an eagle. However, the Dao Image was unfolded to this extent, yet there was no eagle pattern or any sign of the Buddha offering his flesh, which truly does not match its name.

No, it's not mismatching. Ning Fan quickly understood that Mingfeng Immortal Venerable was overly arrogant and conceited, only unfolding a small portion of the Dao Image.

Was he imitating the way he held back against the long-bearded old monk...

Ning Fan was somewhat indifferent. His Dao Image was of Heavenly Grade, a rank almost existing only in legends, far surpassing Mingfeng's Earth-Grade Fifty-Third Rank! Even if Mingfeng Immortal Venerable fully opened his Dao Image, he may not be able to match Ning Fan. Such arrogance would surely lead to defeat!

"To deal with you, I only need to use thirty percent of my Dao Image's power! You must know..."

Mingfeng Immortal Venerable seemed complacent, speaking at length, but Ning Fan had no intention of bantering with him, not waiting for him to finish. He directly stimulated his Dao Image, and immediately, black light surged to the sky, sweeping all around. The black was part of his Dao Image radiance, carrying an oppressive and suffocating feeling, with Demonic Qi surging to the sky! Under the sweeping demon force, even the space here became distorted!

This sudden surge of Dao Image demon force caught Mingfeng Immortal Venerable off guard, forcing him back several steps, the words he intended to say abruptly cut off, his expression dramatically

changed. His thirty percent Dao Image was creaking under Ning Fan's demon force pressure, constantly twisting, even developing cracks, unable to withstand Ning Fan's demon force!

Buddha cannot defeat Demon, how is this possible!

Mingfeng Immortal Venerable took a deep breath!

Though he only used thirty percent of his Dao Image's power, in his life's long river, having his Dao Image suppressed like this was the first time, especially by a demonic Dao Image! What's more terrifying is, Ning Fan didn't even manifest his Dao Image, merely releasing the demon force from it, already forcing him back several steps and causing cracks in his Dao Image, something that defies common sense!

"Use your full strength, or in this Dao Image confrontation, you will die!" Ning Fan said indifferently.

He stood in the black light, which was part of his Demonized Dark Night Path radiance, making him even more demonic, with an unprecedented sharp and terrifying aura.

Mingfeng Immortal Venerable seemed irritated by Ning Fan's words, showing an angry embarrassment, "Such a big mouth you have! You are just a little stronger in Dao Image oppression, you must know, a battle of Dao Images is not just about oppression, there are many contests within! Fine, since you insist on witnessing my full Dao Image's power, I will give you this opportunity! Re-converge!"

Mingfeng Immortal Venerable suddenly clasped his hands together, and within the Dao Image, an image of an eagle chasing a dove appeared, the compassionate expression of the ancient Buddha, containing an enhanced sense of Buddhist nature, multiplied many times!

This is his complete Dao Image!

Buddha losing to Demon, such a thing is impossible! It must be because his power wasn't whole, giving the demon force an opportunity!

Now having used all his Dao Image's power, the Dao Image Buddha's might around him surged several times, like substantial golden oppression, though still not matching Ning Fan's black demon force, it managed to barely sustain under Ning Fan's demon force, restoring some of his confidence.

Demon high by one foot, Dao high by ten feet, now see how I perform the act of subduing demons!

In Buddhist legends, it is said that eons ago, there was a Brahma Land King who, to save a dove pursued by an eagle, willingly offered his flesh to the eagle, in exchange for the dove's life. This is great compassion for all beings, whether eagle or dove, all are beings he wished to protect, making no distinctions.

Mingfeng Immortal Venerable's Dao Image had already achieved great success, the Dao Technique he comprehended relates to this benevolent act of offering flesh, also containing the wonder of a curse, quite formidable. However, this moment with Ning Fan is not about comparing Dao Techniques, but simply the strength of Dao Images, thus he did not intend to use Dao Techniques, instead gathering the Buddha Light generated from his full Dao Image into a Buddha Light Hand Seal as tall as a person.

As this hand seal emerged, it seemed to resonate with all beings and methods, constantly absorbing the natural Dao Method of surrounding grass, wood, mountains, and rocks, forming a swirling pattern of Dao Method ripples in midair. As the ripples spread, Baihua Main Peak started to experience an earthquake.

When the ripple's momentum soared to the peak, Mingfeng pushed with all his strength, and the hand seal whistled towards Ning Fan, in an instant, giving Ning Fan a momentary illusion: he was facing not just Mingfeng's Dao Image alone, but the condensation of the Dao from all life within Baihua Peak's territory!

The force was overwhelming, changing the color of wind and clouds!

"I have already given you a fair fight, if you die because of this, you may die with eyes closed, and afterward, I shall chant sutras for your passing!"

After Mingfeng Immortal Venerable pushed, he clasped his hands, reciting Namó Amitabha, slowly closing his eyes, as if unwilling to witness Ning Fan Dao Crumble and die.

This was already the entirety of his Dao Image's power, additionally drawing from all beings' Dao from this land using Buddhist Divine Skills to fuse into it! In terms of cultivation, Mingfeng ranked only sixth among Baihua Peak's seven Side Peaks, but in terms of Dao Image strength, he could rank in the top three!

At this moment, he had exerted all his power, believing it should be sufficient to kill Ning Fan.

However, in the next instant, Mingfeng Immortal Venerable suddenly opened his eyes in horror. Without seeing clearly what had happened, a demonic palm, several times more fierce than his Buddha hand seal, suddenly smashed towards him!

It was Ning Fan who imitated Mingfeng, condensing the power of his Dao Image to create this! In terms of power levels, this demonic palm was actually several times stronger than Mingfeng's Dao Image Buddha palm, and with just one strike, it shattered Mingfeng's Buddha palm, almost unstoppable! In the next instant, the demonic palm continued its momentum, smashing into Mingfeng's giant Buddha Dao Image, seemingly intending to use his own evil cultivation against the Dao power collected by Mingfeng from all beings!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Dao Images of the eagle, white dove, lotus seat, and giant Buddha were instantly shattered by just one strike of this demonic palm, and Mingfeng Immortal Venerable was severely hit, spewing blood madly and stepping back continuously. With each step, his aura weakened significantly, and after six steps, he could hardly continue, half-kneeling on the mountain path, even struggling to stand! Around him, there was nothing but shattered Buddha light and the enormous roar produced by the clash of Dao Images, resembling thunder.

Within several hundred steps of the mountain path, Demonic Qi permeated everywhere! In this battle, Ning Fan's Dao Image demonic power not only crushed Mingfeng's Dao Image but forcibly altered the atmosphere of the Buddhist teachings here, contaminating a small piece of pure Buddhist land like an ancient demonic cave!

If a mighty cultivator does not drive away this demonic aura, it would remain a sky-high Demonic Qi landscape for thousands, even millions of years.

"Defeated... completely not a match..." A strong sense of defeat appeared in Mingfeng's heart.

Totally defeated... the power levels of the two's Dao Images were completely not on the same level...

If it were a direct confrontation, even if Ning Fan was at his peak, he wouldn't be so powerless in defeat. But this was a clash of Dao Images, different from normal magic duels, and the huge gap in their Dao Images predetermined the result of this duel as a one-sided crush...

The opponent's Dao Image is terrifyingly strong! The opponent even... didn't use full force...

Duolan's red lips slightly opened, speechless with shock.

If she saw correctly, Ning Fan defeated Mingfeng Immortal Venerable with just part of his Dao Image power. Using a portion of Dao Image power to defeat the Fragmented Thought Cultivation of the long-bearded old monk wasn't surprising, but to crush an equivalent rank Immortal Venerable was rather frightening.

Among Immortal Venerable levels, the gap in Dao Images generally wouldn't be too huge, right? Such a one-sided defeat should rarely occur.

How strong is Ning Fan's Dao Image! How far does it exceed Mingfeng Immortal Venerable!

In this battle, how much strength did Ning Fan use? Ninety percent, seventy percent, or even less...

"It's ten percent..." Ning Fan whispered to himself, but didn't speak. He used the Mind Reading Technique to see through Duolan's doubts, but since Duolan didn't ask, he didn't plan to explain.

Actually, Ning Fan was also somewhat shocked by Mingfeng's quick defeat. He had never tested the limits of his Dao Image, and only after today's duel did he fully realize the enormous gap between his Dao Image and ordinary people's!

Ten percent of his Dao Image was enough to defeat all of Mingfeng Immortal Venerable's Dao Image!

And he actually has two Dao Images, one being Demonized Dark Night and the other Dao-Manifested Big Dipper, and in this duel, he only used Demonized Dark Night...

Under normal circumstances, even if there were differences in Dao Images among the Eternal Immortal Venerables, they wouldn't be too significant, which means that among the Immortal Venerable level, those who can surpass him by ten percent Dao Image are probably rare!

And if he were to use all his powers, even an Immortal King facing his Dao Image would likely fall. But he wonders if compared to an Immortal Emperor, his Dao Image can still hold the upper hand...

"Why don't you kill me!" Mingfeng gritted his teeth and asked, looking up at Ning Fan with eyes full of struggle.

Even though he was defeated, he didn't suffer from the collapse of his Dao and die...

It was because the opponent spared him, seeming like his Dao Image had completely collapsed, but actually still leaving a trace of life; otherwise, he would have perished in this Dao Image duel!

He, a dignified Da Bi's Honored Immortal, was spared by a foreign cultivator...

"You didn't rely on your cultivation level to bully me, so I am sparing your life, that's all. But if you block me again, I will not show mercy a second time."

Ning Fan glanced indifferently at the dying Mingfeng Immortal Venerable, then withdrew his gaze, taking Duolan's hand once more, rushing swiftly up the mountain path straight to the summit.

Duolan naturally felt her ears heating up again.

Mingfeng stared bitterly at Ning Fan's back as he headed straight for the summit.

Even if he wanted to pursue, he had no strength to stand up, the injury was too severe... Moreover, he still owed Ning Fan a life-saving grace...

And the intention of the Baihua Great Emperor was quite interesting...

"The Honored One could not possibly be unaware of what happened here, given the Honored One's cold-blooded and murderous nature, if anyone dared to commit crimes in our Hundred Flowers territory, they would always take action to punish without asking for reasons, even if the Honored One is now seriously injured, killing a cultivation-limited Immortal Venerable would not be difficult, yet has not taken action for a long time..."

Could it be that the Honored One does not blame this person for committing murder?

Is it because this foreign cultivator has some connection with the Honored One? After all, a few days ago, it seemed that several foreign cultivators also came to the Hundred Flowers Peak, were received courteously by the Honored One, could it be that this person is of the same group?

Or perhaps, the Honored One was simply enamored by this person's rather handsome appearance and developed a liking, thus contemplating forgiveness...

Or is there some other unknown reason...

Mingfeng sat cross-legged on the mountain path, taking expensive pills to heal his wounds, while his thoughts raced. In fact, when he initially stopped Ning Fan, he already had these thoughts, which is why he hesitated, giving Ning Fan a fair chance, which might have contained some elements of testing...

Now it seems, he seems to have gambled correctly.

When his Dao Image collapsed and he was at the brink of life and death, the Honored One did not take action, if Ning Fan had not shown mercy, he would have already perished...

The Honored One truly is a cold and thin person, could it be that the lives of the Disciples of the Eternal Sect mean less to her than this foreign cultivator in front of her, otherwise why not take action.

Hehe... The Honored One has changed... has become... unrecognizable...

In a daze, Mingfeng seemed to see again that graceful silhouette in the colorful light, walking towards him step by step.

The face was not clear, but the voice was exceptionally soft and melodious, like honey.

"I am the Hundred Flowers Peak Immortal Emperor, would you be willing to follow me..."

"I have the wish to bring salvation to all beings, would you be willing to follow me..."

"I desire to save all suffering in the world, would you be willing to follow me..."

"As long as I am here for one day, I will ensure that no beings die before me, would you be willing to follow me..."

And so he, along with countless poor children, yearned for that adult, joined the Hundred Flowers Peak, cultivated until now, unable to remember how many years have passed...

Ensuring no beings die before me...

Ensuring no beings die before me...

Hehe...

Hehe...

Mingfeng's cloudy eyes, unknowingly, had two lines of old tears.

All of this, naturally, did not concern Ning Fan.

Now, not far from the mountaintop, Ning Fan pushed his speed to the utmost at the moment, along the way, encountering dozens of patrol masters trying to stop his advance, but they were all forced through by his speed, all the way to the top before releasing Duolan.

Once Ning Fan reached the mountaintop, those Baihua cultivators who were chasing from behind, all hesitated and dared not to pursue further, as if the mountaintop was some supreme forbidden land.

"The peak of the main peak is the residence of the Baihua Great Emperor, without a summons, ordinary Baihua cultivators dare not pursue into this place," Duolan explained, looking at the scenery as it was back then, feeling somewhat dazed, recalling the time when her father brought her all the way to storm the Hundred Flowers Main Peak.

Ning Fan glanced around.

This was already the end of the mountain path, surrounded by mist, deep within the mist on the mountain wall, a vague mountain gate of the cave abode could be seen. On both sides of the entrance, clusters of pale orchids grew.

A very special kind of white, like the pale skin of a sickly beauty.

Next to the cliff of the mountain gate, a stele stood approximately three zhang high and eight chi wide, with two lines containing sixteen large characters.

Flowers bloom, flowers wither, all living beings suffer.

Flowers wither, flowers bloom, those who are enlightened are saved.

The words had the impression of universal salvation, observing the supreme pressure contained in the text, it was most likely carved by the Baihua Great Emperor.

Such heavy Buddha might, it seems that this Baihua Great Emperor is also a cultivator of Buddha, which is not surprising in this Buddha Law rich Dabei clan.

Above the mountain gate, there was an extremely faint fluctuation of restrictions, if not a Formation Path Grandmaster, it would be difficult to discern, yet it could not escape Ning Fan's eyes. Ning Fan glanced around, whether the mountain gate or the grass and orchids, every plant and stone was filled with restrictions, not only in number, but arranged intricately with hidden killing intent, if the master did not permit, even an Eternal Immortal Venerable would not dare to trespass, else risk falling.

For this is the cave abode mountain gate of a true Immortal Emperor, violators deserve death, yet it seems somewhat laughable placed alongside the stele advocating universal salvation.

What about universal salvation? Those who trespass the mountain gate should just die? Are they not in need of salvation...

"The inscription on this stele only takes the appearance, not the essence..." Ning Fan sighed slightly.

Thinking that the Baihua Great Emperor was a figure of the same era as Burying Moon, to this day, yet still a Six Calamities cultivation. Perhaps the Baihua Great Emperor has been unable to cultivate further for this inconsistency between appearance and heart.

Not as compassionate as the inscription suggests...

Nevertheless, the mountain gate formation here indeed has some skill and should not be underestimated!

Even though Ning Fan has comprehended the Momentum Character Secret, he could not completely penetrate the operation of this formation in a short time, without several days it would be impossible. This indicates the complexity of the prohibitions around the mountain gate far surpassed the formation set up by Great Emperor Chonghe on Zaoyang Mountain.

After all, that day when Ning Fan broke the formation on Zaoyang Mountain, it did not take much time.

This Baihua Great Emperor may be a superficial Buddha cultivator, but his formation path accomplishments should not be underestimated...

"Our trespass will surely not escape the Baihua Great Emperor's notice, since she has not directly come out to destroy us, most likely due to some concerns regarding my identity as the Saintess... This mountain gate formation is extremely perilous, just like when my father broke it back then, but with the senior's limited cultivation, trespassing may result in death. Without a summons from the Baihua Great Emperor, we might only be able to wait here, until the mountain gate opens on its own..."

Thinking about meeting the Baihua Great Emperor soon, Duolan felt somewhat anxious, her father had once severely injured the Baihua Great Emperor, there was a past grudge. Yet just as she finished speaking, the mountain gate unexpectedly opened on its own, which greatly surprised her.

In her view, with she and Ning Fan trespassing and killing, and her having a feud with the Baihua Great Emperor, even if they were not punished by the Baihua Great Emperor, they would suffer some difficulties. If lucky, they might just be left outside the mountain gate in neglect for a few days, then summoned; if unlucky, perhaps they would be attacked again by the formation outside the mountain gate... But unexpectedly, the two of them were not subjected to much difficulty, and the mountain gate opened.

Several boys with wings emerged from the cave door, upon seeing Ning Fan and Duolan standing outside, they were not surprised, only said coldly, "The Great Emperor has been waiting for a long time, please follow us."

These were the same youths who had previously escorted Ning Fan up the mountain and then disappeared on the mountain path.

One of the winged boys took out a token, and after making a gesture towards it, the deadly prohibitions here immediately ceased, stopping their operation.

Then the youths turned and returned to the cave.

Though the boys spoke indifferently, Ning Fan could hear a certain politeness in their tone, compared to their attitude at the foot of the mountain, it was somewhat better, but still limited.

At least, Ning Fan did not detect any obvious hostility in the faces of these winged boys.

These winged boys were likely following the Baihua Great Emperor's orders to bring them into the cave abode, their attitude implicitly reflected the Baihua Great Emperor's attitude.

Clearly, the Baihua Great Emperor was fully aware of everything that had happened on the mountain path, yet did not seem to hold any grudges against Ning Fan for his offenses and trespass...

"It seems that the Baihua Great Emperor is a reasonable person; however, it's also possible that he is overlooking this matter for the sake of Burying Moon and the others..."

A sudden mountain wind blew by, and the orchids near the mountain gate, stirred by the wind, emitted a sobbing sound, sometimes like a baby's cry, sometimes like a maiden's weep, extremely peculiar.

Ning Fan couldn't help but cast an extra glance at those orchids. This was the first time in his years of cultivation that he encountered orchids that made crying sounds, even though these orchids hadn't gained spiritual essence yet.

The sobbing sound was actually just the listener's imagination, yet in Ning Fan's ears, it seemed to contain an ancient sadness that lasted for eons.

It somewhat stirred his heart.

Ning Fan found his gaze drawn to those pallid orchids, not by enchantment or divine skills, but by a simple allure he couldn't tear his eyes away from.

Duolan, who was initially somewhat apprehensive, couldn't help but find it amusing. Unexpectedly, Senior Ning, who possessed overwhelming demonic qi, was actually a lover of flowers.

"This flower is a unique species of Baihua Peak, named the Wuyou Orchid, one of the ten great Buddhist flowers of the Dabai. In Middle State, it is renowned as 'Blossoming Enlightenment.' It is said that the first owner of Baihua Peak obtained it during a journey, experienced enlightenment because of it, and thus deeply cherished it, transplanting it here. That senior even displayed this flower at an Ancient

Buddha Assembly, openly praising it, 'All gatherings of love will shift as nothing stands eternal, life feared in the briefness of morning dew, from love arises worry, from love arises dread, severing from love brings worry and fear to an end.' This flower gained fame throughout Middle State, acquiring the name Wuyou."

Duolan explained to Ning Fan via voice transmission.

"Severing from love brings worry and fear to an end..." Ning Fan murmured, feeling that the words of that senior bore deep Buddhist and Daoist insights, leading him to recite them several times.

"But I've heard another secret from my father. My father said that the senior originally named this flower not Wuyou Orchid but Wangle Orchid. As the wind blows, the flower whimpers, actually longing for her husband..." Duolan appeared somewhat wistful.

"Wangle Orchid, huh..."

Ning Fan withdrew his gaze, ultimately following a few young men into the mountain gate of the dwelling.

The structure of Baihua Great Emperor's abode was extremely complex, with terrain that shifted every ten breaths, carrying the flavor of an illusion formation. If Ning Fan hadn't followed these young men and instead walked alone, he was sure he would get lost here.

Through Baihua Great Emperor's formation proficiency, Ning Fan gained clearer insight: based on formation skills alone, this person was indeed qualified to associate with Burying Moon, whose cultivation was at the peak.

Though the abode wasn't large and had few branches, Ning Fan walked in it for a full two hours before reaching a wide hall.

On either side of the hall stood more than ten maids in light gauze, all with lowered heads, awaiting orders from the Baihua Great Emperor.

At the center of the hall's upper section lay a gold chair about ten feet long, on which reclined a stunning woman. Dressed in a pink gauze that barely concealed her curves, she had almost transparent veil, with lips beneath too sensually alluring. Her soft breaths could ignite the rawest desires in men.

Conquer, I must conquer this woman!

Three or four young men with lustful eyes knelt beneath her golden seat, and in near madness, licked the woman's fingers, ankles, and bare feet, creating an obscenely indulgent scene, causing Duolan to turn her gaze bashfully, blushing and not daring to look directly.

The young men who guided them here also joined in the behavior of serving the woman after returning to this place.

The seductive woman reclining on the throne was naturally the host of this place, Baihua Great Emperor. She didn't use any aura-masking skills to cover her appearance, but instead, shamelessly exposed her body, without any aversion to letting men indulge in playing and viewing.

The hall was filled with incense, the same incense that could also incite desire, which even Duolan found hard to resist. But to Ning Fan, it was utterly negligible.

"Chulie Duolan, haha, it's been years since we've met, and you're not dead yet..."

Baihua Great Emperor raised her enchanting watery gaze, giving Duolan a dismissive glance, her tone carrying a bit of mockery.

The mockery was naturally directed at Duolan's struggling plight in the world.

Haha, a mere orphan girl has yet to perish; isn't her life rather exceptional?

Baihua Great Emperor's face flushed, it was apparent that she was not insensitive to the stimulation from the boys around her, but this flush also couldn't mask the paleness she tried to hide; her injuries were severe to the extent that her power could exhibit only one to ten percent of its full might.

Yet she still carried an awe-inspiring imperial majesty!

Her gaze shifted from Duolan, turning steadily to Ning Fan, she licked her red lips.

A fine man indeed, Ning Fan's looks fit perfectly with her aesthetics. She adored this kind of gentle, clean-looking male, relishing their servility under her feet, serving like obedient dogs...

Unfortunately, this person was a companion of the Burying Moon Immortal Concubine and couldn't be touched; otherwise, she wouldn't mind indulging in a night of intimacy with Ning Fan and then... adding his body, permanently, to her collection of Corpse Demon artifacts!

Ning Fan instinctively felt a bit of disgust.

Being a master of dual cultivation, he had no right to disdain Baihua Great Emperor's debauchery, yet he didn't appreciate being stared at like prey.

To think that Duolan's jinxed words came true; Baihua Great Emperor indeed harbored lustful thoughts towards him... However, she seemed to exercise great restraint, likely because of Burying Moon.

"What is your name, sir?" Baihua Great Emperor chuckled coquettishly, inquiring.

"My name is Ning Fan."

"Oh, it's Ning Lang then, haha. Ning Lang, I wonder what brings you to my Baihua Peak. Are you perhaps here looking for Sister Burying Moon?" Baihua Great Emperor's gaze lowered to Ning Fan's lower body, making a suggestive sucking motion.

Such blatant teasing...

Ning Fan felt even more repulsed, yet he calmly replied, "Indeed, I am here to find them. May I ask where Burying Moon and the others are?"

"They are presently engaged in nurturing expensive pills for me, probably still busy at this hour, and may take up to two more hours to finish. If you wish to meet them, you'll have to wait. Until then, maybe we can discuss other matters. How about it?" Baihua Great Emperor seductively suggested.

"What might the Great Emperor wish to talk about?"

"Naturally, about the fact that you committed murder in my Hundred Flowers Territory..."

The Baihua Great Emperor's alluring eyes momentarily glittered with murder intent, so icy and bone-chilling that Duolan broke out in a cold sweat, feeling suffocated, though it naturally didn't intimidate Ning Fan.

This was a Great Emperor who lived from ancient times to the present, having traversed life and death, possessing unparalleled evil qi!

This was a cunning and heartless Great Emperor, whom one must approach with utmost caution!

In an instant, many thoughts crossed Ning Fan's mind.

But in the next moment, the Baihua Great Emperor's murderous intent was gone, and she resumed her seductive posture, giggling at Ning Fan, "Ning Lang, don't worry. Killing a mere Long-bearded man doesn't bother me. Since you were the killer, I can overlook it, but the woman beside you has some unsettled old scores with me. Next, I'll give her some punishment, I hope you won't interfere; otherwise, even with my soft spot for you, I wouldn't hesitate to act on my killing intent... Hmm... Hmm... gentler, much gentler, yes, that's it, tongue in, hmm..."

Too pleasurable, Baihua Great Emperor let out a soft hum, enjoying herself as she closed her eyes, and after a while, she weakly commanded,

"Yun Lang, Shi Lang, stop your service, and strip Chu Lie Duolan's clothes for me. I can't kill her, but you can shame her well on my behalf, using all your methods of serving me on her."

"Yes..." Instantly, two young men with fleshly wings stood up, lifelessly replying.

Duolan's face turned deathly pale in an instant.

She expected no life threat upon entering Baihua Peak, yet never imagined Baihua Great Emperor to desecrate her purity with such methods!

Letting these Corpse Demon youngsters violate her!

"I am the Chulie Holy Maiden. If you sully my purity, Chulie will seek justice!" Duolan gritted her teeth, angrily exclaimed.

"Do you think the current Chulie Emperor will defend you? As long as your life remains unharmed, the Holy Mountain will not pursue this matter. Don't forget the massacre your father caused at my Baihua Peak, and the grievous injuries he left on me!"

Baihua Great Emperor dismissed the meat-wing boys, stood up, her face icy cold, and in front of everyone, she untied her dress.

On his near-perfect ****, there was an extremely ugly scar that ran across his back and had yet to heal!

"This was caused by your father's sword strike. Do you remember? I spare your life, but that doesn't mean I won't settle this feud. Since you've willingly sent yourself to my Hundred Blossom Peak, don't blame me for a bit of retaliation. If the Holy Mountain inquires, I'll simply say you volunteered. How will you defend yourself then?"

No way to argue!

Duolan's face turned pale. She had willingly entered Hundred Blossom Peak, no one had forced her. If disgrace came upon her here, she could only blame her own carelessness.

As long as Baihua Great Emperor didn't kill her, the matter wouldn't escalate greatly. After all, though the Saintess's chastity was important, as a Saintess, she was meant to be toyed with. Otherwise, why

enter the Mother-Child Pool? Many fallen sects' Saintesses were treated as commodities and were used by some Holy Mountain mighty ones to enhance their cultivation...

If her innocence was destroyed here and she returned to the Holy Mountain, she would be seen as a plaything, subjected to plundering and extraction...

She didn't want to fall into such a fate!

She would rather... die!

If she threatened with death, Baihua Great Emperor might fear it a bit. After all, if she died, the matter would escalate, and the Baihua Great Emperor would bear the blame...

Duolan slightly gritted her teeth, having made a decision, ready to resist. Yet Ning Fan slightly turned and shielded her behind him. As his demonic aura spread, the two youth approaching Duolan gasped and retreated, unable to take another step!

"Put away your desire for death. With me here!"

Ning Fan had never been certain, his dislike for the empress before him.

Baihua Great Emperor, huh, a true Baihua Great Emperor. Using the rank of an Immortal Emperor to bully a younger person, using the momentum of Hundred Blossom to bully a solitary girl, even though having the right of revenge against the former Chulie Emperor, shouldn't resort to such measures against Duolan.

It's too unbecoming!

If Baihua Great Emperor's revenge was to kill Duolan without hesitation, and not simply ruin her innocence, Ning Fan might even praise her courage. Of course, he wouldn't just sit by and let Duolan die; he'd still intervene.

For revenge, do it cleanly and straightforwardly, don't use such vile tricks, as it only leads to a lower standing.

Ning Fan didn't intend to interfere in the enmity between Baihua Great Emperor and Chulie, neither concerning right nor wrong. Regardless of who's right, Duolan entered Hundred Blossom's territory for him, and she absolutely couldn't be harmed because of him!

That's his principle!

"I might have said, if you obstruct me, I won't hold back anymore..."

Baihua Great Emperor's beautiful eyes revealed killing intent!

At this moment, she was heavily injured, unable to rashly use mana, but if it's a Dao confrontation, mana wouldn't be needed.

Dao confrontation indeed carries its risks, but in absolute power disparity, Baihua Great Emperor fears not using this method.

Below an Immortal Emperor, would she lose in a Dao confrontation!

Dao won't be weakened by injuries. Her Dao, no other among the four Great Middle State Emperors can rival, Ning Fan even less so!

Not to mention Ning Fan's Dao grade or cultivation is impossible to surpass hers, just the Immortal Emperor's Dao is enhanced by Emperor Qi, isn't something any cultivator below the Immortal Emperor can defeat!

No Immortal Venerable or Immortal King dares accept an Immortal Emperor's Dao confrontation, that means seeking one's own death, without a shred of victory!

If Ning Fan were an Immortal Emperor, Baihua Great Emperor might hesitate a bit, not choose this method, but Ning Fan isn't!

Naturally, she wouldn't truly kill Ning Fan; she hadn't finished using the Burial Moon entourage, still needing their help to heal injuries. If she wanted to restore strength, the Pill Masters with Five-Color Medicine Soul were indispensable and couldn't be offended easily!

But, necessary lessons must be taught! Otherwise, how could she maintain her dignity as an Immortal Emperor!

"If you can defeat me in a Dao confrontation, the enmity of Hundred Blossom Peak with Chulie Duolan will be erased! Do you dare? If you don't dare, then don't obstruct my revenge!"

Baihua Great Emperor looked at Ning Fan mockingly.

She didn't believe Ning Fan dared accept the challenge!

Unless Ning Fan was a fool!

"No! An Immortal Emperor's Dao is incomparable to that of Immortal Venerable or Immortal King; in our Dabei history, beneath Immortal Emperor, no one has ever won against an Immortal Emperor in Dao!"

Duolan was scared.

She wasn't afraid of the possibility of her own death; these years, day after day, she faced plots and death, long numb to her own safety.

But Ning Fan was different; yes, Senior Ning was her enemy, was the madman who abducted her, was Chulie's adversary...

But she couldn't bear to watch Ning Fan die!

Couldn't do it, couldn't do it!

If Ning Fan accepted the challenge, he'd surely die. Baihua Great Emperor might worry about her Saintess status, sparing her life, but Ning Fan, a mere foreign cultivator...she wouldn't hesitate to disregard!

She feared Ning Fan would die.

The more familiar she was with Ning Fan, the more she knew Ning Fan wasn't one to shrink in fear, rather someone who in anger would dare kill anyone!

At this moment, she felt the anger Ning Fan hid beneath frozen layers.

Ning Fan looked directly into Baihua Great Emperor's eyes, without any hesitation or desire, no sign of anger, still tranquil, yet exuding a heavy sense of oppression.

Her father was the same! The only time he was angry, he was like this, showing no sadness, no anger, yet... he did something shocking to the Holy Mountain.

Blood bathed Hundred Blossom Peak, slaughtered Blood River's lineage, burned the Holy Mountain, thunder slaughtered Sanyan, Sword Finger at Bright Buddha!

No one imagined that the former Chulie who was devoted to Buddhism would be so terrifying, so... insane in his fury!

"She's mine." Ning Fan said calmly.

"So what, do you fight or not?" Baihua Great Emperor asked disdainfully.

"If you don't regret, what's wrong with fighting."

Still in that calm tone, yet directly provoked Baihua Great Emperor's anger.

Truly arrogant, so arrogant!

If I don't regret...well, let's see how you, a mere foreign Immortal Venerable cultivator, can make me regret!

"Someone, inform the Seven Aids and Forty-Nine Peaks, a foreign cultivator wants to challenge me, all True Immortals or above, make sure to come to the main peak to watch the battle!"

It's been a long time since I've displayed my Divine Skill.

Since she was severely injured and couldn't heal, the Hundred Blossom Peak territory's hearts were uneasy, this is an opportunity, to let the disciples see she's still the one and only Baihua Great Emperor in the Eight Desolates Liuhe!

In front of everyone, punish Ning Fan properly!

Chapter 1018: The First Battle That Shook the Middle State

Ning Fan dared to accept the challenge, naturally because he had some reliance.

Though there was a huge gap in cultivation between him and the Baihua Great Emperor, he also had his advantages: at the very least, his Dao Image was of a higher grade than that of the Baihua Great Emperor.

Ning Fan did not know the specific grade of the Baihua Great Emperor's Dao Image, but with his eyesight at the Second Realm of Tianren, he could confidently determine that the Baihua Great Emperor's Dao Image grade was far inferior to his!

He could keenly sense that when he faced the Baihua Great Emperor, there was a slight suppression from a higher Dao Image, but unfortunately, since the Baihua Great Emperor was not a Heavenly Immortal Practitioner, she could not perceive this.

This made Ning Fan have a certain degree of confidence when facing the Baihua Great Emperor!

Of course, a Dao Image duel is not simply a comparison of grades. Although Ning Fan had an advantage in grade, in terms of actual application, he would definitely not compare to the Baihua Great Emperor who had lived since ancient times. Overall, he was at a disadvantage in this duel, but by his principles, even at a disadvantage, he could not possibly ignore Duolan.

His dao has always been strong, ever since the beginning of cultivation!

Moreover, Ning Fan had the Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command. If he fell at a disadvantage in the Dao Image duel, Ning Fan had confidence that he could find a means to protect himself before suffering a severe injury.

Therefore, he didn't mind fighting a proper Immortal Emperor, as this was indeed an opportunity to prove his Dao Image, though there was certainly some risk.

The battlefield would naturally not be selected in the cave abode but rather on an isolated cliff on the main peak. This cliff was a thousand zhang wide, with Ning Fan and the Baihua Great Emperor each occupying one side, while along the cliff, True Immortals from different peaks gathered under summons to watch the battle.

The rocks trembled slightly, as if they were afraid of the Baihua Great Emperor's hidden and unexpressed fury.

The fog was originally very dense, but with a single glance from the Baihua Great Emperor, it receded frantically as if in fear.

The sky was clear, but suddenly thunder rumbled—this was a unique spectacle of the Dabei Clan—the Emperor's Wrathful Thunder Greeting!

Each True Immortal expert arriving at this place was astonished upon seeing the thunderous phenomenon filling the sky. This celestial spectacle suggested that an Immortal Emperor had truly become angry! The one who incited this wrath was this seemingly unimpressive foreign cultivator?

"Who is this person! Why did he anger the exalted one?"

"This person is a foreign cultivator, who arrived together with Chulie Duolan!"

"So it's the companion of Chulie, that vile servant, and still an insignificant foreign cultivator!"

"Though this person is a foreign cultivator, he does not act with the restraint of other foreign cultivators in our Dabei Clan. Instead, he is brazen, openly causing trouble on the main peak, killed Master Changran, wounded the Peak Master of the Sixth Peak, and brazenly barged into the forbidden ground at the summit of the main peak. The exalted one initially did not want to punish this person, but he acted wantonly, openly defying the exalted one, leading to the current battle!"

"He must be tired of living! Daring to make trouble at Baihua Peak, and openly defying the exalted one, today he shall not leave Baihua Peak alive!"

"I've also heard that this person is so arrogant as to have boldly accepted the Dao Image duel proposed by the exalted one, intending to use his Immortal Venerable Dao Image to contend with the exalted one's Immortal Emperor Dao Image! Ha, ha, ha, one should know that in battles of images, no lower-ranked cultivator has ever defeated an Immortal Emperor! Though the exalted one is heavily injured and finds it difficult to heal, it does not affect the manifestation of her Dao Image. In a battle of Dao Images, this foreign cultivator is undoubtedly doomed!"

"But I've received some news... this foreign cultivator seems to be from the same group as those who came here some days ago..."

"Hiss, if he is with those people, whether the exalted one will kill him is uncertain..."

There were continuous discussions around, which was understandable. A thousand years ago, after the Baihua Emperor returned heavily injured from the Sanyan Continent, the entire Baihua Peak domain had been sealed off from the outside, sinking into silence, and it had been a thousand years since people had seen the exalted one take action.

Many Baihua True Immortals stared intently, awaiting the incoming duel. Some people were not eager to watch the battle and instead glared at Duolan with clenched teeth.

Those gazes carried undisguised hatred. If the Baihua Emperor hadn't ordered that no action was to be taken against this woman until after the duel, some Baihua cultivators would likely have been unable to contain their anger and sought retribution from Duolan.

Duolan was standing alone outside the crowd, with countless hostile gazes behind her, including some from the Fragmented Thought Elders, making her feel as if she were on pins and needles.

Faced with these hostile gazes, Duolan was not unafraid, yet she couldn't afford to fear them. What she worried about more was Ning Fan's situation at this moment.

Blame her, it's all her fault. If not for her, how could Senior Ning rashly confront the Baihua Emperor in a duel... Duolan felt incredibly guilty and self-reproachful in her heart.

She did not believe Ning Fan could overturn the situation and defeat the Immortal Emperor, but the changing circumstances were beyond her ability to stop. She could only silently pray for a miracle to occur, wishing that Ning Fan would not lose too terribly and would not be injured too severely by the Baihua Emperor...

At this moment, the Baihua Emperor stood gracefully at one side of the cliff, her posture elegant, yet exuding an aura of absolute dominance. As if standing on this mountain, the mountain belonged to her! As if standing in the sky, the sky belonged to her! As if upon gazing at the mountains and rivers, everything within sight belonged to her!

Her imperial might was slightly revealed, possessing a momentum that could swallow mountains and rivers, making the weather change color, altering the terrain, with birds lowering their heads and beasts crouching! This prompted many True Immortal Elders to gaze upon her with fright and fervor, reigniting their reverence for the Baihua Emperor!

That imperial might grew ever stronger, continuously rising, rushing straight to the sky, shockingly tearing through the sky, further expanding the phenomenon of the Emperor's Wrathful Thunder Greeting, exposing more sky cracks from where thunder escaped!

The thunder roared, deafening, and the lightning in the sky was so bright that it made the assembled immortals unable to open their eyes!

As that imperial might turned into a violent wind, True Immortals found it difficult to stand firm, yet Ning Fan was not moved an inch by the imperial wind. He secretly activated the Secret of the Character 'Weixx', causing most of the imperial might impacting him to dissipate insignificantly. This was not his first direct confrontation with an Immortal Emperor, but the second time, thus he was still handling it calmly.

The first time was during the encounter with Great Emperor Chonghe at Zhaoyao Mountain, which resulted in being easily subdued by Great Emperor Chonghe. Although he eventually escaped, it was still considered a complete defeat for Ning Fan.

It was also that battle that made Ning Fan deeply aware of the immense gap between himself and an Immortal Emperor.

This time, he faced a Baihua Great Emperor severely injured and not competing in cultivation but in a Dao Image duel where he had some advantage. A surge of heroic spirit welled up in Ning Fan, igniting the flames of battle in his eyes!

What of an Immortal Emperor, it was nothing but a battle!

Since his Blood Lightning was sealed, the power within Ning Fan was dominated by the Ancient Demon, and Ancient Demons are unafraid of fierce battles, having a natural fervor for them! With the grounding from the Baihua Emperor's imperial might, Ning Fan's inner Demon World birthed defiance, rebellion, and noncompliance! That Demon Qi transformed into a black wind, erupting with Ning Fan's monstrous gaze, surging across the domain with the bloodshed Ning Fan had accumulated in his cultivation path, plunging this area momentarily into an ocean of Demonic Qi.

That Demon World surged continuously, becoming powerful enough to defile this Buddhist realm, colliding without yielding against the Baihua Great Emperor's imperial might!

Numerous True Immortals well-versed in Buddhist Law gasped collectively. Such a practitioner with overwhelming Demonic Qi was quite rare in the Dabei Clan!

"Ancient Demon..."

The Baihua Emperor gave Ning Fan a deep glance, her demeanor suddenly changed, her previously harsh features instantly turning dignified and kind, with hands clasped, a slight smile, surrounded by Buddha Light symbols, radiating compassion like an Avalokitesvara saving the distressed, as lovely as an ancient exiled immortal, her voice melodious and clear, enchanting, reciting softly,

"In our Dabei lineage, lightning is empty, and flame is the earth, Emperor's Wrathful Thunder Greeting, Emperor's Death Fire Burial... There are ten Flowers of Buddha, the first being Jinlei Tamo, born in the supreme lightning void, extinguishing all living dreams, blooming once every hundred thousand years, withers in the blink of an eye, when the flower blooms, mountains and rivers are entombed..."

As she chanted, golden light radiated from her body, condensing into the form of a giant golden lightning flower behind her.

The giant flower, formed from golden lightning, exuded a solemn Buddhist nature, with an indescribable aura of compassion within, causing those who saw it to be drawn toward Buddhism.

Upon the emergence of this flower form, Buddhist hymns arose from nowhere, echoing between mountains and rivers, resonating in the ears of every listener. These hymns were ancient, obscure, difficult to discern, with a mournful and solemn tone, imparting a sense of immense, timeless weight. Amidst the rhythmic cadence, there seemed a capability to entice and enchant.

Some of the spectators, lacking firm spirit sense, were directly lost in the chants, while others who weren't lost were even more fervent, marveling in amazement.

Golden Lotus Flower Form! Among the thirty-two forms of Buddhism, it ranks twenty-ninth! In the earthly grade Dao Image ranking, seventeenth! These chants are, in fact, the universal Buddhist sound evoked by the Golden Lotus Flower!

The exalted one rarely uses this form, after all, an Immortal Emperor participating in a Dao Image duel is extremely rare. To personally witness this form today, how fortunate!

Yet this mere foreign cultivator, wishing to battle this form of the exalted one, is like shaking a tree as an ant, laughably overestimating himself! Courting death is all it is!

"Here it comes!"

A sense of foreboding stirred in Ning Fan's heart as Baihua Great Emperor took a small step forward, at the very moment the flower condensed.

Her graceful and elegant lotus steps were unfathomably dangerous. With just a small step, a billion rays of pure Buddha Light surged into the sky from where she stepped!

The golden light reached the heavens above and the earth below, spreading madly towards the heavens and earth behind Baihua Great Emperor, submerging the mountains and rivers behind her in gold!

Ten li, a hundred li, a thousand li, ten thousand li!

Under the full exertion of Baihua Great Emperor, the power of her Dao Image had extended beyond ten thousand li of the Baihua Peak's boundaries. The ten thousand li sky visible behind her turned golden; the distant grasslands turned golden; beasts, birds, masters, and even cities... anything touched by the power of her Dao Image turned golden, leaving only this one color across ten thousand li of mountains and rivers behind her.

It gave an inconceivable feeling, as if in this world covered by gold, Baihua Great Emperor was the sole sovereign!

The myriad immortals of Baihua Peak were drowned in this gold too. In this gold, their Dao became uncontrollable, drawn out by an invisible force, assimilated and absorbed by Baihua Great Emperor's Dao, becoming a part of her Dao.

Seizing the Dao of all living beings for her use, such was the method of Baihua Great Emperor!

All the Dao under the heavens can be for my use! All beings for my own! When all beings harmonize with Dao, Dao can obscure the heavens!

"You, can you block me!"

Baihua Great Emperor's voice bore an indescribable conviction. With a mere thought, the ten thousand li of golden light, with the power of the mountains and rivers, crashed towards Ning Fan.

Where the ten thousand li golden light passed, the intertwining Dao traces in the heavens and earth collapsed entirely, demonstrating the destructive power of this strike against Dao.

This strike was a Dao Image attack; if Ning Fan didn't take it head-on, he wouldn't be injured, but it would mean admitting defeat.

Ning Fan naturally wouldn't admit defeat. At the moment the golden light collided, he raised his hand, pointing towards the air in front, a mysterious spot of black ink left behind in the heavens and earth. Initially just a speck, it spread out, forming a black mirror wall of sky-reaching height and a zhang in thickness, blocking the approaching ten thousand li golden light.

This was a barrier formed by Ning Fan with the power of Dao Image, something that even the Mingfeng Immortal Venerable couldn't shatter using Dao Image.

Yet Baihua Great Emperor's ten thousand li golden light crashed into the mirror wall, shattering it to pieces, advancing once more!

With this trial, Ning Fan determined the gap in Dao Image between himself and Baihua Great Emperor. The Dao force around him surged, manifesting even more endless mirror walls before him.

Astonishingly, there seemed to be a hundred of them!

The ten thousand li golden light remained savage, forcibly shattering each mirror wall, but as a result, its momentum waned. After breaking through the forty-sixth mirror wall, the momentum of the golden light was completely blocked. Ning Fan pressed down with five fingers, causing the remaining mirror walls to shatter suddenly, merging into a massive black palm, striking the ten thousand li golden light back towards Baihua Great Emperor.

Outside the cliff, the crowd of masters were astonished, hardly expecting that Ning Fan could withstand an attack from Baihua Great Emperor.

To withstand one strike meant he could endure ten, a hundred, thus earning the qualification to engage Baihua Great Emperor as an equal!

An outside Heavenly Immortal Practitioner, indeed managing to face an Immortal Emperor's Dao Image at a lower level—if this news were to spread, it would surely cause a sensation in Dabei!

Ning Fan, however, sighed inwardly. While he barely parried a strike from Baihua Great Emperor's Dao Image, the amount of energy expended between the two was vastly different.

Baihua Great Emperor attacked using the Dao of all beings, with negligible personal expenditure. In contrast, Ning Fan fought against the Dao of ten thousand li of mountains and rivers with his own power, expending an overwhelming amount.

He could withstand one strike forcibly. He might even withstand ten. But what about a hundred, a thousand...? If this continued, he would eventually be exhausted of Dao force by Baihua Great Emperor and thus be defeated.

"Not bad, you..." Baihua Great Emperor gestured with her delicate hand, and the ten thousand li golden light rumbled back towards him.

Ning Fan discerned the implicit meaning in Baihua Great Emperor's words. He was good, but merely good; still inadequate to contend with an Immortal Emperor!

The second strike, Ning Fan repelled it again.

The third strike, fourth strike... By the twenty-first strike, Ning Fan finally showed signs of fatigue, as the circulation of Dao force within him began stalling.

The thirtieth strike, fortieth strike... the seventy-ninth strike!

Baihua Great Emperor remained composed, while Ning Fan showed signs of Dao force exhaustion!

"He is defeated... nonetheless, he is worthy of pride. To withstand seventy-nine strikes of an Immortal Emperor's Dao Image at a lower level—no one in my clan could possibly do this..."

"Overcoming the superior with the inferior is only a fantasy. Without reaching that realm, one can't comprehend the terror of an Immortal Emperor."

Amidst the surrounding discussions, the eightieth strike howled forth, carrying the heaviness of mountains and earth, still as overwhelming as before!

"The disparity between our levels is vast. Start anew... You can't meddle in the matter of Chulie Duolan."

Of course, Baihua Great Emperor had restrained herself. This final strike would severely wound Ning Fan but would definitely not endanger his life.

The golden light engulfed Ning Fan, submerged the ten thousand li of mountains and rivers behind him, yet unnoticed was Ning Fan's still, calm gaze within the golden light.

No, saying it was calm would be inaccurate—it was a look of understanding.

"Using one's Dao to contend against the Dao of all beings, especially when facing an Immortal Emperor, the odds of success are slim unless I too possess similar means to transform the power of all beings for my use to have a glimmer of winning... I used one strike to gauge the gap in the Dao Image with Baihua Great Emperor. Another seventy-eight strikes granted insight into Baihua Great Emperor's way of gathering the Dao of all beings... Regrettably, such art of Dao gathering wasn't easy to learn, even more so due to being a Buddhist supernatural power that contradicted the Ancient Demon will within me, making mastery doubly difficult..."

"The Ancient Buddhists enlightened all beings, thus could borrow the Dao of all beings to subdue enemies, while the Ancient Demons were different. Ancient Demons wouldn't enlighten beings; they fight, kill, and give no grace to beings, hence using the Dao force of all beings was exceptionally difficult

for them. The Ancient Demon path is one of breaking and annihilation... Destruction is will, seeking to break all constraints and seek the true self; Annihilation is power, without it, all rebellion is empty!"

"Destruction and annihilation... Previously, when I used the power of the Ancient Demons, I lacked this heart of destruction and annihilation, thus lacking the Path of Destruction..."

"The Demonic Night Transformation is originally a Demonic Dao Image, lacking the realization of the Path of Destruction, its power becomes an empty shell!"

The golden light pierced his body, tearing Ning Fan's Dao, breaking his Dao, no wounds, no blood, but constant agony.

Yet beneath this agony, Ning Fan smiled—a demonic smile.

Confronting an Immortal Emperor-level powerhouse proved to be an excellent opportunity to test Dao Image. For the first time, Ning Fan grasped the essence of the Ancient Demon lineage.

All Ancient Demonic skills were mere appearances; the true difference of Ancient Demons from other races lay in their Dao!

The Path of Destruction!

Ning Fan's bloodline pulsed, ignited! His spirit sense advanced, ascended!

A part within his Dao, belonging to the Ancient Demon lineage, improved!

The golden Buddhist light that pierced his body was repelled by the boiling Ancient Demon force within him, expelled outside, unable to invade again.

For the first time since their confrontation, Baihua Great Emperor furrowed her brow.

She had long since gauged Ning Fan's depth; accordingly, Ning Fan shouldn't have withstood past the eightieth strike, yet now, Ning Fan hadn't fallen, even bounced back her Buddha Power...

Boom!

A loud boom rang out, and a figure shrouded in black Dao light appeared, breaking through the golden Buddha light beside him.

It was none other than Ning Fan, who was previously engulfed by the Buddha light!

"This foreign cultivator is still holding on..." Some True Immortals, who had asserted that Ning Fan would be defeated, were caught off guard and at a loss for words.

There were also those who persisted in their belief that Ning Fan's Dao power had been exhausted, and surviving the eightieth strike was only because the Baihua Great Emperor held back; the eighty-first strike, however, was deemed impossible for him to withstand.

Unless the Baihua Great Emperor continued to hold back...

But Ning Fan's smile was extraordinarily sinister, instilling a sense of dread in many True Immortals who were well-versed in Buddhist law.

Fear! Is it possible for someone among the Buddhist disciples to fear just the mere smile of a devil cultivator!

But it was not altogether surprising, because at this moment, the Demonic Qi emanating from Ning Fan was fundamentally different, extremely dangerous, and an existence that, since ancient times, Buddha cultivators sought to destroy!

The urge to destroy is a manifestation of fear!

"Destruction... those two words encapsulate the essence of the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor. The more depleted the Dao power, the closer to doom, the stronger this Path of Destruction becomes..." Ning Fan felt the Ancient Demon Bloodline boiling within him, gaining more understanding.

The Baihua Great Emperor frowned, flipping her hand to unleash the eighty-first strike. Mysteriously, she felt that Ning Fan seemed to have transformed and become different, so this attack was infused with thirty percent more power than her previous ones!

"It appears that Baihua Great Emperor hadn't used her full strength before. But then again, when have I ever used my full power? My intention was only to comprehend the Dao Image within the realm of all beings... yet at this moment, there is no need to hold back anymore!"

Demonic Night Transformation!

With a single thought, Ning Fan set the boundary at a zhang before him, and in an instant, the mountains and rivers stretching back for ten thousand miles plunged into a black night.

Behind the Baihua Great Emperor, for tens of thousands of miles, was a world of dazzling golden light!

Behind Ning Fan, for tens of thousands of miles, was a world shrouded in darkness!

Golden Sky and Black Sky stood as equals!

This was the first time since entering Baihua Peak that Ning Fan fully revealed the Dao Image of Demonic Night Transformation!

Moreover, this was after understanding the Ancient Demon Destruction Dao, and the Demonic Qi within the black night made even the Baihua Great Emperor reveal a shocked expression.

As Ning Fan pointed forward, ten thousand miles of black light collided with ten thousand miles of golden light, and the result caused everyone to change their color!

Boom!

The ten thousand miles of black light remained motionless, while the ten thousand miles of golden light frantically retreated, with cracks forming!

Ning Fan surprisingly reversed the situation in the eighty-first strike, beginning to gain the upper hand!

The crowd of immortals gasped in shock!

This foreign Immortal Venerable, against an Immortal Emperor, had gained the upper hand! Was it the Baihua Great Emperor's negligence, or was it this foreign cultivator's luck, or perhaps...

Boom!

The Baihua Great Emperor furrowed her brows tightly, furiously launching the eighty-second strike, again suffering a minor setback from Ning Fan.

It wasn't luck!

This foreign cultivator truly suppressed the Baihua Great Emperor!

"What has this boy done? His Demonic Qi seems to have changed... and his Dao Image..." the Baihua Great Emperor's heart stirred.

Ning Fan's Demonic Qi was far from ordinary!

His Dao Image was even more extraordinary!

A brazen young man! Facing an Immortal Emperor powerhouse, he endured up to the eighty-first strike before beginning to fully unveil his Dao Image.

What kind of Dao Image is this, its level impossible to discern! But it's definitely higher than her Heavenly Grade of Seventeen Levels!

The records about the Dao Image during the Era of Decline are too few, and some powerful Dao Images are absolute secrets of the world; even in ancient times, not everyone had the privilege to know them.

This Era's Slaughter Emperor had the qualification to know Ning Fan's Dao Image of Demonic Night Transformation, but the Baihua Great Emperor was not yet qualified!

"Blossoming Thunder Resounds!"

With a delicate shout, the Baihua Great Emperor's massive flower image behind her immediately began to turn, and millions of golden thunder Dao power merged into the ten thousand miles of golden light.

In an instant, the power of the Baihua Great Emperor's Dao Image exploded several times over!

The battle of Dao Images is not a simple battle of levels; there are numerous techniques involved, and the Baihua Great Emperor undoubtedly mastered her Dao Image thoroughly. To this, Ning Fan had to admit and be amazed.

With the added thunderlight, the ten thousand miles of golden light not only surged in power but also brimmed with a violent impact force; the Dao traces were chaotic as if tearing.

The ten thousand miles of golden light hadn't even reached him, yet the scattered Dao traces already sliced Ning Fan's face, drawing blood. Normally, Dao Images couldn't harm people, but evidently, this Dao Image surpassed that limit!

This was truly the Baihua Great Emperor's full-strength strike! Only by overcoming this strike could Ning Fan truly claim victory over the Baihua Great Emperor!

The Baihua Great Emperor pressed down on the ten thousand miles of golden light with her slender hand, her voice icy as she spoke,

"This is my Dao Image's full display, and its outcome is beyond my control. Think carefully, stepping back now is still possible!"

Otherwise, she might not be able to control it, and might not hold back!

Because she wanted to take advantage of Burying Moon, the Baihua Great Emperor certainly didn't want to kill Ning Fan, but she couldn't allow herself to be defeated by an inferior!

If this battle must end with no one retreating, a result must be decided...

Then it must be her victory!

"As an Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor, how could I run away!"

Ning Fan laughed demonically, pressing his demonic palm, and within his ten thousand miles of black light, bright stars began to emerge.

Dao-Manifested Big Dipper! This was Ning Fan's second Heavenly Grade Dao Image, though not fully mastered, yet at this moment, he utilized it!

When the two Dao Images merge, it becomes a super-heavenly grade! The resulting effect also causes Ning Fan's Dao Image's power to multiply by more than tenfold, after all, it is a sublimation in level!

Facing an all-out strike from a dignified Immortal Emperor, if Ning Fan still held back, he would be a fool!

The Dao Image's oppressive force from the Baihua Great Emperor left the spectators in awe!

Ning Fan's ten thousand li of demon might also made the spectators' faces change!

This was definitely not a Dao Image battle they could intervene in, definitely not!

Even the Immortal Venerables and Immortal Kings of the seven auxiliary peaks trembled internally, with all but the heavily injured Mingfeng present. If their Dao Images got involved in this struggle, they would surely be directly obliterated!

Who will win!

Is it His Highness, or this foreign cultivator!

At that moment, even Baihua Great Emperor herself was unsure of her ability to secure a victory.

Yet Ning Fan did not retreat, so how could she retreat? This duel must have a winner!

"A World of Buddha Mountains Descend!"

The Baihua Great Emperor gently pushed with her soft palm, and within the ten thousand li of Buddha Light behind her, shadows of Five Fingered Mountains appeared. The Buddha Light roared and collided with the force of moving mountains and overturning seas.

This was her strongest Dao Image attack, this was... the strongest!

In Ning Fan's heart, there was not as much concern about victory or defeat as the Baihua Great Emperor. He had long since forgotten about winning or losing, only the desire for challenging the strong existed within the Ancient Demon Bloodline!

Only... the ever-echoing words of Ancient Demon Annihilation!

The coming Buddha Mountain could not hope to suppress his demonic way!

He must destroy everything, must... break through everything, to be the true Ancient Demon!

"Ancient Demon Mountain-Shattering Strike!"

Ning Fan condensed all the black light of ten thousand li behind him into a single punch, striking fiercely.

His use of Dao Images was not as refined as the Baihua Great Emperor's, but his demon heart, his path, even if Baihua Great Emperor cultivated for another ten lifetimes, she could not compare!

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Shadow after shadow of the Five Fingered Mountain was shattered by Ning Fan's punch, followed by the total defeat of the Baihua Great Emperor's Dao Image, and the ten thousand li of Buddha Light instantly vanished!

The powerful shock wave directly sent the observing True Immortals flying.

The Baihua Great Emperor spat blood and flew backward, like a withered flower drifting, her aura rapidly weakening. Ultimately, her injuries worsened, she lost, completely defeated, even if any other among the Central Continent's Five Emperors faced Ning Fan in a Dao Image duel, they too would inevitably lose.

No matter what else the child didn't have, his Dao Image was terrifyingly strong. And he hadn't even grown into an Immortal Emperor yet, if he became an emperor...

Pfft!

She coughed up blood once more, and in the endless shattered Buddha Light, her form suddenly became illusory.

No one saw this moment of illusion, as everyone else was sent flying by the shock wave.

Only Ning Fan suddenly witnessed this incredible scene!

In that instant of becoming illusory, the Baihua Great Emperor seemed to have stepped out of human form, transforming into a withered flower...

Could that flower be the true form of the Baihua Great Emperor? Could she have tread the path of cultivation as an essence of flowers and plants?

No...

It was just an ordinary flower, without any traces of cultivation...

It was even a flower long withered and dead, devoid of life...

And the supernatural power bestowed upon that flower...

Could it be...

Ning Fan's thoughts raced, and in an instant, the withered flower transformed back into the Baihua Great Emperor.

Simultaneously, in a marketplace of a certain city in Central Continent, an old man haggling with a customer suddenly showed a hint of surprise and exclaimed softly.

"Hey, Old Niu, are you selling this water tank or not! My master ordered ten water tanks, since a new residence needs many things. If you don't want to do this business, I'll find another vendor!"

"Selling, three hundred coins." The person called Old Niu concealed his astonishment and answered.

Inwardly, he wondered... who was dueling with that dead bee's Phantom Puppet, to drive the puppet to depletion and reveal its true form...

In Liuli City of Central Continent, inside a song and dance hall, seven or eight dancers were performing for guests.

Suddenly, one dancer missed a beat, a slight look of surprise on her face.

She was a dancer nearly perfect in appearance, without a flaw to be found, exuding an inner grace, her form naturally divine, giving off an aura of purity. It seemed she was not merely a dancer, but a bodhisattva walking among men...

"The taste of the Vast Expanse Butterfly..." The dancer unexpectedly licked her lips unconsciously.

The secretion of saliva in her mouth also intensified in that instant...

"I wouldn't have expected the famed first courtesan of Liuli to make such a small mistake, but even if she missteps, she's still the love in my heart!"

"Humph! Afeng is mine, anyone who competes with me is against my Hex Family!"

"Your Hex Family's wealth may not even suffice for Afeng's offerings for a month! How can you compare with my Lei Family!"

"Afeng, my Afeng..."

Below the stage, voices of competing young masters clamored over the flower.

The dancer named Afeng cast a deep look at the young masters below, then with a sweet smile, continued her dance unperturbed...

Chapter 1019: South Sea Spring Water

"We won..."

Ning Fan waved his hand, and the night Dao Image that stretched across ten thousand miles instantly dispersed like smoke and clouds.

His expression was very calm, with an extremely subtle change in temperament compared to before. It was as if there was an added confidence in him, a result of defeating the Baihua Empress, bringing about an enhancement to his Dao heart.

If compared in terms of cultivation, he might not yet be a match for the Immortal Emperors.

But if compared in terms of Dao Image, even against the Sixth Calamity Immortal Emperor, he would dare to fight, having no need to feel inferior when facing an Immortal Emperor.

The entire Baihua Main Peak was engulfed in demonic qi due to Ning Fan's Dao Image, and the demonic aura lingered. Many of the Baihua cultivators, who were well-versed in Buddhist law, were visibly struggling to endure the demonic qi but remained silent and did not leave. The scene was eerily quiet, leaving only the sound of the mountain wind, as if everyone was still immersed in the shock of the Baihua Empress's defeat.

A lower-rank Immortal Venerable actually defeated the illustrious Baihua Great Emperor in terms of Dao Image, and if this spreads, it will surely cause a sensation in the Middle State!

Moreover, observant people could see that the Baihua Empress's defeat wasn't because her Dao Image was too weak, but because Ning Fan's Dao Image was too strong!

Unbelievably strong!

Cough cough cough!

The Baihua Empress barely stabilized her stance and weakly began to cough, looking at Ning Fan with a gaze that held undisguisable shock and despair.

After a long while, she finally emerged from that despair and, with an expressionless face, said to Ning Fan,

"You have won. As this emperor has spoken, it shall be done. From this moment on, the enmity between Baihua Peak and Chulie Duolan is... wiped clean! Should Chulie Duolan wish to pay respects to her mother, no one shall stop her, nor shall anyone... attack her within Baihua Peak's territory..."

Her tone held a slight reluctance...

"Someone come, prepare guest rooms for Young Friend Ning and the Chulie Saintess. From today onward, these two are esteemed guests of Baihua Peak, and no one shall disdain them! The duel has ended, those not involved in the mountain patrol, quickly leave the main peak!"

With the Baihua Empress's command, she was aided by several young boys with wings and turned to leave.

Then came an uproar in the crowd!

Before this, who could have imagined that Ning Fan, who had caused such a disturbance at Baihua Peak, wouldn't be punished but would instead defeat the Baihua Empress and become an esteemed guest of the Baihua Empress!

And who could have imagined that Duolan, who had deep hatred with Baihua Peak like a sea, would reconcile their enmity due to today's events.

Humph!

Many Baihua cultivators snorted coldly and left, their sleeves flicking. Most of these people's friends or relatives had died at the hands of the former Chulie Emperor, so their hatred for Duolan was extreme. Unfortunately, now that the Baihua Empress had issued a command, even if they were unwilling, they dared not act against Duolan any longer.

A few cultivators did not leave immediately; instead, they exchanged a few polite words with Ning Fan before leaving the main peak.

Consider it a way to get acquainted with Ning Fan.

With the pride of the Dabei people, they generally wouldn't warm up to a mere foreign cultivator. However, in any place, the strong are respected. Ning Fan's uprising victory against the Baihua Empress in the Dao Image battle showcased his strength. Once the news spreads, it is enough to astonish the world and make these arrogant Dabei people respect him.

Still, due to the Baihua Empress dispersing everyone, these people, while intending to befriend Ning Fan, dared not linger, only exchanging names before leaving.

Among these people were even the peak masters of several auxiliary peaks.

Aside from Mingfeng Immortal Venerable of the Sixth Auxiliary Peak, who was severely injured and not present, the other six peak masters were there, each briefly exchanging names with Ning Fan, their tones unfailingly polite. Even the peak masters of the First and Second Auxiliary Peaks addressed Ning Fan as equals without any arrogance.

With the shrewdness of these six peak masters, how could they not grasp the Baihua Empress's intentions? Ning Fan was aligned with the foreign cultivator who healed the Baihua Empress, making him an esteemed guest of Baihua Peak; having the ability to shatter the Dao Image of an Immortal Emperor, befriendng him did not harm their status.

In response to the six peak masters' overtures, Ning Fan responded with great civility, showing neither the recklessness from his mountain invasion nor the intimidating demonic demeanor as when confronting the Baihua Empress.

Rather, he was as gentle as a modest gentleman.

This surprised the peak masters greatly, leading them to hold Ning Fan's demon cultivation in even higher regard. The ability to control one's demonic heart at will is not something just any demon cultivator can accomplish.

After brief pleasantries, the six peak masters did not dare linger on the main peak any longer and took their leave. However, as they left, they all extended invitations to Ning Fan, inviting him to visit their

respective auxiliary peaks in the future, promising to entertain him with each peak's most precious spirit fruits. Unable to refuse such hospitality, Ning Fan had to agree to each invitation.

Once all the observing cultivators had left, several young boys with wings came to lead Ning Fan and Duolan back into the cave mansion to rest in the guest rooms.

The guest rooms numbered over a hundred, mostly unoccupied and gathering dust. Only three rooms were spotlessly clean and had maids in service.

"These three guest rooms belong to Lord Yue, Lord Ouyang, and Lord Wu. At this hour, the three lords are still engaged in alchemy for the esteemed one and can't spare a moment. In about one more cup of tea's time, Lord Ning will most likely be able to meet the three lords." One of the winged youths explained with a wooden expression.

The "Lord Yue" mentioned by the youth naturally referred to Burying Moon. Being in the Dabei Clan's list of many enemies, revealing her identity could invite trouble, hence she entered Baihua Peak under an alias. Ning Fan quickly understood this.

"The rooms for the two lords will be cleaned shortly, please wait a moment."

As he spoke, eight young and beautiful maidens were dispatched to clean the guest rooms. In no time, two rooms were prepared, with four maids stationed in each room.

Of course, these two rooms were one each for Ning Fan and Duolan.

However, before checking in, the winged youths asked courteously, "Do Lord Ning and Lord Duolan wish to share a single room? If there's a need for this, we can arrange for the maids to clean a more spacious room for the two lords to reside, to facilitate activities during the night."

Activities during the night... activities during the night...

Duolan felt her ears burning, hurriedly explaining, "No need for that, I and Senior Ning don't have that kind of relationship, we can each have our own room."

She's not some concubine for Senior Ning, how could they stay together... come to think of it, perhaps these Corpse Demons misunderstood something; otherwise, why would they ask such an additional question?

Now that she thinks about it, Senior Ning dared to openly defy the prestigious Baihua Great Emperor just to protect her, even going so far as to face off against an Immortal Emperor's Dao Image. To outsiders, this would likely fuel all sorts of imaginings.

Others might view Ning Fan's actions as a hero rescuing a beauty, suspecting some ambiguous relationship, some private feelings between them...

But only Duolan knew that Senior Ning harbored no romantic feelings for her, merely acting out of protectiveness, determined to protect her.

Simply because of a protective nature... Duolan inexplicably felt a little disappointed.

Ning Fan, amused, thought that these Corpse Demon youths were highly intelligent; to consider such ***** matters so thoroughly.

They were far smarter than typical Corpse Demons.

It seems the Baihua Great Emperor has a unique method in crafting Corpse Demons...

The winged youths were merely asking, and seeing Duolan refuse, after thinking for a moment, they added, "The two of you are distinguished guests of the esteemed one, and according to the rules, during your stay at this estate, you are entitled to a Cauldron Furnace to serve you by your bedside. Should Lord Ning require a female attendant for the night, you may freely use the maids here. As for Lord Duolan... there are no male cauldrons to serve in this estate; all males here belong solely to the esteemed one. Without the esteemed one's command, we cannot serve Lord Duolan. So, if Lord Duolan has any needs, please notify us in advance, and we will find a way to procure some male cultivators for your enjoyment."

"No need! I don't require male attendants for the night!" Duolan's face reddened further, secretly cursing that like master, like servant, for these winged youths' minds seemed solely fixated on affairs between men and women...

Could they not have a single question not related to such matters!

"Lord Duolan doesn't seem very interested in such affairs? Could there be a physical ailment? The esteemed one excels at crafting fragrances from the nectar of a hundred flowers, which can increase desires, treating various ailments related to such affairs. Among them, there are perfumes suitable for women's use, including the Soft Body Embrace Fragrance, Red Path Moist Fragrance, and One Night Ten Husbands Fragrance. If Lord Duolan needs any..."

"No! I want none of those fragrances!"

"Various jade apparatuses are provided in the guest rooms, Lord Duolan can use them at your discretion..."

"I don't need them!"

"At midnight every day, maids will serve the Uniting Yin Warming Yang Tea..."

"I don't need it!"

"The Dual Cultivation Enlightenment Stele of the esteemed one is available for viewing by the guests; if Lord Duolan needs it..."

"I don't need it!"

"There's a secret scroll of room techniques painted by a famous monk in the storeroom, I wonder..."

...

...

.....

"I don't need anything!"

Duolan's pretty face turned so red it seemed like it might drip blood.

The young men with flesh wings were somewhat nervous; could it be that this Lady Duolan was not satisfied with their hospitality? If the Lord were to blame them for their lack of courtesy, it would be troublesome. Thus, the more Duolan refused, the more enthusiastic they became.

"Alright, you can leave now. If there's anything needed, the Chulie Holy Maiden will inform you," Ning Fan said, seeing Duolan was truly embarrassed, and thus dismissed the young men with flesh wings.

Duolan immediately cast him a grateful glance.

Upon meeting Ning Fan's candid gaze, she couldn't help but recall the scene where he decisively shielded her, and instantly, Duolan felt her heart was in tumult, full of unspeakable gratitude. Yet, she remembered Ning Fan's advice, stating their situation could be considered more foe than friend, which left her speechless.

She knew, deep down, she had really fallen in love with Senior Ning.

But this was...wrong...

Ning Fan withdrew his gaze, sighed lightly, and said calmly, "Is there anything you want to say?"

"No..." Duolan lowered her head with some guilt, her cheeks flushed red.

"That's for the best. When you ascended the mountain, you were trapped by that mist formation and got injured. If not treated timely, it might leave hidden dangers, so you should go heal yourself quickly. I also gained some insights from the earlier battle and am eager to return to my room to ponder over them, so I won't keep you any longer."

Ning Fan turned around and headed toward his guest room.

Watching Ning Fan's retreating figure, Duolan's heart was filled with unspoken emotions, turning into a sigh of longing.

"By the way, I haven't returned your thing yet. The long-bearded monk previously took your hair tie made of Flood Dragon's Tendon. I retrieved it but was too busy breaking into the mountain to return it then."

Ning Fan suddenly turned back, handed a storage pouch to Duolan, and then entered his room.

This was the storage pouch taken from the long-bearded monk, containing his cherished mumblings. However, it was neither here nor there for Ning Fan now, so he gave it to Duolan.

Duolan opened the storage pouch and took out her Flood Dragon's Tendon, feeling warmth suffuse her heart.

"Thank you..." she whispered as if to herself, then also stepped into her room.

...

Upon entering the guest room, Ning Fan immediately dismissed the four charming maids, staying alone inside.

He was not a man of lust; rather, he was a person whose life was not lacking in women, so he had no intent of indulging with the maids here.

This left the four maids, eager to form a bond with Ning Fan, very disappointed.

Ouyang Nuan and others were still busy and would return later. Before that, Ning Fan did indeed wish to organize his insights from the previous battle.

After battling with the Immortal Emperor, Ning Fan continuously comprehended many uses of the Dao Image, and for the first time, he grasped the essence of the Ancient Demon lineage.

Annihilation...

Ning Fan could faintly sense that after grasping the concept of annihilation, the Ancient Demon Bloodline within him felt complete. It was as if only from this moment did he become a true Ancient Demon who could proudly face the Immortals and Buddhas.

However, Ning Fan was only at the initial understanding of the Ancient Demon Annihilation Dao. To deepen his insights, it would likely require a long time to accumulate.

The Dao of the Ancient Demon is the word annihilation.

What then is the Dao of the Fiendgods?

And what is the Dao of the ancient demons?

Presumably, one must have some comprehension to make both truly complete.

To become a true Fiendgod, a true ancient demon!

Shortly, Ning Fan roughly sorted the gains from this battle and suddenly remembered the last scene of Baihua Emperor's defeat, which made his expression somewhat solemn.

After Baihua Emperor's defeat, he turned into a wilting, lifeless flower...

Turning into a flower can be explained by Baihua Emperor's true form as a sentient flower; if he was struck back to his original form, naturally, it would appear so.

But why was it a flower without any sign of life...

Even if Baihua Emperor's body was a flower, there should still be life.

Could it be that Baihua Emperor was actually a dead person?

This was not impossible, as there were powerful Corpse cultivators who were indeed lifeless existences.

However, the point of confusion was that in human form, Baihua Emperor exuded no trace of Corpse Qi to Ning Fan but had an exceptionally vigorous life aura.

He was undoubtedly alive...

If he was truly alive, then the lifeless flower as his original form couldn't be explained; a living person's true form could be a flower but not a dead one...

What troubled Ning Fan most was that moment when his left demonic eye distinctly sensed an extremely subtle and weak illusionary power from the dead flower.

Possessing the Fuli Illusion-Breaking Talent, Ning Fan had a very keen perception of illusions. He was confident he didn't mistake it; at that instant, he perceived an almost terrifying illusionary power from the dead flower!

Subsequently, as the illusionary power was activated, it seemed to transform the dead flower bit by bit into the form of Baihua Emperor...

Ning Fan's expression was extremely grave.

The level of illusionary art was something he had never witnessed!

It was as if someone used incredibly powerful illusions to transform a flower without cultivation or life into an Immortal Emperor...

Could it be that Baihua Emperor wasn't a truly existing person, but a creation of illusion magic!

This thought, once it appeared, set off huge waves in Ning Fan's heart.

He couldn't be sure whether this conjecture was true, but if it were, it would be truly terrifying...

Baihua Emperor was absolutely not a weakling!

How powerful one must be to create a Baihua Great Emperor with illusions!

And what a profound illusionary art it must be!

Moreover, if this were true, would anyone in the Dabei clan know the secret about Baihua Emperor? Or was he alone privy to this secret...

If this were to get out, would it touch upon some taboos within the Dabei clan...

Or perhaps he was overthinking, and there was no conflict between the living person and the dead flower; it was merely the effect of a Cultivation Technique...

Can illusions that create an Immortal Emperor really exist in this world?

Ning Fan sighed slightly, feeling that the Baihua Peak's depths were even beyond his imagination.

After a while, a wave of black fortune aura rushed in from outside the door, and Ning Fan opened his eyes, knowing Wu Laoba and others had returned.

"Master, my most beloved Master, you finally came! During the days you were absent, Little Ba remained loyal and true, as steadfast as Guan Yu, protecting Madam Yue and Madam Ouyang, enduring countless hardships and suffering numerous grievances. The difficulties we can't share with outsiders, even being hunted by various city lords due to ignorance of Middle State laws, standing solitary and unaccompanied..."

Ning Fan only saw a shadow flash before his eyes, and an elder with bean-sized eyes and a wretched appearance had already flashed in, kneeling on the ground, clutching his knees, bawling.

Who else could it be, if not Wu Laoba!

"You've used some words incorrectly..." Ning Fan was somewhat speechless.

"Master, you know not, you know not! Little Ba has suffered countless hardships, and nearly died several times! If not for unwavering loyalty, passionate sincerity, if not for yearning to serve the Master, with gratitude and longing, if not worried about tarnishing your mighty and heroic reputation, Little Ba would have been slain by enemies long ago..."

"Enough! Let me see the storage pouch!" Ning Fan frowned, dark thoughts flickering. Wu Laoba shivered, stood up straight, and tried to hide the storage pouch around his waist, his heart shaken.

Having not seen him for a while, the aura of this star of misfortune in the evil path has grown stronger! It's terrifying...

"Wh... what storage pouch, what is Master talking about, Little Ba doesn't understand... Little Ba is really foolish, really ignorant, unable to comprehend Master's golden and jade words..."

"Within three breaths, if you don't hand over the storage pouch, face the consequences yourself!" Ning Fan chuckled inwardly, but made a fierce face outwardly.

Frightened, Wu Laoba quickly handed over the storage pouch, with a seemingly willing attitude.

Ning Fan just quickly scanned the storage pouch and was rendered speechless.

He didn't believe that Wu Laoba suffered or was wronged on his way to the Middle State.

Though his cultivation was heavily sealed by the Punishing Ring, his fortune was not sealed. Knowing Wu Laoba is full of black fortune divine skills, most are directly linked to fortune levels, rather than related to cultivation...

If this guy wanted to frame someone, he would likely succeed every time. Following his temperament, entering Middle State in chaos likely yielded substantial profits.

Therefore, as soon as Ning Fan met him, he asked for the storage pouch to see Wu Laoba's gains in the Middle State.

Indeed, Wu Laoba, when left to his own devices, had his storage pouch filled with countless good things.

Medicine Soul Stones... not less than ten million pieces! Where did this guy get so many Medicine Soul Stones? This could let them stay with the Dabei Clan for a very long time.

For foreign cultivators without strong Medicine Souls, the quantity of Medicine Soul Stones directly determines their stay's duration here!

Expensive pills... no less than a hundred bottles, and each bottle is Ninth-Revolution and above pills, produced by the Dabei Clan, ranging from Lead Elixir, Silver Elixir to Golden Elixir...

Magical treasures... Surprisingly, there's a Twelve Nirvana Acquired Treasure in this guy's storage pouch and about ten Nine Nirvana and Ten Nirvana magical treasures! The extra Twelve Nirvana treasure is an emerald Imperial Ancient Crown, seemingly a defensive magical treasure with considerable power, and besides its defensive effects, it seems to have other abilities...

It seems it can temporarily boost a cultivator's fortune...

"If Master desires that Imperial Jade Fortune Crown, please take it. Little Ba swindled this treasure precisely to present it to you, with absolutely no intention of keeping anything for myself! Please accept it, Master!" Wu Laoba was inwardly pained but wore a fawning smile.

Ning Fan smiled slightly, shaking his head. He had an Ancient Kingdom's God-Destroying Shield, so he didn't need this mere Twelve Nirvana Acquired Treasure. Although the treasure could enhance fortune and was quite mysterious, it was evident that it would benefit Wu Laoba more, considering his ace is his black fortune...

This treasure's utility was even greater than a regular Innate Treasure to Wu Laoba.

"Don't worry, you can keep this green hat, I don't want it."

Ning Fan's words were music to Wu Laoba's ears, completely ignoring the other implication of a 'green hat'. As long as the Master didn't compete for this 'green hat', the rest of the contents in the storage pouch were his to take, Wu Xiaoba didn't mind! Naturally, he flattered Ning Fan again, expressing his loyalty, asserting that with the green hat boosting black fortune, he would serve the Master valiantly on the battlefield, becoming a sharp blade for the Master, conquering far and wide, using my blood to set the boundaries for you...

Ning Fan ignored these flattery entirely. Calmly, he took away over half of the Medicine Soul Stones, leaving only a few for Wu Laoba, also took away most of the expensive pills, then returned the storage pouch to Wu Laoba.

Wool cannot be shaved all at once.

Ning Fan was still expecting Wu Laoba to continue plundering in all directions to accumulate wealth for him, so naturally, he had to leave him some benefits.

After finishing all this, Ning Fan completely ignored Wu Laoba. His gaze shifted slightly, meeting the somewhat mischievous smiles of Ouyang Nuan and Zang Yue.

This master-servant pair is truly a pair of jokers...

"Are things going smoothly?" Ning Fan was naturally inquiring about the matter of investigating the Jiuli Ritual Vessel.

Zang Yue and her group came to Middle State in advance, and wasn't it just for this matter?

"It's going smoothly. As per our agreement with the Baihua Emperor, as long as Sister Nuan nourishes enough dan medicine to help her heal her injuries, she will tell us what she knows about the ritual vessel. Unfortunately, someone recklessly made a move, injuring the Baihua Emperor in a lower position, which worsened her injuries. In this way, Sister Nuan and I are afraid we'll have to nourish more dan medicine to fulfill the agreement..." Zang Yue glared at Ning Fan with ill humor, having already heard about Ning Fan's Dao Image duel on the way back to the guest room.

That look of anger without words seemed to blame Ning Fan for injuring the Baihua Emperor.

After all, she had some old friendship with the Baihua Emperor and even owed her some favors. She was really worried that Ning Fan directly killed the Baihua Emperor...

The Baihua Emperor was already seriously injured and dying, her injuries couldn't be further aggravated...

Of course, Zang Yue would never admit that she was actually a bit worried about Ning Fan too. Fighting the Immortal Emperor, it was indeed a bit reckless. It would be best if this little thief won, but if he lost, it would be dangerous...

The Dao Image duel was extremely perilous. Even if the Baihua Emperor spared Ning Fan's life, she would most likely punish Ning Fan in some way.

Serious injury, demotion of realm... all were possible.

Ouyang Nuan, however, did not hide her concern for Ning Fan. She wanted to say some reproachful words, but upon meeting Ning Fan's somewhat fiery gaze, her words immediately lost momentum, and

she only sighed softly, "The opponent is the Immortal Emperor. Husband should have been more cautious..."

Then she glanced at Ning Fan with some reproach, "I heard Husband clashed with the Baihua Emperor because of a Dabei woman?"

But Ouyang Nuan and Zang Yue said in unison, "I understand, no need to explain." The two women had such deep tacit understanding!

Only the former spoke in a calm tone, while the latter in a mocking tone.

Ouyang Nuan was already aware that Ning Fan was the inheritor of Ancient Chaos and had psychological preparation for such matters.

Zang Yue had long believed that Ning Fan was a little thief, trying to seize any opportunity to ridicule Ning Fan with a few words.

No need to explain, huh...

Forget it, I won't explain then...

Ning Fan left the pitiful Wu Laoba aside and sat down with the two women to chat, asking about their experiences along the way.

With Wu Laoba accompanying them, their journey was naturally chaotic, but most of the enemies were directly dealt with by Wu Laoba's Black Fortune, including Immortal Venerable and Immortal King. As long as an Immortal Emperor didn't appear, there were really few who could do anything to Wu Laoba.

Especially midway, Wu Laoba unexpectedly gained a green hat as a trophy, after which his Black Fortune ability increased significantly, making him even more formidable.

Though they caused quite a stir in Middle State, when they reached Baihua Peak, they were directly regarded as honored guests by the Baihua Emperor. Because of this, those forces wanting to make a move on them became quite cautious and dared not act.

After that, Zang Yue and others stayed at Baihua Peak to nourish dan medicine for the Baihua Emperor.

According to Zang Yue, the Baihua Emperor did not lack Alchemists, having hired several Ninth Revolution Golden Pill-level Alchemists to exclusively refine Healing Pills for her.

For the Four Heavens, there were very few Ninth Revolution Golden Pill-level Alchemists; for the Dabei clan, Gold Core-level Alchemists were also not many, but not rare either.

The Baihua Emperor's injuries were extremely peculiar, and the Healing Pills were a very niche type of Ninth Revolution Golden Pill. Despite having many exclusive alchemists, there was no need for Ouyang Nuan to personally make the pills. In fact, many semi-finished pills had already been refined. However, the refining requirements of this pill were quite harsh, requiring the assistance of several rare medicine souls to succeed, and the Five-Color Medicine Soul was precisely one of them.

"The Baihua Emperor is injured by the power of reincarnation, which is why her injuries have been slow to heal..." Zang Yue sighed slightly, revealing the hidden secret.

"Power of Reincarnation? If it's the true power of reincarnation, it might directly take Baihua Emperor's life. Even if it causes injuries, it's definitely not something that the Ninth Revolution Golden Pill can heal. I suppose the power of reincarnation that injured Baihua Emperor, if not flawed, must have some defects..." Ning Fan, having some understanding of the power of reincarnation, guessed correctly.

"Correct, the one who injured Baihua was merely a mimicked reincarnation power from a Second Step Great Power, not the real thing. Otherwise, Baihua's injuries wouldn't be so simple..." Burying Moon sighed, and after a moment, gratefully held Ouyang Nuan's hand.

"If it weren't for Sister Nuan possessing the Five-Color Medicine Soul, which happens to have the rare medicine soul power to refine the Divine Origin Pill, healing Baihua wouldn't be so easy. I must thank Sister Nuan for her assistance in this matter."

"Sister Burying Moon, no need for politeness. In essence, this matter is to help my husband, so it's natural for me to do my part."

"The Dabei Clan has many ancient pill recipes, none of which can be refined without having rare medicine souls. This is why the Dabei people hold rare medicine soul possessors in such high regard..."

"Speaking of rare medicine souls, sister, do you remember those possessors we met days ago..."

Unexpectedly, Burying Moon and Ouyang Nuan got more and more engrossed in conversation, leaving Ning Fan sidelined; the two women continued chatting on their own.

Ning Fan found it amusing, feeling he couldn't interject, so he simply sat aside, listening to the two of them talk.

"Master... Little Ba, loyal to the core, willing to keep you company?" Wu Laoba sensed an opportunity to show loyalty, his body trembling as he approached.

"No need." Two words, understated yet cold enough to hit Wu Laoba hard!

Master Ning preferred silence to chatting with Little Ba...

Master Ning preferred silence to chatting with Little Ba...

Master Ning preferred silence...

Master...

Continued to ignore the pitiful Wu Laoba.

As Ning Fan listened deeply, his gaze gradually grew solemn because Burying Moon finally talked about her past exploits in Dabei...

According to Burying Moon, she was deeply trapped at the time when Baihua Emperor saved her, thus owing Baihua Emperor a favor.

Because of this, when Ning Fan was away, she heard of Baihua Emperor's severe injury and contacted Baihua Emperor using Secret Technique. Learning Baihua might know the whereabouts of the ritual vessel, she rushed to Middle State with Ouyang Nuan to rescue Baihua Emperor.

In a rush to save a friend, she couldn't wait for Ning Fan to return!

From this point of view, despite Burying Moon's flaws, she was indeed someone who knew gratitude and repaid kindness.

"Back then, I relied on my Immortal Emperor peak cultivation to rampage in Middle State, but was severely wounded by an Ox Demon that suddenly appeared. At the critical moment, Baihua used her profound Dao of formations to save me. Without her, I might not have died, but would have paid a huge price."

"I still remember when Baihua and I first met, she was soft-hearted and merciful, as compassionate as the bodhisattva depicted in Buddhist scriptures, never so fond of youthful men... I never expected, after all these years, she would become this way... decisive in killing, overwhelmingly domineering, and surprisingly now has many male attendants..."

"After years apart, truly everything has changed..." Burying Moon mused deeply, the transformation covering all the years from ancient times to today.

Comparing the current Baihua Emperor, she certainly preferred the old Baihua, the girl who would save even ants.

Very naive, naively unlike a cultivator, but truly adorable.

Although today's Baihua Emperor is vastly different, uninhibited and cunningly ruthless, she has always valued gratitude, and naturally wouldn't forget the life-saving grace due to these changes.

True friendship lasts regardless of how someone changes; she is who she is.

She is just herself.

"Wait, you're saying Baihua before and now are very different in personality?" Ning Fan suddenly spoke, interrupting the two's conversation.

Burying Moon habitually teased, "Why do you care so much about topics related to Baihua? Are you, the little lecher, interested in Baihua? If that's really the case, let me caution you, Baihua is the type of woman you should stay far away from."

Although her tone seemed teasing, there was a hint of genuine advice.

Fearing Ning Fan might fail in dual cultivation with Baihua and be drained by her...

Baihua now is not a kind type, better not touched...

"I'll remember your advice. Although, do answer my question." Ning Fan felt a bit helpless, wondering when Burying Moon will change her explosive ways.

"Alright, alright, you're the master. If you ask, how can a subordinate not answer? Baihua indeed seems different from before, but cultivation matters are just like this — people always change over time. No one stays in one place forever, nor does anyone remain unchanged..."

Is it really like this?

Ning Fan squinted slightly, his mind envisioning scenes of the old Baihua Emperor, pure as a bodhisattva, unwilling to harm even an ant.

Could it be possible...

The Baihua Emperor hasn't massively changed in personality...

But the old Baihua and the current Baihua might not be the same person...

"Regardless of the truth, it has nothing to do with me, it's best not to delve too deep..."

Ning Fan made a decision, stopped probing any more information on Baihua Emperor, chatted a bit more with the two women, and then went back to his room.

Ouyang Nuan had consumed a lot of energy refining pills for Baihua Emperor, so Ning Fan didn't stay with Ouyang Nuan, giving her enough time to rest instead.

The next morning, as before, Ouyang Nuan, Burying Moon, and Wu Laoba went together to the dan refinement room in Baihua Emperor's dwelling to use the Five-Color Medicine Soul to nurture Baihua Emperor's semi-finished Divine Origin Pill.

Ning Fan went to check on them, realized that according to his current medicine soul level, he couldn't help much, thus refrained from revealing his medicine soul or interfering, choosing to protect Ouyang Nuan instead.

On the third day, Ning Fan still stayed to protect Ouyang Nuan.

On the fourth day, many peak masters from Baihua Peak's Seven Aids and Forty-Nine Peaks sent invitation cards, inviting Ning Fan to visit.

Ning Fan had promised to visit that day, and it wasn't proper to reject, so he planned to fulfill his promise, visit them, and gather some intelligence regarding the second round of the Tomb Reseizing Competition.

The second round of the Tomb Reseizing is about to start soon!

According to Burying Moon, the second round reward includes an item vital for Baihua Emperor's recovery after injury, and only by achieving a certain rank in the second round can one obtain this item. Without it, even a large number of Divine Origin Pills couldn't prevent Baihua Emperor's cultivation from dropping after recovering from injuries...

This item is called South Sea Spring Water; it's said that consuming it ensures that after healing from severe injuries, there's no concern about cultivation level dropping.

Given Baihua Emperor's status, if it were a common item, she could acquire it without needing Ning Fan to win and obtain it in the second round.

The issue is, the entity offering the South Sea Spring Water as a reward isn't from Middle State's forces but from the Holy Mountain Sect, which apparently has some history with Baihua Emperor. Thus, even with Baihua Emperor's special status, acquiring this item is very hard...

Unless someone could legitimately win it in the second round and give it to Baihua Emperor.

"If the South Sea Spring Water truly has such magical effects, it would greatly aid Baihua Emperor and potentially help the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor as well..."

Ning Fan's thoughts drifted afar; if the Ancient Chaos Grand Emperor could be successfully saved, whether he could recover his former cultivation remains uncertain.

But if he had the South Sea Spring Water...

Thus, for this second round of the Tomb Reseizing, he indeed needs to plan meticulously.

In the meantime, gathering more intelligence could increase his chances...

Chapter 1020: Bai Lu's Shamelessness

The Seven Aids and Forty-Nine Peaks sent over more than thirty invitations, inviting Ning Fan to visit, taste spiritual fruits, and discuss the Dao.

Those who dared to send invitations at least had Fragmented Thought Cultivation, as Shekong Cultivators lacked the confidence to invite Ning Fan, the Eternal Immortal Venerable.

Even those Fragmented Thought Cultivators lacked absolute confidence to truly invite Ning Fan to their abode. Therefore, apart from the six auxiliary peak masters who sincerely invited Ning Fan, the rest of the invitations from Fragmented Thought Cultivators were more of a symbolic gesture of goodwill.

However, Ning Fan actually fulfilled his promises and visited these Fragmented Thought Cultivators one by one, leaving them utterly flattered and surprised.

The structure of Baihua Peak consists of a main peak, seven auxiliary peaks, and forty-nine mountain ranges.

The master of the forty-seventh mountain range, who had Fragmented Thought Early Stage cultivation, was brewing tea and reading scriptures in his cave abode when suddenly informed by the sramanera that a cultivator named Ning was visiting.

Startled, he couldn't even hold his teacup steady, which fell to the ground!

Overwhelmed by shock, he hastened to invite Ning Fan in, eagerly taking out various treasures to warmly entertain Ning Fan.

"Who would have thought Senior Ning would grace my humble abode, I'm truly honored beyond words. The spiritual fruits and teas here are quite crude; I hope you won't find them disdainful!"

"Haha, the peak master is too courteous. If I'm not mistaken, these spiritual fruits and teas are quite beneficial for mana enhancement. If Fragmented Thought Cultivators drink them often, they will accumulate considerable benefits over time."

"If Senior enjoys them, please feel free to have more! To be honest, the quality of the spiritual fruits and teas I possess is not high, perhaps beneficial to Fragmented Thought Cultivators, but to a venerable like you, they may not amount to much. Unfortunately, my cultivation is limited, and I can't offer anything of higher grade, I hope you understand."

"There's no need for such formalities, peak master. Spiritual fruits and teas are merely external objects. If you don't mind, how about we exchange cultivation insights?"

"Senior is willing to guide me!"

Thus, the master of the forty-seventh mountain range, even more excited, brought out more treasures to host Ning Fan and discussed his cultivation doubts during their conversation.

Though Ning Fan hadn't experienced these Fragmented Thought cultivation issues, with his Second Realm of Tianren Dao Enlightenment, offering guidance was effortless, often pointing straight to the core issue with just a few words, clearing the other's doubts. Therefore, it was guidance without much time consumption.

Listening to the cultivation queries of a Fragmented Thought Cultivator might unexpectedly benefit Ning Fan's future cultivation as well. One day he would reach the Shattered Thought Realm.

Moreover, these spiritual fruits and teas were not as crude as the peak master claimed. They were considered rough only concerning an Eternal Immortal Venerable, but they were treasures to Fragmented Thought Cultivators and exceptionally uplifting to Shekong Cultivators.

Even with few spiritual fruits and teas, Ning Fan's archaic god and demon Shekong mana advanced substantially. These spiritual fruits and teas also had peculiar effects in consolidating realms, gradually stabilizing Ning Fan's freshly broken through and unstable ancient god and demon realm.

In the brief conversation, Ning Fan also subtly inquired about intelligence regarding the second round of the graveyard battle.

The peak master, aware that Ning Fan sought some intelligence, appreciated his guidance and directly engraved known information into a jade scroll using spirit sense, handing it to Ning Fan.

Ning Fan only stayed at this peak for the time it takes to drink a cup of tea before bidding farewell, leaving the peak master quite regretful.

However, the peak master understood that for someone of Ning Fan's status as an Immortal Venerable, even sitting for a cup of tea was already a great honor. Therefore, there was no complaint.

Ning Fan also mentioned that if he had time in the future, he would visit again, hoping the peak master wouldn't find it bothersome... This left the peak master eagerly anticipating Ning Fan's future visits, welcoming him with open arms.

The short visits were mutually delightful.

Such delightful scenes also occurred at the forty-third mountain range, forty-first mountain range, thirty-ninth mountain range...

In half a day, Ning Fan visited the cave abodes of over twenty Fragmented Thought Cultivators, endearing himself to them and consuming quite a lot of spiritual fruits and teas.

Much intelligence was gathered...

The cultivation of the archaic god and demon was also completely stabilized, with evident progress toward the late stage of Shekong...

Regarding Fragmented Thought cultivation, Ning Fan gained considerable experience.

In the future, if time permits, he wouldn't mind engaging in such mutually beneficial visits.

Afterward, it would be time to visit the eternal peak masters of various auxiliary peaks.

By etiquette, he should visit the more esteemed auxiliary peak masters first and then the mountain range peak masters.

Ning Fan, however, did the contrary, not out of intent, but because the eternal peak masters inviting Ning Fan appeared more solemn, each avoiding concurrent times, as if each wanted to host Ning Fan for a full day rather than just for a cup of tea.

The seventh auxiliary peak master invited Ning Fan to visit the next day.

The sixth auxiliary peak master, Mingfeng Immortal Venerable, also sent an invitation two days later, wishing to thank Ning Fan for his mercy.

The fifth auxiliary peak master invited Ning Fan for three days later.

The subsequent peak masters staggered their invitations, seeming as though they had planned it beforehand.

Initially, Ning Fan's visit to the auxiliary peak masters was merely a response to the etiquette. But the benefits received at the mountain ranges made him somewhat anticipate visiting the Eternal Old Freaks.

These Eternal Old Freaks were, after all, serious in their demeanor, likely offering more than mere ordinary fruits and teas.

The Dabei Clan seemed quite abundant in spiritual fruits and teas. Considering the benefits of Fragmented Thought spiritual fruits and teas, those of eternal grade must offer even greater benefits.

"It feels a bit like being a freeloader, but visits are, after all, a matter of mutual consent, not solely to my benefit..."

Since the seventh auxiliary peak's invitation was for the next day, Ning Fan didn't visit anyone else but returned to the main peak. Once reaching the gate of the Hundred Flowers Emperor Cave Mansion, the boy with flesh wings, who was waiting, led him inside, through a maze of formations, back to the guest chamber.

It was quite a courteous reception...

In fact, Ning Fan had stayed in the Hundred Flowers Emperor's cave mansion for four days, having already gained insight into the mansion's formations. If he wished, he could enter and exit without guidance.

However, the Baihua Emperor would likely not appreciate knowing this, as no one likes their cave mansion's restrictions completely understood by others. Therefore, Ning Fan didn't reveal his understanding of the formations, avoiding unnecessary troubles.

He still let the boy with flesh wings guide him.

Returning to the guest chamber, Ning Fan began consolidating the day's insights and refining the remaining medicinal effects of the spiritual fruits and teas. The day swiftly passed.

On the fifth day, Ning Fan, as planned, visited the seventh auxiliary peak master.

This was an Immortal Venerable of the Eternal First Calamity, offering numerous precious spiritual fruits to entertain Ning Fan, substantially refining Ning Fan's archaic god and demon cultivation.

The increase in mana from these fruits alone was several times that of yesterday, illustrating that visiting Eternal Immortal Venerables was of greater benefit than Fragmented Thought Cultivators.

The visit lasted an entire day, after which Ning Fan departed. They exchanged substantial cultivation experience; with Ning Fan's Dao enlightenment, he conversed smoothly, leaving them both delighted.

On the sixth day, Ning Fan visited the sixth auxiliary peak, meeting with Mingfeng Immortal Venerable.

Mingfeng Immortal Venerable had severe injuries but knew that Ning Fan had shown mercy, holding no grudges against him.

Especially later, when Mingfeng learned of Ning Fan's remarkable feat of defeating the Baihua Emperor, he became even more convinced that Ning Fan had held back significantly during their Dao Image confrontation...

Thus, towards Ning Fan, he felt genuine gratitude.

Due to severe injuries, Mingfeng Immortal Venerable did not retain Ning Fan for long. They only chatted briefly before Mingfeng Immortal Venerable, using tea in place of wine, punished himself with three cups, and had no choice but to retire to his room to heal.

Ning Fan naturally did not blame Mingfeng Immortal Venerable for neglecting his guest.

Because although Mingfeng Immortal Venerable did not converse long with him, he gifted Ning Fan many rare Spirit Fruits.

The quantity was almost ten times what Ning Fan had eaten on the Seventh Auxiliary Peak!

For an Eternal Immortal Venerable, these Spirit Fruits were quite valuable. This gesture clearly showed that Mingfeng Immortal Venerable's gratitude towards Ning Fan was not just verbal but genuine.

With so many Spirit Fruits, Ning Fan couldn't consume them all in one day, so he decided to save them for gradual enjoyment.

On the seventh, eighth, and ninth days, Ning Fan successively visited the Peak Masters of the Fifth, Fourth, and Third Auxiliary Peaks, and all were delighted.

On the tenth day, when Ning Fan visited the Immortal King Peak Master of the Second Auxiliary Peak, as he left that evening, the Immortal King Peak Master held Ning Fan's hand, lamenting that they hadn't met sooner.

"In my life, I have been arrogant and rarely met someone among same-rank Immortal Kings who could earn my respect. Eternal Immortal Venerables who could do so are even fewer! Your Dao Enlightenment is profound, the deepest I've ever seen! I believe, in less than a million years, you will surely reach the Immortal King Realm, Daoist!"

"Daoist, you overestimate me. Advancing to the Immortal King within a million years is too difficult, too difficult..." Ning Fan politely replied, but inwardly he held some confidence.

This Immortal King Peak Master spoke without malice, rather with high regard for Ning Fan. After all, for ordinary people, not to mention a million years, even with tens of millions of years of hard cultivation, they might not reach the Immortal King Realm. Many Shedding Void and Fragmented Thought Elders have practiced for millions of years, and the pace of post-True Immortal cultivation is understandably slow.

But Ning Fan was no ordinary person; considering the time elapsed outside, he had cultivated for less than a thousand years and reached such high, profound cultivation.

Calculating his bone age, it was only over forty thousand years, due to his usage of many Towers of Time and Years.

The Third Step, Ning Fan dared not be certain, for in the Era of Decline, the Third Step's legacy had long been severed. But the Second Step... Ning Fan had the confidence that he would reach its peak in this life!

Then... pursue the Third, Fourth Step!

On the eleventh day, Ning Fan was finally going to visit the Peak Master of the First Auxiliary Peak—True Person Bailu.

This was a Pinnacle Immortal King, even close to becoming a Quasi-Emperor. Although not as formidable as War King Luo Hou, he wasn't much weaker.

That day, just as Ning Fan was about to visit True Person Bailu, Duolan suddenly came to him.

In fact, Duolan's room wasn't far from Ning Fan's, but knowing Ning Fan was busy befriending Baihua cultivators, she hadn't disturbed him much, only occasionally coming by to greet and inquire.

Today, however, she had a request.

"I heard Senior is going to the First Auxiliary Peak to visit True Person Bailu, may I accompany you, junior?"

"Oh? You want to see True Person Bailu? Do you have some ties with this person?" Ning Fan asked, surprised.

"No, junior goes to the First Auxiliary Peak not to see True Person Bailu, but to worship my mother..."

"Worship your mother?" Ning Fan was surprised.

The day after the Baihua Emperor was defeated, there was mention of Duolan and allowances for worship or matters of the sort, but Ning Fan hadn't given it much thought. Now it seemed there might be more to it.

Could it be that Duolan's mother was buried on the First Auxiliary Peak?

If so, there must be deep ties with Baihua Peak.

Recalling the former Chu Lie Emperor's bloodbath at Baihua Peak, Ning Fan had a slight realization that in this world, everything has cause and effect. The so-called bloodbath must have its reasons...

"Yes, junior's mother is buried on the First Auxiliary Peak. My father said that my mother was once the former Peak Master of the First Auxiliary Peak..."

Duolan's eyes were very calm. Regarding her mother's death, she didn't feel deep, heart-wrenching pain, as her mother had passed when Duolan was very young, memories of childhood are long blurred.

But occasionally she would dream of her mother's vague face, with eyes of remorse and reluctance.

Whenever she dreamed of that, she'd feel a vague frustration, like a fine needle pricking her heart, with minor pain, lingering and unsoothable...

What kind of person was her mother...

She would never see her again in this life, but oh how she wished to pay homage...

"Why don't you go yourself? The Baihua Emperor seemingly ordered that you can move freely here and pay homage to your mother." Ning Fan asked.

"I've gone once a few **** days ago, and yesterday too, but you weren't aware. Though the people of the First Auxiliary Peak have not acted against me or made any difficulties, with my cultivation, I can't break through the mist barriers of the First Auxiliary Peak, I keep coming and going, unable to ascend the mountain..." Duolan admitted with some embarrassment.

No one stopped her from climbing.

She simply lacked the cultivation to go up.

The Seven Auxiliary Peaks have natural mist barriers; if one's cultivation is insufficient and there isn't an Auxiliary Peak cultivator familiar with the mist leading the way, it's hard to pass through the barriers to climb the mountain. Ning Fan had understood this during his previous visits to a few Auxiliary Peaks.

Clearly, the cultivators of the First Auxiliary Peak did not welcome Duolan.

They didn't stop her, nor did they appoint anyone to guide her up.

For them to not act against Duolan despite the Baihua Emperor's stern order was commendable...

"If I take you along, might it cause some trouble..." Ning Fan slightly frowned.

Hearing this, Duolan lowered her head in disappointment.

But Ning Fan's tone changed, "Well, you can come with me. I'll take you up the mountain; there might not really be any trouble."

"Thank you, Senior!" Duolan exclaimed joyfully.

Ning Fan nodded, summoned the winged boy to lead the way out of the cave mansion. Duolan naturally followed closely, all the way to the First Auxiliary Peak.

He didn't like involving himself in troubles but had always admired familial devotion. If it were for other matters, Ning Fan might not help Duolan, but for the memorial to her mother, he didn't mind lending a hand.

He figured True Person Bailu, who was eager to befriend him, wouldn't truly end their relationship over such a trivial matter.

At the foot of the First Auxiliary Peak, a designated person had long been waiting, ready to greet Ning Fan. Seeing him arrive with Duolan, they were momentarily stunned, hesitated slightly, but after a moment, they returned to normal, respectfully leading Ning Fan and Duolan up the mountain.

There were no ripples stirred.

Interestingly, Ning Fan covertly used the Mind Reading Technique on some of the female cultivators leading the way to gather intelligence.

He actually saw thoughts like these in some of the female cultivators' minds.

'The Peak Master guessed correctly. Indeed, Lord Ning has arrived together with the Chulie Holy Maiden. Fortunately, the Peak Master had already given instructions; otherwise, we would have been too flustered...'

'There was an order from the Peak Master beforehand. If Lord Ning comes with the Chulie Holy Maiden, there should be no negligence towards the Holy Maiden. Though I'm unwilling, I mustn't be neglectful of the Chulie Holy Maiden...'

The Mind Reading Technique is indeed useful.

On the way up the mountain, just as they reached the outside of True Person Bailu's cave mansion, he walked out at just the right moment, as if he already knew everything. His gaze shifted meaningfully between Ning Fan and Duolan, and after a moment, he ordered the others to take Duolan to the back mountain for her mother's memorial, without any negligence, while he personally welcomed Ning Fan into the cave mansion to enjoy Spirit Fruit and Spiritual Tea, as they sat and discussed the Dao.

The insights True Person Bailu had into the Dao were indeed profound. In exchanging Daoist thoughts with him, Ning Fan gained quite a bit.

However, as time went by, unknowingly, True Person Bailu's topics began to veer off.

It seemed like he was hinting at something indirectly...

Occasionally mentioning other Saintess from different factions of the Holy Mountain.

Then again, mentioning how some quasi-emperors among them were nearing emperorhood, seemingly because they had gained some kind of fortune.

Given Ning Fan's intelligence, he was aware that inviting him to discuss the Dao was just one part of True Person Bailu's intentions; there was likely something more.

Since True Person Bailu didn't bring it up directly, Ning Fan chose not to expose it, merely smiling softly and sipping his tea calmly.

Gradually, True Person Bailu stopped speaking, but he continued to watch Ning Fan with significant intent, somewhat surprised.

After a long while, he praised, "Upon first meeting, I thought you were an anomaly within the demon path, with control over your monster heart almost to an expert level. Today, seeing you again, I realize I still underestimated you back then. Your composure and stability far exceed my expectations."

"Whatever you wish to say, feel free to say it," Ning Fan said with a gentle smile, putting down his teacup.

"With your intelligence, you must have known that my inviting you here was with another purpose."

"I can see that much, but I don't know what you want? As an outsider cultivator, I don't think there's much I can offer you."

"Please don't misunderstand, I have no intention of scheming against you. I merely wish to share some benefits with you."

"Oh, what kind of benefits? Please go ahead and tell me," Ning Fan remained unmoved.

"A tremendous benefit, one that could increase the chance of becoming an Emperor!"

True Person Bailu observed Ning Fan's expression and, seeing that he showed no reaction to the topic of increasing the chances of becoming an Emperor, was somewhat surprised.

It's important to know that if other Eternal Old Freaks heard of benefits that increased the chance of becoming an Emperor, they would likely be slightly taken aback and intrigued. Achieving emperorhood is the ultimate pursuit of every Eternal Cultivator, yet breaking through to Immortal Emperor is no small feat, and there is seldom anything that can enhance that likelihood. Even someone like him, who is already half a step into the Immortal Emperor Realm, finds it challenging to predict how many years he might remain at the Quasi-Emperor level if lacking fortune.

The difficulty of becoming an Emperor is evident.

In True Person Bailu's eyes, Ning Fan naturally couldn't be indifferent to becoming an Emperor, yet he appeared unmoved, which was unexpected.

It seemed this man's depth of mind exceeded expectations...

Ning Fan wasn't untouched by the notion of greater chances of emperorhood; rather, he had little concept and deep understanding of the difficulty involved.

Honestly speaking, the matter of emperorhood was still too distant for him: his Ancient God's Ancient Demon Cultivation was only at the Shekong stage; his Ancient Demon Cultivation had only reached the Nine Nirvanas of the Heavenly Demon; his Calamity Blood Cultivation, albeit formidable, lacked an orthodox method for practice, and achieving his current cultivation was a result of fortune, making it extremely challenging to advance to higher realms, a difficulty surpassing that of improving Divine Demon Cultivation.

Discussing emperorhood chances now seemed somewhat premature...

"If I'm not mistaken, you should be quite adept at Dual Cultivation, yes?" True Person Bailu paused briefly before continuing.

"I wouldn't say adept, just somewhat familiar. If I'm right, sir, you also seem proficient in Dual Cultivation, perhaps practicing Buddhist Joyful Zen?"

"Keen-eyed, indeed, I do practice Joyful Zen," True Person Bailu's eyes narrowed, slightly surprised at Ning Fan's discernment.

Buddha cultivators emphasize the void of the four elements and the purification of the six senses, seldom indulging in female companionship, as overindulgence can harm the foundation of Buddhist Law. Thus, most Buddha cultivators are individuals who cultivate physical discipline.

Some highly advanced Buddha cultivators even preserve their state of a child's body for life, sometimes even cultivating the Buddhist Xiang Ma Yin Zang technique, directly sealing their male root within their body.

However, there are also Buddha cultivators who practice Joyful Zen, advancing their cultivation through Dual Cultivation, such as the Baihua Great Emperor, who was a practitioner of such.

True Person Bailu unexpectedly was among those pursuing this path as well.

Joyful Zen, as long as both parties are willing, is not inherently immoral. Ning Fan refrained from commenting on Baihua Great Emperor, but the True Person Bailu before him, who bore hardly any Evil Qi, evidently had caused little harm in his life and wasn't one to oppress women or take lives unjustly.

Yet bringing up Saintess first, then mention of emperorhood, and finally Dual Cultivation...

From Ning Fan's intelligent and deep disposition, he could already faintly guess True Person Bailu's supposed method to increase the chance of emperorhood.

"Do you have any intentions regarding the Chulie Holy Maiden?" True Person Bailu, after circling around the topic, finally touched on the main point.

Ning Fan knew True Person Bailu wasn't asking if there was any romantic involvement, but rather... whether Ning Fan intended to absorb Duolan, to obtain the Yin energy within her!

That was something only a Saintess, who had been immersed in the Zimu Pond since childhood, could possess!

There are few things in the world that can increase the chances of becoming an Emperor, but this particular energy definitely counted as one of them!

Ning Fan couldn't help but recall when he first captured Duolan, and her desperate resolve against dying.

'I can let you cast the Three Yin Soul Locking Technique on me, but I will never comply with that matter. If you force me, I'd rather die here! If I die, when the sepulcher period lapses, you will have attracted major trouble! I know your purpose in coming to Dabei is significant, so you won't want unnecessary trouble. If you force the matter upon me, you will regret it! I, Duolan, swear on my life!'

That day, the little girl tried to protect not her body's purity, but the Yin energy within her...

"What's the difference if I do or don't have intentions?" Ning Fan showed an indifferent stance as if to see what True Person Bailu would say next.

"If you have no intentions, so be it. But if you do have intentions, being an outsider cultivator, possessing the Holy Mountain Saintess is as difficult as ascending to the heavens! The many Emperors of the Holy Mountain would absolutely never allow this! Unless... you can gain the support of some of the mighty ones from the Holy Mountain!"

Ning Fan's eyes slightly narrowed, and after a long pause, he asked, "What should I do, pray tell?"

"Hehe, so you indeed have the intention, that makes things much better! I knew your every act of protecting that Chulie Holy Maiden could not possibly be as simple as worldly affairs of men and women being rumored outside. As expected, your purpose is far greater, aiming for the Saintess's Yin energy. Hehe, even someone like me at the Quasi-Emperor stage wouldn't dare partake in such a scheme recklessly. Yet with your strength, there might just be a chance..."

True Person Bailu gazed at Ning Fan with the look of a kindred spirit before proceeding,

"Among the factions within the Holy Mountain, I have connections with an Immortal King in the Spirit Sect Lineage, and I know some things. The Saint Son of Spirit Sect Lineage has long been collecting rare Medicine Soul-bearing women as concubines, using the Joyful Zen method to absorb and Dual Cultivate. Should anyone offer rare Medicine Soul-bearing women, they will be heavily rewarded. If a woman offered possesses a Medicine Soul so rare as the Five-Color Medicine Soul, then even raising an over-the-top demand to possess the Chulie Holy Maiden might find some support from the Spirit Sect Lineage. However, you, being merely an outsider cultivator, cannot fully claim the Yin energy within Duolan, at most two to three-tenths, while the remaining seven to eight-tenths would still belong to the old monsters of the Holy Mountain. As for the two to three-tenths you might gain, you would have to share a portion with me, given that this information was shared with you by me, after all..."

Ning Fan's expression instantly turned cold.

True Person Bailu implied that Ning Fan should offer Ouyang Nuan for the Spirit Sect Saint Son to absorb!

Selling his wife for glory!

And even after offering her, he could only absorb two to three-tenths of Duolan's Yin energy, while Duolan's remaining Yin energy would be absorbed by other old monsters of the Holy Mountain.

This True Person Bai Lu also wants to gain benefits, invading Duolan's body, extracting some Yin energy to increase his confidence in breaking through to the Immortal Emperor!

How shameless!

It seems that although this person does not kill much and lacks heavy Evil Qi, he has certainly not refrained from shameless deeds!

"Daoist, why are you so angry? Is it possible that I've said something wrong?" True Person Bai Lu was greatly surprised, and his expression also became somewhat cold.

"As for selling my wife, Ning Fan will never do such a thing. As for the Yin energy within the Chulie Holy Maiden, Ning Fan has no desire for it either. You've come to me with the wrong intentions!" Ning Fan abruptly stood up, ready to leave with a flick of his sleeve.

True Person Bai Lu was taken aback, biting his teeth. This was an excellent opportunity to gain the Holy Maiden's Yin energy alongside, how could he let it slip? So he couldn't help but try to persuade Ning Fan to stay.

"Daoist, is it because you cannot bear to part with Ouyang Nuan's beauty? This matter is a huge mistake! A true man does not fear being without a wife. As long as you can become an Emperor, why worry about not enjoying beauties? Offering your wife to the Spirit Sect lineage would be greatly beneficial to the matter of becoming an Emperor. Moreover, as long as I speak on your behalf, the Spirit Sect Saint Son, after absorbing Ouyang Nuan, would most likely be willing to return her..."

Before True Person Bai Lu could say more, his expression suddenly changed as he saw Ning Fan suddenly turn around. A surge of overwhelming killing intent erupted, causing his Quasi-Emperor cultivation to quiver intensely!

He could smell a sensation of lethal danger emanating from Ning Fan!

"We're not on the same path, our paths do not align! But if you continue to desecrate my wife, Ning Fan is not afraid to kill a Quasi-Emperor atop this auxiliary peak! You better watch your mouth!"

Each word carried an overwhelming demon might, and it wasn't merely bluster; rather, it genuinely gave True Person Bai Lu a sense of being on the brink of life and death!

That was the crisis brought by the Flame Ancestor's Golden Palm Command to True Person Bai Lu.

At this moment, Ning Fan had the golden palm command hidden in his sleeve, unseen by True Person Bai Lu, yet he was indeed shaken by that lethal crisis.

Inwardly, True Person Bai Lu was overwhelmed.

He initially thought Ning Fan was merely a normal Immortal Venerable with strong Dao image and sealed cultivation. Now it seemed this person clearly possessed a terrifying reliance capable of striking down a Quasi-Emperor, not someone to provoke!

But after all, he had good intentions. Even if this person disagreed with the matter, he shouldn't be so angry! How rude!

As expected! Demon cultivators in this world are all arrogant and impudent, not worth associating with!

Just like the former Chulie, who became enraged for a woman, incurred the wrath of an entire realm, mistakenly entered the path of evil cultivators, and eventually met his demise alongside his clan, becoming a laughingstock under the heavens!

Such a person cannot be considered a true great man!

Among those who invited Ning Fan, True Person Bai Lu was the only one who looked down on him.

He despised Ning Fan, thinking that a man who cannot even discard a woman how could he accomplish anything great! Though he despised him, he was truly frightened by Ning Fan's undisguised killing intent, which completely weakened his aura as a Quasi-Emperor, and he no longer dared to utter any blasphemous words about Ouyang Nuan in Ning Fan's presence.

This young man dares to challenge an Immortal Emperor!

If he really angered this madman, he might actually face a life-threatening situation!

A true man does not need to engage with brutes! If this young man wants to leave, just let him go. After all, he's just a child and not worth plotting with!

Seeing True Person Bai Lu obediently shut his mouth, Ning Fan turned around and walked out of the cave mansion, his fury only slightly subsiding as he walked all the way to the back mountain.

He despised people like True Person Bai Lu.

But such people exist, even... in many corners of the cultivation world.

He couldn't say that True Person Bai Lu's actions were necessarily wrong; they were just different paths, and as such, Ning Fan found even the slightest conversation with him annoying.

"To think that a visit full of joy would result in such an outcome here. I fear I shall not wish to step foot here again..."

Ning Fan walked all the way to the back mountain, where in a secluded place, he found Duolan.

Duolan knelt alone in front of a small grave, her face not showing much sorrow.

But though she had no sorrow, for some reason, she did not want to rise, nor did she want to leave...

What kind of person was her mother...

Everyone cursed her mother as a woman of loose morals, but Duolan didn't think her mother was lowly at all.

In her heart, her mother must be the most beautiful, the most pure woman in the world. Although she had never seen her mother, she firmly believed in this.

Her hand traced the weathered old tombstone, and for some reason, Duolan thought of the time when her father brought her as a child to fight their way up Baihua Peak.

That day, her father's eyes were blood-red, like an enraged lion, so frightening, so crazy.

Ultimately, he fought his way to the First Auxiliary Peak, to her mother's tombstone, touching the tombstone, eyes filled with sorrow, shedding tears of blood.

Duolan had heard from some Chulie elders that her appearance inherited her mother's beauty and was very similar to her mother's, especially that glaring red hair.

Duolan had secretly guessed that since she was very young, her father had distanced himself, not seeing her much, not because he didn't like her, but because he was afraid to see her face.

A face similar to her mother's...

So she never blamed her father.

She always believed that the mother of whom she could hardly remember the appearance loved her.

And that the father who always treated her coldly also loved her.

This had been her faith for so many years, supporting her to the present.

"It's time to go..." Ning Fan's voice suddenly came from behind her.

Duolan's face reddened slightly, standing up, and what she saw was Ning Fan turning and descending the mountain.

No words of care, but the senior coming here to find me is an act of care itself.

He really is quite like my cold, silent father...

Duolan patted the dust off her knees, and jogged after Ning Fan, heading towards the fog-filled mountain path below.

Farewell, mother...

Once I fulfill father's last wish and revive the Chulie lineage, I will come back to see you.

No matter how difficult, I will do it, I must do it.

Because I am your and father's daughter...