

M. Slaying 231

Chapter 231: Black Lotus

The dark clouds loomed overhead.

A mountain created with a giant skull could be seen.

This was the eerie and terrifying White-Bone Mountain, where diabolical cultivators were cunning and vicious and one wrong step could put one's life in danger.

After waiting outside for a short while, Liu Sen led the three youngsters into the Chamber of Loyalty. The constant calls and greetings along the way indicated that the members of this chamber were rather close with each other.

As they passed through a spacious corridor, they caught sight of General Hei Yu, lounging in a lazy, tilted posture high up in the great hall.

With a youthful appearance, General Hei Yu didn't look old at all. Even as he was draped in a thick black cloak, it was obvious that he was skinny. When one stared at his brows and eyes, they would feel a sinister aura.

Upon seeing the three youngsters brought over by Liu Sen, General Hei Yu smiled and asked, "Are these the new brothers you wanted to introduce? Why are they hiding their faces?"

"Chamber Master, please forgive them. They were part of another diabolical sect, inheritors of a minor cultivation legacy. They heard about General Hei Yu of the White-Bone Sect and joined out of admiration for the renowned General Hei Yu. As they felt embarrassed of their original lineage, they hid their faces." Liu Sen explained with a bow.

A diverse array of cultivation legacies existed within diabolical sects. It wasn't strange for members of smaller sects to leave their sect for a bigger sect.

The words of flattery seemed rather effective as General Hei Yu immediately smirked, appearing rather pleased as he declared, "Very good! We are just in need of capable people. You three came at the perfect time. Bring the bowls!"

With this, a subordinate brought a few big bowls. One of the bowls was filled with liquor.

While Chu Liang and the other two were puzzled about his intentions, General Hei Yu leaped up abruptly and landed before them. Then, with his right hand, he plucked a black feather off his cloak.

The edge of the black feather was as sharp as a saber. He gripped it with his left hand and pulled the feather up with his right hand.

Swoosh!

Blood spurted out and flowed into the bowl. Immediately, the bowl of white liquor took on the color of blood.

"Since you have joined the Chamber of Loyalty today, let's swear brotherhood in blood. From now on, we are brothers for life!" General Hei Yu declared loudly, brimming with enthusiasm.

Great...

No wonder it's called the Chamber of Loyalty. This is an actual mafia gang.

Even if we are swearing blood brotherhood, you don't have to be this rough to yourself. This dude is too honest. He mixed up so much blood with the liquor that it has thickened up. Chu Liang complained internally.

The three exchanged glances and stepped forward. Each of them pricked their fingers and dripped a drop of blood into the bowl.

As Chu Liang had practiced the Blood-Refinement Technique: Divine Light as well as the Secret Dragon Blood Technique, the color of his blood was almost golden. As the drop of blood dripped into the liquor, a faint fragrance emanated.

Fortunately, it was only a drop of blood so its uniqueness wasn't obvious in the mixture of liquor and blood.

The mixture of liquor and blood was portioned into the large bowls. General Hei Yu then lifted the bowl up and announced, "I will drink first as a toast!"

With that, he emptied the bowl in one gulp.

At the sight of his boldness, Chu Liang and the others trembled. They lifted the bowl and lightly grazed the liquor with their lips.

"Hahaha!" General Hei Yu guffawed, not giving a damn about how much these three had drunk. He turned back and wobbled around as he returned to his seat.

He then announced, "A few days ago, the Lord of the White-Bone Hall issued an order, stating that the White-Bone Hall will soon commence a grand conquest. When the time comes, a hundred diabolical soldiers will be called upon to act. This will provide us with a significant opportunity to establish our reputation!"

"We are willing to serve!" They all declared as they nodded in agreement.

With the blood oath concluded, General Hei Yu waved them off, allowing them to disperse. "You can go for now and familiarize yourself with the White-Bone Mountain.

"In the next two days, I will have Cang Ying find a mission for you three. Consider this a test of your abilities and be sure to show your worth when the time comes."

"Yes!"

The process of infiltrating the White-Bone Hall turned out to be simpler than the three had imagined, with the only difficulty being the unsanitary mixture of blood and liquor.

Like what General Hei Yu had mentioned, turbulent changes were happening within the White-Bone Hall and they definitely benefited from this as they did join at a time when the White-Bone Hall was expanding their forces.

"Alright. Now that I have made the necessary arrangements, you three are free to move around," Liu Sen, the one who had recommended them, said. "There are very few restrictions in the Chamber of Loyalty. As long as what you do doesn't interfere with the official matters, you are really free to

do whatever," Liu Sen explained. "Just make sure not to enter the inner palace of White-Bone Mountain."

...

The three of them then wandered in the Chamber of Loyalty, appearing to be familiarizing themselves with this new place. In reality, they were really observing and gathering information on the enemy forces.

The atmosphere in the Chamber of Loyalty was quite different from other places in the diabolical sect. The cultivators in this chamber walked around shoulder to shoulder. The people here were boisterous and lively and gave off characteristics of a normal martial community. Clearly, General Hei Yu, the leader of this chamber, held a significant influence on the subordinate members of the chamber.

While they wandered around, Monk Pushan would comment on every single thing he saw without stopping, while Luo Yao remained as taciturn as always. Chu Liang walked casually between them, appearing very carefree, though his body would occasionally tremble.

"What's with the occasional tremors?" Monk Pushan finally couldn't resist the urge to ask.

"It's nothing." Chu Liang could only respond with a smile.

Since they entered the White-Bone Mountain, the Crimson Executioner reached a frenzied state!

It was vibrating so much that it was almost dancing within the White Pagoda. Chu Liang could feel this intense vibration that represented the righteous sword's strong urge to obliterate evil.

The vibration was so intense and frequent that Chu Liang couldn't even figure out the target of the sword.

The Crimson Executioner could distinctly identify the source of the blood-stained aura. However, this place was saturated with an amalgamation of blood-stained auras from different people.

It was like trying to identify one frog call amidst a cacophony of frog calls.

Chu Liang had no choice but to suppress this urge. After all, no matter how powerful the enhancing effect of the Crimson Executioner was, he couldn't possibly rely on this sword to handle everyone in the White-Bone Hall.

At this moment, a sudden commotion outside caught their attention, and they faintly heard someone exclaim, "Enchantress Liu!"

Upon returning to the great hall, a woman dressed in a flaming red dress walked in gracefully.

In the Scarlet-Robe Hall, Enchantress Liu held the rank of second. With the visage of a middle-aged beauty, she appeared much older than Enchantress Yi. Her brows resembled the mountains of spring, her eyes the waters of autumn, and the corners of her eyes and eyebrows exuded countless charms.

Her figure was voluptuous and graceful, clad in a tightly-waisted red long dress with a slit at the waist, revealing large swaths of fair skin. A black lotus was tattooed at her waist, extremely eye-catching.

Upon seeing the tattoo, Chu Liang muttered softly and wondered to himself why this black lotus tattoo looked so familiar.

When General Hei Yu saw the girl, he immediately stood up.

With a loud guffaw, he said, "Enchantress Liu, what an honor to have you grace us with your presence! Why didn't you notify us of your visit beforehand! I missed the chance to host you properly!"

"Heh, I came unannounced, Chamber Master Hei Yu. I hope my sudden visit isn't too rude," Enchantress Liu's voice sounded gentle, soft, and alluring.

"Of course not! The Scarlet-Robe Hall and the White-Bone Hall are like branches of the same tree. You are always welcome at the Chamber of Loyalty," General Hei Yu responded in a straightforward manner.

"Oh, it would be rude of me to simply disturb." Enchantress Liu chuckled and said, "Heh, to be honest, I came here because I need you to help me with something."

"Oh?" General Hei Yu was confused. "Enchantress, what do you need help with?"

It was normal for him to feel surprised. In terms of hierarchy, he was technically at the same level as Enchantress Liu. However, the Scarlet-Robe Hall only had four enchantresses. They were the sole disciples of the Scarlet-Robe Hall's master, who held an exceptionally high status and had reached an extremely advanced level in her journey of cultivation.

The White-Bone Hall was said to have eight hundred chambers, and General Hei Yu was just one of the eight hundred chamber masters working under the Elder of White-Bone Mountain.

His own value in the hall was incomparable with that of the enchantress,

"It's nothing major, just that we're short-handed in the Scarlet-Robe Hall and can't spare any manpower," Enchantress Liu explained. "I met up with the Elder of White-Bone Mountain Elder, and he asked me to seek you for help."

"So it's an order from the hall master! Then of course, I'll comply!" General Hei Yu exclaimed.

He hardly ever saw the hall master throughout the year, so if this task was entrusted to him by the Elder of White-Bone Mountain, he naturally had to take it seriously.

"My sisters and I are hoping to get our hands on a batch of Eternal-Youth Pills but we couldn't figure out where we might find a suitable alchemist. And so, we are hoping that you can help us find one," said Enchantress. Liu

"Alright. Count on me!" General Hei Yu said as he patted himself on the chest.

"In that case, thank you in advance," Enchantress Liu said. She gave a gentle bow and turned back, walking away in the usual alluring manner.

The men of the Chamber of Loyalty watched her swaying figure depart, reluctant to let her leave their sight.

Chu Liang was one of those men.

When Luo Yao noticed his behavior, she humphed coldly and asked, "I thought you said just a glance at women annoys you?"

"Maybe the second glance calmed him down," Monk Pushan added with a sly grin.

"I am not looking at her. I am looking at the tattoo on her waist," Chu Liang explained.

"So that's the style that Young Master Chu likes, huh?" Monk Pushan nodded knowingly.

Luo Yao frowned with disdain revealed in her eyes.

"..." Chu Liang felt so speechless.

He had been staring at the tattoo on Enchantress Liu's waist because the tattoo looked familiar. After a moment's thought, he remembered that he had taken out a dudou[1] from within the Evil Ksitigarbha owned by the Southern-Route Guider.

The exact same black lotus tattooed on Enchantress Liu's waist was embroidered on that dudou[2]!

Could Enchantress Liu be the owner of that dudou?

But the Southern-Route Guider was a subordinate of the Violet Gold Marquess, while Enchantress Liu is a disciple of the Scarlet-Robe Hall's master. Although they are of the same level, the Left and Right Guardians of the Dark King Sect are at odds with the Four Halls of Darkness...

If the two were a couple, it might not be as simple as having an affair...

He was pondering this earlier.

But now, Luo Yao and Monk Pushan misunderstood again. Even if he wanted to explain, he couldn't take the dudou out. If he had done that, it would only further confirm that he was indeed a pervert.

Anyway, to them, he no longer held a positive image. Chu Liang could only shrug and let them be.

Think whatever you want.

Whatever you two say is right then.

Chapter 232: A Formal Attestation of Abilities

"What the chamber master meant to say was that he wants the pills, but he doesn't want to pay." A man dressed in a sturdy black garment said with a grim expression. "Do you three understand?"

"Understood!" Chu Liang and the other two said.

At this moment, they stood outside a valley shrouded in thin mist, within which loomed a gloomy mountain manor.

To understand why they had come here, the story must start from when Enchantress Liu visited the White-Bone Mountain.

While meeting with the Elder of White-Bone Mountain on behalf of her teacher, Enchantress Liu mentioned some personal matters. In response, the Elder of White-Bone Mountain instructed her to seek General Hei Yu's assistance, granting her permission to assign any task.

Enchantress Liu wanted to find someone capable of refining a batch of Eternal-Youth Pills.

For female cultivators, eternal youth was often more important than anything else. Aging was inevitable for all cultivators within the first six realms, and only those who had reached the Dao Attainment Realm could evade this fate. Although the aging process for cultivators within the first six realms was much slower, it was still happening.

Previously, Chu Liang had encountered Wenren Mo of the Sea King Sect attempting to use Youth-Retaining Beauty-Preserving Pills to deepen his relationship with female cultivators. Among the pills developed by the righteous sects, the Youth-Retaining Beauty-Preserving Pill was considered one of the more effective anti-aging pills.

While the Youth-Retaining Beauty-Preserving Pill was effective, it was inferior to the Eternal-Youth Pill. The Eternal-Youth Pill was a type of diabolical pill, concocted through sinister means by cultivators of the diabolical sect.

After spending considerable effort, General Hei Yu managed to find an alchemist skilled in refining the Eternal-Youth Pills and expressed his intention to purchase such pills.

The Eternal-Youth Pills wouldn't increase one's cultivation energy and wouldn't elevate one's cultivation level. Yet, they were incredibly valuable.

When Enchantress Liu asked him to find an alchemist, she naturally left him a substantial amount of money that was more than enough for the pills. However, General Hei Yu wanted both the pills and the money.

Coincidentally, he needed to test a few new recruits. And so, he assigned this task to Chu Liang and his companions.

The man in the sturdy black garment was named Cang Ying. He was General Hei Yu's right-hand man and the one leading this operation.

"I'll be watching your every move from the shadows, but I won't intervene. If I need to step in, it means you have failed this mission," Cang Ying said coldly.

With a raise of his chin, he instructed, "Off you go."

Upon acknowledging the order, Chu Liang, Luo Yao, and Pushan flew towards the mountain manor with serious expressions.

This mission would be like a formal attestation of their abilities, and they needed to excel.

Knock-knock, knock-knock.

Monk Pushan stepped forward and knocked on the huge door of the mountain manor.

An enchanted formation was set up within the mist. If the people inside the mountain manor refused to open the door, they would never be able to barge inside.

"Who is it?" The voice of a child sounded inside.

"Subordinates of Hei Yu." Chu Liang answered in a low voice.

Creak—

A tiny figure pushed the door open.

It was a child with a topknot hairstyle. He had rosy lips and white teeth, appearing rather adorable.

Chu Liang couldn't help but cast a few extra glances at the child.

"Please come in. My teacher has been waiting inside for a long time," said the young Daoist apprentice. His voice sounded clear and crisp.

The child turned around and led the three into the mountain manor. Along the way, they encountered peculiar flowers and special plants, their delightful appearance adding to the refreshing fragrance in the air. They then arrived in front of the main hall that was connected to the courtyard.

The reality was that this alchemist was not part of any diabolical sects. He had built this mountain manor and formed a faction of his own. In the world of immortality cultivators, he was rather famous.

If Chu Liang and the others hadn't learned through the diabolical sect that he was selling the Eternal Youth Pill, they wouldn't have expected that a renowned alchemist would be secretly refining diabolical pills.

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A middle-aged alchemist dressed in pristine white robes sat quietly in the main hall. Upon seeing them, he smiled and greeted, "The Eternal-Youth Pills are ready. Have you brought the agreed-upon amount of Vermillion-Bird coins?"

In the world of immortality cultivators, transactions that didn't involve direct bartering were mostly conducted using the currency of Taotie City. After all, Taotie City was where resources were most concentrated, which was why its currency became the most widely accepted.

"I have the money," Chu Liang said as he took out a jade slip. He then asked, "Where are the pills?"

The alchemist clapped his hands gently, and the young Daoist apprentice brought over a red gourd, placing it carefully on the table.

"I have refined these Eternal-Youth Pills many times, and there is definitely no issue," he chuckled, saying confidently.

Chu Liang stared at the pills and fell silent for a moment...

There must be over a dozen human lives in this gourd. He thought to himself.

Chu Liang suddenly asked, "Are the people who purchase these pills all members of diabolical sects?"

"Diabolical sects?" Upon hearing this, the alchemist was taken aback. He then shook his head and said with a smile, "There aren't that many female cultivators in diabolical sects. Most of the people who buy these pills are high-ranking officials, nobles, and renowned figures from the righteous path. Ordinary people would never be able to afford them."

Chu Liang nodded, then with a flip of his hand, he stowed the jade slip away.

"Eh?" The alchemist's pupils dilated.

"The chamber master meant to convey his hope to befriend you," Chu Liang said.

"Of course, I'm fine with being friends, but what's the meaning of this?" the alchemist asked, glaring at him with a hostile expression.

"Friends should not talk about money," Chu Liang answered.

"Heh." The alchemist was so angry that he started laughing. He said coldly, "I have investigated your chamber master. With eight hundred chambers in the White-Bone Hall, he hardly holds a significant rank. Even so, he still has the guts to scheme against me? If anyone were to make a move, it would be the Elder of the White-Bone Hall. General Hei Yu alone lacks the qualifications, especially with his mere lackeys dispatched..."

The fact that the alchemist has been dealing with both the good and evil working on such a business that couldn't be publicly known meant that he was someone with tricks up his sleeves. As soon as he spoke, the mist outside the hall thickened.

Boom!

As the wind howled and thunder clapped, the entire hall instantly felt like an isolated island. It seemed as though the spiritual qi within this area was boiling!

The peculiar flowers and plants in the courtyard burst forth, transforming into demonic creatures!

Roar!

The moment this major formation activated, Chu Liang, Luo Yao, and Pushan also sprung into action.

He raised one finger and summoned the Crimson Executioner. Instantly, he drew several yin-nature talismanic scripts and suddenly launched an attack towards the side hall!

Prick!

The intense yin qi left a trail of icy frost wherever it passed. However, unlike the talismanic script of ice, it emitted more than just bone-chilling coldness; it also carried a heavy aura of death.

Pierce!

The sword attack resembled a yin-nature dragon, piercing through the wall and unveiling the ultimate target ahead.

It was that young Daoist apprentice!

Upon seeing the powerful strike, the young Daoist apprentice stood stunned. Amidst his panic, he managed only to hastily form a finger seal to block the attack.

Boom!

Instantly, an apparition of a deity materialized before the young Daoist apprentice. With hands clasped together, it assumed the stance of seizing the yin-nature dragon barehanded.

In this life-or-death moment, the young Daoist apprentice, appearing to be only a few years old, unexpectedly unleashed powerful cultivation energy!

Nevertheless, the brief moment of delay had resulted in the Crimson Executioner slashing through his body.

With the attack enhanced by the righteous sword, how effective could the unprepared and sudden block be against the attack?

Chu Liang's move had not only surprised the alchemist and the young Daoist apprentice, but also Luo Yao and Pushan. They had no idea why Chu Liang had suddenly made a move against this child.

However, the moment they saw the outburst of cultivation energy coming from the young Daoist apprentice, they figured out Chu Liang's intention.

Swish!

As the Crimson Executioner recoiled, the young Daoist apprentice collapsed to the ground, his eyes reflecting intense hatred and an unwillingness to accept defeat.

He had no idea what had revealed his identity.

"How... how did you know he's the actual alchemist?" The alchemist trembled as he stood up.

When the young Daoist apprentice died, the alchemist started panicking. His anxiety intensified as he realized that Chu Liang's power far surpassed his expectations.

"Heh," Chu Liang sneered, offering no response.

The first glimpse of the young Daoist apprentice triggered an intense reaction from the Crimson Executioner. Thus, Chu Liang realized that the child before him exuded a blood-stained aura.

Yet, upon seeing the alchemist, the Crimson Executioner was silent, displaying no reaction whatsoever.

Something was obviously wrong.

Upon seeing the three drawing closer and closer, the alchemist hastily said, "You can take the pills. I won't collect the money. My teacher is dead... I... Just let me go please! We can be friends!"

Prick.

Without a moment's hesitation, the sword light pierced through his body.

Chu Liang's gaze appeared cold and indifferent.

It would be ideal to use this opportunity to erase this darkness concealed within the light.

After Chu Liang killed the alchemist, he searched the alchemist's body and found a storage tool that he could open. However, there was nothing valuable inside.

He then turned his attention to the young Daoist apprentice, running his hands around the waist until he discovered a small jade gourd.

This small jade gourd was also a storage tool, but of a more advanced level, requiring a special inscription seal.

Since Chu Liang wasn't in a hurry to open it, he decided he would seek out professionals to unlock it when he returned to Mount Shu.

The three then searched around and found some alchemical tools and rare spirit plants. They also discovered a substantial amount of human skin and bones in the many underground lairs hidden within the hill at the back.

"Damned him!" Luo Yao cursed softly.

When they returned to the main hall, Cang Ying also entered. Ever since the enchanted formation in the vicinity was activated, he couldn't observe the situation unfolding inside. The fight ended swiftly. He waited for a while before daring to step in.

Upon witnessing what had occurred inside, he was quite surprised.

He didn't expect the three to resolve this in such a clean and straightforward manner.

General Hei Yu had intended to send them here for a test. Despite declaring all chamber members as brothers, it was evident that he intended to use these new recruits as cannon fodder.

When Cang Ying saw the bodies on the ground, a hint of approval gleamed in his eyes.

Quite ruthless. They didn't even spare the child. Cang Ying thought to himself.

Chapter 233: Ancient Dragon Lair

"I'm surprised you managed to acquire it this quickly, Chamber Master Hei Yu. You are indeed very efficient as expected. It's no wonder that the White-Bone Hall's master holds you in high regard," Enchantress Liu remarked with a bright smile.

General Hei Yu gazed at this woman who was exuding charm continuously and felt very happy to hear her words of praise.

He patted his chest and said, "Haha, it was nothing."

General Hei Yu spoke the truth. He hadn't expected that the alchemist would be dealt with so easily. His plan had been to let the newcomers have a go doing whatever they could. After all, he didn't care if they died.

Unexpectedly, they'd acted without hesitation; they'd seized the treasure, killed those involved, and set the place on fire. They had completed the mission cleanly and efficiently. This gave General Hei Yu a good impression of them.

Of course, he couldn't tell Enchantress Liu that he'd actually gotten someone else to do the job.

"The White-Bone Hall has many chamber masters, but only a few are outstanding. It appears that Master Hei Yu is definitely one of them," Enchantress Liu praised General Hei Yu highly.

"Oh, no, no. How could I dare accept such praise?" General Hei Yu replied humbly, hiding that he actually felt very pleased. Nevertheless, he couldn't hold back a grin as he said, "The three principles that I, Hei Yu, stand by are that a person should always be ruthless, loyal, and have many brothers! That's all that matters."

Enchantress Liu then changed the topic. "Acquiring the Eternal-Youth Pills is indeed just a small matter. There's a matter of much greater difficulty. I wonder if you would be willing to work with me on it, Chamber Master Hei Yu?"

"Oh?" General Hei Yu uttered, his expression turning serious. He asked, "What is it?"

"I discovered a hidden realm with someone. Each of us had half of the key and agreed to explore it together in the future," Enchantress Liu explained slowly. "However, that person has died, but I have no idea where that happened. So, all I have is my half of the key."

"But it's a rare ancient hidden realm. I'm unwilling to let it go. So, I asked a formation specialist for help. He can attempt opening the hidden realm with the half key, but seventy-two cultivators are needed for the Major Enchanted Formation of the Earthly Evils[1]. What I'm asking is... could you have your subordinates help form the enchanted formation? I can pay you generously..."

General Hei Yu considered the offer for a moment.

The woman's eyes were extremely captivating, but there was no way General Hei Yu would not let her feminine wiles cloud his judgment.

General Hei Yu had a high level of self-awareness. He knew that at least ninety percent of the men in the diabolical sects desired to be with this Enchantress. There was no way she would be interested in him romantically.

Even though she had expressed that she admired him, it was surely just a means to persuade him to help her.

General Hei Yu thoughts were focused solely on what he could benefit from this situation.

After that moment of contemplation, General Hei Yu asked, "I assume that opening an ancient hidden realm won't be an easy task, right?"

"As expected, you're an intelligent person, Chamber Master Hei Yu." Enchantress Liu smiled again. "I won't hide it from you then. There is definitely some danger for those involved."

"Everyone in the diabolical sects know that I, Hei Yu, prioritize being loyal the most. I have always treated my brothers like they're part of me," General Hei Yu said. He paused before saying, "Yet, you want me to lead my brothers into danger..."

Enchantress Liu added, "I will pay you more."

"Which hidden realm is it? When are we going?" General Hei Yu asked, no longer hesitating.

Enchantress Liu answered, "In two days. We're going to the Ancient Dragon Lair!"

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After completing their first mission, Chu Liang's party and his companions intended to leave.

They all carried tracking jade talismans, but the White-Bone Mountain was constantly in flight. Their senior sect members wanted to wipe out all of the White-Bone Hall members at one go, but it was highly likely that their senior sect members would rush over only to find nothing. Moreover, they didn't have knowledge of the situation, so they definitely wouldn't have brought enough manpower to take down the White-Bone Hall.

Anyway, the White-Bone Hall did not place any restrictions on its members' activities; they just needed to arrive promptly when summoned. This meant the trio just needed to make note of the names of the areas in the White-Bone Mountain's flight route and leave calmly. Upon returning to their respective sects, they could assemble a large force of righteous cultivators and then destroy the White-Bone Hall in one fell swoop, dealing a heavy blow to the Dark King Sect.

However, just as the trio were about to leave, they received a message that there would be a mission in two days. Everyone was to stay inside the Chamber of Loyalty and await further instructions.

The message made the trio a little uneasy. They were from righteous sects, so staying on White-Bone Mountain for even just a few more moments was torture. Luo Yao was a little better off than the other two, as the qi surrounding the Valley of the Three Absolutes consisted of both righteous and diabolical qi.

Meanwhile, Chu Liang felt the worst. The Crimson Executioner was shaking so much that he almost wished he were dead. He had a great urge to draw the sword and go on a killing spree.

The pavilion that the Chamber of Loyalty occupied had many rooms, so the trio casually picked three rooms and stayed there for two days. When the day of the mission finally arrived, General Hei Yu assembled his troops and valiantly charged off White-Bone Mountain in high spirits.

"I heard this is a secret mission. Only the core members of the Chamber of Loyalty are allowed to take part in it," whispered Liu Sen, the person who had gotten the trio into the hall. "You did a great job on your first mission. That's why Chamber Master Hei Yu decided to take you along this time. Excellent work."

Heheh, Chu Liang inwardly let out a bitter laugh. So, that's why?

If I had known, I wouldn't have acted so ruthlessly during the mission. That way, I might have already returned to Mount Shu and would be enjoying hotpot with Senior Sister Jiang by now.

General Hei Yu rode on the back of a large black-feathered bird, with his brothers following closely behind. They flew northwestward for most of the day.

This baffled the Chamber of Loyalty's members.

Where exactly were they going? If they flew further west, they would be flying out of the Yu Dynasty's territory.

After about an hour, General Hei Yu announced loudly, "Today's mission requires strict confidentiality. Our destination is just up ahead!"

Ahead of them was a seemingly bottomless abyss. It looked like a gaping wound that ran to the center of the earth. Even from a bird's-eye view, they could not see an end to the abyss.

It was the Ancient Dragon Lair!

Chu Liang had heard of this legendary realm long ago, but today was his first time venturing to this location.

The lair had been left abandoned for countless years. Yet, when he looked at the lair, he felt a mighty pressure weighing down on him, sending his heart racing in fear.

General Hei Yu led the team straight into the abyss. Occasionally, loud roars rang out from the sides of the abyss, but no creature actually dared to attack the group.

The upper layer of the abyss consisted of pitch-black ramparts with no discernible colors. However, after descending very deep into the abyss, they were surprised by the sudden appearance of lush green grass, trees, and beautiful flowers with vibrant purples and reds. When they finally landed, they found themselves in a luxuriant jungle!

It was totally unexpected that a world like this actually existed deep in a seemingly bottomless abyss. Anyone who saw it would undoubtedly gasp in surprise.

There was a captivatingly beautiful woman in a flaming red dress standing at the entrance of a jungle valley. Beside her was a black-robed man with a weathered face and an icy gaze.

Enchantress Liu? Chu Liang thought.

Seeing the woman, Chu Liang was reminded once again of that black lotus flower.

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"This is Master Mu, the formation specialist I invited," Enchantress Liu said. Then she stepped forward and gestured toward General Hei Yu. "And this is the Chamber Master Hei Yu of the White-Bone Hall."

General Hei Yu hurriedly greeted Master Mu. "Master Mu, it's an honor to meet you at last."

Master Mu was rather cold and indifferent.

He just gave a slight nod and uttered, "Mm."

Nevertheless, General Hei Yu didn't get angry.

Instead, he laughed. "Hehe."

Master Mu was renowned among the diabolical sects. He didn't belong to any major cultivation lineage, but he had a very high status in the diabolical community.

A cultivator never knew when they might need the help of a specialist like Master Mu, just like how cultivators occasionally needed the services of alchemists and artificers. Specialists had a wide network of connections and usually possessed considerable power and influence, so it was always wise to treat them with respect.

As for why it didn't matter that Chu Liang's trio had killed that alchemist in their operation, it was because the alchemist wasn't a member of a diabolical sect. That meant General Hei Yu wouldn't have had any further dealings with the alchemist anyway, so he didn't care about the alchemist's death. However, General Hei Yu might need Master Mu in the future.

Everyone was somewhat proficient in enchanted formations, but a formation specialist—someone who specialized their cultivation in the field of enchanted formations—was extremely rare. Formation specialists were even rarer than alchemists, artificers, and the like, so they possessed a much higher status than specialists of other fields.

Master Mu swept his gaze over the seventy-two people behind General Hei Yu and asked, "Do all of them have a cultivation level that's at the third realm or higher?"

General Hei Yu answered, "Yes. As you requested, all of my brothers here are powerful cultivators at the third and fourth realms."

Master Mu raised his hand and tossed out a sheet of paper. A diagram of an enchanted formation had been drawn on it.

"Stand in accordance with the positions for the qi-circulation route mapped out in the diagram for the Major Enchanted Formation of Earthly Evils. Assist me by activating the underground channels of yin qi. Aim to complete the formation within two hours."

"Sure!" General Hei Yu nodded. "Leave it to me."

He turned around, showed the formation diagram to his subordinates, and explained it to them. Major enchanted formations like these consisted of at least a dozen minor enchanted formations. It was an extremely deep field of study. Nevertheless, Master Mu's diagram was detailed and concise, making it relatively easy to understand.

Chu Liang, Luo Yao, and Monk Pushan were among the top disciples of their respective sects, so they probably understood what they needed to do with just a glance. Meanwhile, General Hei Yu was still racking his brain, engaged in a serious discussion with his brothers of the criminal world.

Chu Liang couldn't be bothered teaching them, so he just silently retreated to the rear of the group. Then he glanced furtively at the two people standing on the side, away from General Hei Yu's group.

Master Mu and Enchantress Liu were whispering to each other. After they had a brief conversation, Master Mu turned around and scanned the deep valley that was surrounded by lofty trees with a height of ten zhang. Then he used his palm to strike the tangle of vines on the mountain wall!

Wham!

"It should be here," Master Mu said resolutely.

He finished talking just as a burst of dust fell, revealing a section of the mountain wall that was covered with strange carvings. In the center of the carvings was a stone disk with a hollow center, appearing to be missing something.

Master Mu raised his hand toward Enchantress Liu.

Enchantress Liu handed over a semicircular iron plate that was engraved with strange patterns. Master Mu then set the iron plate into place, perfectly filling up the hole in the stone disk halfway.

"Fortunately, the half of the key you possess is the Yang Plate, we can use the yin qi in the underground channels as the other half of the key. We might not be able to do it if you possessed the Yin Plate instead," Master Mu said.

Enchantress Liu laughed, "Hehe, it's fortunate that you're here, Master Mu."

The pair weren't trying to hide what they were doing, so Chu Liang had witnessed everything. His pupils contracted a little as a realization surged through his mind.

That iron plate... he had one too!

Chapter 234: Doing the Opposite of an Escape

After almost two hours, Master Mu stepped forward and asked General Hei Yu, "Are we good?"

"Almost," General Hei Yu said. "Just let my brothers practice a few more times and we should be good to complete the formation."

"Sure," Master Mu responded before he turned and left.

With a flip of his hand, he retrieved this black python that was as thick as his arm. When he took the python out, it was asleep.

As he gently caressed the python, the python suddenly lifted its head and opened its eyes, revealing a pair of vertical pupils.

Plop.

When Master Mu set the python down, it immediately burrowed underground.

With a plop, its entire body submerged inside and disappeared in the soil.

As the python disappeared, Master Mu closed his eyes in meditation, fully immersing himself in his senses. After a while, the python burst out of the ground several dozen zhang away.

He then opened his eyes and said, "We can start."

Immediately, General Hei Yu waved his hand and called out, "Brothers! Set up the formation!"

His subordinates in the Chamber of Loyalty had already studied the formation diagram. When they heard this, they immediately dispersed. With the location where the black python broke out of the ground as the focal point, they organized themselves according to the major and minor positions and positioned themselves within the formation.

Chu Liang, Luo Yao, and Pushan had secretly chosen positions at the very edge and on elevated ground, allowing a broader view and easier observation of the entire area.

Master Mu stood on the focal point of the formation and shouted, "Activate!"

Boom!

The seventy-two diabolical cultivators activated their foundational qi at the same time, moving the energies of the world according to the method of activation outlined in the enchanted formation. This would then gather the Earthly Evils and activate the Earthly Evils' channels of yin qi which existed underground.

Human abilities might have their limitations, but the vastness of the universe would be boundless.

The core of this formation technique would involve using humans as both the lock and the key to harness the boundless energies of the heavens and earth, achieving what man alone could not accomplish.

Xu Hongqiu, whom Chu Liang had met previously, inherited the legacy of righteous formation techniques, and her cultivation focused on mastering these techniques. By the fourth realm of cultivation, Xu Hongqiu could manipulate the flow of time within a designated area.

These were feats unimaginable for other arts and techniques but possible for those who had mastered formation techniques.

Whizz!

To move a mountain, one must start with small stones. At this moment, the diabolical cultivators would serve as the leverage. With the collective effort of the group, they activated the underground channels of yin qi.

The circulation of cultivation energy within the diabolical cultivators reached a frenzied state, and foundational qi flowed out of them like a river.

With the roar of thunder, the power of the Earthly Evils surged like terrifying waves in the underground channels, transforming into a black dragon swirling around.

Instantly, a dark mist billowed, and the entire place was shrouded in chilling black fog that seemed endlessly vast.

Everyone felt the weight of this heavy power pressing down on them.

The burden that Master Lu bore was the greatest. He served as the core of the formation and all the energy converged within his body before flowing outward from him.

As the terrifying pressure emanated from all around his body, his clothes fluttered, and he soon began to tremble.

How could the body of a human being handle such immense power?

In fact, Master Lu was not the bearer of this power as he merely served as the bridge.

He held the black-colored half-circle jade plaque in his grip, the shape appearing rather similar to the missing piece on the mountain wall.

It should be the replica that was made to open this hidden realm.

At this moment, Master Lu was infusing power into this jade plaque.

Halfway through the activation of the enchanted formation, Chu Liang glanced over at Luo Yao and Pushan, secretly telling them to be careful through Voice Transmission.

There was something wrong with this enchanted formation.

He had examined the formation diagram. The normal activation of this formation would not have required this much foundational qi. Could Master Mu, being the core of the formation, be intentionally absorbing their cultivation energy?

Initially, Chu Liang thought that they could simply get by no matter what they had to do. However, from what was happening now, it seemed like the situation was about to deviate from what would be expected.

While he was hesitating on whether he should remind General Hei Yu about this, he noticed Enchantress Liu flying over and whispering something to General Hei Yu.

At this moment, the Major Enchanted Formation of the Earthly Evils started operating at an increasingly rapid pace.

Something's not right!

As the Major Enchanted Formation approached the end of its operation, it should have started to slow down. Yet, instead of slowing, the speed continued to increase.

This meant that the power they would have to bear would continue to grow. They would be unable to stop it!

"Stop!" He shouted as he immediately stopped practicing the Qi-Circulation Technique.

Upon hearing his shout, Luo Yao and Monk Pushan quickly stopped what they were doing and exited the formation.

However, the other members of the Chamber of Loyalty didn't know them and naturally chose not to listen. Instead, they hesitated, casting glances toward General Hei Yu.

Master Mu, serving as the core of the formation, heard the warning. Immediately, his eyes narrowed as he withdrew the infusion of foundational qi.

The immense Power of the Earthly Evils resembled a vortex propelled into action by everyone. If the members of the Chamber of Loyalty stopped first, he, as the core of the formation, would have to bear all the recoil. Conversely, if he stopped first, the others executing the major enchanted formation would bear the consequences of the recoil.

As the one orchestrating this formation, he had propelled for the vortex to spin rapidly and fiercely.

At this moment, the enchanted formation abruptly ceased its operation, followed by a sudden recoil and the sound of an explosion.

Boom!

When the underground channels suddenly exploded, clouds of black qi surged upward and the Power of Earthly Evils, manifested as the gigantic black dragon, shattered.

Master Mu, who was already prepared, retreated swiftly by flying back.

However, the diabolical cultivators trapped within the enchanted formation had no means of escape. The diffused Power of the Earthly Evils enshrouded the diabolical cultivators and some died, while others were injured.

Chu Liang, Luo Yao, and Pushan were the only exceptions. They had already flown back and taken cover.

The remaining diabolical cultivators that survived had depleted all their foundational qi. They were severely injured and collapsed on the ground.

In this instant, the Chamber of Loyalty suffered heavy casualties.

...

On the other side, Enchantress Liu had been talking to General Hei Yu.

With an alluring smile, she said, "General Hei Yu, you are young and capable. I really made the right choice asking you for help."

As she spoke, her arm casually edged closer to General Hei Yu, gently brushing against him. There was something ambiguous about her actions.

Instead of moving closer, General Hei Yu stepped back, creating some distance between himself and Enchantress Liu.

"Enchantress Liu, you don't have to be so courteous. This was a happy collaboration. We will collaborate again next time."

Enchantress Liu was about to say something when she suddenly heard Chu Liang's yell, causing her expression to twist into a fierce grimace.

"Eh?" General Hei Yu looked over.

In the blink of an eye, Enchantress Liu shouted sharply and raised her hand, delivering a swift palm strike!

This palm strike is accompanied by a dense blood-stained aura, as swift as lightning! Moreover, it was so close that it's practically impossible to dodge!

In the midst of panic, General Hei Yu only lifted half of the black feathers on his cloak. Instantly, the black feathers hardened, transforming into armor-like thorns and spikes, effectively blocking Enchantress Liu's palm strike. Upon impact, the feathers shattered completely!

Enchantress Liu had already reached the sixth realm, while General Hei Yu remained at the fifth realm, significantly weaker than her. A sneak attack from a cultivator at a higher level was not easily countered.

Puff! His blood vessels exploded.

General Hei Yu felt as if half of his body's blood had been forcefully expelled by this palm strike!

The blood-controlling divine techniques of the Scarlet-Robe Hall was extremely devious and malicious!

"I was doing my best to help you, but you wanted to harm me!" General Hei Yu shouted, enduring the severe pain of his injuries as he retreated backward with the momentum.

"You were just too naive." Enchantress Liu sneered coldly as she explained. "Do you know what hidden realm this is? It's the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm. How would I possibly allow a living witness to such a secret?"

While she was talking, General Hei Yu lifted the remaining half of the black feathers on his cloak, transforming it into a huge pair of wings. He spread the wings open and prepared to leap into the sky to escape!

As he fled for his life, he moved at an incredible speed. However, Enchantress Liu made no attempt to pursue him, simply watching as he was about to make his escape.

"Trying to escape?"

Suddenly, General Hei Yu heard a shout from above.

General Hei Yu was completely focused on Enchantress Liu. Upon hearing the voice from above, he was startled and quickly looked up.

A ripple appeared in mid-air, and Master Mu materialized above him. The air behind him had transformed into a barrier resembling a black mirror.

They had already set up a secret enchanted formation here!

Both Enchantress Liu and Master Mu had planned to discard them after they had served their purpose.

General Hei Yu finally understood why Enchantress Liu, despite her high level, had been eager to collaborate with him. It was simply because it would be easier to silence them forever!

Upon considering this, General Hei Yu realized that the request for him to find the Eternal-Youth Pills was likely just a pretext, intended to make this invitation for collaboration seem as if it had occurred naturally.

Such intricate schemes!

Despite General Hei Yu's realization, it came too late.

Master Mu was able to attain the status of a formation specialist, holding an extremely high position within the diabolical sect.

His cultivation level was at the sixth realm, higher than that of General Hei Yu.

Even if all members of his chamber were in perfect condition, they might not have been able to escape the combined efforts of the two sixth-realm cultivators. Moreover, having fallen into a trap, they had already lost their ability to fight.

Clearly, their fate was sealed—they could only wait to be slaughtered...

Bang!

As Master Mu's palm descended, General Hei Yu once again used the other half of his cloak to block. Even so, he still suffered severe injuries and was ruthlessly knocked to the ground.

"Ahh..." General Hei Yu coughed up a mouthful of blood and roared angrily, "Aren't you two afraid of the Elder of the White-Bone Hall?"

"Heh, you think too highly of yourself. The Elder of the White-Bone Hall would never offend the Scarlet-Robe Hall for your sake," Enchantress Liu said with a charming smile. "Besides, do you think I would return to the diabolical sect after exploring the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm?"

She fluttered as she flew over. She was just about to take General Hei Yu's life and enter the hidden realm in peace when Master Mu suddenly shouted, "Thief! How dare you!"

...

Within the blink of an eye, the situation changed drastically.

As Chu Liang had warned in advance, the team of undercover agents retained their full combat strength.

They watched as the situation unfolded.

Master Mu and Enchantress Liu worked together and slaughtered the remaining injured members of the Chamber of Loyalty.

While Chu Liang possessed the Crimson Executioner, its effect would only be effective against Enchantress Liu, who was at the sixth realm.

Even with the Crimson Executioner, there was still a possibility of defeat.

When it came to Master Mu, the Crimson Executioner showed no reaction.

This meant that although Master Mu was involved in the diabolical sect, he hadn't taken the lives of many innocent people.

Instead, the Crimson Executioner targeted the injured ones on the ground, as well as General Hei Yu.

It would be easy for him to dispatch each of them with a single strike.

At this point, Chu Liang even wondered if he could earn a chance at life by turning against his fellow members of the chamber and joining Enchantress Liu's side.

Since they couldn't win, their first choice was to run.

While Enchantress Liu and Master Mu launched a joint attack on General Hei Yu, the three ascended into the sky. However, their path of escape was abruptly blocked by a barrier in the form of a black mirror.

Luo Yao waved her palm, but was then sent flying backward by the recoil.

It would not be easy escaping from an enchanted formation carefully set up by a powerful formation specialist.

Chu Liang could bypass the barrier using Dimension Compression, but his two teammates would remain trapped inside, unable to escape.

And so, he decided to temporarily abandon the idea of escaping alone.

The first thing the three did was to crush the tracking jade talisman and request assistance from their respective teachers and sects.

However, they were currently at the Ancient Dragon Lair, which was located far away. It would take some time for the elders to arrive.

It would be nearly impossible for them to withstand the combined attack of two experts at the sixth realm.

Even if he had summoned Old Fei, as a fragmented Battle Soul, he wouldn't be powerful enough to fight against either of these two sixth-realm cultivators.

With thoughts racing through his mind, every scenario flashed before Chu Liang's eyes.

Finally, he caught sight of the half-circle iron plaque with inscriptions on the mountain wall, with Enchantress Liu's already embedded on the wall.

At that moment, Enchantress Liu and Master Mu were on the opposite side, leaving this area empty.

Chu Liang's eyes gleamed with determination as he exclaimed, "Follow me!"

Instead of moving outward, he dashed inward.

His body flashed!

Whoosh—

In his urgency, he used the Dimension Compression and materialized before the mountain wall in an instant. Then, he retrieved the other half of the inscribed iron plaque and forcefully slammed it into the missing piece on the wall.

Bam!

With both iron plaques attached to the mountain wall, the missing shape was now placed and the entire wall was complete.

At that moment, a brilliant white light illuminated the surroundings, accompanied by faint dragon chants.

The mountain wall transformed into a massive vortex.

Back then, the Southern-Route Guider was concerned about the potential risks within the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm.

He was determined to obtain the seventh-realm Battle Soul before embarking on the exploration.

However, this delay resulted in his efforts and sacrifices benefiting someone else instead. And the one who benefited from this was the individual who caused his demise.

Master Mu immediately detected the anomalies in this area. The two sixth-realm cultivators hadn't anticipated this development at all! They had viewed these individuals as trapped prey.

Yet, who would have expected that they would be able to unlock this door?

Not even Luo Yao and Monk Pushan had expected this turn of events, let alone the two sixth-realm cultivators.

Even though they recognized Chu Liang's extraordinary abilities and his capacity to achieve feats beyond the reach of ordinary individuals...

They still found themselves surprised by the unexpected turns events took.

Enchantress Liu and Master Mu unleashed a surge of cultivation energy as they rushed towards them.

However, it was already too late. In the blink of an eye, the three were sucked into a massive vortex on the mountain wall and disappeared.

The two exchanged glances and simultaneously bellowed, "Follow them!"

Chapter 235: We Are All Good Friends

"What is this?" Chu Liang asked.

"Descendants of dragons," answered Luo Yao.

"It is the youngling of a draconic demonic beast. With double wings on its back and a body resembling a lion and a tiger, fully covered in scales, this should be a Winged Draconic Beast. Although it is a youngling, it is very fierce. It should have the strength of a sixth realm upon reaching adulthood. The purity of dragon blood in a Winged Draconic Beast is rather high. On the other hand, it looks hungry," explained Monk Pushan.

When the three entered the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm through the vortex, they felt as though the world was spinning. They flew swiftly and suddenly arrived in a place of unknown origin.

There was a dense forest as vast as the sea, with trees towering ten zhang high. The depth of the dense greenery was beyond comprehension, and there was a very strong sense of a primitive atmosphere.

Before they could fully observe their surroundings, a small creature approached them.

This was the youngling of a draconic demonic beast. It stood at the height of one chi. Its entire body was covered in dense green-black scales that didn't leave a single gap between them. Its small legs and limbs looked very sturdy, and its feet appeared very thick. It had a pair of tiny wings on its back, which seemed rather too small and short compared to the size of its body. Even if they were spread open, they wouldn't be able to lift its chubby body into the air.

The pure-blooded dragons were known as the True Dragons. However, True Dragons were rare in numbers. The offspring produced by breeding of True Dragons and other species were collectively referred to as the draconic descendants.

"This little thing is quite adorable," Chu Liang said with a smile.

The young draconic descendant sniffed at Chu Liang, its head tilting slightly as if it had caught a whiff of something.

"It seems friendly." Monk Pushan commented with a smile as well.

Seemingly in response to his words, the young draconic descendant turned towards him, immediately baring its teeth and hissing: "Hiss—".

It was so fierce.

The cry sounded sharp yet endearingly cute. It had three rows of fangs, clearly indicating that when fully grown, its teeth would be terrifying like a jungle of halberds. However, at this moment, its teeth were not yet fully grown, and it was not fierce enough.

"Why is it so fierce to me?" Pushan said with a frown.

"Move." Luo Yao, who was at the side, lifted the young draconic descent by the neck and threw it to the side.

She didn't use much force, but still, she sent it flying. It tumbled on the ground, then got up again, turned its head, and ran into the depths of the dense forest.

"Heh. There are draconic demonic beasts in this hidden realm. We must be careful," Monk Pushan said with a smile as he watched the youngling clumsily retreat.

Chu Liang looked back and saw that the vortex that had transported them here had disappeared. The location was random, and it was impossible for them to return the way they came.

Thankfully, there wasn't just one straight path. If there had been, Enchantress Liu and Master Mu would have followed it and caught them within moments.

"There must be a way out. Let's find it," he said.

They weren't familiar with this forest, so they dared not recklessly charge forward. They didn't dare to fly high in the sky as they might overlook surrounding dangers and become targets of some demonic beasts that were more powerful.

The three had no choice but to take slow steps forward, spreading out their divine senses to remain vigilant against any dangerous auras.

Boom!

They had barely taken a few steps when they heard the trees on the side collapse, revealing a massive dragon head!

They then saw its towering body, standing three zhang tall. Agile and powerful like a lion, it had enormous wings that seemed to be crafted from black iron, spanning over ten zhang and capable of cutting through anything.

It had a pair of fiery golden eyes, resembling torches of flames.

It was a Winged Draconic Beast and this one was a thousand times bigger than the youngling they saw earlier!

The big one is here!

The tiny youngling of the Winged Draconic Beast perched atop the creature's head, its eyes gleaming with pride and arrogance.

Wow, did this little guy call in the parents so quickly? Is there really a need to hold a grudge like this?

Bang!

When the gigantic Winged Draconic Beast stomped on the ground, it felt as though half of the mountain trembled.

It crouched down and started getting closer to the three people.

"It's your fault. Who told you to bully the kid? And now, its parent is here. Apologize to it," Monk Pushan said to Luo Yao.

Luo Yao replied in an indifferent tone, "If I apologize, will it forgive me?"

"I am guessing no," answered Chu Liang.

"Then why aren't we running?" Monk Pushan shouted and immediately turned around to escape.

The other two didn't hesitate either. They turned around, ready to fly away.

Flying on swords in this dense forest wasn't convenient. However, considering the Winged Draconic Beast's massive size, it shouldn't be agile enough to catch them easily. This meant that as long as they were fast enough when flying through manipulation of the wind...

"Raaawwwrrrrrr!"

The three descended on the ground.

They were just about to flip over and escape when they suddenly noticed the head of an even bigger Winged Draconic Beast behind them. Its teeth and claws were even sharper, and the fury in its golden eyes burned even brighter!

The one earlier was clearly the mom while the one before their eyes was the dad! The Winged Draconic Beasts were clearly a family of three!

The male Winged Draconic Beast advanced stealthily, concealing its breath and aura. The three had no idea when it had maneuvered behind them. These creatures weren't clumsy demonic beasts; they were cunning, bloodthirsty apex hunters!

"Rawrr!" The female Winged Draconic Beast in front responded with a low growl.

The three youngsters were trapped in the center as the two Winged Draconic Beasts closed in on both sides.

Even if they had wings, they couldn't escape!

"Eeekk!" The young Draconic beast emitted a high-pitched cry.

"It looks like we can only split up and run. They will at most catch two of us and at least one will escape and survive," Monk Pushan said.

"Why don't we try fighting?" Luo Yao suggested. Her eyes sharpened like a saber, as if she had a secret trump card hidden in her pocket.

"Wait..." Chu Liang raised his hand and stopped their discussion.

He felt as though the family of three were not as hostile as they initially perceived.

If the apex hunters intended to kill them, they wouldn't have bothered with warning roars. They could have simply pounced and killed one of them.

Yet, nothing like that happened.

They seemed to be testing the waters.

There was one reason that came to mind.

Chu Liang suddenly drew in a deep breath and swiftly performed the Secret Dragon Blood Technique, maximizing his circulation before exhaling a mouthful of dragon breath.

His irises turned into a golden color.

They were the golden irises of dragons.

When Monk Pushan saw this, he was shocked, shouting, "You switched sides a bit too fast!"

"Quiet!" Luo Yao frowned and scolded.

"Mmm-mmmm-mm-mmm..." A series of muffled words escaped from Monk Pushan's mouth.

Chu Liang felt the dragon blood within him burning fiercely. He unleashed his dragon breath, which was really the dragon breath of the White Dragon on Mount Shu...

The White Dragon, as a pureblooded True Dragon, would certainly command some authority and respect among these Draconic descendants.

I knew it. Chu Liang thought to himself.

The situation unfolded just as he had predicted. Upon sensing the powerful dragon breath of the White Dragon, the two Winged Draconic Beasts gradually began to show signs of friendliness.

They approached Chu Liang with lowered heads. Instead of baring their fangs, they gently sniffed him.

Chu Liang reached out and gently touched the top of the male Winged Draconic Beast's nose, attempting to convey that he meant no harm.

As he turned around to touch the female one, he suddenly sensed the male Winged Draconic Beast growling.

"Sure. I won't touch your wife." Chu Liang chuckled.

The dragon bloodline of the two Winged Draconic Beasts was very pure and they were both sixth-realm demonic beasts. In regard to their muscle density, they were nearly on par with a seventh-realm demonic beast.

They were so close that they could potentially tear him apart in the time it would take to draw a single breath.

These creatures were so docile because of the dragon breath that the White Dragon of Mount Shu bestowed upon him.

This was the power of bloodline. Through it, pureblooded True Dragons could dominate their Draconic descendants.

"We are friends." Chu Liang said as he pointed at himself and the Winged Draconic Beas in front. Then, he patted Luo Yao and said, "They are my friends."

"We are all good friends." He said as he gestured.

Although he wasn't certain if the three creatures would comprehend him, he figured that descendants of dragons would likely be quite intelligent. Even if they couldn't grasp human language, they should be able to interpret the general meaning of his gestures.

After he finished speaking, he glanced at the two Winged Draconic Beasts, but they showed no reaction.

Chu Liang then dragged Luo Yao and Pushan, who were next to him, and cautiously took a step back, moving his foot slowly.

"Rawrrr..." the female Winged Draconic Beast emitted a deep roar. It sounded like she was trying to say something.

Chu Liang could sense her emotions. She seemed to be protesting the injustice that her child had experienced.

And so, Chu Liang raised his hand and tossed out two berries.

"Here, consider this our apology."

Pop!

His aim was flawless, and the young dragon descendant caught the berries skillfully. As it began munching on the berries it caught, joy and satisfaction radiated from its small, vertical pupils.

This was a lesson Chu Liang had learned since his encounter with the young girl who might be the Cataclysmic Ba. The Golden Vein Berries held no special powers; they were merely tasty snacks. However, such snacks proved highly effective against these small creatures with limited intelligence.

Upon sensing the joy coming from the young draconic descent, the female Winged Draconic Beast gradually felt better.

Their footsteps eventually lightened and quickened, progressing from a leisurely pace to a brisk stride, then transitioning into a jog, and finally bursting into an all-out sprint...

The three of them were like three gusts of wind, whirling out of this dense forest.

"Phew~"

When Chu Liang executed the Secret Dragon Blood Technique at full force, he could sense the forest emanating the unique dragon breath of the Winged Draconic Beasts, strongly suggesting that this area was their territory.

As they emerged from the dense forest, Chu Liang could sense the concentration of the Winged Draconic Beast's dragon breath gradually diminishing until it eventually vanished altogether.

Before entering the territory of another powerful draconic demonic beast, there would typically be a buffer zone. The three stopped in this untouched area, exhaling a sigh of relief in unison.

"Young Hero Chu, it's good that you are here. They seem very close to you?" Monk Pushan asked.

"A few days ago, a True Dragon was drawn to Mount Shu to suppress its fate. You heard about that, haven't you?" Chu Liang asked. "It frequently transformed its dragon breath into rain as a gift for the disciples of Mount Shu, and this rain likely affected my aura."

The rain formed by dragon breath couldn't possibly have such an impact, but there was no need for Chu Liang to explain this in detail to Pushan and Luo Yao. After all, neither of their immortal sects had been visited by True Dragons.

So what if I was talking nonsense? Are they going to doubt me? Chu Liang thought to himself.

"You get such benefits when a True Dragon guards your sect? I am so envious," remarked Monk Pushan.

Luo Yao then said, "In that case, we shouldn't have to worry too much about the draconic demonic beast in this hidden realm."

"Not necessarily," Chu Liang said. "This family of three seems to have a good temperament. If the little Winged Draconic Beast wasn't bullied, they might not have come out at all. And if there's one with a bad temperament, I might not even have time to unleash the dragon breath. After all, I barely touched it and the dragon breath I possess is not strong enough."

As the three discussed countermeasures, they heard rustling from the woods opposite them, and two figures emerged.

Chu Liang's heart skipped a beat when he saw them.

Apart from Enchantress Liu and Master Mu, who else could be in this hidden realm?

"Hehe, you two escaped very quickly. It took us a while to find you three," said Enchantress Liu as she smiled in an alluring manner.

Chu Liang, Luo Yao, and Pushan had seen that alluring smile before. It was the same smile she wore right before she killed General Hei Yu in the next moment.

And so, they immediately became cautious.

Master Mu, who stood to the side, turned his gaze towards Chu Liang with a serious expression. "I want to know how you opened this hidden realm," he asked.

After Chu Liang placed the inscribed half-circle iron plaque, a vortex immediately formed on the mountain wall.

Master Mu did not see what had happened so he was curious.

"You have no idea. The hidden realm holds a secret," Chu Liang explained. "You just have to shout 'open sesame', and a gate of mystery will reveal itself."

"Ptui." Enchantress Liu sneered and said, "Do you think we are kids who will believe such stupid lies?"

"You don't believe me? Look!" Chu Liang said as he pointed at the hill behind them. Then, he shouted, "Open sesame!"

Although Enchantress Liu and Master Mu didn't believe him, they still subconsciously turned their gaze. It was just a brief moment.

During that fleeting moment, Chu Liang executed a flip and bolted!

Luo Yao and Pushan followed suit. Having experienced some things together, they could naturally anticipate each other's moves.

Luo Yao immediately opened the black umbrella and that black ghost appeared. It held her up and carried her away like the wind! Monk Pushan strode forward, moving several dozen zhang away, an action reminiscent of the great divine technique, the Buddha's Heavenly Steps!

Chu Liang was the one that escaped the slowest. Still, when he opened the Green Leaf Umbrella, he was extremely fast as well.

In the blink of an eye, the three disappeared amidst the dense forest!

"How cunning!" Enchantress Liu said angrily.

They had pursued for a while now, but these lackeys kept slipping away! Each of them were cunning enough to cause mischief on their own!

"Hmph!" Master Mu humphed coldly and a formation diagram materialized below his feet.

Whoosh!

Chapter 236: No Path to the Heavens (I)

Run!

The real identities of the undercover trio had not been exposed, but it was obvious that the two people pursuing them would not let them go. It would be a fight to the death the next time they met.

Chu Liang went back the way he came and returned to the place where he and his companions had encountered the family of three Winged Draconic Beasts. However, the only Winged Draconic Beast left in that clearing was the hatchling.

The hatchling was smacking its lips, seemingly still savoring the taste of the Golden Vein Berries. The little beast was thinking that it would be wonderful if it could have two more.

Thud, thud.

Right then, two Golden Vein Berries fell from above out of nowhere and hit the little creature's head, stunning it for a moment.

"Help me call your parents over!" Chu Liang shouted as he rushed past.

He had no idea if the hatchling heard him. Nevertheless, after staring blankly for a moment, the hatchling scooped the berries into its mouth and scampered off.

A second later, Master Mu appeared at the clearing.

The way he moved was extremely strange. It seemed like he was not actually making any movements.

There was a projection of a formation diagram under his feet. It expanded rapidly, spreading a hundred zhang across the ground in all directions. Then he disappeared from the center of the formation and reappeared at the frontmost point of the formation, moving forward over a hundred zhang in a flash.

With him at the center, the formation diagram expanded repeatedly, and he would be shifted to the frontmost point of the formation each time. This method allowed him to move very quickly.

After repeating this process several times, he caught sight of the three people up ahead.

Like Master Mu, Enchantress Liu was at the sixth realm, but she was slower than him. Nevertheless, the difference wasn't significant, and she appeared as a trail of red light following closely behind him.

The pair of sixth-realm cultivators only needed a short time to catch up to Chu Liang's group.

Suddenly, the sky turned dark.

"Raaaar!"

As an angry roar rang out, a Winged Draconic Beast's huge wings that seemed to cover the sky swung down toward Master Mu. The enormous Winged Draconic Beast opened its huge mouth, revealing three rows of terrifying fangs. It intended to devour Master Mu in one bite!

Swoosh—

Master Mu's figure flickered again, disappearing and then reappearing in another corner of the formation. His gaze remained cold and composed as he avoided the sudden attack.

This sixth-realm Winged Draconic Beast might seem extremely fearsome in the eyes of others, but to Master Mu, the Winged Draconic Beast was not a problem at all.

"Raaaaar!"

The Winged Draconic Beast's attack struck empty space. Nevertheless, it immediately swung its huge wings again, attempting to strike Master Mu again!

Master Mu formed two-handed hand seals and grasped the empty space.

Two formation diagrams appeared in midair. One was in front of him, blocking the Winged Draconic Beast's wingstrike. The other appeared in front of the Winged Draconic Beast, smashing into it with tremendous force!

Wham!

The formation diagram reflected the force of the Winged Draconic Beast's attack! Master Mu injured the beast by using its own attack! The Winged Draconic Beast was sent staggering backward several tens of zhang.

Right after that brief exchange of moves, Enchantress Liu arrived and sprang into action. She pointed at the Winged Draconic Beast, and a scarlet blood sword materialized out of thin air. It went piercing toward the Winged Draconic Beast.

However, Enchantress Liu suddenly felt a murderous aura surging beneath her feet. It was an ambush!

Alarmed, Enchantress Liu stepped backward, but she failed to avoid the oncoming attack. A mouthful of black dragon breath struck her, shrouding half of her body.

Hiss—

The dragon breath permeated her flesh. It dissolved one of her arms and one of her legs into a pool of blood, leaving her bones bare. It was a gnarly sight.

The pair of Winged Draconic Beasts had used a strategy—one drew the enemy's attention from the front while the other gathered its breath to launch a sneak attack from behind. Coupled with their familiarity with the terrain, this was undoubtedly a tried-and-true strategy!

Enchantress Liu flew up, with blood dripping from her injuries. A red light appeared at the gaping wounds and slowly covered the bare bones of her fleshless arm and leg, gradually wrapping her bones with new muscle and skin.

In the blink of an eye, she had fully recovered and regained her limbs.

Her ruined clothes could not be repaired, so her newly grown arm and leg were left exposed. The limbs were shapely and covered with fair and radiant skin—seemingly even more beautiful than before.

Enchantress Liu had used the Immortal Art: Last Drop of blood!

Legend had it that this immortal art allowed a cultivator to resurrect themselves even with just a drop of blood, pretty much giving them a body that could never die. Enchantress Liu's situation was not that extreme, but she used the powerful spiritual energy in her blood to recover her limbs, showing the incredible prowess of Last Drop of Blood.

Enchantress Liu flew over to Master Mu and hovered in midair with him.

The pair of Winged Draconic Beasts converged as well. They crouched down with their fierce gazes locked onto their targets.

A great battle was about to begin.

...

Meanwhile, Chu Liang's group had already fled in another direction and left the jungle. They did not know how long the pair of Winged Draconic Beasts could hold off the two diabolical cultivators, so they did not dare to pause to rest even for a moment.

Compared to demonic beasts, human cultivators had way more tricks up their sleeve, such as divine skills and enchanted tools. Even if Master Mu and Enchantress Liu could not harm the pair of Winged Draconic Beasts, it should not be difficult for them to escape. That meant the Winged Draconic Beasts would not be able to hold off Master Mu and Enchantress Liu for very long.

Yet, not long after Chu Liang's group fled from the jungle, they encountered a new crisis.

"Screeeeee!"

A screech ripped through the air. This was a sign that this crisis was much more dangerous than the one before, and it was thirsty for blood.

A beam of red light suddenly flashed by, almost grazing Monk Pushan. Fortunately, he swung his large hands at just the right time. His fair palms smacked the creature invading his personal space, sending it to the ground easily like he was swatting a mosquito.

The fallen demonic beast's appearance was a bit different after getting hit. Nevertheless, the trio could vaguely tell that the demonic beast looked like a bat covered in scales. It was small in stature, about the size of a child, and had a hideous face.

"Vampire Bat-Dragon! This demonic beast isn't strong alone, but they always live in a colony. Seeing one means there could be hundreds or even thousands more!" Luo Yao said from midair.

Before she even finished talking, three beams of blood-red light shot up from below, attacking her from all sides!

Luo Yao flipped her hand over and summoned her white paper umbrella, opening it immediately. A white ghostly figure appeared and embraced her. It blocked the three Vampire Bat-Dragons from attacking Luo Yao.

Luo Yao suspended two paper umbrellas in the air behind her. Meanwhile, her right hand reached for her large curved saber. In a flash, she struck down the three Vampire Bat-Dragons!

The fight was over in an instant. It appeared that the three Vampire Bat-Dragons had not caused much harm to the trio.

However, the sound of flapping wings then filled the air as a vast expanse of red clouds that seemed to stretch over the sky and the ground rose from the middle of the mountain. There was an oncoming swarm of Vampire Bat-Dragons!

Chu Liang put his full effort into using the Secret Dragon Blood Technique, wanting to block the swarm of Vampire Bat-Dragons for his companions.

Unfortunately, things did not play out as he had expected. These Vampire Bat-Dragons were inferior to the Winged Draconic Beasts in both strength and intelligence. They did not attack Chu Liang, but they still charged at his companions, trying to suck their blood.

"I'll hold them off. The two of you should go first!" Chu Liang yelled.

He wielded the Dustless Sword and performed the Hundred Swords Seal. In an instant, hundreds of glowing swords enshrouded with dragon breath and the Cloud of Determination sword qi flew about, forming a defensive barrier of sword qi!

Swish, swish, swish—

Chu Liang continuously struck down the Vampire Bat-Dragons. Many of them were not fatally wounded, but they were unable to keep pursuing Pushan and Luo Yao.

The Vampire Bat-Dragons outnumbered Chu Liang greatly, yet they did not dare attack him. They just wanted to move around him, just like a sea of blood wanting to flow around a reef.

Chu Liang did not just stay in one spot. As he used the Hundred Swords Seal to kill the Vampire Bat-Dragons, he hurried after Luo Yao and Pushan.

The Vampire Bat-Dragons were chasing after them too. That meant the Vampire Bat-Dragons were constantly in the range of Chu Liang's beams of swordlight, allowing him to kill over a hundred Vampire Bat-Dragons in just a short time.

Chapter 237: No Path to the Heavens (II)

Meanwhile, Luo Yao and Pushan passed through a forested area, and the Vampire Bat-Dragons' pursuit came to an abrupt halt.

"Screeee, screeee, screeee!!!"

It seemed as if there was an invisible barrier. Thousands upon thousands of Vampire Bat-Dragons crowded outside this barrier and emitted shrill cries, compounding into an ear-splitting cacophony. Yet, not one of the creatures dared to stick even a foot into the pool of lightning.

"What formidable demonic beast occupies the territory we're in now?" Chu Liang wondered as he landed.

He then turned around and observed the Vampire Bat-Dragons' odd behavior. Chu Liang hadn't lowered his guard in the slightest.

Judging from the Vampire Bat-Dragons' behavior, it was clear to Chu Liang that he wasn't the one they were afraid of. It had to be something even more powerful than him.

"It might not be a demonic beast. Instead, it's..." Monk Pushan pointed at a mountain peak. "Well, see for yourself."

...

Peeking through from behind the lofty green mountain was a gigantic dragon skull that was fully black. The crevices in the skull had been filled with a material similar to rhodium. It was used to turn the skull into a palace-like structure.

The workmanship was really rough. Yet, this building made for a rather terrifying sight. This dragon skull obviously belonged to a pure-blood True Dragon!

What incredible existence could turn an adult pure-blood True Dragon into a building and put it on display here?

It seemed that this Dragon-Bone Palace was probably what the swarm of Vampire Bat-Dragons were afraid of. If the trio left this area, they would probably still encounter attacks from more descendants of dragons. So, the trio didn't rush to leave; instead, they slowly approached the palace.

Once the trio went around the mountain, they could see the gigantic dragon skull in full and found that its seemingly endlessly long body trailed behind it. Like the skull, the rest of the skeleton was covered in a rhodium-like material.

The dragon skeleton—starting with a skull that was as high as the mountain and continuing on with a winding body that seemed to stretch on endlessly behind it—was like a long city wall made of rhodium!

The inside of that gigantic dragon skull's gaping mouth was pitch-black like an abyss in the mountains.

"Shall we go in and take a look?" Monk Pushan asked. His curiosity was piqued. "It seems to be a rather special place. If this hidden realm has an exit, it might just be in there."

"Sure," Luo Yao agreed.

Chu Liang didn't object to the idea. After all, they were in an awkward situation. If they were to head back out, they would be attacked by draconic descendants. And if they were to simply wait here, Enchantress Liu and Master Mu would eventually catch up, leaving the trio with no escape. They might as well just go inside the dragon skull and explore.

Looking at that tail that seemed to stretch on endlessly, Chu Liang also thought that there might be an exit hidden in there.

So, the trio entered the skull.

This dragon skull was as high as a mountain, so its gaping mouth seemed like the massive entrance gates of a city. As humans, the trio felt extremely small when they entered.

Once inside, they saw a dark, long passageway. The rhodium fillings in the dragon bone had been done roughly on the outside, but the engravings inside had been done very meticulously. With black and gold painted over them, they looked stately and magnificent.

On the tall walls of the passageway, there were relief paintings^[1] depicting profound scenes. They were very likely scenes of wars that had occurred in ancient times.

"These are murals from the era of the ancient Dragon God. My sect, the Buddhist Cloud Monastery, has a collection of these too. I can roughly figure out what's being depicted," Monk Pushan said.

Then rays of divine light shone out from his eyes, piercing through the darkness. As he walked through the passageway, he looked closely at each mural.

"The first mural seems to depict a young dragon, whose parents were killed by an enemy—an evil dragon..." Pushan explained slowly as he interpreted the murals. "The young dragon was in turmoil. It had always had a deep fear of being alone in this world; it was determined to avenge its parents and relatives. It felt a little sorrowful as well. 'I was nothing at birth, and after I was born—'"

"Hang on," Luo Yao interrupted. "You can interpret all that from the first mural alone?"

"Uh, I did make some conjectures about its emotional state," Monk Pushan admitted.

"Don't make conjectures. There are so many murals here. By the time you're done making conjectures about all of them, Enchantress Liu and Master Mu would have already had a kid and even spent a month in confinement after childbirth[2], and we'd still be here for them to catch us," Chu Liang remarked.

Pushan sighed. "Fine..."

"The second mural depicts the young dragon growing up, venturing out into the world and gaining experience, and following a powerful... Dragon God?" Pushan said bewilderedly.

"How do you know that's the Dragon God?" Chu Liang asked as he looked at the mural.

Pushana explained, "The murals of the ancient dragons were painted with some rules. The painting style may be rough, but only the Dragon God was allowed to be depicted with divine light. Any other True Dragons would not have been painting with this divine light."

Chu Liang nodded. "I see."

In the distant past, a ninth-realm Hallowed One emerged among the dragons. It was known as the Dragon God.

Under its leadership, the dragons once ruled over the mortal realm. Dragons had a long lifespan that surpassed even that of demons, so the dragons could have flourished for thousands of years under

the lead of the Dragon God. Yet, the dragons' rule over the mortal realm lasted for less than a thousand years before it came to an abrupt end.

Thousands of years later, the Ancient Dragon Lair fell into ruin, and the remaining pure-blood True Dragons fled to the Abyss of the Hidden Dragons.

These were all secrets from the distant past, and the reasons behind the events had long been forgotten by the world.

The next dozen or so murals depicted the same young dragon accompanying the Dragon God on expeditions, battling not only other dragons but also other powerful demonic beasts and even humans.

During the period depicted in the murals, the young dragon grew into an enormous dragon with an indomitable spirit. Enchantress Liu had called this place the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm. In that case, the dragon that was featured in the murals should be the Blue Dragon, the owner of this hidden realm.

The next mural showed the Blue Dragon growing under the instruction of the Dragon God. The Blue Dragon eventually became extremely powerful and returned to its hometown. It killed the evil dragon, avenging its parents and relatives. The Blue Dragon then used the bones of the evil dragon to build a palace that served as an everlasting memorial.

So, it turned out that the Blue Dragon had built this long wall of dragon bones using the bones of its enemy.

The trio continued walking ahead and found several more murals. These depicted violent, bloody wars that ended with the Dragon God facing an endless stream of lightning clouds descending from the heavens.

It looked like there were faint figures of celestial soldiers standing on the clouds. Yet, it also looked like it might just be a giant hand. The details were quite blurry. Perhaps it was because the artist hadn't gotten a clear look at the scene. It was obvious from the mural that the artist had been in a state of fear and confusion.

"Is this... a tribulation for a breakthrough in cultivation?" Monk Pushan guessed.

"It looks more like a battle where both sides fought till their last breath," Luo Yao said.

"What's this?" Chu Liang asked.

He noticed that there were several blurry little human figures in one of the bottom corners of the mural. Humans rarely appeared in these dragon murals, but it didn't seem like those people were simply bystanders.

Monk Pushan shook his head. He couldn't figure out what had happened in the scene depicted in the mural.

The trio moved on to the next mural. The Dragon God had disappeared, leaving a huge blank space in the middle of the picture. All that remained in the mural were True Dragons looking dejected as they soared into the sky. It was a scene of madness and chaos.

There was also a complicated character written on the mural. It seemed to be from the language of dragons.

"Dragon script went extinct a long time ago. I don't recognize this character," Monk Pushan said.

Chu Liang looked at it. It was expected that he wouldn't recognize it either. Yet, a stream of information rushed into his mind, allowing him to instantly understand the meaning that this character held.

It was very complicated and represented a sorrowful state of mind like that of a hero at the end of his road bellowing at the heavens.

Simply put, what it said was: There is no path to the heavens.

Chapter 238: This Humble One is Fine

These dragon murals were created in ancient times. The dragon script was cryptic and intricate, and the scenes depicted were complex. Although the three had encountered numerous such murals, they could only glean a vague understanding of the life of the Blue Dragon. There were still a lot of stories they couldn't figure out. So, as they kept looking, they just quickly glanced at them, like travelers passing by.

During this time, Chu Liang also diverted his attention to another matter.

With a portion of his divine sense sunk into the space within the White Pagoda, Chu Liang set about the task of refining almost one hundred Vampire Bat-Dragons he had killed. Given the unpredictable dangers ahead, it would be good if he could unbox any valuable items that could help.

After attaining the Golden Core Realm, Chu Liang's divine sense strengthened to the point in which he could effortlessly multitask. He could advance without a change of expression while refining the imprints within the White Pagoda.

The only issue was that he had always been used to refining the imprints in a very quiet and safe environment.

Now, as he rewarded himself with each step he took, it felt rather strange.

Inside the White Pagoda, the imprints of the Vampire Bat-Dragons had already been arranged in cages, patiently awaiting his inspection. With time pressing, Chu Liang approached the cages without hesitation.

Refine!

Boom!

A long-lost radiance flashed by, and a white light floated in front of Chu Liang.

It was a reddish-golden rhombus-shaped crystal, with flames flickering faintly within the crystal.

[Dragon-Blood Crystal: Formed through the condensation of dragon's blood essence, this crystal, when melted and infused into one's bloodstream, significantly boosts qi and vitality, accelerates blood formation, and intensifies bloodlust and battle intent. The effects last for two hours and do not accumulate with repeated use.]

Upon sensing this message in his mind, Chu Liang became clear of the use of this item.

This wasn't complicated. He could infuse a single crystal into his bloodstream and experience a holistic enhancement of his abilities. In the world of immortality cultivators, there were a few pills designed specifically to enhance combat abilities. These pills would occasionally come in handy, especially since the power gap between experts was almost negligible.

The enhancement of vitality was achieved by an increase in foundational qi and strength, which then allowed for a stronger outburst of power. The acceleration of blood formation was the same as the improvement in replenishment, which meant that injuries would recover at a quicker rate. The strengthening of bloodlust and battle intent sounded somewhat cryptic... But it likely meant the same as the strengthening of the mental state.

As for how strong the effect might be, he would only find out by giving it a try. Nevertheless, anything that could boost combat ability was welcome.

As Chu Liang continued advancing, he refined all the imprints.

He had been unboxing the rewards for a very long time. After around one hundred or so attempts, he finally completed the last refinement, and his arm felt a little sore.

He had accumulated a huge pile of Dragon-Blood Crystals and intended to melt one now to test its effects. There wasn't a fight at the moment, but whether there was a fight or not, it didn't matter because the effect was just a straightforward improvement. With such a large pile, he wasn't worried about wasting any.

It would be easier to determine its usage once he had tested its effects.

He withdrew his divine sense from the space within the White Pagoda. With a flip of his hand, he took out a Dragon-Blood Crystal. As his foundational qi swirled like a whirlwind, he melted and infused the crystal into his bloodstream.

Boom!

The effect was fiercer than he had anticipated.

In that brief moment, he felt as though a bomb had been hurled into his bloodstream, stirring up tumultuous waves. A massive wave of heat surged upward to his brain and downstream to his heart and he felt as though a formless ball of fire enveloped his body.

"Puff..." Chu Liang exhaled a breath of hot qi.

The effect of this crystal was so strong.

He couldn't even control his battle intent. The tremendous strength constrained within his body, which he couldn't fully exert, was driving him crazy. At that moment, he wished for an evil entity to leap out so he could punch it and kill it!

But his mind was still clear. He knew that this was a change brought about through the Dragon-Blood Crystal. He mustn't let this surge of heat wave take his rationality away. As he activated his foundational qi and suppressed the urge, attempting to return back to normal.

At this point, Monk Pushan sensed something amiss. He turned around and asked out of concern, "What's the matter with you?"

"This humble one[1] is fine!" Chu Liang roared.

Monk Pushan was so confused.

...

"Something's off with the circulation of my foundational qi. Just let me adjust my breathing for a bit," Chu Liang said as he quickly sat cross-legged on the spot, making adjustments to suppress the strong urge.

Monk Pushan and Luo Yao thought he was acting weird, but it wasn't the first time they had thought Chu Liang was odd. In fact, it had happened on numerous occasions.

When someone is consistently weird, and they continue to act strangely, you wouldn't find it unusual anymore.

While Chu Liang was adjusting his breathing, he sensed erratic movements within the White Pagoda.

The golden cocoon spun by the little silkworm earlier suddenly began vibrating anxiously, emitting a buzzing sound.

The cocoon was likely about to burst open.

Chu Liang muttered inwardly, "It's bad enough that the Crimson Executioner is vibrating inside, but now you're vibrating too. Are you both trying to deprive me of peace?"

He couldn't do anything, so he ignored the cocoon, allowing the little silkworm to break free from the cocoon inside the White Pagoda on its own.

After a moment, he stood up again, his gaze returning to calmness. "Sorry for the interruption. Shall we continue?"

The three then continued moving forward.

As they walked past this vast corridor, they stopped seeing any more murals. Instead, a spacious platform appeared ahead. At the forefront of the platform hung various types of heads. As many years had passed by, the spiritual energy in these skulls had long since dissipated. Yet, they were obviously once very powerful demonic beasts.

This should be the Blue Dragon's loot.

Among these arrayed skulls, there was a pathway ahead. However, the pathway was extremely narrow. Hanging in front of that pathway was a corpse.

This corpse differed from the other loot. It was dressed in an ancient-looking cloak that showed no signs of decay despite the passing of countless years, indicating its supreme quality. The figure had the head of a dragon but the body of a human, which was covered entirely in scales. A long golden-colored string was hanging from its neck.

It had died by suicide!

After countless years had passed, even those incredibly formidable beings from before had completely lost their spiritual energy. Yet, this corpse showed no signs of decay, appearing as if it was alive.

It was rather eerie.

Luo Yao said, "The corpse doesn't show any signs of decay. It must have been refined using Soul Techniques and sacrificed. Be careful."

Monk Pushan said, "With a dragon head and human body, it looks like a Jimeng in the legends."

Chu Liang said, "Its clothes doesn't show any sign of decay so that must be valuable..."

The three muttered to themselves. Suddenly, Luo Yao and Monk Pushan both turned their glances at Chu Liang.

Sensing the stares, Chu Liang hastily said, "I was just saying nonsense. Can you elaborate?"

Without wasting any words, Luo Yao immediately explained, "Considering the time depicted in the murals, the fall of the Blue Dragon happened countless years ago. Yet, this body shows no signs of decay. Even the Eminent Ones, who have reached the Dao Attainment Realm, cannot achieve this. Such preservation can only occur if the body was refined and sacrificed using Soul Techniques before death. The body can only remain undecayed if its conscious soul[2] remains within the same space as the body."

"The conscious soul is still here..." Chu Liang muttered with a frown.

Apart from them, is there truly someone else in this cold, empty, and silent palace? Are they being watched from somewhere?

Such thoughts sent a slight chill down his spine.

Luo Yao turned to Monk Pushan and inquired, "What do you think the identity of this person is?"

Monk Pushan responded, "During the prime of the dragon race, there were diverse types of dragon descendants, including the dragon-human hybrids. The main lineage among these dragon-human hybrids takes on the form of humans with dragon heads. They were considered the most intelligent lineage among all draconic descendants and had made significant contributions to the dragon race. The Dragon God bestowed upon this lineage the name Jimeng."

"It was during that time when the True Dragon would recruit draconic descendants as their attendants. To the draconic descendants, this was considered the utmost honor. During that era, Jimeng was the most favored type of attendants and would often serve beside the throne of every True Dragon."

Monk Pushan stared at the body and continued, "There is no doubt that this is a member of the Jimeng Clan and is most likely the Blue Dragon's servant."

"I see..." Chu Liang nodded. He then said, "But we have already made it here. We can't go back. Even if a Jimeng is currently guarding here in the form of a conscious soul, we have to continue advancing."

"Yes." Luo Yao agreed with Chu Liang, saying, "Let's go with the flow."

With this, the three gently bowed to the corpse of the dragon servant and went around it, stepping into the narrow passageway.

This time, there were no murals on either side of the wall. Instead, the walls were made of smooth, polished, glistening black jade material. As the passageway was very narrow, the three could only proceed single-file.

They continued advancing with the guys on both sides and the girl in the center.[3]

The passageway was eerily quiet, devoid of even the slightest sound of the wind. They could only hear the sound of their footsteps echoing in unison.

There were no abnormalities.

The passageway was very long and they walked for a very long time. It was such a long time that Chu Liang felt as though if he walked to the end of the pathway and looked up, he would see Mount Shu.

Nevertheless, the three remained patient.

Remaining calm and composed was a crucial trait, especially in times of danger lurking in the surroundings.

Suddenly!

Chu Liang noticed something wrong.

The walls on both sides were made of black jade, resembling blurry mirrors that faintly reflected their silhouettes... Even though they were blurry, the number of silhouettes could be easily counted.

But when he glanced sideways just now, he saw four distinct silhouettes on the wall to the right.

His heart skipped a beat.

He had no idea how long the shadow had been silently trailing behind them. Despite having spread out their divine senses, they hadn't sensed its presence at all, which showed how eerie the situation was.

The fourth shadow remained elusive to their divine senses, likely visible only to the naked eye.

But any attempt by Chu Liang to look back might alert the shadow. So, instead, he quickly glanced to the left and counted.

Yet, there were only three silhouettes reflected on the left.

Eh? What's going on?

Chapter 239: It Said Yes

But was it three or four? Chu Liang had no idea.

Chu Liang couldn't glance to the right again. For some existences, constant gazes might still alert them.

He had a million thoughts running through his mind.

Suddenly, everything changed. It had only been a moment since he noticed the eerie shadow, yet he had already made up his mind.

He abruptly shouted, "Be careful!"

As he spoke, he released a burst of green light!

Whoosh!

Razor Leaf!

For stealth attacks, the Razor Leaf was always Chu Liang's first choice. Although he raised his hand and was throwing forward, the green light flashed and struck the wall behind Monk Pushan.

The trajectory of the Razor Leaf was completely unpredictable.

Even ghosts couldn't predict the trajectory, let alone humans.

Swish!

As the green curved saber embedded itself in the wall behind the fourth black shadow, a crisp sound, like the tearing of silk fabric, resonated.

This was the result Chu Liang had expected. When the black shadow appeared on the left but not on the right, it suggested that it wasn't a reflection. It was on the wall!

"Ahhhhhhh—" A furious scream erupted from the wall, indicating it had been hurt. Then, the black shadow vanished into the wall.

By then, Luo Yao and Monk Pushan naturally noticed the dark silhouette as well.

However, they weren't weaklings.

In an instant turn of events, Monk Pushan, being the one closest to the scene, swiftly reacted to the unexpected change, unleashing a devastatingly powerful attack.

With a flick of his wrist, he thrust his palm forward, conjuring a three-chi tall white jade palm print that slammed into the black wall with tremendous force, shattering it into countless pieces.

Yet, Monk Pushan's strike missed its mark. The dark silhouette had vanished without a trace.

Where they weren't noticing, an eerie shadow of a dragon's head and body materialized beneath Luo Yao's feet, seemingly lying flat on the ground.

The shadow, dressed in the ancient-style cloak, had the head of a dragon and body of a human. It looked identical to the corpse of that dragon servant!

As its body materialized, it suddenly stretched out its hand and grabbed Luo Yao by the ankle, clearly about to drag her underground!

Bam!

However, as it grabbed Luo Yao, another hand swiftly caught it.

It turned out that Luo Yao had opened her red paper umbrella.

Of the three present, Luo Yao was the most skilled at controlling ghosts, and she was the only one who had sensed this ghost's movements.

This was her area of expertise.

Luo Yao had already predicted its movement and decided to use herself as bait to lure it into action. Simultaneously, she opened her red umbrella.

The entire space was instantly filled with a killing and bloodlusting aura.

"Heh..." An icy cold sneer sounds.

The small ghost child bent down and grabbed the wrist of the ghost dragon servant with his small hand, while the corner of his mouth curved into a sneer.

The ghost dragon servant seemed to have felt fear as it flashed and attempted to disappear again.

Nevertheless, the ghost kid stood up and pulled with all his might!

Bang!

He forcefully dragged the ghost dragon servant out from the floor.

Chu Liang felt his eyebrows quiver.

He had seen this ghost kid before and knew this kid was fierce. However, he hadn't seen this kid for a while. It was only now that he realized that this kid had grown fiercer. This caught him off guard.

The ghost dragon servant had remained here for a long time. It was ancient and powerful. Yet, in the grasp of the ghost kid, it seemed like nothing more than a toy!

The ghost kid seized the ghost dragon servant with both hands and seemed to be ready to tear it apart!

"Don't kill it yet!" Chu Liang suddenly shouted.

"Stop!" Luo Yao immediately shouted.

As the shout echoed through the air, the ghost kid's arms froze in mid-action. His smile vanished, replaced by a look of unhappiness. Nevertheless, he obediently turned toward Luo Yao, awaiting her next instruction.

Chu Liang had asked the ghost kid to stop as he sensed that the ghost dragon servant wasn't emanating very strong hostility.

Even before Chu Liang initiated any attack on the ghost dragon servant, it had been following them for some time without making any hostile moves.

As Chu Liang stared at the ghost dragon servant held by the short ghost kid, he inquired, "Are you the guard stationed here?"

The dragon spirit glanced at him, its eyes betraying a mix of emotions. After a moment, it let out a soft roar, "Raaar..."

The ghost dragon servant emitted low, rumbling dragon chants.

Sometimes, a single sound would contain vast amounts of information. Chu Liang was the only one who could decipher this sound and the translation of the roar automatically appeared in his mind.

"He says... he is a ghost dragon servant serving under the Blue Dragon and volunteered to be sacrificed and have his soul be refined so that he can remain here forever as a conscious soul^[1] to guard the Blue Dragon's Orb. He warns that any non-draconic descendants entering this place would face death for sure," Chu Liang translated the information for everyone.

"Oh, it's the Living Sacrifice Ritual," Luo Yao immediately said.

This was an evil sacrificial ritual practiced during ancient times, often occurring in certain tombs.

If the ghost dragon servant wanted to guard the Blue Dragon's tomb, he would only be able to do so for a few centuries until the end of his lifespan. However, by sacrificing himself using this Living Sacrifice Ritual, his soul would retain its intelligence and perpetually guard this location.

In the great tombs during ancient times, the position of tomb guardian would be passed down, and occasionally, this type of Living Sacrifice Ritual would take place.

Chu Liang then asked again, "Then can I enter?"

"Roarr..." The ghost dragon servant emitted low, rumbling roars again.

The message rang out in Chu Liang's mind.

—Since you possess the bloodline of a True Dragon, you are naturally permitted to enter. Inside lies the location where our Lord, the Blue Dragon, stores its Dragon Orb. Our Lord, the Blue Dragon,

wishes to bestow this orb upon a new draconic descendant to revive the glory of the dragon race. If you inherit the Dragon Orb belonging to our esteemed Blue Dragon, you must heed its final instruction... Dragons must never approach the sacred burial ground!

Chu Liang pondered in silence for a while.

The Dragon Orb served as the source of power for a True Dragon, often considered the greatest treasure they could leave behind after their death. Typically, True Dragons would choose to pass down the Dragon Orb to their descendants or kin, thereby preserving their power and legacy.

It was still a mystery how the Blue Dragon met its demise without even having the chance to pass on its orb.

Regarding the Blue Dragon's final request, Chu Liang was left feeling confused.

What is the sacred burial ground? Could this be the Divine Ruins from the legends? Chu Liang pondered. What kind of power resides there that even beings like the Blue Dragon would fear?

When Monk Pushan noticed Chu Liang lost in silent contemplation, he asked out of curiosity, "What did this lengthy chant convey?"

Chu Liang replied simply, "It said yes."

...

Monk Pushan's thoughts wandered as he pondered the implications. Could it be that in the language of the dragon race, the more they speak, the less they truly convey?

He pondered further. Does this imply that I am considered taciturn among the dragon race?

After Chu Liang dismissed him with just one word, Luo Yao released the dragon servant ghost, and the three continued their journey.

As they continued walking, Chu Liang sensed something amiss again.

He sensed some strange movements in the White Pagoda.

As he immersed a portion of his divine sense into the White Pagoda, he was immediately greeted by a fluttering golden light within the space.

Remnants of the golden cocoon lay scattered across the floor, a clear indication that the little silkworm had indeed emerged from its cocoon.

As the golden light in the air swiftly caught sight of him, it immediately flew towards him, exuding a sense of familiarity and intimacy.

Chu Liang stretched his hand out and a golden butterfly landed on his palm.

Upon closer inspection, Chu Liang realized that this butterfly looked markedly different from ordinary ones. Its entire body was adorned with intricate patterns, and the soft, chubby appearance hinted at remnants of its initial maggot form. Its body now emitted a soft platinum radiance, complemented by a pair of large golden wings.

It actually emerged from the cocoon as a butterfly!

The golden butterfly appeared very anxious, continuously swirling atop Chu Liang's palm in an attempt to convey its emotions.

It wanted to get out.

Chu Liang recalled the golden butterfly's ability to hunt for treasure and wondered if it had sensed the presence of some hidden treasure.

He wanted to keep the golden butterfly there, but he noticed it becoming increasingly agitated, flying up and down as if it might tear the house apart if it remained in the White Pagoda. Given its destructive potential, there was a high chance it would damage his belongings.

Everything stored in the White Pagoda was very much cherished by Chu Liang, especially the two Large-Headed Dolls who practiced dual cultivation every night. He absolutely couldn't bear any mishaps happening to these dolls.

And so, with a flick of his wrist, Chu Liang took out the butterfly.

A burst of golden light flew from Chu Liang's palm, catching Monk Pushan's attention. He quickly inquired, "What's that?"

"It's my spirit pet," replied Chu Liang. "It can hunt for treasure and will lead us to it." He paused for a moment before adding, "Follow closely."

If we don't stick close, the treasure it finds might end up not being ours.

As they followed the streak of golden light, they sped along until they abruptly found themselves entering another vast open space.

The space was incredibly vast, with a pitch-black dome stretching endlessly overhead. Directly ahead stood towering and massive coiling dragon pillars.

This architectural style was greatly favored by dragons. For beings of immense dragon-like form, these coiling pillars served as their thrones.

This should be the main hall of the Blue Dragon.

With a quick glance, they watched as the golden light flew unhesitatingly towards the top of the coiling dragon pillar, and Chu Liang swiftly followed suit.

As they continued flying to the very top of the coiling dragon pillar, they discovered a waist-height stone platform. On the platform, there was a square stone box adorned with carvings of the Blue Dragon.

Is the Dragon Orb hidden here?

Chu Liang examined the stone box from all angles and realized that there were no openings. There was simply no way for him to open it.. When he attempted to lift the stone box and take it away, he realized it was firmly lodged into the coiling dragon pillar beneath. A powerful force bound them together, making it impossible to separate them.

How do I even remove this?

After the golden butterfly flew up the coiling dragon pillar, it disappeared.

Is this stone box not its target? Chu Liang wondered.

As Chu Liang puzzled over the situation, shouts echoed from the entrance of the main hall. Faintly, he heard the cries of the dragon servant ghost.

Panic immediately gripped the three of them.

"The people from the diabolical sects are here!"

Chapter 240: Mine Isn't That Round

Shit, Chu Liang cursed inwardly.

If everything's as it should be, that means the legendary Blue Dragon's Orb[1] is in this small stone box. But I don't know how to open it. That ghost dragon servant's to blame. It could have conveyed a lot of information with just one roar, but it kept rambling about some nonsense...

Why didn't it just tell me how to open this box?!

And now, it's impossible for me to go back and ask that. I don't even know if it's still alive. Enchantress Liu and Master Mu don't have the aura of a True Dragon, so the ghost dragon servant will try to stop them. However, they won't be as merciful as me.

What are we going to do?

If those two monsters charge in here, the three of us definitely won't be a match for them. But we can't take the stone box. The Coiling-Dragon Pillar is ridiculously enormous; it's impossible to uproot it.

I can't think of any solutions right now.

Will we end up having to cup our hands together submissively and yield to them?

The greatest treasure of the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm is right in front of me. I'll be in for a world of hurt if I can't take it with me.

Seeing Chu Liang lost in his thoughts, Monk Pushan called out urgently, "Chu Liang! Move!"

Chu Liang's heart ached at the thought of leaving the treasure behind. Nevertheless, he turned around without the slightest hesitation and flew toward the exit at the other end.

Humans often desired the unattainable, much like a snake trying to swallow an elephant. So, it was natural for Chu Liang to covet treasures. If he couldn't obtain them, it just meant it wasn't in his destiny to do so.

Monk Pushan and Luo Yao, on the other hand, had no idea that the stone box contained a Dragon Orb. They just thought it was some strange box. Nonetheless, even if they knew it contained treasure, they wouldn't think much of it.

The trio flew out swiftly, escaping through the exit on the other end of the large hall.

Ahead of them was another extremely long and narrow passageway. The trio flew for a long time without hearing any sounds behind them.

Chu Liang knew that the two monsters might get delayed by the stone box. After all, they'd opened the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm to search for the treasures that lay within it. Their target might very well have been the Dragon Orb to begin with, so they wouldn't just pass by the stone box.

This was good news for the trio though. It meant that the two monsters wouldn't be in such a rush to chase after them, allowing them to avoid the two monsters easily.

The Blue Dragon's Secret Realm was so vast; just how long did they have to stay in hiding for?

However, if the two monsters were to get their hands on the Dragon Orb, it might give them control over the entire hidden realm. In that case, they might not even need to search for the trio; they would be able to sense the trio's presence and catch them straight away.

The trio would truly be doomed then, with no path to the heavens and no door into the earth[2].

Chu Liang was deeply worried about that. Then he saw a patch of daylight shining in from overhead. There was a massive gaping hole in the ceiling of the passageway, a split in the sealed skeleton.

The trio flew out and looked down at the skeleton. It turned out that the evil dragon had been split in two at the waist. This was probably the site of the fatal wound that led to its death.

Despite having traveled for so long, the trio had only traversed through half of the evil dragon's corpse. It was easy to imagine how enormous the evil dragon had been during its lifetime.

The trio left the memorial. Their current location was far from where they had encountered the Vampire Bat-Dragons. Moreover, without the Enchantress Liu and Master Mu on their heels, the trio could take the time to cautiously explore the area without attracting the attention of the draconic demonic beasts in their surroundings.

Just as the trio entered the jungle, Chu Liang suddenly gasped inwardly.

Did I forget something?

What happened to that little golden butterfly that just emerged from its cocoon?

...

"What's this?" Enchantress Liu asked.

She stood gracefully on the Coiling-Dragon Pillar, tucking her hair back with a look of anticipation.

Master Mu's gaze was fully focused on the stone box as he caressed it very great affectionately with both hands.

He answered casually, "This is an enchanted tool with a locking mechanism that the ancient dragons made. The enchanted formations engraved on it are simple, but Heavenly Law is concealed within them. Their workmanship is vastly superior to those of mortals."

Enchantress Liu asked another question. "Will the Blue Dragon's Orb be inside?"

Master Mu sounded even more nonchalant as he replied, "We'll know once we open the box."

"Once we have the Blue Dragon's Orb, we'll have command over the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm. The countless draconic descendants and treasures of nature will be ours. Then we can choose a secluded place for cultivation."

"We?" Master Mu turned and shot her a glance. "Didn't we agree on a sixty-forty split between you and me? Don't worry. I won't take more than what we agreed on. Your sect, the Dark King Sect, is too powerful. I do not dare to take more than what's my share."

"Oh..." Enchantress Liu uttered as she leaned over to Master Mu, pressing her body against his. She placed her hand gently on the stone box and whispered in Master Mu's ear, "I'll give all of this to you... I'll give myself to you too. How about that?"

"You're blocking my view," Master Mu said, thoughtlessly pushing Enchantress Liu's hand away.

Enchantress Liu frowned, feeling a little angry. "You—"

"I know about your romantic affairs. You've had over twenty lovers from diabolical sects, but they're all dead now." Master Mu injected his foundational qi into the stone box, slowly probing it. "You said you'll give all of this to me, what you really meant is that you want to take all of it for yourself."

"I didn't kill them!" Enchantress Liu exclaimed, her eyes widening in shock. She froze for a moment before adding, "Well, not all of them."

Enchantress Liu added inwardly, The Southern-Route Guider's death wasn't my doing.

"Regardless, you're as vicious as snakes and scorpions. There's no way I would dare to touch you. This time, you used my skills to open it, and I used your key to enter the hidden realm. Let's call it a fair trade. I just hope you'll keep your promise."

"Hmph," Enchantress Liu snorted coldly.

Seeing how Master Mu was so engrossed in studying the enchanted formation inscriptions on the stone box, Enchantress Liu reckoned that he wouldn't even notice if someone snuck up and attacked him from behind. She really wanted to try doing that.

Nevertheless, since the box hadn't been opened yet, she still needed this man's skills.

After a while, Enchantress Liu asked impatiently, "Can you open it or not?"

"I can," Master Mu answered confidently.

Enchantress Liu pursed her lips, keeping mum. After all, she had never met a man who said he couldn't do something. Nonetheless, the truth would eventually reveal itself.

Master Mu seemed to be an exception though. After a while, he started circulating his qi at a maddening pace, and green steam rose from the bones in his limbs!

With great effort, he managed to unravel the enchanted formations. Without unraveling the enchanted formations first, it was likely that even a seventh-realm Eminent One wouldn't be able to open this stone box with brute force.

A moment later, white light shone out from the stone box!

A breath that seemed to have been sealed for tens of thousands of years, going as far back as the ancient primordial times, escaped from the stone box. The box had opened a crack!

"Open!" Master Mu shouted and pried the box open with his hands!

Harsh bright light burst out of the box, but the two monsters didn't even let themselves blink. They looked inside the box with intense excitement.

Even to diabolical cultivators of their caliber, the hidden realm of an ancient True Dragon was an incredible place. And now, they were about to possess that realm. How could they not be excited? How could they not be overjoyed?!

When the light finally dissipated, they saw that inside the stone box was a round... black hole.

They were stunned.

After a long silence, Enchantress Liu reached inside the box and felt around, concluding that the box was indeed empty.

She looked at Master Mu. "What's going on?"

Enchantress Liu's initial reaction was to suspect that this guy had done something sneaky while he was opening the stone box!

However, Master Mu was just as surprised. He probed the hole with his divine sense, checking it more deeply than Enchantress Liu had done. Master Mu swiftly reached a conclusion as to what had happened.

He explained, "Someone made a hole that starts at the bottom end of the stone pillar and extends all the way up here. They took the content of the box and left... How did they do that?"

Master Mu was even more astonished than Enchantress Liu. He was well aware that the Coiling-Dragon Pillar had been made with an extremely solid material.

Just how incredible was this person's cultivation prowess that they managed to dig their way through the pillar?

...

What about the little golden butterfly?

Just as Chu Liang had that thought, a beam of dazzling golden light approached him from behind.

It turned out that the little golden butterfly had been following right behind Chu Liang all along.

But...

Chu Liang looked at the little golden butterfly and thought that there was something really strange about it.

The little golden butterfly looked bloated, its belly bulging because of the round object inside. Its originally fleshy white body had distended so much that it was now reduced to just a thin membrane wrapped around the object. The little golden butterfly looked just like a snake that had swallowed an elephant.

The spherical object inside its belly flashed constantly. With that luminous golden light shining through the little golden butterfly's thin white membrane, the little golden butterfly looked like a large firefly as it flew over to Chu Liang.

"Is that your spirit pet?" Monk Pushan asked.

"Mm..." Chu Liang uttered hesitantly.

I really want to say that my spirit pet isn't that round.

This glutton.

If I'm not mistaken, it seems to have swallowed the Blue Dragon's Orb.

How on earth did it manage to do that?!