

M. Slaying 551

Chapter 551: Collision of Heaven and Earth

"What's with this..."

Murmurs of dissatisfaction started sounding from the audience seats on the Emperor's Mound and at the foot of the hill.

The grumbling began as the Divine Mirror of the Eight Trigrams' light screen continued to show only the South Melody Conservatory team. It started with Xue Lingxue playing the guqin, then Yu Xiang'er on the flute, Shen Qingyan with her own flute performance, and now Tie Chui beating the drums...

The crowd couldn't take it anymore.

What is this all about?

Although the fans of the South Melody Conservatory were happy to see this, most of the audience had come to watch the exciting and intense fights at the Competition of the Hundred Sects. If they liked seeing this, they could have attended the tour set up by the South Melody Conservatory instead.

Since the Black Devil Whale appeared in the illusory realm, many teams had lost their grasp on what was truly happening and had been acting strangely. However, if the audience had seen these scenes, it would inevitably cause chaos.

This was why Immortal Jiuyi had instructed the South Melody Conservatory team to perform, keeping the screen focused solely on them.

The audience had no idea of the earth-shattering changes happening elsewhere.

At the heart of the swirling vortex loomed the massive Black Devil Whale, suspended ominously in the sky. Many teams dared not approach, yet all kept a close watch on its every move.

Everyone was busy speculating. Had a new mechanism been introduced in this year's Assembly of Immortal Sects? Or had they added wild monsters to the map?

But isn't it a bit too powerful?

Who would even dare fight it?

Monk Pushan, who was right beneath the Black Devil Whale also had the same question. As he was very near, he could feel the immense pressure radiating from the colossal creature with startling clarity.

As Immortal Yuan Lu disappeared into its massive mouth, the Black Devil Whale turned slowly, seemingly preparing to dive into the sea.

Chu Liang immediately recalled the legends he'd heard about the Black Devil Whale. If this colossal beast returned to the sea, dealing with it would become even more troublesome.

Immortal Yuan Lu would then likely be able to fight for control of the Divine Mirror of the Eight Trigrams undisturbed within the creature's belly.

With that thought, he no longer hesitated and declared, "Whether it works or not, we have to try. We can't just sit back and do nothing."

In truth, if Fog-Hidden Mountain of Immortals lost the Divine Mirror of the Eight Trigrams, it might actually benefit the Mount Shu Sect. Among the sects in the Divine Nine, they wouldn't be the only ones without a legendary artifact, and much of the burden wouldn't rest solely on the Mount Shu Sect.

But if the West Sea Diabolical Forces obtained the legendary artifact, it would be a terrible catastrophe for the righteous world.

Whoosh—

Chu Liang suddenly took off on his sword, creating some distance between himself and the others.

Monk Pushan was momentarily stunned by this move. How can he say "whether it works or not, we have to try," and then turn around and run? Is he messing with me?

However, because he trusted Chu Liang, he decided to just wait and see.

Sure enough, after Chu Liang flew some distances away, he suddenly summoned an airship... one with colors beyond description.

The overly modern design made both Pushan and Enchantress Yi frown.

But in the next instant, an immensely terrifying power erupted from the airship.

Previously, Wen Yulong had informed Chu Liang that a collision with this airship could pose a significant threat to seventh-realm demonic beasts. Of course, this would only be effective against massive demonic beasts, as people would simply move out of the way.

Even sixth-realm cultivators would try their best to dodge if an airship was barreling toward them, not to mention seventh-realm Eminent Ones. Thus, this wasn't the most effective method for attacking human cultivators.

But demonic beasts, with their massive size, were easier targets.

It was similar to how Chu Liang could slay the Taowu with the Violet and Azure Twin Swords, yet he might not have been able to do the same to seventh-realm Eminent Ones who, despite their great power, could not kill the Taowu.

Demonic beasts gained advantages from their large size, but naturally, there were many downsides as well.

For example, right now.

The enormous Black Devil Whale attempted to dive into the sea, but just as it turned its head, the airship Lianglong had already begun a relentless charge from afar.

Boom—

The entire airship suddenly ignited in a blazing inferno, and a pike made of the finest black gold rose from its tip, moving so quickly it became a blur in an instant.

Inside the cabin, Chu Liang lost his balance momentarily, struggling against the force that threatened to throw him back.

However, he wasn't afraid. After the last incident, Dong Futu had advised Wen Yulong to make a small modification that would make the airship safer.

Bang—

Just as they were about to collide with the massive beast, a tremendous force surged up from beneath his feet, launching Chu Liang out of the airship!

That's right—this "safety" feature was designed solely to ensure the pilot's survival.

The airship's vast reserves of Spiritual Qi Jade Talisman burned out in an instant, adding even more momentum to intensify the force of the collision.

Boom, boom, boom—

The airship itself wasn't small, but compared to the Black Devil Whale, it was like a mere toy. Yet, in the blink of an eye, the two collided.

The "little toy" plunged deep into the body of the Black Devil Whale.

Immediately, a bright light burst from the hole left by the airship's collision with the Black Devil Whale.

This was one of Dong Futu's "small" modifications.

He had argued that simply ramming wouldn't be powerful enough. Since it had come down to the final step, why not just blow it up?

By crushing the medallion while the airship was on the third tier, the final self-destruction mode would be initiated.

It would become a self-destructing airship.

The explosion of this airship was equivalent to the destruction of the entire wealth of a mid-tier immortal sect. It was a huge loss for Chu Liang as well.

要不是在虚境之中，他肯定是会犹豫的。 If they hadn't been in the illusory realm, he would have definitely hesitated before making such a costly move.

The explosion from the enchanted formation that Dong Futu added was so powerful that even Chu Liang, who had just been ejected from the cabin, couldn't escape the impact of the shockwave. Just a minor ripple from the blast flung him high into the sky, where he became a tiny, distant figure against the vast horizon, like a speck of starlight in the night.

The Black Devil Whale's carcass crashed heavily to the ground. Although it appeared mostly intact, a massive hole gaped in its side, with muffled explosions still rumbling from within.

Its insides were blown to pieces.

Rumble, rumble, rumble—

At that moment, Immortal Jiuyi's words finally reached his ears.

Immortal Jiuyi wanted to order everyone to stop the fight temporarily and attack the diabolical cultivators invading the illusory realm. It was undoubtedly a difficult decision, so he spoke slowly.

He had only managed to say half a sentence when he witnessed this shocking scene unfold before him.

Chu Liang of the Mount Shu Sect?

Despite being only a fifth-realm disciple, he had managed to kill a vicious seventh-realm beast using a heavily enhanced airship.

It was simply beyond belief.

If one had to explain how this happened, perhaps it was the sheer power of wealth?

It was like witnessing a collision of heaven and earth.

Not only did it kill the Black Devil Whale, but it also seemed that Immortal Yuan Lu inside had suffered severe injuries. It was unknown as to whether he survived, but it was clear he had lost the ability to awaken the spirit in the Diabolical Divine Mirror.

Immortal Jiuyi felt the pressure ease considerably and he started focusing on breaking through the barrier that was blocking his power from entering the realm.

As for the other disciples in the illusory realm, he simply followed up with one more sentence.

"To all disciples participating in the Competition of the Hundred Sects..." He paused briefly, then slowly added, "Good morning."

...

This sudden twist left everyone dumbfounded. He alerted everyone only to say those two words?

He's saying good morning at this hour?

Huh?

Of course, most people were oblivious to the earth-shattering events happening elsewhere; they had only seen the black whale rise and fall, unaware of what had actually happened.

In actuality, they did not care at all. The teams remained focused on their own victories and losses, their attention locked on the competition at hand.

The teams from Mount Shu Sect and Buddhist Cloud Monastery had been trailing behind Chu Liang and Pushan, keeping a safe distance. However, when Chu Liang attempted to contact them before crashing into the Black Devil Whale, they didn't respond.

This was because the team had encountered trouble of their own.

Though, in this case, the trouble came in the form of a single person.

Jiang Yuebai, Xu Ziyang, Ling Ao, and three young monks from the Buddhist Cloud Monastery were following Chu Liang when a figure suddenly descended in their path.

The person wore brocade robes with a jade belt, his hair flowing in the wind. He stood with a graceful posture and an indifferent expression.

With sparkling eyes, he glanced around and said slowly, "My target is the team from the Mount Shu Sect. The people from the Buddhist Cloud Monastery may leave."

"Yang Shenlong..." Jiang Yuebai stepped forward.

The person was none other than Yang Shenlong, the head disciple of Penglai.

He stood alone before the combined forces of the two teams.

"Young Hero Yang, you're underestimating Buddhist Cloud Monastery." Pucheng stepped forward as well. "We've allied with the Mount Shu Sect. If you strike against them, we won't stand idly by."

Yang Shenlong glanced at him again, his tone calm and breezy. "Don't misunderstand. I'm not afraid of you helping the Mount Shu Sect in a fight against me. I've simply gathered enough soul crystals, so there's no need for me to end you all here."

His words sounded gentle, but on closer inspection, they carried a strong air of disdain, causing Pucheng to furrow his brows deeply.

Jiang Yuebai whispered, "Master Pucheng, since we're his only target, there's really no need for you to intervene."

"Miss Jiang, there's no need to say that," Pucheng replied, shaking his head. "Since we've formed an alliance and pledged to advance and retreat together, how could we back down first? Even if the Penglai Supreme Sect is strong, they can't ignore the strength of my senior brothers and me."

Hah—

As he spoke, the three monks of Buddhist Cloud Monastery had already taken their stances, hands clasped in prayer, with their qi flames surging, exuding the might of Vajra Arhats!

"Alright then." Jiang Yuebai said no more.

When she turned her gaze back to Yang Shenlong, his expression remained calm, as he quietly observed them discussing their plan.

Only when all six of them had assumed their stances to face him did Yang Shenlong ask with a slight nod, "Ready?"

With that, he took a step forward.

Boom.

The ground erupted with roaring wind and rumbling thunder, as though a dragon and tiger were soaring into the sky!

Chapter 552: Worry Not, Ah Feng

"What happened?" the Imperial Supervisory Commissioner asked as he approached.

When the screen was showing the team of the South Melody Conservatory for too long, the members of the immortal sects watching the competition naturally sensed that something was off. They realized that there might be trouble within the illusory realm.

Immortal Jiuyi opened his eyes and smiled. "Everything is fine now."

Just moments ago, Immortal Yuan Lu had infiltrated the illusory realm, and someone had created a barrier between reality and illusion, blocking any outside power from entering. They had tried to take control of the Divine Mirror of the Eight Trigrams. It was a truly dangerous situation.

Unexpectedly, before Immortal Jiuyi could break through the barrier, someone inside the illusory realm had already solved the crisis.

Now, with his power restored in the illusory realm, Immortal Jiuyi had effortlessly erased all traces left by Immortal Yuan Lu. If he was not busy now, he would have taken the Divine Mirror of the Eight Trigrams along the boundary between reality and illusion to hunt down anyone daring enough to covet the legendary artifact of the Fog-Hidden Mountain of Immortals.

And all of this was thanks to that disciple from the Mount Shu Sect...

Immortal Jiuyi made a mental note of Chu Liang's name. Though this matter shouldn't be publicized, he needed to deny the fact that there was this debt of gratitude.

Yet, the incident could only have been caused by someone with profound mastery of the Great Dao of Reality and Illusion. Immortal Yuan Lu could never have managed it alone.

Immortal Jiuyi couldn't help but frown slightly as he wondered who had helped Immortal Yuan Lu. If this matter remained unresolved, they would have to prohibit any outsiders from entering the Divine Mirror of the Eight Trigrams.

This would mean that, for all future Assemblies of Immortal Sects, such unrestricted battles would no longer be possible as the disciples could no longer fight in the illusory realm created by the Divine Mirror.

Most people were already growing dissatisfied with the prolonged musical performances, though some die-hard fans of the South Melody Conservatory were thoroughly enjoying every moment.

For example, a certain Mount Shu Sect disciple with thick brows and big eyes.

"Qingyan! Qingyan! She is beautiful and has a sweet voice![1]" Lin Bei cheered.

"How can you be so relaxed?" Shang Ziliang asked. "Didn't you place a bet?"

"Of course I did," Lin Bei replied. "Chu Liang gave me his spare money to bet with, so I naturally put in some of my own."

"Aren't you worried they might not make it to the next round?" Shang Ziliang asked, full of concern.

He had also bet his entire fortune on the Mount Shu Sect, and though he had confidence in their team, he couldn't shake the anxiety as the competition unfolded.

"With Chu Liang present, what is there to worry about? Just wait until the competition ends—it'll be another victory," Lin Bei said, his expression conveying an inexplicable confidence in Chu Liang.

Although Shang Ziliang also had faith in Chu Liang, he couldn't help but feel a bit of regret when he thought about his entire fortune.

He absolutely couldn't make such a foolish move again in the future.

A small bet might only harm the body, but a big one could cost one's life.

Turning his head, he saw that Lackey A's face had turned green—clearly frozen with anxiety.

"You bet everything too?" Shang Ziliang asked.

"I bet a full fifty Vermillion-Bird coins," Lackey A replied through gritted teeth.

Shang Ziliang rolled his eyes. "Then why are you so nervous..."

"I heard the river outside the capital of Yu is really cold this season..." Lackey A muttered.

"Losing fifty isn't worth jumping in a river for!" Shang Ziliang snapped.

"It's just... pity for my never-before-seen wife and my unborn child..." Lackey A lamented.

"Which means there's no one to pity at all!" Shang Ziliang sighed, rubbing his forehead.

"Relax," Lin Bei said. "How much do your life savings even amount to? Compared to Chu Liang, it's nothing. If he's confident, what are you so worried about?"

Hearing this, Shang Ziliang nodded. "True enough."

Lackey A added, "Anyway, all my money was earned with Big Bro; even if I lose it all with him, it's no big deal."

"Can the guy who only bet fifty just stay quiet!" Shang Ziliang yelled.

Meanwhile, Di Nufeng watched with delight.

"Oh my, these little sisters are so beautiful," she said with an infatuated look. "The more I watch, the more I wanna eat them up! Yum!"

"Ah Feng, control yourself a bit," the elderly Sun and Huang said, shivering beside her.

"But why have we been watching the South Melody Conservatory team for such a long time?" Scholar Sun pondered. "Something must have happened in the illusory realm."

"It probably isn't anything major; otherwise, Immortal Jiuyi would have taken action," Elder Huang speculated.

Di Nufeng replied, "I just hope it doesn't affect the Mount Shu Sect."

"Don't worry, Ah Feng," Elder Huang seized the moment to flatter her. "Jiangjiang will surely lead Mount Shu to great success."

Just as he finished speaking, a sudden uproar erupted from the crowd!

...

The scene suddenly changed to Yang Shenlong, who was now fighting alone against the teams from the Mount Shu Sect and Buddhist Cloud Monastery. After such a long period of calm, the abrupt switch to this intense scene left the audience feeling a bit unprepared.

They saw a figure with a blazing and fierce silhouette flash by, leaving an afterimage before Yang Shenlong.

With a roar like thunder, he slammed his fist toward Yang Shenlong!

It was none other than Ling Ao from Mount Shu Sect!

After months of special training, Ling Ao's cultivation level remained at the peak of the fourth realm. However, even without a breakthrough, his physical strength had significantly improved. With this strike, he exuded the faint power of a True Dragon.

Yang Shenlong responded with a sudden gleam in his eyes. A spark of divine fire lit up in his pupils and his irises turned a brilliant gold.

"Roar—"

An apparition of the coiled Azure Dragon appeared behind him. As the dragon's authority was unleashed, Ling Ao's fierce flames instantly weakened.

This was the breath of a True Dragon!

As Yang Shenlong lifted his left hand, three azure scales could be seen beneath his wrist.

Yang Shenlong had inherited the legacy of the Azure Dragon and cultivated it to the third realm. With the power of the True Dragon now revealed, Ling Ao's dragon-blood physique became significantly weaker.

Bang—

Yang Shenlong extended his palm and caught Ling Ao's powerful punch mid-charge, his stance as immovable as a rock. Then, a green light emanated from his palm, causing Ling Ao to shrink under his grip, reducing him to the size of an insect in moments.

With a forceful press, he slammed down.

Boom.

With a resounding blast, Ling Ao turned into a soul crystal.

Yang Shenlong had used the Immortal art, World Within One's Sleeve.

This was a technique of the Great Dao of the World, capable of compressing the enemy along with the surrounding space, capturing them completely. Yang Shenlong was truly wielding the world in his palm.

In an instant, he had eliminated one person, and the situation on the field had dramatically shifted.

Ling Ao had not charged forward blindly; he was trying to buy time for the others. He just hadn't expected to die immediately after making his move.

As his body dissipated, the three monks from Buddhist Cloud Monastery appeared behind Yang Shenlong, while the two from the Mount Shu Sect flanked him on either side.

With a clang of swords, Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai drew their blades and struck simultaneously.

Before Chu Liang appeared out of nowhere, these two had been regarded as the two pillars of the Mount Shu Sect and the standout disciples of the younger generation.

With Jiang Yuebai and Chu Liang stealing the spotlight lately, Xu Ziyang had taken a step back. However, he hadn't slacked off; instead, he harbored a quiet determination, dedicating himself to intense cultivation.

Now, his qi surged skyward, sword qi swirling around him with the roar of a dragon, showcasing the full extent of his cultivation power.

It was the fourth level of the fifth realm!

At the Mount Shu Summit, he had only reached the first level of the fifth realm, which had already amazed everyone. Now, in just over half a year, he had advanced three levels?

Those who had witnessed his performance at the Mount Shu Summit were shocked.

Though resources were crucial in the fifth realm, even with abundant supplies, one needed to fully comprehend their arts to make progress in cultivation. How had he managed to break through so quickly?

As Wang Xuanling watched from the sidelines, he felt a deep sense of comfort as he realized it was finally time for his disciple to showcase his prowess to the world.

Wang Xuanling had witnessed every step of Xu Ziyang's journey.

In fact, by the time of the Mount Shu Summit, Xu Ziyang had already attained the fifth realm for some time, and shortly after losing to Chu Liang, he advanced to the second level of the fifth realm.

But he didn't rest or indulge himself. He paused all non-essential tasks to focus entirely on cultivation, reaching the third level before the special training even started.

After these months of special training, he had advanced to the fourth level while he was in the palace at Emperor's Mound.

As he was born a prodigy, his cultivation had always been the pride of the Mount Shu Sect. Prior to losing to Chu Liang at the Mount Shu Summit, he had never tasted defeat before. Some might have been crushed by this sudden defeat, but not Xu Ziyang.

A legendary sword could only be forged through repeated polishing and refining. He had remained silent, patiently waiting for the moment to reveal himself to the world.

Boom—

By reaching the fourth level of the fifth realm, he now possessed four types of foundational qi: metal, wood, water, and fire.

As his sword qi surged fiercely, even his teammates shuddered, not daring to approach.

He unleashed the Heaven-Raising Sword!

The enormous swordlight bore down on Yang Shenlong, its reflection glimmering in his golden eyes.

Suddenly, Yang Shenlong grasped the air with his right hand and pulled out an azure beam of light measuring three chi in length. Everyone watching could see it clearly. It was not a sword, but a section of azure and black bone.

It looked like a dragon bone.

Holding the beam of azure light, Yang Shenlong appeared to unleash his full strength, the aura around him intensifying as a layer of azure jade radiance enveloped his skin.

He then aimed the beam of azure light in his palm directly at Xu Ziyang's sword qi.

At this moment, he revealed his cultivation power entirely and a hush fell over the entire crowd.

It was the sixth realm.

Chapter 553: The Fight with the Pure Jade One

The Pure Jade[1] Transcendent Form of the Penglai Supreme Sect.

This wasn't a form attainable at the fifth realm; one had to reach the sixth realm, the Transcendence Realm, to unlock it. With the Pure Jade Transcendent Form, cultivators could connect to the heavens and earth. This not only granted them invincible defense but also allowed their Sea of Qi to expand as vast as the heavens, becoming nearly inexhaustible.

This was why the higher one's cultivation, the more challenging it became to fight someone of a higher realm.

The reason prodigies were called such was not only due to their rapid advancement in cultivation but also because of their ability to challenge individuals of higher cultivation realms. This extraordinary trait was something ordinary people could never demonstrate.

However, this only applied when prodigies faced ordinary cultivators.

If Xu Ziyang or Jiang Yuebai faced an ordinary cultivator at the sixth realm, there was a chance they could win even when fighting alone. However, if they were to fight another prodigy at the sixth realm, the situation would be different, as that prodigy would also be an extraordinary existence.

Swoosh—

Xu Ziyang unleashed the Heaven-Raising Sword with full force, but his attack was split apart by the beam of azure light in Yang Shenlong's palm, dissipating into the air.

At this moment, the attacks from the monks of Buddhist Cloud Monastery arrived. The three monks coordinated perfectly; two of them formed seals and summoned apparitions of glowering Vajras, each standing three zhang tall, delivering powerful punches from the left and right toward Yang Shenlong.

The third monk clasped his hands in prayer, summoning a ripple-like apparition that enveloped the other two, as Buddhist chants echoed within the waves.

This was a divine technique that enhanced the attack. As these ripples continued, the power of all Buddhist arts was doubled.

Yet Yang Shenlong appeared completely unconcerned by the two heavy strikes, making no move to dodge. However, if he were actually hit by these punches, he would not be able to withstand them, even with the sixth-realm transcendent form.

Boom—

But when the two heavy punches struck his body, they suddenly missed, as if he were made of air, causing the Vajra fists to collide with each other instead.

Each monk staggered from the impact.

Jiang Yuebai's eyes flashed as she thrust her longsword toward a specific spot. "Here!"

The overwhelming swordlight swept forward, and in the next instant, Yang Shenlong's figure appeared in that very spot.

This was a technique Jiang Yuebai had also mastered.

The combination of Shadow of Radiance and Dimension Compression allowed one's body to vanish momentarily, creating the illusion of standing still even while closing in on the enemy.

At this moment, Yang Shenlong's first target was Jiang Yuebai.

Since it was a fight of one against many, he decided to eliminate the strongest first, which was why he targeted Jiang Yuebai first. Ling Ao would likely feel a sense of pride in this brief moment, as he was, after all, the first to be eliminated.

Swish, swish, swish—

Jiang Yuebai formed a seal with her left hand, raising her longsword in front of her chest. In an instant, it transformed into dozens of blades, encircling her like a fence, while the surging sword light formed a protective barrier around her.

The sword qi barrier was seamless. Any attack from any direction would be instantly deflected by the swordlight.

However, against such a defense, Yang Shenlong's response was simply to attack head-on.

He thrust his right arm forward, the three-chi beam of azure light piercing directly into the sword qi barrier. The barrier concentrated at a single point, enveloping Yang Shenlong's body in intense sword qi.

Boom—

After a blinding explosion of light, both figures disappeared.

A moment later, Jiang Yuebai's figure reappeared over ten zhang away, having narrowly escaped using the same technique as Yang Shenlong. However, her right chest was soaked in blood. Clearly, she had been severely injured.

Meanwhile, Yang Shenlong's figure materialized behind the three monks from Buddhist Cloud Monastery.

"Hm?" Pucheng reacted first, but it was already too late.

Slash—

Yang Shenlong's azure light slashed down, splitting a glowering Vajra apparition along with the monk beneath it.

At that moment, Pucheng launched a full-body palm strike. A massive Buddha's Palm imprint glowed with a colorful light bearing down on Yang Shenlong. While attacking, he activated the form of Transcendent Dharma Mirror, rendering him invincible to all divine abilities.

When facing the monks of the Buddhist Cloud Monastery, divine techniques and abilities were not very effective; one had to rely on physical strength. Yang Shenlong was clearly aware of this, as he lifted his left hand, which had transformed into a massive azure dragon claw.

Boom!

With a single swipe, the dragon claw slammed Pucheng down into the dust.

Boom, boom, boom—

Xu Ziyang's sword qi, accompanied by roaring thunder, swept down. Yang Shenlong's robes fluttered as his shadows suddenly split in two. His true form remained in place, effortlessly catching Xu Ziyang's strike.

Meanwhile, the clone formed through the immortal art External Manifestation appeared in front of the last monk from the Buddhist Cloud Monastery and pierced him with a dragon claw.

A gust of wind swept through the battlefield.

Suddenly, only the two Mount Shu Sect disciples and Yang Shenlong remained, and Jiang Yuebai was severely wounded.

In fact, Yang Shenlong hadn't emerged unscathed. Just moments ago, Jiang Yuebai's sword qi barrier had nearly pierced his Pure Jade Transcendent Form, leaving a sword wound on his shoulder.

His original plan had been to trade a minor injury for a kill, eliminating the strongest, which was Jiang Yuebai, first. But when that attack failed, he quickly shifted his focus, taking out the monks from the Buddhist Cloud Monastery instead.

But now, he was faced with the most troublesome two of the five. Though, they were only slightly troublesome to him.

Looking at the two Mount Shu disciples, Yang Shenlong placed his left hand over the sword wound on his shoulder. With a flicker of azure light, the wound healed at a speed visible to the naked eye.

In the blink of an eye, he was as good as new.

Though Jiang Yuebai also possessed Yi Wood foundational qi of the fifth realm, which sped up healing, she could never heal that fast. The sword qi from Yang Shenlong's strike continued to aggravate the wounds, making recovery extremely difficult.

But Yang Shenlong not only had the support of fifth-realm foundational qi but also the Azure Dragon legacy of the third realm, which provided miraculous healing effects.

Once an Azure Dragon matured, its mystical powers rendered it nearly invincible, either unscathed or unkillable. As long as it wasn't struck down in a single blow, it could fully recover in an instant. The eighth-realm Azure Dragon of the Penglai Supreme Sect was said to be eternally undying.

As long as its own lifespan didn't come to an end, there was hardly anyone in the world who could kill it.

At this moment, the two from Mount Shu had witnessed this firsthand.

Given the situation, there was nothing left to say. Yang Shenlong and his clone launched their attack together, darting toward the two Mount Shu disciples.

Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai had no intention of fleeing, knowing that escape was impossible in this scenario. While the odds looked grim, they believed that if they could defeat Yang Shenlong, the path ahead would be clear.

Whoosh—

Sword light flashed through the air as Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai unleashed their most powerful sword qi, channeling all their cultivation energy into the attack. The sword qi roared like thunder, as if the might of heaven itself had descended upon them.

It seemed as if each was attacking a separate target, but halfway through, Xu Ziyang suddenly changed direction, and both focused on the same figure as Jiang Yuebai.

This move meant Xu Ziyang had to endure an attack from the other figure.

They shared a tacit understanding in their coordination. Neither of them was strong enough to face Yang Shenlong alone. However, if they combined their efforts to kill one of the two together and that one turned out to be the true form, there would be a chance of winning.

Boom—

Jiang Yuebai and Xu Ziyang's endless swordlight converged on one figure, blasting it apart in an instant—even the Pure Jade Transcendent Form couldn't withstand it.

But Xu Ziyang was cleaved in half by the azure light from the other figure, vanishing into thin air.

As the dust settled, only Yang Shenlong remained, facing an injured Jiang Yuebai.

"That was very dangerous. If you two had guessed correctly, I might have really been killed," Yang Shenlong said with an indifferent expression. "Unfortunately, you guessed wrong."

Jiang Yuebai's gaze held no despair, showing only determination. Her longsword froze over, glinting with a cold light as she moved swiftly

She transformed into sword light, seemingly trying to escape. Yang Shenlong leaped after her, but the sword light suddenly reversed direction! It was a back-thrusting sword attack!

Swoosh—

They passed by each other in an instant.

When they reappeared, Jiang Yuebai stood where Yang Shenlong had been, and Yang Shenlong occupied the spot where she had been, their backs facing one another.

In the next moment, Jiang Yuebai's figure shattered.

Soul crystals were scattered across the battlefield, numbering in the dozens. All the soul crystals that Chu Liang had previously collected were entrusted to Jiang Yuebai for safekeeping—he likely hadn't expected that most of the members in his team would be killed when he, being a scout, would survive.

A deep bloodstain appeared across Yang Shenlong's waist; if it had been three cun deeper, he would have been severed in half by the waist.

He frowned slightly, placing his left hand over the wound and started the slow process of healing.

...

Far out on the sea, a group of four sat in a small boat, fishing rods in hand, enjoying their time together.

"Senior Brother," one of the young disciples asked, "we've been fishing for three days without catching anything. Do you think there are no fish in this sea?"

"How could that be?" replied the senior brother. "Our esteemed teacher told us that as soon as we catch a fish, we can go out and fight others."

"Could it be that..." the junior brother said hesitantly, "our esteemed teacher doesn't want us to fight anyone at all?"

The senior brother shot him a glance and replied, "If I were you, I wouldn't say that out loud."

"..." The junior brother immediately covered his mouth.

"We're not that strong; going out to fight would just be asking for death," another senior brother chuckled. "Let's just wait out the seven days here. Maybe by then, there'll be fewer than ten teams left, and we can advance without lifting a finger."

"Let's hope the others out there are battling fiercely," another added with a laugh.

As they chatted and laughed, the youngest brother suddenly exclaimed, "Huh? Senior Brother, I think I've caught a fish!"

"How could that be?" the senior brother asked, surprised. "There are no living creatures in this sea—how could there possibly be a fish?"

"And it's pretty big too!"

Splash—

The junior brother tugged hard on his rod, flinging his catch into the air before it landed with a thud on the boat.

It was only then that they realized it wasn't a fish at all, but an unconscious young man with a handsome face, clearly injured.

"That's no fish! This must be one of the disciples in the Competition of a Hundred Sects," one of them exclaimed. "How did he end up floating all the way out here when we are already hiding so far away from the others?"

"Huh?" another said, "Does that mean we might be able to get a soul crystal?"

"Exactly!" their leader chuckled. "Thank Mother Nature for this gift."

He raised his palm, preparing to strike the young man down.

But just then, the injured young man opened his eyes.

Bang, bang, bang, bang—

After several explosive sounds, the young man collected the four soul crystals, dried the seawater from his clothes with his qi, and smiled. "What a bounty to wake up to! Mother Nature is truly generous."

This person was none other than Chu Liang.

Earlier, he had crashed his airship into the Black Devil Whale. Although he had been ejected, the explosion was so powerful that it sent him flying a second time.

It blasted him far out into the sea, leaving him dazed for a moment.

Fortunately, his injuries weren't severe; after a quick circulation of his qi and blood, he recovered fully.

Just then, he felt something vibrate in his pocket. He took it out and saw that it was a message from Jiang Yuebai on the United Hearts Jade.

The message had just been sent moments ago and there were only three words on it.

"Yang Shenlong."

Chapter 554: You're Joking, Right?

What does this mean?

Chu Liang stared at the name. It gave him an ominous feeling.

That feeling was right. He tried to reach out to Jiang Yuebai, but his half of the United Hearts Jade had already lost connection to its other half. This meant that the other half of the jade had disappeared from the illusory realm.

Senior Sister Jiang and the others must have encountered the Penglai Supreme Sect's team...

Chu Liang was well aware of how strong his team was.

Senior Brother Xu has reached the fourth level of the fifth realm. Senior Sister Jiang is at the third level of the fifth realm and is proficient in many powerful immortal arts. They're outstanding even among all the talented young cultivators participating in the Assembly of Immortal Sects. In fact, our team should be able to secure a spot in the top ten for the second round even if we have a dog tied to us.

Moreover, they were accompanied by our ally, the Buddhist Cloud Monastery team. Even if they met a formidable foe and lost, they should have been able to escape and kept their soul crystals. However, they couldn't flee... Does that mean the Penglai Supreme Sect team has a powerful sixth-realm cultivator?

That person is most likely Yang Shenlong. If he has indeed reached the sixth realm, he must be incredibly powerful.

As the head disciple, Senior Sister Jiang held all the soul crystals. If there had been any chance to escape, Senior Brother Xu and Ling Ao would have ensured her escape first. If even Senior Sister Jiang couldn't get away, then the others wouldn't have survived either.

Chu Liang thought it over and concluded that he had likely become an orphan.[1] Of course, he could also be called a lone wolf.

As he pondered his next steps, he got a pleasant surprise. He had earned a golden imprint from killing the Black Devil Whale.

It seemed that everything within the illusory realm was indeed as real as reality itself. Even slaying a resurrected Black Devil Whale could yield an imprint. The Black Devil Whale had been a formidable creature, so that likely meant a great treasure awaited him.

When in doubt, reward yourself.

Chu Liang promptly entered the White Pagoda and pressed "Refine."

Boom.

There was a flash of red light, and a small, lustrous white orb floated out. Chu Liang caught it in his hand.

[Great Pill of the Endlessly Devouring Whale: An ancient great pill that contains the real soul of a devil whale. Upon consuming the pill, the cultivator's Sea of Qi will become as vast and endless as a devil whale's consumption capacity. This effect lasts for a quarter of an hour.

Note: The effect of this pill is great, but it should not be used in excess. Use in moderation.]

As Chu Liang read the description, he thought deeply about the pill.

The pill's effect was very similar to the legendary immortal art Boundless Sea of Qi, which had been lost a long time ago. It was said that when a cultivator used the Boundless Sea of Qi, they would have access to an unlimited reserve of cultivation energy. They could use any divine techniques or skills freely without concern that they might deplete their foundational qi.

However, the issue was that it did not enhance the quality of the cultivator's foundational qi or deepen their comprehension of their Great Dao. The Boundless Sea of Qi certainly had a powerful effect, but as for how much it could boost a cultivator's combat strength, that depended on how it was used.

For example, even if a cultivator at the Spiritual Awareness Realm were given unlimited foundational qi, their attacks would still struggle to break through Chu Liang's defenses. Meanwhile, Chu Liang would still be able to easily cause them to explode with a single punch.

In other words, only cultivators who had already learned a powerful divine skill but couldn't use it yet due to their limited cultivation energy could fully benefit from the Great Pill of the Endlessly Devouring Whale.

If Chu Liang had the Violet and Azure Twin Swords in hand to combine with the use of this pill, he could wipe out everyone in the illusory realm within a quarter of an hour. Without the pill, he

wouldn't have enough cultivation energy to do that even if he drained his cultivation energy reserve two hundred times over.

As for the warning about using the pill in moderation—well, that seemed unnecessary. After all, he'd only been given one pill; how could he possibly use it in excess?

After rewarding himself, Chu Liang's train of thought cleared up. He spent another moment in deep thought, then he got up and flew toward dry land.

Initially, he'd thought he'd collected enough soul crystals and could take things easy. He was bound to meet with danger as the team's scout, so he had entrusted all the soul crystals to Jiang Yuebai in the rear.

Who knew I'd go from being the scout to the main team in the blink of an eye?

Currently, he only had the four soul crystals he'd "picked up" when he resurfaced from the sea. That amount certainly would not be enough for the Mount Shu Sect team to make it into the top ten, so he couldn't just wait out at sea until the competition ended. That's why he decided to return to land and hunt down a few more teams.

As he soared through the air, he felt a dull ache in his muscles and bones. The airship had exploded with incredible force earlier. Dong Futu's handiwork was indeed extraordinary.

However, the power ratio of the two enchanted formations wasn't quite right. The force that flung him away hadn't been strong enough to allow him to escape the explosion's aftershock. He'd have to mention this to Dong Futu.

Still, Chu Liang was grateful that he had the chance to test the explosion function out in the illusory realm. He wouldn't have dared to blow up his airship just to see how powerful the explosion would be.

...

By the time Chu Liang reached the center of the sea, the sky had turned dark.

A monk in white robes flew toward him.

Chu Liang recognized him instantly. "Pushan?"

"Chu Liang!" Monk Pushan's voice was filled with urgency. "I've finally found you! We're doomed, doomed, doomed..."

Sensing that Pushan was about to unload a huge stream of words, Chu Liang quickly interrupted him. "Where's Enchantress Yi?"

Monk Pushan hurriedly explained, "After you got blown away, I received a message from my brothers saying there was an emergency. So, Enchantress Yi and I split up. She went to look for you, and I went back to check on our teams.

"But by the time I got there, it was too late. I used my Heavenly Eye to check on them from afar and saw Yang Shenlong single-handedly kill all six of them! I'm the only one left from the Buddhist Cloud Monastery team, and I don't dare to go back there. We're doomed; we're both orphans now..."

The Heavenly Eye was one of the Six Great Divine Abilities of Buddhism. It briefly granted a Buddhist monk vision that was similar to the Ji Family's Clairvoyant Vision, which allowed their sight to bypass yin and yang and into the Vault of Heaven.

Nevertheless, the Heavenly Eye couldn't be used for extended periods, making it unsuitable for regular scouting. It was, however, quite useful in this situation, where they needed quick scans for potential danger.

Chu Liang patted Pushan's shoulder. "It's okay. As long as I'm here, you're not an orphan."

"Eh?"

Pushan blinked, sensing something was off in that statement.[2]

After a pause, Pushan continued, "Once the battle between Yang Shenlong and our teams was over, I rushed to find you. I have no idea where Enchantress Yi went."

"Let's not search for her now; we have more pressing matters to handle," Chu Liang said.

Chu Liang and Pushan flew toward dry land together.

On the way, Chu Liang added, "Now that each of our sects has only one person left, the two of us must stick together. As long as you're with me, we can gather enough soul crystals to advance."

Monk Pushan replied, "I trust you, but we're already on the fourth day. The competition is in its second half, and only the strongest teams remain. The fights will be more intense than ever. I'm not sure we'll be able to find suitable targets."

Judging from the past assemblies, the final days of the Competition of the Hundred Sects were often the most thrilling. Teams without a single soul crystal could gain enough to advance just by taking down one person, while some strong teams, weakened by earlier fights, might find themselves outnumbered and eliminated... Anything was possible.

However, those possibilities depended on their strength. Chu Liang and Pushan's group was down to just two people, and they were from different sects, so that meant they needed twice the number of soul crystals to advance.

If they both wanted to secure stable positions in the top ten, they needed at least seventy or eighty soul crystals in total.

In the first half of the competition, many participants had managed to wipe out entire teams alone because there had been many weak teams. Now, only strong teams remained, so it was very difficult for anyone to achieve such a feat again. It was no wonder Pushan was apprehensive about their situation.

"Is it really that hard to find a target?" Chu Liang asked puzzledly. "Isn't there a huge target right over there?"

Pushan followed Chu Liang's gaze to the other side of the shore. With the Black Whale Mountain gone, all that remained was a massive hole in the ground. Looking past it, he could make out the outline of a city in the distance. It was massive yet quiet, with only a few scattered lights glowing within.

Pushan realized that he had unknowingly followed Chu Liang all the way to the only city within this illusory realm—Misty Waters City.

The faint moonlight shone down on Pushan's bald head, shrouding it in a soft, slightly bewildering glow.

He asked in disbelief, "You're joking, right?"

Chapter 555: Attack the City

"Waaaaah!"

In the spectator stands where members of various immortal sects sat, Shang Ziliang and Lackey A clung to each other and let out heart-wrenching wails.

Shang Ziliang bawled. "Why are you crying?"

"It hurts!" Lackey A answered, crying even louder.

"You only bet fifty Vermillion-Bird coins! What do you have to feel hurt about?" Shang Ziliang's face scrunched up in agony. "I'm the one who's really hurting!"

"It's too painful!" Lackey A said. "I heard it's very nice and warm with beautiful scenery at the laundry river just outside the capital of Yu. Ornamental boats and leisure boats often pass by, and you can see courtesans playing around on the boats. Maybe we should just go pick out a spot there." [1]

"I think that's a great idea!" Shang Ziliang replied.

Shang Ziliang and Lackey A weren't the only ones wailing. As the competition reached the midway point, some of the stronger teams were eliminated in succession, and cries of despair became a common occurrence in the spectator stands.

However, when Yang Shenlong wiped out the teams from the Mount Shu Sect and Buddhist Cloud Monastery, there were more people laughing than crying.

That was because few people had bet on the Mount Shu Sect or the Buddhist Cloud Monastery. The Mount Shu Sect hadn't placed in the top ten for several assemblies in a row, and the Buddhist Cloud Monastery had a weak team this time. They did not even have one outstanding prodigy in their team, so the public didn't have a good impression of them.

Thus, only Shang Ziliang and Lackey A were crying for the Mount Shu Sect team.

In contrast, Yang Shenlong's explosive sixth-realm cultivation power stunned all of the spectators. He had been renowned for a long time as a powerful cultivator, but he had seldom shown his strength publicly, so this performance shocked everyone.

The appearance of a sixth-realm cultivator at the Assembly of Immortal Sects was a rare event that had not occurred for a century. Cultivators at Yang Shenlong's age would need both unparalleled talent and extreme dedication to reach such a high level of cultivation.

This pretty much erased any suspense there was about which team was going to win. If the Penglai Supreme Sect team had been the favorite before, it now seemed like an absolute certainty that they would be the winning team. Those who had hoped for a safe win and bet on the Penglai Supreme Sect could now relax completely.

The atmosphere in the spectator stands was generally joyous and celebratory. Only the Mount Shu Sect's area was enveloped in a depressing mood reminiscent of cold winds and gloomy rain.

It wasn't just one member who got defeated; Jiang Yuebai, Xu Ziyang, and Ling Ao had all gotten killed. That meant Mount Shu had lost all of the soul crystals they had collected. If the Mount Shu Sect were to fail in this assembly too, they would lose their right to stay ranked in the Divine Nine.

That was in stark contrast to the Thunderbolt Stronghold team.

With three core disciples in their team, the Thunderbolt Stronghold had held the highest hopes that their team would achieve success in the assembly this time. However, the Mount Shu Sect team had crushed the Thunderbolt Stronghold team and their hope, leaving them with one remaining member.

Now, seeing the Mount Shu Sect team meet the same fate, the members of the Thunderbolt Stronghold felt pleased that revenge had been served.

Lin Bei, on the other hand, just seemed confused about why his fellow disciples were wailing. "What are you two doing?"

Shang Ziliang looked at him. "Do you not have a heart? Are you not upset?"

"I'm sad Jiangjiang was eliminated, but our sect's team hasn't been eliminated yet," Lin Bei replied puzzledly. "Isn't Chu Liang still in there?"

"This..." Shang Ziliang uttered, trailing off.

He didn't believe Chu Liang could pull off a miracle. Nonetheless, seeing Lin Bei's confident expression, Shang Ziliang couldn't bring himself to dampen Lin Bei's faith in Chu Liang.

Ultimately, Shang Ziliang just mumbled, "Let's just hope Big Bro can find a chance to gather some soul crystals and hang on until the end."

"It's not a hope; Chu Liang will definitely turn the tables," Lin Bei stated with absolute conviction.

...

There was another person who was equally confident that Chu Liang would succeed—Di Nufeng.

Old Huang had just finished saying that the Mount Shu Sect team would produce good results under Jiang Yuebai's leadership... Then Yang Shenlong single-handedly crushed that idea, leaving Old Huang quite angry.

Old Huang could only add, "There shouldn't have been any major obstacles for the Mount Shu Sect team. But who would've guessed that Yang Shenlong would reach the sixth realm at his age... It's frankly unbelievable. It seems there's no doubt the Penglai Supreme Sect will win this year."

Old Sun remarked, "It's a pity for the Mount Shu Sect. The Mount Shu Sect team is very strong this year. If it wasn't because Yang Shenlong targeted them, they would very likely have advanced."

Di Nufeng asked in confusion, "But isn't my disciple still in there?"

"Well, that's true..." Old Huang forced a smile. "He might be able to hold out alone in the latter half of the Competition of the Hundred Sects, but it's too difficult for one person to gather enough soul crystals to advance..."

"What's wrong with one person?" Di Nufeng still sounded puzzled. "Why does it make a difference whether he has teammates or not?"

Just then, another wail rang out from the Mount Shu Sect's seating area. "What's Big Bro doing???"

Shang Ziliang clutched his head, staring at the figure that appeared on the projection.

He'd just been hoping Chu Liang would lay low and find a way to collect some soul crystals, then maybe he would have a shot at advancing as a lone wolf. Why did he end up outside Misty Waters City instead?

Had Chu Liang lost his composure and gone there to throw everything all away?

...

At this moment, Monk Pushan had the same thought.

"It's not that I want to stop you, but you need to think this through! We're the remaining members of our teams—the final beacons of hope for our sects. If you just end things for yourself like this, how will you justify your actions to your team members and sect? Do you think sacrificing yourself to get revenge for Jiang Yuebai would move her? She'd just ask you: does that make any sense? Does that make any sense? Does that make any sense..." [2]

Chu Liang looked at him, feeling baffled. "Weren't you the one saying it's hard to find enough targets for soul crystals? There are plenty available in the city. There will definitely be enough soul crystals for both of our teams to advance, so why not go take them?"

Stupefied, Pushan said, "Yes, everyone knows that. So, why hasn't anyone else gone to take them? Is it that no one wants them?"

"Maybe," Chu Liang replied without much thought. He then reassured Pushan, "Don't worry; I'll handle it alone. You just stay on the outskirts and keep watch. If things go south, I'll run."

"Yang Shenlong is at the sixth realm! Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai couldn't escape. How will you?"

Chu Liang suddenly turned to Pushan and asked seriously, "Do you trust me?"

Monk Pushan fell silent, recalling everything that had happened since the first time.

He nodded. "I trust you."

Chu Liang smiled. "Then relax."

"Okay!" Pushan exclaimed. "If you're going to attack Misty Waters City, at least let me help. I can't just watch you go alone."

"There's definitely a task for you," Chu Liang said as he landed on a nearby hill.

They were only a few hundred zhang from Misty Waters City. They were close enough that if there were any night watchmen on the walls, they would have already seen him.

Standing tall on the hill, Chu Liang raised his hand and pulled out a gourd from his storage tool. He opened the gourd and scattered its contents into the air, making a cascade of Puppet Pills.

These were the Puppet Pills specially made to be used with the immortal art Army of Beans.

If random materials were used with Army of Beans to make soldiers, the summoned puppets would have a weak spiritual nature and little combat power. Using these Puppet Pills instead would allow the cultivator to summon much stronger and more capable puppets.

The problem was that... Puppet Pills were very expensive to make. At the last Mount Shu Summit, Chu Liang had made only four pills, but that small number was enough to impress everyone.

This time, he had a great number of the pills—around two hundred of them. He used all of them to summon puppets, draining all of his cultivation energy in one go.

In an instant, an army appeared before him.

Unexpectedly, he swallowed an expensive Qi Replenishing Pill instead of the Great Pill of the Endlessly Devouring Whale. Then he sat down and meditated for a while. With his Large-Headed Dolls circulating his qi as well, his Sea of Qi was quickly replenished, becoming full again in just a while.

Seeing that Chu Liang seemed to be done, Pushan took the opportunity to ask, "Where did you get so many Puppet Pills? Did you stay up day and night these past few months just to make these?"

It took nearly a full day to concoct one Puppet Pill, so it would have taken ages for one person to make that many pills.

"I can make the pills, but there's no need for me to make them all by myself, right?" Chu Liang replied. "For a large batch like this, I put out a request at a high price. Dozens of alchemists were eager to take on the work."

Hearing that, Monk Pushan finally remembered that Chu Liang's way of thinking was on a whole other level.

For ordinary cultivators, if they had an enchanted cauldron, they would concoct whatever pills they knew how to concoct. They would only seek the services of others for pills they couldn't concoct.

Chu Liang, however, operated differently. His principle was that if others could do it, then he didn't need to. That allowed him to save his time for things that only he could do.

It was a totally different mindset.

After summoning the two hundred puppets, Chu Liang arranged them into several groups. Then he finished meditating and pulled out a few gourds from his chest pocket. These gourds likely stored a different kind of pill, not the Puppet Pills that Chu Liang had already used earlier.

He handed the gourds to the puppets, making Pushan curious once more. Did the puppets need to take pills too?

Pushan couldn't resist asking, "What are those?"

"Thunderfire Pills," Chu Liang answered.

"Huh?" Monk Pushan's pupils dilated. "That many of them?"

Thunderfire Pills weren't for consumption; they were commonly used explosives. Nevertheless, high-level cultivators rarely used those pills, as they could easily unleash a similar level of force with a divine skill. That meant they simply did not need such items. Furthermore, if they used the pills instead of their skills, they would have to spend money to acquire the pills, which were pretty expensive.

"Taotie City, Red Cotton Peak, the capital of Yu... I bought every Thunderfire Pill that was available in those shopping districts, and they're all right here," Chu Liang said with a smile.

Looking at the many puppet soldiers and Thunderfire Pills, Pushan felt even more confident in Chu Liang now. It seemed that Chu Liang wasn't acting out of blind impulse; he had made ample preparations beforehand.

Thunderfire Pills were not very effective against cultivators at the higher realms, but that was when they were used in small numbers. If it were just one pill exploding, Pushan would be unfazed. However, just one of these gourds seemed to contain almost two hundred Thunderfire Pills...

Sure, you can use them freely in the illusory realm without any regret since you'd still have them in the real world, but the fact that you even have so many of these pills is astonishing. Who could bear to spend that much on this thing?

It was clear that Chu Liang had gone all in, draining his hard-earned money for this Assembly of Immortal Sects.

As Chu Liang gazed at Misty Waters City in the distance, his eyes lit up with determination and fury.

Chu Liang had indeed gone all in for this assembly, splitting his entire savings to serve as two funds. He used one fund to buy various materials and items, and he used the other to bet on the Mount Shu Sect's advancement.

If the Mount Shu Sect were to successfully advance to the third round of the assembly, he would not only break even but make a profit. However, if the Mount Shu Sect were eliminated, he would lose everything.

Cutting off a person's source of income was like taking their parents' lives, and the Penglai Sect was currently cutting off his source of income. Furthermore, Yang Shenlong had even killed Jiang Yuebai...

All things considered, it was tantamount to wiping out Chu Liang's whole family. How could he possibly wait till the next day to get revenge for such an atrocious act?!

Chu Liang looked at Misty Waters City and swung his hand wide. "Aim at the places with lights on. Throw the pills!"

The over two hundred puppets simultaneously hurled the Thunderfire Pills like synchronized peashooters. [3]

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh.

The first wave of Thunderfire Pills hit Misty Waters City, followed by a continuous chain of explosions.

Boom, boom, boom.

The rumble of thunder reverberated throughout the city as a huge fire spread! The city was set alight in an instant!

This night of rumbling thunder and raining fire had only just begun.

Boom, boom, boom.

After two waves of bombarding the city with fire, Chu Liang instructed Pushan, "Use your Heavenly Eye to keep an eye on the city and tell the puppets where to throw the Thunderfire Pills. Just focus the attacks on places with people. If anyone comes to find you and it seems like you can't handle them, run away immediately."

"I'm directing the puppets?" Pushan said in surprise. "Then what about you?"

"I'm going to attack the city!" Chu Liang said firmly.

In the blink of an eye, he turned into a shadowy figure, flying speedily over the city walls of Misty Waters City.

Stunned, Pushan had a blank expression as he watched Chu Liang's figure disappear into the distance.

Chu Liang's plan had sounded quite absurd, but since Chu Liang was the one carrying it out, Pushan thought that it might just work.

Pushan activated his Heavenly Eye and scanned the city for signs of the panicked teams that were in alliance with the Penglai Supreme Sect team. Once he found them, he ordered the puppet army to bombard them with the Thunderfire Pills.

After a few rounds of that, Pushan felt a rush of exhilaration.

I have to admit... this feels pretty awesome.

Chapter 556: I Even Bought You a Meal Once

On the high platform on Emperor's Mound, the elders of the immortal sects sat in small groups. For those with keen eyes, much could be inferred just by observing the seating arrangements.

Generally, the members of the sects in the Divine Nine sat together, while the members of the sects in the Terrestrial Ten clustered with their own. It was rare for an elder of a sect in the Divine Nine to lower themselves to sit with any member of a sect in the Terrestrial Ten, just as it was uncommon for an elder of a sect in the Terrestrial Ten to mingle with any member of a sect in the Divine Nine, as doing so could tarnish their reputation and label them as social climbers.

Among the higher-ups of the sects in the Terrestrial Ten, Huyan Dong, the City Lord of Taotie City, Huang Hanshan, the Lord of the Thunderbolt Stronghold, and Xu Bashan, the Chief of the Four Seas Whale Gang, were seated together.

It was rather interesting that these three were sitting together.

Huyan Dong, with a square face, broad features, and graying temples, appeared to be in his forties or fifties. He seemed like the kind of person who could give off an air of authority without ever raising his voice.

Dressed in wide-sleeved robes, he looked like a simple man. However, as he had been the wealthiest man in the realm of immortality cultivation for a very long time, he naturally exuded a noble aura.

His life story was legendary. He was not a member of the direct lineage of the Huyan Family, nor was he a resident of Taotie City. Instead, he was part of a distant branch of the Huyan Family, living in a village outside the city. If this were a tale of an emperor with poor relatives, he would certainly play the role of those poor relatives.

But through his own grit and talent, he clawed his way up, eventually managing most of the Huyan Family's enterprises. His cultivation level and acumen far surpassed those of the Master of the Huyan Family at the time. After the family elders "begged" him multiple times, he finally agreed to take over the supervision of Taotie City, allowing his family to become the rightful lineage of the Huyan Family.

He married the most beautiful woman from the Ascending Dragon Academy, who was sixty years younger than him. He was truly the winner in life.

Now, his biggest wish was to help his city rise to the ranks of the Divine Nine while he was still the city lord. Judging by the progress of this Assembly of Immortal Sects, it seemed he was closer than ever to realizing that dream.

After Yang Shenlong killed most of the members from the Mount Shu Sect team, no one believed Chu Liang could pull off a comeback on his own. Thus, Huyan Dong's biggest competitor became Huang Hanshan.

Huang Hanshan shared the same thought.

Huang Hanshan sat to the left. With his broad face, bushy beard, and fierce eyes, he resembled a bandit chieftain.

Huyan Dong, with his noble bearing, sat on the right, wearing a faint smile.

Between them sat Xu Bashan, appearing calm as a pond.

He sat between them because he had good relations with both. He had sworn brotherhood with Huang Hanshan. Obviously, this was a bond that was one of life and death.

Meanwhile, the Whale Gang and Taotie City maintained close business ties. The Whale Gang had established shops along nearly an entire street in Taotie City, creating an inseparable relationship of mutual interest between the two.

Additionally, the Whale Gang, like Ascending Dragon Academy, was rooted in the Four Seas and Nine Provinces, with no ambition to compete for a position among the Divine Nine. As a result, they had no conflict with either side.

Thus, when Taotie City and Thunderbolt Stronghold were at odds, he naturally became the ideal mediator between the two.

As the disciples of Taotie City entered Misty Waters City, Huang Hanshan remarked with a sneer, "City Lord Huyan, what a cunning plan... Latching onto Penglai's support is surely a clever way to step into the ranks of the Divine Nine."

By saying this, he was implicitly mocking that the Taotie City was acting like a lapdog to the Penglai Supreme Sect, but Huyan Dong ignored his comments.

When Du Wuhen entered Misty Waters City, Huyan Dong smiled and replied, "The head disciple of Thunderbolt Stronghold sure has guts, going out of his way to ally with enemies."

Huang Hanshan glared. "Considering the situation, why not? Nothing wrong with that."

"True, it's certainly the move of a real man," Huyan Dong replied sarcastically.

"Alright, alright," Xu Bashan interjected. "Neither of you has much room to talk. The disciples are the ones fighting in the illusory realm—what good does it do for you two to argue here?"

Huang Hanshan and Huyan Dong both let out cold snorts in response.

At this rate, it looked like both Taotie City and Thunderbolt Stronghold could make it into the top ten by relying on Penglai. From what they had shown in the past, Thunderbolt Stronghold had a slightly better track record, but not by much.

If the Mount Shu Sect actually lost their place in the Divine Nine, Taotie City could rely on its vast wealth and make generous contributions to the imperial court as well as other sects in the Divine and they might actually end up being the one to take Mount Shu Sect's place.

Huang Hanshan, observing the situation in the illusory realm, couldn't help but furrowed his brows.

Du Wuhen was on his own, so he wouldn't be able to eliminate the entire team from Taotie City, especially since Taotie City was protected by the Penglai Supreme Sect team. Huang Hanshan began strategizing his next moves so that his sect could be the one to take Mount Shu Sect's place.

Huyan Dong didn't have absolute confidence either; in terms of sect heritage and legacy, the Thunderbolt Stronghold was certainly more legitimate than Taotie City.

At this moment, he started scanning the high platform, contemplating how best to bribe the elders of the other immortal sects.

"What? Already thinking about whom to bribe?" Huang Hanshan's words hit the mark.

"Lord Huang, these are interesting words coming out of your mouth!" Huyan Dong replied. "If there truly is an empty spot in the rankings of the Divine Nine, do you really think it could be bought with money? Your sect has often accepted gifts from my city. If bribery worked, would your sect have stepped down from competing for this spot?"

"That just means you haven't offered me enough," Huang Hanshan laughed. "If you offered a tempting price, why wouldn't we consider giving you the rank of the Divine Nine?"

"Lord Huang, you speak as if it's already decided that your sect will take Mount Shu Sect's place," Huyan Dong retorted.

"I think there's a point to what you're saying," Xu Bashan interrupted the argument with a steady voice. "Why are you both talking as if that seat is already empty? As long as Chu Liang lives, neither of your sects stands a chance."

"Even if your little brother is exceptionally gifted, what can he do by himself? Wipe out two teams like Yang Shenlong did?" Huang Hanshan scoffed.

"Just take a look at what he's doing," Xu Bashan suddenly remarked.

As he gazed at the display in mid-air, his calm demeanor finally broke into a genuine smile.

...

Rumble, rumble, rumble—

A sudden barrage of Thunderfire Pills shook Misty Waters City, leaving its residents stunned.

This was Penglai's territory, one that its members had cleansed and purged. Who would dare to cause trouble here?

Near the eastern part of the city, a few disciples of Taotie City emerged into the streets amidst the rumbling shockwaves. Huyan Bin, both shocked and enraged, yelled, "What's going on?"

"City Lord Junior, let's get out of here first," urged the Taotie City disciples around him.

"The entire Misty Waters City is blowing up! Where do we hide?" Huyan Bin snapped. "Raise the shields!"

At his command, three disciples behind him raised twenty-four talismans, which immediately transformed into massive golden shields in the air.

Together, the seventy-two shields created a barrier across the sky, deflecting the incoming Thunderfire Pills. Despite the intense explosions, the shields only wavered slightly.

Taotie City might not have the strongest cultivation legacies, but they certainly had wealth.

Each talisman was worth a fortune and could only be used once, yet these disciples didn't hesitate to use seventy-two of them.

From a bird's-eye view, it appeared to be an attack of Thunderfire Pills met with a defense of talisman shields. But in reality, it was more like a clash of Vermillion-Bird coins and sword coins.

But in the next instant, a shadowy figure streaked through the street, arriving in a flash.

"Who's there?" A disciple of Taotie City quickly raised an enchanted tool, summoning a wall of raging fire to block the path.

However, the figure seemed to have felt nothing, charging straight through the wall of divine fire and landing a punch as it reached the ground!

Boom—

The disciple who had summoned the wall of divine fire was obliterated by a single punch, disintegrating into a soul crystal.

Only then did Huyan Bin finally see clearly—it was Chu Liang who had launched this night raid.

Huyan Bin's heart skipped a beat.

Huyan Bin's bribery was the main reason why Yang Shenlong had gone to attack the disciples of the Mount Shu Sect. Now, as Huyan Bin saw Chu Liang descend from the sky like a god, he naturally felt a twinge of guilt.

Especially since Chu Liang, with flames raging behind him, resembled a vengeful deity coming to wreak havoc!

"Retreat! Find the people from Penglai!" Huyan Bin shouted.

Even though they outnumbered Chu Liang three to one, he didn't hesitate to order a retreat.

He made a wise choice, but he was not wise enough. If they had fled upon hearing the explosions, they would have had a chance to escape. And now, with Chu Liang closing in, where could they possibly go?

The three disciples from Taotie City summoned a pair of massive golden wings behind them, their gleaming feathers shimmering with light. With a single flap, they transformed into streaks of light, flying hundreds of zhang in an instant.

They were so fast, even their afterimages were barely visible.

Taotie City possessed a new legendary artifact ranked among the top hundred, named the Golden Wings That Brush Against the Clouds. What they now summoned was a high-level replica of this artifact.

Yet, no speed could match the all-encompassing rain of swords.

The moment they raised their golden wings, Chu Liang unhesitatingly drew his flying sword and hurled it into the air.

With a piercing sound, the sword split into countless streams of sword light, slicing through the sky and raining down like a storm!

Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!

That was the Myriad Talismanic Sword!

Chu Liang used the swiftest talismanic script, the Talismanic Script of Wind, causing the endless sword light to descend instantly.

Once more, the area was engulfed by sword qi, bringing complete devastation to Misty Waters City that night.

The explosions from the Thunderfire Pills had already reduced much of the city to rubble. Now, as the attacks from the Myriad Talismanic Sword rained down on the remnants, even the rubble was obliterated, leaving half the district in dust.

The two Taotie City disciples didn't even have time to scream before the sword light overtook them, turning them into soul crystals.

Only Huyan Bin survived the rain of swords, as a gentle light suddenly enveloped his entire body, protecting his life and instantly transporting him ten zhang away.

"The Salvation Bodhi Mantra?"

Chu Liang instantly recognized it as a highly valuable Buddhist relic in the realm of immortality cultivation—a life-saving talisman for critical moments.

"Brother Chu..." Huyan Bin smiled bitterly. "It's been a while. There's no need to rush; we could sit and talk this through. Spare me, and I can give you money..."

"Brother Huyan, you're not short on money, and neither am I," Chu Liang replied with a smile. "I'm pressed for time right now, so let's catch up another day."

Before Chu Liang finished speaking, he had already appeared in front of Huyan Bin.

Huyan Bin raised his hand, summoning four fierce and intimidating Vajra Puppets to block Chu Liang's path.

But Chu Liang wielded the Dustless Sword, its sword light surging as the Geng Metal foundational qi from his two Golden Cores filled the sword. With a single strike, he cleaved through two of the puppets at the waist!

Every sect provided their disciples with numerous pills, enchanted tools, and useful items before entering the illusory realm. However, there was a limit to what one person could manage, and carrying too much would only become a burden.

Huyan Bin clearly seemed to be panicking as Chu Liang drew closer.

He didn't dare block with his cultivation energy. In fact, he had lost all sense of judgment, wildly throwing enchanted tools and hoping that one would be enough to block Chu Liang's advance.

Chu Liang even saw him throw out a worn boot and someone's embroidered dudou. Huyan Bin's frantic scrambling suggested that there were simply too many things in his storage tool, resulting in a mental overload.

But no matter the tool, Chu Liang sliced through each one with a single stroke!

Indeed, wealth was part of one's strength, but beyond that, Chu Liang's own power was truly elite. In comparison, Huyan Bin fell far short.

I have money, and so do you.

But I possess top-tier talent for comprehending immortal arts, do you?

I have two ultimate-tier Golden Cores circulating within me, do you?

I have two times the foundational qi of the fifth realm due to my two Golden Cores, do you?

I have Large-Headed Dolls tirelessly working for me, do you?

I have Senior Sister Jiang, do you?

I have inherited more than one dragon legacy, did you?

As the sword light drew nearer, Chu Liang shattered not only Huyan Bin's enchanted tools but also Taotie City's hopes of ascending into the Divine Nine.

As Huyan Bin watched Chu Liang descend with demonic swordlight, he suddenly realized that it might have been a grave mistake to go against the Mount Shu Sect!

In despair, he managed one last shout, "Brother Chuuu! I even bought you a meal once!"

Slash!

Chapter 557: All of You Should Attack Me Together

"Hahaha!" Huang Hanshan's laughter echoed across the high platform, sounding shrill and irritating—a stark contrast to the livid expression on Huyan Dong's face.

Xu Bashan couldn't bear to watch anymore and whispered, "No need to laugh so loudly..."

"I'm simply happy for our little brother," Huang Hanshan declared loudly. "Since he's your sworn brother, that makes him my brother too."

No one had expected Chu Liang to suddenly attack the Misty Waters City under the cover of night.

It was usually quieter at night during the second round, so none of them expected Chu Liang to launch an attack on Misty Waters City alone!

This choice was so bold it seemed almost suicidal.

In fact, most of the onlookers thought the same. They thought that Chu Liang had a mental breakdown upon finding out that all his teammates had died while he was scouting alone. In their eyes, this was a desperate, all-or-nothing move—a decision to go out in a blaze of sacrifice.

More and more people started saying he'd chosen to die with Jiang Yuebai out of love.

The only question now was how many he could take down before he fell.

This thrilling nighttime show stopped many viewers who were about to leave; they gathered below Emperor's Mound once more, with most spontaneously cheering Chu Liang on.

After all, it was rather tragic but brave of him to make this move.

When they saw him single-handedly take down a squad from Taotie City, a massive cheer erupted across the field, though a few cries of anguish could also be heard.

This year's assembly was a dangerous one for the Mount Shu Sect. Many crazy gamblers believed that a wealthy power like Taotie City would go to great lengths, offering hefty bribes to both the higher-ups and the disciples to secure a path and position in the Divine Nine.

To these gamblers, blinded by their bets, anything seemed possible—even a staged outcome—so they placed enormous wagers on Taotie City.

The competition had indeed played out just as they had predicted. Taotie City had allied with Penglai, leading to the elimination of most of the Mount Shu Sect team members.

At that point, gamblers were still smugly insisting they'd guessed the inside scoop all along.

But who would have thought that Chu Liang would appear out of nowhere and completely change the story?

Even if he could eliminate the Taotie City team, could he advance to the next round on his own? Could he take down Penglai on his own? Why go through all this trouble?

In the brief moment when Chu Liang chased after Huyan Bin, some forced themselves to say calmly, "It must be because the price wasn't settled. Chu Liang can't possibly mean to kill him."

The gamblers who lost everything wailed in despair, but there were even more who admired Chu Liang's bold move, cheering enthusiastically for his spectacular performance.

For a moment, the night outside the capital of Yu boiled with excitement, all because of Chu Liang.

"This kid..." Elder Huang said in amazement, "I thought he was a cunning prodigy for his age. But now it's clear—at heart, he's just like Ah Feng."

Scholar Sun nodded in agreement, then shot him a sidelong glance with a smirk. "So... you're saying Ah Feng isn't smart?"

Elder Huang jolted upright. "I never said that! Don't be an instigator—"

Boom!

Thankfully, before Elder Huang finished speaking, he had already leaped to a distant section of the spectator stands.

Di Nufeng withdrew her foot as she muttered, "You clearly said it. I heard you loud and clear."

"But your disciple truly takes after you. Most of the time, he seems indifferent, but when it comes to those he cares about, he can unleash extraordinary strength," Scholar Sun said with a sigh. "One day, he'll shine among the brightest on Mount Shu, just like you."

"Heh, you flatter him, Elder..." Di Nufeng chuckled. "My disciple's good, but he's still got a long way to go before he catches up to me."

Alright then, Scholar Sun thought to himself. I thought you were finally being humble, which rarely happens, but it turns out you were only being humble for your disciple.

"That definitely meant the same thing as what I said..." grumbled Elder Huang as he crawled back.

"Heh." Scholar Sun chuckled. Now you know the value of reading a book titled Emotional Intelligence? he thought to himself.

...

The explosions in Misty Waters City paused momentarily, only to resume soon after.

Chu Liang guessed that someone in the city might have gone after Pushan. But Pushan wasn't the type to be easily eliminated. He should be able to handle himself. After all, he had over two hundred high-level puppets helping him.

After swiftly eliminating the members of Taotie City, Chu Liang flew forward, crossing two streets before spotting another figure ahead.

Amidst the blazing firelight, a youth in black, tight-fitting clothes stood tall at the end of the long street, a saber strapped across his back.

He had been waiting for Chu Liang.

Chu Liang immediately figured out the youth's intention.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh—

Suddenly, several sharp white feathers shot out from the side, their icy edges so lethal that even Chu Liang felt a jolt of danger despite his resilient body.

In an instant, he compressed the space beneath his feet, dodging ten zhang away.

The feathers struck nearby rubble, piercing and melting the stones instantly.

The type of peculiar poison coating the feathers remained unknown.

Chu Liang landed, but before he could stand firmly, he sensed a shadowy figure slipping out from the shadow beneath him.

It was a petite woman. With only half her body visible in the shadow, she stealthily drew two icy blades, aiming them at Chu Liang's legs.

Chu Liang seemed oblivious, but suddenly he stomped his foot fiercely!

Boom—

In an instant, the ground cracked, and the woman emerging from the shadow was flung several zhang away. She twisted mid-air, landing nearby, then swiftly kicked a large stone toward him with a sharp whoosh.

Just as the stone was about to strike Chu Liang, it transformed mid-air into a burly figure resembling a vajra warrior, roaring as he launched a punch downward!

If it was a competition of strength, Chu Liang had no fear. He met the punch head-on with his own.

Boom! Thud—

As their fists collided, the giant was sent crashing into the rubble, the impact echoing like thunder through the air.

In a heartbeat, Chu Liang had already faced off against three shadowy figures dressed in black.

They were the members of the Royal Wave Bureau from the Fuyao Kingdom.

As Chu Liang gazed at the figures before him, he realized the fight was inevitable. The Fuyao Kingdom was an ally of the Penglai Supreme Sect, like a loyal hound serving its master. If he didn't take down the dog, how would he ever get the chance to meet the master?

At the end of the street, a youth with a saber on his back approached slowly. His voice was low but clear as he said, "You truly are skilled. From the beginning, my esteemed teacher instructed us to keep an eye on the team from the Mount Shu Sect. They told me that Jiang Yuebai is the head disciple. Yet, I have always thought you were the strongest."

"Then you've got it wrong; Senior Sister Jiang is indeed stronger than me," Chu Liang replied.

"Yang Shenlong told us earlier that he would deal with the Mount Shu Sect team. When we offered to help, he said it wasn't necessary and instructed us to focus on protecting Misty Waters City. I really regretted it as I thought I had lost my chance to personally avenge my esteemed teacher by killing a Mount Shu disciple. So, I'm very grateful you came to me."

As the youth with the saber spoke, he continued advancing closer.

Snap.

He stopped five chi in front of Chu Liang; for cultivators, this distance was close enough to determine life or death in a single breath.

Chu Liang's flow of qi locked onto him, just as his qi flow locked onto Chu Liang. In truth, their confrontation had begun the moment he approached.

"Out of gratitude, I'll grant you a fair duel," said the youth with a saber on his back, commanding his companions, "Step back! No matter the outcome, do not interfere in this fight."

"Forget that," Chu Liang replied, shaking his head. "I suggest you all come at me together."

"Are you looking down on us?" The youth with a saber on his back said with a sneer, "You'll regret your arrogance."

"Not at all. I have great respect for people from Fuyao Kingdom," Chu Liang replied sincerely, "I'm just worried that if they leave, I won't have enough soul crystals."

Chapter 558: Hu Sanlang

The youth with a saber on his back left peacefully.

...

When the youth with a saber on his back heard Chu Liang saying such arrogant words so casually, his hair flew up and a fierce gleam flared in his eyes.

Hiss—

With a swift motion, the saber unsheathed, sending a dazzling cascade of starlight across the air.

A sharp whoosh filled the air as Chu Liang activated Dimension Compression once more, narrowly evading the saber's sudden strike.

A cold, intimidating light reflected from the saber. Had it struck, even with his physique, he wouldn't have endured it.

"Keep this in mind. The one who will eliminate you members of the Mount Shu Sect is named Hu Sanlang!" the youth with the saber on his back shouted in a final roar.

He swung his saber down like a crashing wave. The blade glinted sharply in the light.

What a ruthless strike!

Seeing this, Chu Liang couldn't help but feel shocked. No wonder Hu Sanlang always had that wickedly charming expression—he really had the skills to match it.

Without hesitation, Chu Liang channeled his cultivation energy at full force, lifting his Dustless Sword to block the saber.

When dealing with the team from Taotie City, every move Chu Liang executed felt ruthless, though he hadn't unleashed his full cultivation energy at the time. Now, standing before Hu Sanlang, he quickly circulated his qi to the max, revealing his true cultivation level.

He was at level two of the fifth realm.

Not long before he started the special training organized by the Mount Shu Sect, Chu Liang had achieved a breakthrough into the fifth realm.

After a few months of training in the Primordial Chaos Hidden Realm, he reached level two of the fifth realm.

Even before attaining the fifth realm, he had achieved Completion of Five Elements, thanks to the Colorful Doll, granting him control over all five elements. The recent breakthrough in his cultivation level just allowed him to channel both metal and wood foundational qi from both of his Golden Cores[1].

Hu Sanlang, who was opposite him, was merely at level one of the fifth realm in cultivation, yet the force behind his saber swing radiated a killing intent that surpassed typical cultivation power.

Boom—

When the second strike fell like a dragon's tail, it shattered the long street, splitting it apart. In an instant, a massive trench several dozen zhang long formed in the center.

As Chu Liang raised his Dustless Sword, the Ten Thousand Swords Seal instantly formed a shield of swords. It managed to deflect the sharp saber, yet the dazzling saber light still sent him stumbling back over ten zhang..

He flipped backward, commanding the myriad swords in the air, and launched a counterattack with the Myriad Talismanic Sword.

This time, he unleashed the Talismanic Script of Fire, which descended like a fiery meteor shower from the sky, engulfing the entire street and surrounding buildings.

It was unavoidable!

But Hu Sanlang did not dodge.

“Haah—” With a step of his right foot and a half spin, the saber light swept around him like a whirlwind, clearing away the fiery swords in all directions.

Seeing this, Chu Liang couldn't help but feel dubious.

Although the cultivation of the fifth realm was not weak, the glint reflecting off his saber was really too sharp for his cultivation level. This kind of saber qi and knife glint was sharp for even a sixth-realm cultivator.

While the cultivation of the fifth realm was formidable, the glint reflecting off his saber was exceptionally sharp for his level. This kind of saber qi and blade glint could challenge even a sixth-realm cultivator.

Before he could think any deeper, Hu Sanlang had already soared into the air, a sweeping cold light blocking out the sky, determined to not stop until Chu Liang was slain!

As the saber strike loomed down like the weight of the sky, leaving him nowhere to evade, Chu Liang had no choice but to lift his Dustless Sword and face it directly.

He unleashed the Heaven-Raising Sword!

A massive sword light erupted from the ground, clashing with the saber light in midair. The solid sword light collided with the cascading saber light, producing crackling sounds of thunder and lightning, before merging into a chaotic mass that scattered around them.

Both Chu Liang and Hu Sanlang felt the impact, retreating ten zhang away from each other.

Chu Liang felt a bit more recoil, as he had been at a disadvantage during the clash earlier. Even with the Heaven-Raising Sword, he was unable to penetrate the saber.

However, his body was exceptionally strong, and with the protection of the Jiuli Soul Armor, the damage he sustained was minimal.

Meanwhile, Hu Sanlang, pushed back by the dispersed sword qi, now had blood streaks across his body and face.

Yet, this level of injury didn't weaken his fighting spirit; instead, it only fueled his ferocity.

As Chu Liang witnessed the fierce qi flames blazing, he finally connected the dots and asked, "Could this be the Wave-Cleaving Saber Strike from the Fuyao Kingdom?"

The cultivation system of the Fuyao Kingdom, derived from Penglai Supreme Sect, primarily focused on ancient mystical techniques. They had only a few cultivation legacies, with the Wave-Cleaving Saber Strike being one of the most well-known.

According to legend, on the day the Fuyao Kingdom was founded, countless sea monsters gathered, attempting to seize the new nation's fate and fortune. The first king of Fuyao was said to have slain countless demons with a single saber, parting the sea for three days and instilling fear throughout the East Sea region.

Yet, the legacy of the Wave-Cleaving Saber remained exclusive to the royal family, with only its members granted the privilege to learn it.

Chu Liang thought to himself, Is Hu Sanlang part of the Fuyao Kingdom's royal family?

"For eight years, I fought in the Tiger's Den until my esteemed teacher rescued me. She broke the rules when she taught me the Wave-Cleaving Saber Strike." Hu Sanlang said, looking down and focusing intently on the blade of his saber. He continued, "And all of this is to take revenge on all you tyrants from Mount Shu!"

With his declaration, the saber light surged anew, growing even more powerful!

This resolute fighting spirit caused Chu Liang to frown slightly. “Tyrants?”

How did I suddenly become the villain?

...

On the high platform, at the seats reserved for the members of the Penglai Supreme Sect, Han Lingshuang sat alone, with no one within several zhang of her.

In her black attire, her snow-white skin stood out even more.

As she watched Hu Sanlang relentlessly strike at Chu Liang and push him to retreat, her usually composed eyes finally betrayed a flicker of excitement.

This day has finally arrived, she thought.

Everyone in the Royal Wave Bureau knew Han Lingshuang as cold and distant, but few were aware that she had once been the most beloved little princess of the Fuyao Kingdom’s royal family. Sixty years ago, she had been a talented and sweet girl, like an innocent little flower that had never left the greenhouse.

It wasn’t until that year, when she traveled to the capital of Yu to participate in the Assembly of Immortal Sects...

At first, the journey went smoothly. The Fuyao Kingdom’s team easily passed the Great Selection of the Four Seas, advancing to the Competition of the Hundred Sects. In the midst of their celebrations, they started dreaming of making it to the round of the Battle at the Imperial City.

Then, the teams from the Divine Nine and the Terrestrial Ten made their appearance. That year, the Mount Shu Sect sent a team consisting of Jiang Tiankuo, Yan Zi, and Di Nufeng.

Among the younger generation, these three were perhaps the equivalent of this year’s Yang Shenlong. The difference was that, unlike this year, there were three of them—all on the same team.

They dispersed and hunted down other teams one by one, not just wiping out individual teams but effortlessly crushing alliances of several teams. The immortal sects were so thoroughly defeated that, in desperation, teams of four had to split up to minimize the risk of total annihilation.

In those days, it was said that whoever was spotted by the Mount Shu Sect team first would be eliminated and the remaining fortunate ones would then advance to the next round.

If encountering a member of the Mount Shu Sect team was unfortunate, then crossing paths with Di Nufeng would be the epitome of misfortune.

The Fuyao Kingdom team had been hiding in an underground sand cavern when they were discovered by Di Nufeng.

Han Lingshuang could never forget that scene.

Crouching in the underground cavern, she focused on hiding her qi, not daring to reveal even the faintest hint. Meanwhile, Di Nufeng was outside burning the sand with her divine fire, heating the ground until it was almost molten.

As the horrifying, eerie laughter echoed, her teammates fell one by one, unable to endure, dragged out and left screaming in pain.

Suddenly, everything went quiet outside.

Han Lingshuang didn't dare extend her divine sense, so she strained her ears to listen carefully to the sounds outside. After a while, she thought Di Nufeng had finally left and raised her eyes to look out.

At that moment!

A head appeared upside down at the entrance of the underground cavern!

"Hee-hee-hee..." the voice cackled. "Little beauty, you wouldn't want your Fuyao Kingdom to end here, would you..."

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh—”

In that moment, Han Lingshuang made the choice to end her own life.

With a single glance, she resolutely drew her saber and ended her own life, finally bringing an end to that terrifying ordeal. For years afterward, she couldn't bear to sleep; whenever she drifted off, nightmares haunted her, transporting her back to that underground cavern, where the horrifying, sinister laughter echoed outside...

Her act of taking her own life out of fear at the Assembly of Immortal Sects turned her into a laughingstock among her peers in the royal family. The once-beloved princess felt, for the first time, the cold harshness of life.

So, she committed herself to seeking vengeance.

Since this grudge began at the Assembly of Immortal Sects, she was determined to settle it there. She focused on overcoming her weaknesses, training with all her might until she eventually secured the lead position at the Royal Wave Bureau.

She then discovered a child who had been taken in and raised by a tiger demon from a young age. This child possessed a rare natural disposition for developing saber intent, so she brought him into the Royal Wave Bureau and made an exception to teach him the Wave-Cleaving Saber Strike, a technique that only members of the royal family could practice.

Everything she did was for the Assembly of Immortal Sect this year.

If the Mount Shu Sect were eliminated in the Competition of the Hundred Sects for five consecutive years, they would lose their place among the Divine Nine. If her disciple could personally eliminate the team from the Mount Shu Sect, Han Lingshuang would finally be free from her inner demons.

Hu Sanlang, I'm counting on you for everything! she cried out inwardly.

How similar was the saber light of the youth within the light screen to Han Lingshuang's gaze outside it? Both shone with equal intensity and determination.

When she turned her gaze toward Di Nufeng in the distance, she saw that terrifying woman sitting at ease, engaged in conversation with two old men. Several jars of wine lay at her feet, and she held a bowl of beef offal, casually skewering pieces with a bamboo stick as she spoke and ate.

She appeared completely at ease, with no awareness whatsoever that her own disciple was on the verge of elimination.

Surely, you're just feigning calmness... Han Lingshuang thought to herself. When your disciple causes the Mount Shu Sect to lose its place in the Divine Nine, I doubt you would still remain this carefree.

But as she observed Chu Liang's expression on the light screen, she realized it closely resembled that of his teacher.

Both of them were effortlessly composed.

Han Lingshuang felt a rush of panic grip her unexpectedly.

Chapter 559: Don't Announce Your Big Moves Next Time

Boom—

The buildings in Misty Waters City had already been reduced to ruins by the relentless carpet bombing of Thunderfire Pills. Now, wherever Hu Sanlang's saber light touched, even the rubble crumbled into dust.

This saber technique basically swept up the entire street. It was so scary that even his teammates hid far away, not daring to approach.

In the middle of the whirlwind, Chu Liang moved quickly, dodging every attack and never letting himself get hit. Even when Hu Sanlang trapped him again and again, Chu Liang used his Dimension Compression skill to slip away, always staying just out of reach.

After attacking nonstop for fifteen minutes, Hu Sanlang finally stopped, holding his saber and catching his breath.

"Tired?" Chu Liang looked at him.

Chu Liang had thought it was weird how Hu Sanlang could unleash a saber power that seemed stronger than his actual cultivation level.

After realizing his opponent was using the Wave-Cleaving Saber Strike, Chu Liang figured out the secret. During their special training in the Primordial Chaos Hidden Realm, they had studied techniques from different immortal sects and major factions, including the Fuyao Kingdom's Wave-Cleaving Saber Strike.

The secret to this saber technique was to build up saber intent over time and strike only occasionally. The longer the intent was stored, the stronger the attack when it was finally released.

This was also why they decided to team up with the Penglai Supreme Sect.

Hu Sanlang had to limit how often he attacked so he could save up enough power for when he really needed it.

But this stored saber intent would eventually run out. The energy would weaken over time, and in the long, drawn-out fight that Chu Liang planned, Hu Sanlang's saved-up saber intent was finally weakening.

Hu Sanlang stood with his saber, staring at Chu Liang across from him and feeling just as shocked.

Sure, it is true that my stored saber intent is limited and will eventually run out. But is your Sea of Qi endless? Does Dimension Compression really use only a tiny bit of foundational qi? These questions filled Hu Sanlang's head.

In just that short fifteen minutes, he'd seen Chu Liang nearly engulfed by the light from his saber countless times. But each time, in the blink of an eye, Chu Liang managed to escape using Dimension Compression.

This divine skill is still an immortal art, after all. Are you really using it so freely? Hu Sanlang wondered.

Hu Sanlang thought his saber intent would last longer than Chu Liang's foundational qi. Once Chu Liang couldn't dodge anymore, he'd bring the fight to an end with one decisive slash.

Who would have thought that Chu Liang's foundational qi would seem endless...

Hu Sanlang couldn't tell if Chu Liang had an enormous Sea of Qi or a monster-like recovery speed. All he knew was that his own saber intent was already drained.

Meanwhile, Chu Liang remained completely unscathed.

The teammates watching nearby, along with the audience outside, began to realize that although Hu Sanlang had held the upper hand, his strength was now waning.

This situation was, in fact, exactly what Chu Liang had intended.

Had he clashed head-on with the full force of the Wave-Cleaving Saber Strike, he might not have been defeated, but both him and Hu Sanlang would have ended up both severely injured. Now that he was on his own, he needed to secure victory at the lowest possible cost.

Fortunately, he possessed both an enormous Sea of Qi and a rapid recovery speed.

With the strength of three Large-Headed Dolls, two ultimate-tier Golden Pills, and foundational qi harmonized by the Completion of Five Elements, his combined combat power was unmatched by anyone else in his realm.

Even as he was of the fifth realm as Hu Sanlang, he was different. If ordinary cultivators were rated one-star, and immortal sect prodigies rated two-star, then Chu Liang could be considered a three-star cultivator at the fifth realm—an exceptional state.

As long as it wasn't a divine ability or enchanted tool requiring a much higher cultivation realm, he could use his techniques freely—just as casually as spending spirit-stone coins.

"I won't rest until you're cut down by my saber," Hu Sanlang replied.

"Your saber is clearly not as sharp as your words," Chu Liang smirked.

"You think you've already won?" Hu Sanlang suddenly retorted.

It seemed he had made his decision. Raising his saber high, he formed a gesture with his left hand, and the low, rumbling sound of surging waves filled the air.

"Hu Sanlang!" his teammates from the Fuyao Kingdom couldn't help but shout.

"Tongshi[1], Baihe[2], Ying[3]..." Hu Sanlang said slowly, "I will give my all; the rest is up to you."

"No matter how much you look at them, they can't save you," Chu Liang said. "There was no grudge between us—I had no reason to kill you. But you chose to side with Penglai, and I really need soul crystals today. That's why I can't let any of you go."

"Heh." Hu Sanlang gave a cold laugh.

Boom—

Suddenly, his saber swung—not at Chu Liang, but at his own wrist, slicing it with a sharp hiss.

Blood spurted forth.

As his saber absorbed his blood and essence, the saber light took on a deep crimson hue. He leaped into the air, slashing down from above with renewed force!

The typical approach with the Wave-Cleaving Saber Strike was to build up saber intent over a long period, then release it all in a single, powerful strike.

But in desperate situations, there was another way.

What if the saved saber intent was exhausted? The answer was to draw upon power one didn't yet possess.

The user could tap into saber intent from future reserves, but at a steep cost: severe damage to their meridians. Pushing this technique too far could even lead to instant death.

The power behind this fatal strike was, predictably, immense.

Boom, boom, boom—

This time, the saber light wasn't a crashing wave from above but a vast ocean rising from the ground, leaving no room for escape. Even Dimension Compression couldn't slip him out of the reach of that crimson glow.

Hiss—

Chu Liang's figure was engulfed in an instant.

Bang!

After the thunderous crash, everything fell into silence.

"Hu Sanlang!" A few teammates rushed over.

They found Hu Sanlang half-kneeling, blood staining his body as he leaned on his saber for support. It was clear he wouldn't survive.

"Heh..." A faint smile appeared on his face. "I've finally avenged my esteemed teacher... I've eliminated the Mount Shu Sect..."

Moments ago, the saber light had engulfed Chu Liang like a vast ocean, a blow that would mean certain death for any enemy. Hu Sanlang turned his gaze toward the distant horizon, wondering if his esteemed teacher outside the Divine Mirror of the Eight Trigrams had witnessed this...

It was unknown as to whether Han Lingshuang had witnessed it, but in that moment, Hu Sanlang saw something terrifying.

He saw Chu Liang calmly walking out of the rubble nearby, a flicker of lingering fear in his eyes. "That strike was no joke; it was brutal."

"You..." Hu Sanlang's pupils trembled. He tried to speak, but blood filled his mouth. After a long pause, he uttered, "Sacrificial Substitute?"

In that instant when he struck down with his saber, he had clearly sensed that Chu Liang had no chance to dodge and he felt Chu Liang's life slip away. Yet now, he stood unscathed. He had likely used the Sacrificial Substitute technique to escape death.

"Correct," Chu Liang smiled, "Consider it a lesson—don't announce your big moves next time."

...

"Sacrificial Substitute, huh," Scholar Sun remarked in a leisurely tone. "At the last Mount Shu Summit, he hadn't mastered that skill, had he? This kid really does surprise us every time."

"His talent and perception are both exceptional. Now that his cultivation level is higher, mastering immortal arts comes even easier to him," Elder Huang added. "His potential is boundless."

"Weren't you the one who doubted him back then?" Scholar Sun chuckled.

"It's not my fault I misjudged him," Elder Huang replied, a hint of resentment in his voice. "Who would have thought someone with such extraordinary talent would have such a low cultivation level? Did he only begin cultivating a year or two ago? What was he doing before that?"

Scholar Sun smiled. "In any case, his accomplishments today are surely thanks to Ah Feng's guidance."

Di Nufeng, in the middle of enjoying her beef stew, swallowed a bite and looked up with a grin. "You can't say that. At least seven percent of Chu Liang's success is due to his own efforts... my contribution is, at most, ninety-three percent."

"Speaking of which, these young ones from the Fuyao Kingdom are something else," Elder Huang sighed. "One after another, they keep charging forward, even after their strongest has fallen. Anyone watching might think they were sworn enemies with the Mount Shu Sect."

"Who knows? No grudges in the past, no resentments now. What's all this even for?" Di Nufeng shook her head.

A short distance away, the three bigshots from the Whale Gang, Taotie City, and Thunderbolt Stronghold sat together, their expressions changing noticeably.

At first, Huyan Dong from Taotie City laughed, while Huang Hanshan and Xu Bashan remained expressionless.

Then, Huang Hanshan from Thunderbolt Stronghold started laughing as Huyan Dong and Xu Bashan kept their stoic expressions.

Now, it was Xu Bashan from the Whale Gang who laughed, while Huyan Dong and Huang Hanshan stayed stone-faced.

Indeed, the smiles never truly vanished; they simply passed from one face to another.

Initially, both Taotie City and Thunderbolt Stronghold held high hopes of advancing to the next round, making Huang Hanshan the most nervous of the three. Later, when Taotie City was eliminated, he was brimming with joy. But who could have guessed that Chu Liang wouldn't stop there? After defeating Taotie City, he went on and took out the Fuyao Kingdom's team too!

What's he doing?

If Chu Liang continued pressing forward, he would meet the last remaining member of the Thunderbolt Stronghold.

Although Huang Hanshan had confidence in his eldest disciple, Chu Liang's unstoppable momentum was daunting. From the looks of it, he truly intended to fight his way straight to Yang Shenlong to seek vengeance. Is this really necessary? When will this cycle of vengeance ever end? Huang Hanshan wondered.

Meanwhile, Huyan Dong, whose face had been ashen since Taotie City's elimination, now had a spark of hope in his eyes. Watching Chu Liang—whom he had seen as an enemy just moments ago—he whispered inwardly, Keep it up.

Chapter 560: The Dark King Sect and I Cannot Co-Exist

The evening breeze gently brushed against Black Whale Mountain as white waves chased the sandy beach. The barrage of Thunderfire Pills raining down on Misty Waters City finally stopped, and Du Wuhen could remove the protective enchanted formation surrounding him.

The sudden bombardment had almost razed Misty Waters City to the ground.

Earlier in the night, Du Wuhen had scanned the area with his divine sense and noticed Chu Liang killing his way into the city. He had initially intended to ambush and eliminate this lone wolf from the Mount Shu Sect team, crushing their final beacon of hope.

However, Yang Shenlong unexpectedly issued an order for all the Penglai Supreme Sect allies in the city to remain in place and stay on guard, forbidding them from taking any proactive action.

It seemed that the arrogant saber-wielding guy from the Fuyao Kingdom had been insistent on having a one-on-one with Chu Liang. Despite having previously denied his request, Yang Shenlong agreed to it this time.

As a result, they watched Chu Liang defeat the arrogant saber-wielder, Hu Sanlang.

Du Wuhen could see that Chu Liang was clearly superior to Hu Sanlang—be it his cultivation level, divine abilities, or enchanted tools. If Chu Liang hadn't minded taking a little damage, he could have ended the battle very quickly.

Despite being filled with resentment and coughing up several loads of blood, Hu Sanlang died peacefully. Chu Liang then swiftly took care of the remaining small fry from the Fuyao Kingdom team, quickly making his way to the street Du Wuhen was guarding.

Du Wuhen couldn't help but feel a surge of anger. It was fine that Yang Shenlong had not intervened. But if Yang Shenlong had just let him fight Chu Liang alongside the team from the Fuyao Kingdom, the Mount Shu Sect team might have already been eliminated along with the Taotie City team.

Now, what was he supposed to do with the immense responsibility weighing on his shoulders?

However, there was nothing else he could have done. Since he was seeking shelter under Yang Shenlong's wings, he had to follow Yang Shenlong's orders. The teams in Misty Waters City might seem like allies, but the harsh truth was that they were just the Penglai Supreme Sect's accessories.

Similarly, the Penglai Supreme Sect was more like Yang Shenlong and his accessories. Thus, Yang Shenlong was the absolute authority in Misty Waters City.

When Du Wuhen chose to enter the city, he had already anticipated he would have a tough time there, but he did not have any other options.

Before this Assembly of Immortal Sects, everything had been improving steadily... The wheels of the Thunderbolt Stronghold were rolling forward, while the Mount Shu Sect's performance declined year after year. They were barely hanging onto their position in the Divine Nine. It was just a matter of time before the Thunderbolt Stronghold would take their place. Furthermore, it just so happened that the team of disciples they selected to participate in this Assembly of Immortal Sects was their strongest ever.

No one could have anticipated the unexpected turn of events that forced Du Wuhen to resort to joining the enemy camp.

Chu Liang was to blame for all of it.

Du Wuhen shifted all his complaints and anger onto Chu Liang.

If it wasn't for that shameless scoundrel eliminating my brothers, how could I have fallen to such a state?

It's just as well that he's come. I can get revenge right here!

Just as that thought crossed his mind, he saw what seemed like a meteor blaze through the air from up ahead and crash onto the ground right in front of him.

Bang!

In the blink of an eye, the dust settled, and the flames died down, only to reveal Chu Liang standing there. Like a brisk autumn breeze sweeping away fallen leaves, he had collected the soul crystals of the team from the Fuyao Kingdom and then rushed over to Du Wuhen without pausing.

"Young Hero Du, so you joined the ene—the Penglai team's alliance too," Chu Liang said.

He was quite shocked to see Du Wuhen. He hadn't anticipated this at all.

Chu Liang hadn't been surprised that Taotie City had allied with the Penglai Supreme Sect. However, he found it surprising that even Du Wuhen, with his thick eyebrows and large eyes, had allied with them too.

Seeing Chu Liang's astonished expression only fueled Du Wuhen's anger. Is it so strange that I'm here? Isn't this all because of you??

"There's no need for us to say much more," Du Wuhen replied, waving his hand decisively. "Whether the Mount Shu Sect will be driven out from the Divine Nine or the Thunderbolt Stronghold will climb the ranks into the Divine Nine, that all depends on this battle between us!"

Chu Liang frowned. "Those two aren't really valid options, though?"

"Enough with the nonsense. Let's fight to the death!" Du Wuhen declared.

He summoned his massive scythe, and his murderous intent instantly surged to its peak.

Chu Liang remained calm even in the face of Du Wuhen's intense intent to fight. "You're the eldest disciple of the Thunderbolt Stronghold. Your esteemed teacher is the sworn brother of my sworn brother... It's not inappropriate if I call you 'nephew,' right?"

Chu Liang maintained a degree of courtesy toward the Thunderbolt Stronghold because of his relationship with Xu Bashan.

"Let me give you a piece of advice, nephew. You're the last remaining member of the Thunderbolt Stronghold team. Do not stand in my way."

Boom.

Du Wuhen's response to Chu Liang was immediate and lethal. He swung his massive scythe in the air, producing a crescent-shaped streak of light that instantly transformed into countless birds that seemed to cover the sky. They shot straight toward Chu Liang!

...

A flock of birds rose from a mountain forest, scattering across the sky.

There was dark purple lava flowing all over Soul Flame Island in the West Sea. Some of the lava had pooled into a volcanic crater, forming a deep lava pond that swirled with the hues of destruction.

The dark purple lava did not give off any heat and appeared unremarkable. However, if any birds or beasts touched it even slightly upon landing, they would instantly perish in the lava, swallowed up in the blink of an eye. The lava ravenously devoured all lifeforms. Yet, there was a huge shadowy figure submerged in that lava pond.

On the edge of the lava pond, there was a middle-aged cultivator in black robes sitting cross-legged with his eyes closed. He looked just like the person who had almost stirred up a storm in the illusory realm earlier—Immortal Yuan Lu.

Suddenly, Immortal Yuan Lu opened his eyes.

The lava before him boiled, and a ball of fire with a pitch-black core emerged from the lava pond. The ball of fire turned over slightly, revealing a divine glow.

It seemed to be an eyeball!

"It failed..." Immortal Yuan Lu said quietly.

As the lava bubbled, a voice slowly rang out from the depths of the lava pond. "I did my best. To begin with, I'm not in my peak condition. The most I could do was delay the master of the Divine Mirror of the Eight Trigrams for a moment."

"It has nothing to do with you, Nightmare Demon King. When I was in that illusory realm, someone managed to destroy the Black Devil Whale and my avatar."

Immortal Yuan Lu's tone was calm, but it was just concealing the rage he felt.

From what Immortal Yuan Lu said, it was clear that the entity at the bottom of the lava pool was the Nightmare Demon King, who had been sleeping for thousands of years in the Deep Pool of Dreams!

"Those immortal sect disciples?" asked the Nightmare Demon King in a booming thunder-like voice from the depths of the lava pond.

"No..." Immortal Yuan Lu replied, sounding exasperated. "It was someone from the Dark King Sect."

Several thousand years ago, the Nightmare Demon King was inflicted with a near-fatal injury. However, thanks to its unusual divine abilities, it managed to survive and escape to the Deep Pool of Dreams, where it recuperated for several thousand years.

At present, the Nightmare Demon King had regained some of its cultivation power, but it still had not fully recovered from the severe injury. Thus, even though the Nightmare Demon King had awakened, it still needed to find a place where it could restore its soul.

Soul Flame Island was one such place.

The lava on Soul Flame Island devoured living creatures, but it also contained powerful spiritual energy that had been accumulated since ancient times. So, the lava pond was akin to a medicinal bath for the Nightmare Demon King.

However, Soul Flame Island had always been under the control of the West Sea Diabolical Forces, and the demons did not have enough power to seize it. It was only with the Demon King of Qingqiu's mediation that the Nightmare Demon King and the West Sea Diabolical Forces collaborated this time.

The West Sea Diabolical Forces lent Soul Flame Island to the Nightmare Demon King for recuperation, while the Nightmare Demon King agreed to help Immortal Yuan Lu seize the Divine Mirror of the Eight Trigrams.

The demons occupied the Far West, and a significant portion of the West Sea served as a buffer zone between the Far West and the nine provinces. Unlike the elderly chancellor of the previous dynasty, diabolical sects did not abide by laws or morals, so they had always worked with demons.

When the righteous sects purged the West Sea Diabolical Forces from the nine provinces, the demons had sheltered many fleeing diabolical cultivators, allowing the diabolical sects to survive time and time again despite almost getting wiped out.

This collaboration between the Nightmare Demon King and the West Sea Diabolical Forces could kill three birds with one stone. It could significantly weaken the strength of the righteous sects in the nine provinces and allow the Nightmare Demon King to recover. Then once the Nightmare Demon King had fully recovered, the West Sea Diabolical Forces would gain a powerful ally.

Unfortunately, their plan failed due to an unexpected factor.

"The Violet Gold Marquess of the Dark King Sect pretended to cooperate with me, but in reality, it was his people who sabotaged my plan. Otherwise, how could those immortal sect disciples have stopped me?" Immortal Yuan Lu gazed up at the sky. "He deliberately painted the airship with weird colors, but I still recognized it. The airship that destroyed the Black Devil Whale was the Violet Gold Marquess's airship. Since he even gave his airship to that person, that can only mean he had already planned to ruin my plan long in advance!"

"Dark King Sect..." Immortal Yuan Lu became increasingly furious. "Though we have our conflicts, I have always maintained a facade of friendship. After all, life is hard for diabolical sects. Even when your members act brazenly, I never treated them as enemies.

"However, from today onward, the West Sea Diabolical Forces and the Dark King Sect cannot co-exist!"