

A Man Like None Other Novel

Chapter 6251

He gripped the Dragon-Slaying Sword tightly and charged forward again.

This time, his sword was faster, more ruthless, and more decisive.

Yunxi stood at a distance, watching the battle, her brows furrowing deeper and deeper.

She could see that although David fought fiercely and relentlessly, Ning Zhi clearly still had strength to spare.

Every attack David launched was precisely neutralized by Ning Zhi; every burst of energy from David was calmly dealt with by Ning Zhi.

If this continued, David would eventually be exhausted, and then it would be a matter of life and death.

She gripped her sword tightly, her ghostly energy surging around her, preparing to intervene.

"Yunxi, don't."

David's voice suddenly came, his tone firm and unquestionable, "This is between him and me, don't interfere."

Yunxi bit her lip, her eyes filled with resentment, but ultimately she didn't move.

She knew David's temperament.

When he said he didn't want her to interfere, he really meant it.

If she forced her way in, David wouldn't be grateful; instead, he would be angry.

This was his pride, and also his stubbornness.

The battle continued.

David fought with increasing ferocity, his golden dragon bloodline boiling to its limit.

He felt like a piece of steel thrown into a furnace, being forged and tempered by fire. Every strike carried the resolute determination of burning life itself. The

dragon patterns on the Dragon-Slaying Sword shone brightly, the entire sword emitting a blinding golden light, as if it might explode at any moment.

Every line on the blade pulsed and burned, the divine weapon, passed down for countless years, responding to its master's will.

Ning Zhi gradually abandoned his frivolous expression, a hint of solemnity appearing in his eyes.

He could sense that David's strength was still increasing during the battle, seemingly without limit.

Each strike was heavier than the last, each attack more ferocious than the last.

This terrifying talent of growing stronger with each battle filled Ning Zhi with dread.

"This guy..."

A trace of resentment flashed through Ning Zhi's mind.

He had given so much.

He fell into the demonic path, enduring the pain of demonic backlash;

he devoured the cultivation of countless powerful beings, bearing sins he could never wash away;

he abandoned his former self, becoming an existence even he himself was unfamiliar with.

All of this was what earned him his current strength.

But what about David?

He had just reached the fourth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, yet his combat power was no less than his.

What gave him the right?

What gave him the right to always be one step ahead of him?

A ruthless glint flashed in Ning Zhi's eyes.

"David, you are indeed very strong," he said coldly, "but not enough."

Before his words had even finished, the demonic energy around him surged violently.

That demonic energy was no longer the faint, almost imperceptible form it had been before, but rather erupted from his body like a volcanic eruption, blotting out the sky and dyeing the entire sky black.

Within the demonic energy, faint cries of ghosts and wolves could be heard, the resentment left behind by the powerful beings he had devoured, the sins he bore.

He threw a punch.

This punch was unlike any of his previous punches.

The fist energy was as black as ink, but it was no longer simply black.

Within that inky blackness, a dark red light flowed, countless twisted faces wailed, and a terrifying power capable of destroying everything was gathering. That was his all-out attack, a strike powerful enough to level a mountain.

David gritted his teeth and swung his sword to meet it. He knew he couldn't withstand that punch, but he couldn't retreat.

Once he retreated, his momentum would dissipate, and there would be no chance to turn the tide.

The Dragon-Slaying Sword let out a mournful cry, as if it too knew this was the final collision.

"Boom—!"

This strike was ten times more powerful than any before.

Golden light and demonic energy exploded simultaneously upon collision, transforming into a visible shockwave that spread outwards at supersonic speeds.

Wherever the shockwave passed, the ground was ripped apart, rocks were pulverized, and the air was compressed into a tangible mass, emitting a piercing shriek.

The protective array of Holy Light Peak trembled violently under this attack, and dense cracks appeared on the golden light shield, like an eggshell about to break.

The spirit stones in the array's core were instantly drained of all their spiritual power, turning into grayish-white powder. Dozens of elders maintaining the array simultaneously coughed up blood and collapsed to the ground.

David was blasted away like a golden meteor, crashing heavily to the ground hundreds of feet away.

The impact created a crater several feet deep, filled with charred mud and shattered rocks.

He struggled to his feet, but every bone in his body groaned, every muscle trembled.

The Dragon-Slaying Sword lay embedded in the ground beside him, its light dimmed to a mere groan.

Blood seeped from his mouth, nostrils, and ears—a sign of internal organ injury.

He knelt on one knee, gasping for breath, his vision blurring.

Ning Zhi fared no better.

He was forced back more than ten feet by the recoil, his feet carving deep furrows in the ground.

His black clothes were torn in several places by the sword energy, one blade even slicing his arm, blood dripping from his fingertips.

He glanced down at his wounds, a flicker of surprise in his eyes.

How long had it been since he'd been injured?

Since falling into the demonic path, since gaining his current power, he hadn't tasted injury for a long time.

"David..."

he murmured, his tone tinged with complexity.

On Holy Light Peak, Yao Chen watched this scene, a glint of light flashing in his eyes.

The opportunity had arrived.

David was severely injured, and Ning Zhi had also expended considerable energy.

This was the perfect time for him to strike.

If he could eliminate both of them now, the Divine Hall could completely remove two major threats and rest easy.

He calculated in his mind: David had a grudge against the Divine Hall; keeping him alive would only bring trouble sooner or later.

Although Ning Zhi seemed uninterested in the Divine Hall, who knew if he might change his mind?

Rather than waiting for Ning Zhi to free up his hands, he should act now, help Ning Zhi deal with David first, and then find an opportunity to attack Ning Zhi.

The enemy of my enemy is my friend—Ning Zhi wouldn't be unaware of this principle.

As long as he showed enough sincerity, Ning Zhi shouldn't refuse.

"Pass down the order to activate the mountain-protecting formation," Yao Chen said in a deep voice.

The guardian elder was shocked: "Hall Master, what are you doing?"

Yao Chen didn't answer. With a flash, he led several True Immortal Realm elders away from the protective mountain array and flew towards the battlefield.

Yun Xi was the first to spot them and shouted sharply, "David, be careful!"

David was struggling to stand up from the pit. Hearing Yun Xi's warning, he tried to retreat, but it was too late. Yao

Chen struck out with a palm.

The golden palm print, carrying the terrifying power of a True Immortal Realm expert, descended from the sky like a mountain, aiming straight for David's back.

This palm strike was as fast as lightning, extremely ruthless, and showed no mercy. Wherever the palm print passed, the air was compressed into a solid form, emitting a piercing shriek.

David was caught off guard and barely managed to dodge the vital point, but the palm wind still struck his shoulder.

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"Bang!"

The sound of bones cracking was clearly audible.

His shoulder caved in instantly, and he was sent flying like a kite with a broken string, crashing heavily to the ground dozens of feet away, spitting out blood.

"David!"

Yun Xi was furious, drawing her sword to charge at Yao Chen, but David stopped her with a raised hand.

David struggled to his feet, his left arm hanging limply at his side, the bones in his shoulder shattered, every movement causing excruciating pain.

He looked at Yao Chen, his eyes filled with coldness, but a mocking smile curled at the corner of his mouth. "The head of the Divine Hall? Is this how your Divine Hall behaves? Taking advantage of someone in distress?"

Yao Chen's expression remained unchanged as he calmly said, "There's no need to follow any rules when dealing with an arrogant fool like you. You destroyed my Holy Light Domain's Holy Pure Sect and insulted the dignity of my Divine Race; you deserve to die."

He turned to Ning Zhi, his face instantly plastered with a smile, and cupped his hands, saying, "Senior Ning Zhi, I am Yao Chen, the head of the Divine Hall. I

have long admired your name, and meeting you today, I can see it is indeed well-deserved. Senior has a grudge against David, and so do I.

I am willing to lend you a hand to deal with this fiend. As the saying goes, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. What do you say, Senior?"

Ning Zhi looked at him without speaking.

His gaze was terrifyingly calm, as if he were looking at a dead man.

Yao Chen was overjoyed, thinking Ning Zhi was considering it, and quickly continued, "Senior, the Divine Hall has been operating in the Holy Domain of Light for tens of thousands of years, with a profound foundation. If we can join forces, the Divine Hall is willing to provide full assistance to you in your future endeavors in the Holy Domain of Light. Whether it's resources, intelligence

, or manpower, please don't hesitate to ask." He paused, then added, "Senior, rest assured, I have no other intentions than to sincerely wish to befriend you.

This David is ruthless and indiscriminately kills innocent people; everyone has the right to punish him. It is perfectly reasonable for me to join forces with you, Senior."

Yao Chen spoke eloquently, his eyes full of expectation.

In his mind, Ning Zhi had no reason to refuse.

The Divine Hall was one of the oldest forces in the Holy Domain of Light; with the Divine Hall's assistance, Ning Zhi's actions in the Holy Domain of Light would be much more convenient.

Moreover, he had taken the initiative to show goodwill, adopting such a humble posture; Ning Zhi wouldn't refuse him.

But he was wrong.

Ning Zhi looked at him and suddenly smiled.

The smile was faint, yet it carried undisguised mockery and disdain, as if looking at a clown.

"Yao Chen?"

he repeated the name softly, his tone playful and somewhat nonchalant. "You just said, 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend'?"

Yao Chen nodded hastily, his face beaming. "Exactly, exactly. Senior has a grudge against David, and I also have a grudge against David. It's only natural for us to join forces."

Ning Zhi shook his head, looking at him like he was looking at an ignorant child.

"Yao Chen, haven't you made a mistake?"

He stepped forward slowly, each step leaving a deep footprint in the ground. The soil around the footprints was corroded by demonic energy, instantly turning into charred powder.

"You think you're worthy to be my friend?" Ning Zhi's face was full of sarcasm.

Yao Chen's smile froze instantly, as if a bucket of ice water had been poured over him.

Ning Zhi continued, "Your Divine Hall, claiming to be the righteous path, secretly captures demonic cultivators and rogue cultivators to conduct those shameful bloodline experiments. For your own selfish gain, you turn living people into monsters, letting them die in agony. This behavior is even worse than that of the demon race."

His voice was not loud, but every word was like a hammer blow to Yao Chen's heart. "You lot dare to talk to me about cooperation? Do you even deserve to be called 'enemies of my enemy'?" Ning Zhi's mockery deepened.

Yao Chen's face turned deathly pale, cold sweat beading on his forehead. He hurriedly said, "Senior, there must be some misunderstanding! Our Divine Hall..."

"Misunderstanding?"

Ning Zhi sneered, interrupting him. "I saw it with my own eyes, I heard it with my own ears, and you call it a misunderstanding?"

He raised his right hand, and a wisp of black demonic flame quietly appeared in his palm.

Though small, the flame radiated a chilling heat, distorting and scorching the surrounding air.

"How many demonic cultivators has your Divine Hall captured? How many people have you killed? Those demonic cultivators you captured, those rogue

cultivators you used as experimental subjects, their wronged souls are still wailing in that dense forest. Do you think I don't know?"

Yao Chen trembled all over, subconsciously taking a step back, his voice changing tone: "Senior, I... I'm doing this for the future of the Divine Race... If we don't become stronger, the Divine Hall will eventually follow in the footsteps of the Divine Temple..."

"The future of the Divine Race?"

Ning Zhi interrupted him again, his eyes full of disdain.

"Do you think I don't know what you're planning? You want to use me to deal with David, and then reap the benefits after we've both been weakened.

Or, you want to use my influence to strengthen your Divine Hall, and then find an opportunity to kick me aside. Yao Chen, I can see through your scheme at a glance."

Yao Chen's face changed drastically, his lips trembling as he tried to explain, but Ning Zhi didn't give him the chance.

"Yao Chen, the worst thing you could do was treat me like a fool." Ning Zhi's voice was terrifyingly calm, but beneath that calm was a killing intent capable of destroying the heavens and the earth.

"You think I'd cooperate with you? You're not even worthy to carry my shoes,"

Ning Zhi sneered.

Yao Chen finally panicked, completely panicked.

His legs went weak, almost kneeling down, his voice trembling as he pleaded, "Senior, I had no such intention! I just... I just..."

Ning Zhi wouldn't listen to his nonsense.

He raised his hand and struck out with his palm.

The black demonic flames that had been churning in his palm suddenly erupted!

It wasn't the casual flame he'd used against the divine power before, but a true, all-out world-destroying flame.

The demonic flames spewed from his palm, initially just a thin pillar of fire, but in an instant, the pillar of fire expanded to tens of feet thick, transforming into a ferocious black fire dragon, baring its fangs and claws as it pounced on Yao Chen!

Wherever the fire dragon passed, space was torn open with a huge rift, revealing the pitch-black void within.

The spatial fragments at the edge of the rift melted and evaporated in the demonic flames, emitting a piercing shriek.

A deep trench, several meters deep, was scorched into the ground. The soil at the edge of the trench melted under the intense heat, turning into dark red magma that bubbled and bubbled.

Yao Chen was terrified and desperately channeled all the spiritual power within his body.

His holy light protective shield was like paper before the demonic flames, torn to shreds the moment it touched him.

He summoned his protective artifact, the golden mirror that had been with him for thousands of years, but it only lasted for less than a breath in the demonic flames before shattering into countless fragments.

He turned to flee, but the fire dragon was too fast, so fast that he didn't even have time to react.

The demonic flames instantly devoured his protective holy light, his physical body, and his soul.

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“No—!”

Yao Chen let out a bloodcurdling scream, his voice filled with resentment, confusion, and despair.

He died without understanding why Ning Zhi would kill him.

He was clearly helping Ning Zhi, clearly wanting to cooperate with him, clearly having lowered his stance and abandoned his dignity, so why...

The demonic flames dissipated.

Yao Chen’s body turned to ashes, vanishing into the world.

The elders who had followed Yao Chen didn’t even have time to scream before being engulfed by the demonic flames and instantly killed.

Their bodies burned in the demonic flames for less than a breath before completely turning to nothingness, leaving not even bones.

But the demonic flames didn’t stop there.

After devouring Yao Chen, the fire dragon continued forward, crashing directly into the protective array of Holy Light Peak.

Boom—!

The entire Holy Light Peak trembled.

The protective array, strengthened by countless ancestors of the divine halls over tens of thousands of years, was like paper before Ning Zhi's demonic flames, instantly torn open with a huge gap.

The golden light shield melted and evaporated rapidly under the scorching demonic flames, turning into countless golden specks, like a golden rain.

Cracks spread outwards from the breach, dense and numerous, like a spider web.

In just a few breaths, the entire formation collapsed, the golden light shield completely dissipated, revealing the trembling Holy Light Peak within.

The buildings on the mountain swayed precariously in the aftershocks of the demonic flames, countless palaces and pavilions collapsed with a deafening roar, debris flying everywhere, and dust billowing.

The disciples of the Divine Hall scattered and fled, their cries, screams, and pleas for mercy mingling together, echoing throughout the entire mountain.

Ning Zhi withdrew his hand, looking at the scene before him with a calm expression, as if he had just done something insignificant.

The entire scene was deathly silent.

On Holy Light Peak, the surviving disciples of the Divine Hall collapsed to the ground, trembling all over, lacking even the courage to flee.

They looked at the black-clad figure at the foot of the mountain as if looking at an invincible demon god.

Yun Xi looked at Ning Zhi with fear in her eyes, instinctively shielding David behind her.

Ming Li gripped his Ghost Blade tightly, standing in front of Liu Qianqian, his palms sweating profusely.

Yun Yao hid behind David, trembling all over, unable to utter a word.

David calmly looked at Ning Zhi, a complex expression flashing in his eyes.

Ning Zhi turned around and looked at David, "What, are you surprised?"

David did not answer.

Ning Zhi said calmly, "A man like Yao Chen deserves to die. He claims to be righteous, but behind the scenes he does nothing but despicable things. Although I'm not a good person myself, at least I despise this kind of scum."

He paused, his gaze turning icy.

"That's enough for today. We'll fight again when we have another chance."

With that, he turned and transformed into a black streak of light, disappearing into the distance.

The streak of light tore through the sky, leaving a long gash in the clouds that took a long time to heal.

Ning Zhi wasn't stupid. He knew that in a life-or-death situation, Yun Xi would definitely intervene. If David and Yun Xi joined forces, he would definitely be no match for them.

Moreover, Ning Zhi wasn't worried that David would run away. As long as Sonya was with him, David would never give up.

Ning Zhi even wanted to see David die at Sonya's hands.

David stood there, watching Ning Zhi's departing figure, speechless for a long time.

Yun Xi walked to his side and whispered, "Who exactly is this Ning Zhi?"

David was silent for a moment before slowly speaking.

"A madman."

He turned and looked towards Holy Light Peak.

That once majestic and sacred mountain was now crumbling, its protective array broken, its palaces and pavilions mostly collapsed, and disciples of the Divine Hall were fleeing everywhere. It was nothing like a sacred place anymore.

"Let's go, I still have business with the Divine Hall."

He strode towards Holy Light Peak.

Although his left arm still hung limply at his side, although blood still clung to the corner of his mouth, and although every step aggravated his wound, his back was ramrod straight, like a drawn sword.

Yun Xi followed behind him, and Ming Li and Liu Qianqian also caught up.

Yun Yao wiped away her tears, mustered her courage, and followed as well.

The five figures walked towards the dilapidated mountain.

David quickly found a guardian elder who was about to flee inside the ruined palace of the Divine Hall!

Upon seeing David arrive, the guardian elder knelt down with a thud and burst into tears.

"Grandpa, spare me! Grandpa, spare me!" The guardian elder, having witnessed David's strength, was terrified.

"Do me a favor, and I'll let you go,"

David said to the guardian elder.

“Grandpa, just say the word. I’ll do anything...”

the guardian elder nodded repeatedly.

David took out the soul crystal containing the remnant souls of Mu Sha and his wife, saying, “This is a soul crystal refined by the temple. It contains two remnant souls. I know your temple has the ability to release the remnant souls within the soul crystal and directly shape them into physical forms, thus restoring their physical bodies.”

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Hearing David’s words, the guardian elder was slightly taken aback.

His kneeling body trembled violently, cold sweat mixed with dust dripping from his forehead, leaving dark streaks on his face.

His name was Zhou Yuanlang, a guardian elder of the Divine Hall for three thousand years, his cultivation barely touching the threshold of the True Immortal Realm. He was usually a respected figure in the Divine Hall.

But at this moment, he didn’t even have the courage to look David in the eye.

He subconsciously swallowed.

The Divine Hall did indeed possess this secret technique.

It was one of the most core inheritances of the Divine Hall for tens of thousands of years—the Soul Return Technique.

Through special means, it released the remnant soul sealed within the soul crystal, then used the unique bloodline power of the divine race to reshape its physical body.

This secret technique was extremely complex, requiring specific arrays, precious materials, and at least three elders at the True Immortal Realm level or above to perform the technique together.

Moreover, the success rate was not high.

But he dared not deny it.

David's eyes told him that if he said "no," his head would be separated from his body in the next instant.

"Yes...yes."

Zhou Yuanlang nodded repeatedly, his voice trembling. "The Divine Hall does indeed possess this secret technique, called the Soul Return Technique. However...it requires a specific place to cast..."

"What place?" David pressed.

Zhou Yuanlang hesitated for a moment, then gritted his teeth and said, "In the forbidden area behind the Divine Hall...there is an ancient Soul Return Formation there, the only place in the entire Holy Light Domain where the remnant soul of the Soul Crystal can be safely released.

Ordinary formations that forcibly release the Soul Crystal will cause the remnant soul to dissipate the moment it is released; only that formation can guarantee the integrity of the remnant soul..."

David put the Soul Crystal back into his pocket and said coldly, "Lead the way."

Zhou Yuanlang shuddered, a barely concealed strange light flashing in his eyes, but it was quickly covered by fear.

"Yes, yes, yes...Grandpa, come with me..."

He turned around and walked towards the back of Holy Light Peak, his steps faltering, his back looking extremely disheveled.

Yun Xi walked to David's side and said in a low voice, "This person is not right."

David nodded slightly: "I know."

Of course he knew.

Zhou Yuanlang agreed too quickly, and his attitude was too submissive.

Even if someone who had been an elder in the Divine Hall for thousands of years was afraid of death, he shouldn't have so readily betrayed the sect's core secrets.

Unless he had other plans.

"Then why are you going with him?" Yun Xi frowned.

David looked at Zhou Yuanlang's back and said calmly, "He has his plans, and I have my methods. My friend and his wife's remnant souls won't last much longer; I can't wait."

Yun Xi stopped speaking, only gripping her sword tightly, her eyes filled with even greater vigilance.

Ming Li, holding Liu Qianqian's hand, walked at the very back, his Ghost Blade already half-drawn, ready to deal with any unexpected situation.

Yun Yao followed closely behind David, her face pale, but she bit her lip, not uttering a sound.

Six figures passed through the dilapidated buildings of Holy Light Peak, heading towards the back mountain.

Along the way, there were collapsed palaces and fleeing Divine Hall disciples everywhere.

When the disciples saw David and his group, they screamed and scattered as if they had seen ghosts; no one dared to stop them.

The hall master, Yao Chen, is dead; the protective array has been broken; the elders are either dead or have fled. This sacred land, which once dominated the Holy Domain of Light for hundreds of thousands of years, is now nothing more than a toothless tiger, all show and no substance.

Zhou Yuanlang led them through ruins and a dark mountain tunnel, finally arriving at the entrance of a valley shrouded in thick fog.

"This is it,"

Zhou Yuanlang stopped, pointing into the valley. "The Soul Return Array is deep within the valley. However, it's been shrouded in a restriction for years, preventing outsiders from entering. Only my elder's token can activate it..." He pulled a palm-sized golden token from his robes, its surface covered in densely packed runes, emitting a faint glow.

"Grandpa, wait a moment, I'll activate the restriction right away..."

Zhou Yuanlang held the token up, chanting incantations.

The runes on the token began to light up, the golden light growing stronger until it transformed into a beam of light that shot into the thick fog.

The fog churned and slowly parted to reveal a narrow passage.

At the end of the passage, an ancient stone platform could be vaguely seen, its surface covered in intricate patterns, emitting a faint blue light.

"That's the Soul Return Array,"

Zhou Yuanlang said, pointing to the platform with a beaming smile. "Grandpa, please follow me. Casting the spell will take a little time, but it will definitely succeed..."

He then stepped into the passage first.

David followed, but the moment he stepped into the passage, his brow furrowed sharply.

Something was wrong.

The aura in this passage... something was off.

An extremely eerie aura emanated from the depths of the valley. This aura contained both the holy light unique to the gods and the malevolent, demonic energy characteristic of the demons. These two diametrically opposed forces were forcibly mixed together, creating a distorted, chaotic, and nauseating sense of oppression.

It was like forcibly mixing oil and water; superficially they blended, but in reality, each drop repelled and tore at the other.

"David..."

Yun Xi's voice came from behind, tinged with obvious apprehension, "There's something wrong with this place."

"I know."

David stopped, his gaze sharp as lightning, sweeping towards the thick fog at the end of the passage.

The distorted aura grew thicker and heavier, as if something was awakening from its slumber.

Zhou Yuanlang had reached the middle of the passage when he suddenly stopped and turned around.

His expression changed.

The obsequious, servile demeanor vanished, replaced by an almost manic smugness and resentment.

“David, David, you actually dared to follow me in.”

Zhou Yuanlang’s voice no longer trembled, but instead carried a long-suppressed sense of exhilaration. “What do you think the Divine Hall is? You think I’d obediently help you? Hahahaha...”

He laughed loudly, the laughter echoing in the narrow passage, extremely jarring. Chen

Ping looked at him calmly, without saying a word.

Zhou Yuanlang suddenly raised the token in his hand and slammed it hard against the wall of the passage.

Boom—!

The entire passage shook violently, and thick fog surged in from all directions, completely sealing off the escape route.

On the ancient stone platform at the end of the passage, the intricate patterns lit up with a dazzling red light, like flowing blood.

But the most chilling thing was the heartbeat coming from below the stone platform.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

The heartbeat was deep and powerful, each beat causing the ground to tremble slightly, each beat like a heavy punch to the heart.

Zhou Yuanlang retreated to the side of the stone platform, his smile becoming even more ferocious.

“Come forth, my clan’s most perfect masterpiece!”

As soon as he finished speaking, the stone platform exploded!

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Shards of stone flew, dust billowed, and a colossal figure soared into the sky from beneath the stone platform, landing heavily at the end of the passage.

As the dust settled, David finally saw the thing in its entirety.

It was... a humanoid monster.

Its size was enormous, over two zhang tall, its entire body covered in dark golden scales, each scale flowing with eerie blood-red patterns.

Its left half radiated a holy golden light, the holy light power unique to the divine race;

its right half, however, surged with pitch-black demonic energy, the malevolent intent unique to the demon race.

These two diametrically opposed forces clashed wildly within its body, yet were forcibly fused together by some bizarre method, making it appear like a torn and reassembled doll, twisted and mad in every way.

Its face was expressionless, or rather, its face was incapable of expressing any expression.

It wasn't a normal human face at all. The left half still retained human features, but the right half was completely twisted and deformed, with countless worm-like blood vessels bulging beneath the skin. One eye was blood-red, while the other was empty, like a lifeless object.

"This is..."

Yun Xi gasped, instinctively taking a step back.

"The only finished product of the secret fusion of the Divine Hall."

Zhou Yuanlang stood behind the monster, his voice filled with pride and resentment. "We spent ten thousand years, using thousands of divine and demonic cultivators as test subjects, to successfully create this one."

He reached out and gently patted the monster's back, his manner resembling that of someone showing off their most prized creation.

"Its body is fused with the bloodlines of twelve divine cultivators and the demonic cores of six demonic cultivators. We spent ten thousand years repeatedly adjusting and improving it to achieve its current stable state."

Zhou Yuanlang's smile grew increasingly maniacal.

"Peak of the third rank of True Immortal Realm. This is the greatest achievement of the Divine Hall in tens of thousands of years! Given enough time, it could even grow to the peak of the ninth rank of True Immortal Realm, or even break through to the legendary realm!"

He looked at David, his eyes full of contempt and disdain. "If it weren't for that trash Hall Master being too careless and being instantly killed by that demon Ning Zhi, as long as we release it, none of you would have escaped! Not a single one of you would have escaped!"

David stared at the monster, his brows furrowed.

His intuition was frantically warning him.

This thing... was indeed very strong.

The aura of the peak of the third rank of True Immortal Realm was almost tangible, pressing down on him so much that he could hardly breathe.

The distorted holy light and demonic energy intertwined, forming a strange force field that made the surrounding space unstable.

He could sense that this thing's strength far surpassed Yao Chen's.

Yao Chen was only a second-rank True Immortal Realm cultivator, and he was used to being pampered; his true combat strength might not even reach the level of a second-rank True Immortal Realm cultivator.

But this monster was different.

It was created to fight; every inch of its flesh and blood, every bone, was born for slaughter.

"David..."

Yun Xi's voice was soft, yet carried an unprecedented gravity, "This thing is not easy to deal with."

David nodded slightly and took a deep breath.

The golden dragon bloodline within him began to boil, golden dragon energy surging around him, and the Dragon Slayer Sword appeared in his palm, emitting a deep sword hum.

"It's not easy to deal with, but we have to deal with it."

His voice was calm, but his eyes were sharp as knives.

Zhou Yuanlang laughed loudly, his laughter filled with disdain and smugness.

“Deal with it? David, what do you have to deal with it? You can’t even beat Ning Zhi, yet you dare to challenge my Divine Hall’s most perfect masterpiece? Hahahaha... Kill them all!”

Before he finished speaking, the monster moved.

It made no sound, not even a breath, and charged forward silently. But its speed was outrageously fast! Its

massive body, over two zhang tall, unleashed a terrifying speed completely disproportionate to its size. Like a dark golden meteor, wreathed in distorted holy light and demonic energy, it hurtled straight towards David!

Wherever it passed, footprints over a foot deep were left in the ground, and ear-piercing explosions echoed in the air—sonic booms! Its speed had broken the sound barrier!

David’s pupils constricted sharply. He held the Dragon-Slaying Sword horizontally in front of him, golden dragon energy surging wildly into the blade.

“Clang—!”

The monster’s fist slammed into the Dragon-Slaying Sword, producing a deafening metallic clang.

The power... was immense!

David felt as if he had been struck head-on by a mountain. He was sent flying like a kite with a broken string, crashing heavily against the wall of the passage.

The wall shattered with a deafening roar, sending debris flying and dust billowing.

His back shattered at least three feet of rock before he finally came to a stop.

His hand went numb, the Dragon-Slaying Sword trembled violently, its cry tinged with sorrow.

Blood trickled from the corner of his mouth; the punch had injured his internal organs.

"Such power..."

David gritted his teeth and straightened up, a look of horror flashing in his eyes.

He had defended with all his might, yet the monster's power still far exceeded his expectations.

A full-force attack from a peak third-grade True Immortal was indeed not something a peak fourth-grade Upper Immortal could withstand.

Moreover, this monster's true combat strength was probably higher than that of an ordinary peak third-grade True Immortal.

No wonder even a legitimate divine clan like the Divine Hall secretly engaged in things that defied the laws of nature.

The monster, having landed its blow, charged forward without hesitation.

Its movements were devoid of any fancy tricks or techniques; they were pure, primal, beast-like violence.

A punch, a kick, a ram—each strike carried earth-shattering power, each strike enough to level a mountain.

David gritted his teeth and charged forward, his Dragon-Slaying Sword transforming into a sky full of sword light, engaging the monster in fierce combat.

Golden light clashed with the dark golden scales, erupting in dazzling sparks.

But David quickly discovered a chilling truth—his sword couldn't penetrate the monster's defenses.

The Dragon-Slaying Sword could only leave a shallow white mark on its scales, unable to even cut through them.

And every attack from the monster left him in grave danger.

"Boom!"

Another punch sent David flying, crashing through three stone pillars, spitting out blood.

His left arm, already shattered by Yao Chen's blow to the shoulder, was now further injured, losing all feeling in it.

"David!"

Yun Xi could no longer restrain herself, drawing her sword and rushing forward.

Her ghostly blade, imbued with eerie ghostly energy, stabbed towards the monster's back.

The monster didn't even turn its head, instead slapping back with its hand.

Yunxi parried with her sword, but was forced back several steps by the terrifying force, her tiger's mouth split open and blood flowed freely.

"This thing's defense is too strong..."

Yunxi gritted her teeth and said, "Ordinary attacks can't hurt it at all."

David struggled to his feet, wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth, and a ruthless glint flashed in his eyes.

Chapter 6256

"Ordinary attacks won't hurt, so I'll use something extraordinary."

He took a deep breath, and the Golden Dragon bloodline within him boiled completely.

Golden dragon energy surged from his body, condensing behind him into a phantom of a five-clawed golden dragon.

The phantom was more solid than when he fought Ning Zhi, its dragon eyes blazing, its dragon might overwhelming, as if it were about to break free from the void.

The golden dragon patterns on the Dragon-Slaying Sword flickered wildly, every line on the blade burning and roaring.

This was the limit of what he could do.

He pushed the power of the Golden Dragon bloodline to its limit, pouring everything into this one sword strike.

"Yun Xi, help me restrain it!" David said in a deep voice.

Yun Xi didn't hesitate at all. She twirled the Ghost Blade in her hand, and the eerie ghost energy transformed into countless black chains, wrapping around the monster.

The monster was bound by the chains, letting out a low roar, and with a shake of its arms, it broke the chains inch by inch.

But this momentary pause was enough.

David moved.

His figure transformed into a golden streak of light, the Dragon-Slaying Sword in front of him, and he shot forward like an arrow, aiming straight for the monster's chest.

This sword strike contained all his power, all his will, and all his life.

Before the sword arrived, its intent had already reached him.

That sword intent was as chilling as winter, as sharp as a blade, tearing a dark rift in the air.

The monster seemed to sense the threat; for the first time, it let out a sound, a low, beast-like roar, filled with resentment and rage.

It clenched its fists, and the holy light and demonic energy within its body erupted simultaneously, condensing into a twisted shield in front of it.

Half of the shield was radiantly golden, and the other half was pitch black; the two diametrically opposed forces swirled wildly within it, forming an extremely eerie vortex.

"Break—!"

David roared, and the Dragon-Slaying Sword plunged fiercely into the vortex.

Boom—!

The moment the sword collided with the shield, a deafening roar erupted.

Golden dragon energy and twisted holy demonic energy exploded simultaneously, transforming into a terrifying shockwave that spread outwards.

The walls on both sides of the passage were torn to shreds by the shockwave, sending debris flying and dust billowing everywhere.

Numerous cracks appeared on the overhead rock face, and large chunks of rock fell from above.

David felt his arms, shoulders, and even the bones throughout his body groaning and trembling.

The Dragon-Slaying Sword and the shield were locked in a stalemate, neither able to advance.

The monster's power was too great; its cultivation far surpassed David's. Even with David burning his bloodline, he couldn't overpower it in strength.

"Break!"

David gritted his teeth, his eyes turning a deep crimson gold.

The golden dragon bloodline within him broke through its limits at this moment, and the bottleneck that had plagued him for so long shattered in this life-or-death moment!

Fifth Rank of the Upper Immortal Realm!

His aura surged instantly, golden dragon energy erupting from his body like a volcanic eruption, condensing behind him into a more solid and majestic five-clawed golden dragon.

The light on the Dragon-Slaying Sword increased several times over, and the dragon patterns on its blade seemed to come alive, emitting a deafening roar!

Crack—

a crack appeared on the distorted shield.

The crack spread rapidly, densely packed like a spider web.

“Break!”

David roared again, thrusting the Dragon-Slaying Sword forward with tremendous force.

Boom—!

The shield shattered, and the Dragon-Slaying Sword, unstoppable, pierced fiercely into the monster’s chest!

“Awooo—!”The monster let out a bloodcurdling roar, its voice filled with resentment and rage.

Dark golden blood gushed from its wounds, containing both golden holy light and black demonic energy. The two forces repelled each other in the air, producing a hissing sound.

Yet the monster did not fall.

It wildly swung its arms, smashing them towards David.

David didn’t have time to draw his Dragon-Slaying Sword; he could only loosen his grip on the hilt and retreat.

But the monster’s fist was too fast, slamming heavily into his chest.

“Bang!”

The sound of bones cracking was clearly audible. David felt at least two of his ribs break, and he flew backward like a kite with a broken string, spitting out blood.

“David!”

Yun Xi cried out in alarm, flashing forward to catch David.

But the impact was too great; she staggered back more than ten steps with David in her arms before barely managing to regain her balance.

The monster glanced down at the Dragon-Slaying Sword embedded in its chest, let out a low growl, reached out and gripped the blade, pulling it out with a swift motion.

Dark golden blood gushed forth again, but the monster seemed oblivious to the pain, casually tossing the Dragon-Slaying Sword to the ground and turning to walk towards David and Yun Xi.

Though its steps were unsteady, its killing intent remained undiminished.

Each step left a deep footprint in the ground, the edges of the footprints stained dark gold with blood.

"It's not dead yet..."

David gritted his teeth, the excruciating pain in his chest making it almost impossible to breathe.

Yun Xi set him down, gripped her ghostly blade tightly, and stood in front of him.

"I'll handle this."

Her voice was calm, but the killing intent in her eyes was intense.

The monster drew closer and closer.

Yun Xi took a deep breath, the ghostly energy around her surging wildly.

Behind her, a huge phantom vaguely appeared—a woman in a black robe, with long, flowing hair, a blurred face, and holding an equally enormous ghostly blade in her hand.

That was her innate ghostly form, her trump card cultivated for thousands of years.

“Ghost Slash,”

Yun Xi uttered softly, her voice low yet carrying the weight of a judgment from the deepest abyss.

She drew her sword.

This strike was unlike any before.

The ghostly energy on the blade condensed to its peak, transforming into a jet-black blade of light, slashing towards the monster’s neck.

Where the blade passed, space was torn open by a dark rift, its edges emitting a piercing shriek.

The monster sensed a deadly threat, frantically channeling its holy light and demonic energy, attempting to reconstruct its shield.

But its chest was pierced by the Dragon Slayer Sword, its power greatly diminished, and the shield shattered before it could even form.

The blade of light sliced through its neck without hindrance.

“Crack.”

The sound was soft, yet clearly audible.

The monster’s head flew high, dark golden blood gushing from the severed neck like a fountain.

Its body stood still for a full three breaths before crashing to the ground, kicking up a cloud of dust.

Its head rolled a few times on the ground, the twisted face still bearing the grotesque contortions of its dying moments.

All was quiet.

Yun Xi sheathed her ghost blade, her face paling, a fine layer of sweat beading on her forehead.

This single strike had almost exhausted most of her strength.

"Dead..."

she gasped, looking at David, "How are you?"

Chapter 6257

David struggled to his feet, the excruciating pain in his chest causing cold sweat to pour down his forehead, but he still shook his head: "I won't die."

He glanced down at the monster's corpse on the ground, a complex emotion flashing in his eyes.

A fusion monster at the peak of the third rank of True Immortal Realm... If it weren't for Yun Xi's sword strike, he probably would have really died here today.

"What about Elder Shentang?"

David suddenly remembered something and looked up sharply.

The end of the passage was empty.

Zhou Yuanlang was gone.

"He ran away when you pierced that monster's chest."

Ming Li's voice came from behind, tinged with regret, "I'll go after him..."

Before he could finish speaking, a scream suddenly came from afar.

That voice... it was Zhou Yuanlang's.

David's heart sank, and he endured the excruciating pain in his chest, rushing towards the direction from which the voice came.

Ming Li followed closely behind.

The three of them passed through the passage and arrived at the other side of the valley, where the scene before them made David's steps suddenly stop.

Zhou Yuanlang's corpse lay on the ground, a thin line of blood on his throat, fresh blood slowly seeping from the wound.

His eyes were wide open, his face still showing terror and disbelief, as if he couldn't believe he was dying here.

Yunxi stood beside the corpse, blood still dripping from the ghost blade in her hand.

Her expression was calm, even somewhat cold.

"He tried to run," Yunxi said calmly. "I killed him."

David was silent for a moment, then slowly said, "I... wanted to spare his life."

Yunxi turned to look at him, a hint of confusion flashing in her eyes: "Why keep him? Keeping someone like that around is just asking for trouble."

David didn't answer.

He couldn't say.

He couldn't say that he had spared Zhou Yuanlang because he still needed him to control the Soul Return Array to release the remnants of Mu Sha and his wife's souls.

But now... Zhou Yuanlang was dead.

David turned to look at the shattered stone platform at the end of the passage. The Soul Return Array had been completely destroyed in the battle just now; its complex patterns had shattered into countless pieces, scattered all over the ground, beyond repair.

His heart sank to the bottom.

"David?"

Yunxi noticed his unusual behavior and frowned, asking, "What's wrong?"

David didn't answer, but slowly took out the soul crystal from his robes.

The two white lights within the soul crystal... dimmed even more.

Their movement became slower and slower, as if two exhausted souls were about to stop beating at any moment.

David's fingers trembled slightly.

The shrine was destroyed, the Soul Returning Array was ruined, and Zhou Yuanlang was dead.

The remnant souls of Mu Sha and his wife... couldn't be released.

"David?"

Yunxi walked to his side, looking down at the soul crystal, a knowing glint in her eyes, "The remnant souls in this soul crystal... are about to dissipate?"

David nodded, his voice hoarse: "The Soul Returning Array of the shrine was destroyed, and Zhou Yuanlang is dead. Without the array, the remnant souls can't be released... In a while, they will completely dissipate." He gripped the Soul Crystal tightly, his knuckles white, veins bulging.

Yun Xi remained silent.

Yun Yao walked up from behind, cautiously tugging at David's sleeve.

Her eyes were red, her voice soft yet carrying a resolute gentleness.

"Young Master Chen, don't worry. The Divine Hall has been destroyed, but... there's still the Divine Palace."

David turned to look at her.

Yun Yao pursed her lips, mustering her courage to continue, "The Divine Hall and the Divine Palace are both branches of the Divine Race. The Divine Hall has the Soul Return Technique, and the Divine Palace might have it too?"

Moreover, the Divine Palace is older and more powerful than the Divine Hall, their lineage is more complete. If anyone in this world can release the remnant soul within the Soul Crystal, it must be the Divine Palace."

David's eyes flickered slightly.

Yun Yao's words were like a ray of light illuminating the darkness in his heart.

Yes... there's still the Divine Palace.

The Divine Race isn't just the Divine Hall.

The Divine Temple, the Divine Hall, and the Divine Palace are collectively known as the three major branches of the Divine Race.

The temple had been destroyed by Ning Zhi, and the shrine had also been destroyed by him and Ning Zhi together, but the Divine Palace still existed.

That most mysterious, oldest, and most powerful Divine Palace still existed.

"Do you know where the Divine Palace is?" David asked.

Yun Yao nodded, carefully choosing her words: "The location of the Divine Palace... is extremely secretive. I once saw some records in a fragment of a scroll, saying that the Divine Palace is not in the Holy Domain of Light, but in another extremely hidden place in the Fourteenth Heaven.

What that place is called, where it is, is not clearly stated in the fragment, only mentioned in passing as 'Beyond the Heavens'."

She paused, then added: "Moreover, there are very few tales about the Divine Palace, and many cultivators in the Fourteenth Heaven don't even believe that the Divine Palace really exists.

Some say it's just a legend that the gods embellished themselves, and some say that the Divine Palace disappeared tens of thousands of years ago." "They're dead," some say. "The Divine Palace has always existed, but their disciples never show their true faces, acting with extreme discretion and never participating in any conflicts within the Fourteenth Heaven."

David frowned. "Aren't the Divine Hall and the Divine Temple also branches of the Divine Race? They don't even know the exact location of the Divine Palace?"

Yun Yao shook her head. "Although the Divine Hall, Divine Temple, and Divine Palace are collectively known as the three major branches of the Divine Race, the Divine Palace has always operated independently, with almost no contact with the other two branches.

The Divine Hall and Divine Temple operate openly, establishing sects and recruiting disciples throughout the Fourteenth Heaven; the Divine Palace operates in the shadows, hidden from the world, detached from worldly affairs."

David was silent for a moment.

This was far more troublesome than he had imagined.

He had originally thought that the Divine Palace, like the Divine Hall, was a well-known force within the Fourteenth Heaven, easily found by asking for directions.

But now he realized that the existence of the Divine Palace itself was a mystery, a mystery even those within the Divine Race themselves didn't fully understand.

"However..."

Yun Yao suddenly remembered something, her eyes brightening slightly. "There's a sentence on the tattered scroll that I don't quite remember, but it seems to say, 'The Divine Palace is hidden in the far north, beyond the snowfields, and only those with the right destiny can enter.'

If the record is correct, the Divine Palace should be deeper in the far north of the Fourteenth Heaven, farther than any place anyone has ever been."

"The far north..." David murmured, repeating.

Yun Xi interjected, "I heard someone mention it when I was in the Fifteenth Heaven. They said that at the northernmost point of the Fourteenth Heaven, there's an ice field called 'Gui Xu,' which is the end of the Fourteenth Heaven. Beyond that lies the chaotic void.

It's said that a fierce wind that can freeze souls blows across that ice field all year round, and even cultivators in the early True Immortal Realm dare not venture deep into it. If the Divine Palace is really there..."

She didn't finish her sentence, but her meaning was clear: if the Divine Palace was truly hidden in such a place, then the danger of David's journey would far exceed his imagination.

David carefully put the Soul Crystal back into his robes, his eyes calm and resolute.

"No matter where the Divine Palace is, I'm going."

His tone was soft, but there was no room for negotiation.

Yunxi frowned: "I'll go with you."

Chapter 6258

"No," David shook his head. "I'll go alone."

Yun Xi's brows furrowed even more. "Why?"

David looked into her eyes and said seriously, "The Divine Palace has always been secluded, which means they don't want to be disturbed. If I bring too many people, it's easy for them to misunderstand. If they think I'm going to provoke them with helpers, they probably won't even let me in the door."

He paused, then smiled bitterly. "Besides, the news of the destruction of the Divine Hall will reach the Divine Palace's ears sooner or later. If they know I was one of the people who destroyed the Divine Hall, they're already wary of me. If

I bring a large group of people to attack, they'll definitely think I'm here to wipe out their sect."

Yun Xi fell silent.

She understood what David meant.

The Divine Palace was different from the Divine Hall.

The Divine Hall was in the open, acting openly and following rules;

the Divine Palace was in the shadows, mysterious and unpredictable, acting entirely according to its own principles.

When dealing with an opponent who follows rules, you can use those rules to maneuver;

but when dealing with someone without rules, you never know what they will do.

Moreover, the Divine Palace's foundation was unfathomable.

If a real fight broke out, David might not win.

Even if he did, the Divine Palace would be destroyed, and the remnant souls of Mu Sha and his wife would truly have no hope left.

"But you're going alone..." Yun Xi was still worried.

"Going alone is actually safer,"

David said. "I'll visit as a guest, not as an enemy. Besides, with my current strength, there aren't many people in the Fourteenth Heaven who can stop me."

This was true.

After his battle with Ning Zhi, his cultivation had broken through to the fifth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, and his Golden Dragon bloodline had become more solidified.

Although his cultivation level was still in the Upper Immortal Realm, he was confident he could fight a third-rank True Immortal Realm cultivator.

Yun Xi bit her lip, ultimately not insisting any further.

She knew David was right, but she couldn't suppress her worries.

"Then promise me,"

Yunxi stared into his eyes, enunciating each word clearly, "if the Divine Palace turns against you, leave immediately. Don't be reckless, don't fight head-on."

David nodded: "I promise you, you should also return to Yunxian City as soon as possible. With only Long Zhan and Wanqing, I'm afraid we can't hold it. Ning Zhi has gone back, and he might even bring the Demonic Dragon to attack Yunxian City."

"Okay!" Yunxi nodded.

David turned around and looked at the distant horizon.

That direction was the northernmost point of the Fourteenth Heaven, the unknown land called "Guixu," the place where the Divine Palace might exist.

"Senior Musha, wait a little longer,"

he said silently in his heart, "I will definitely find a way to release you."

He took a deep breath, transformed into a golden stream of light, and disappeared into the horizon.

Yunxi stood there, watching his back, motionless for a long time.

Ming Li walked to her side and said softly, "Mr. Chen is just like that, you can't stop him."

Yunxi didn't speak, but just gripped the sword in her hand tightly.

"Let's go too." Her voice was calm, but a barely perceptible worry flashed in her eyes.

David was her greatest hope now; she was counting on him to accompany her to the Fifteenth Heaven.

"If he doesn't return within a month... I'll storm the Divine Palace and tear down their gates." Princess Yunxi's temper flared.

Ming Li: "..."

He opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but ultimately said nothing. Forget it, this young lady has an even bigger temper than David.

Can't afford to offend her, can't afford to offend her.

...

There's no teleportation array to the far north, so David flew north for seven days and seven nights.

For the first three days, he could still see signs of human habitation: scattered small towns, the caves of rogue cultivators, and the occasional passing caravan.

He asked everyone he met about the Divine Palace, but the answer was always the same: a shake of the head.

"The Divine Palace? Never heard of it."

"That's just ancient legend, who knows if it's true or not."

“Young man, have you been fooled? I’ve lived in the Fourteenth Heaven for eight thousand years, and I’ve never heard of any Divine Palace.”

By the fourth day, all signs of human habitation had vanished.

The land beneath his feet transformed from a vast grassland into barren frozen ground, and then from frozen ground into an endless ice field.

The temperature plummeted so much that even his protective dragon aura felt a chill, and his breath condensed into tiny ice crystals that fluttered to the ground.

On the fifth day, even the ice field disappeared.

Beneath his feet lay a void of white, not ice, not snow, but a substance he had never seen before.

The white was like solidified light; it felt unreal underfoot, yet he wouldn’t fall.

A chilling silence enveloped him; not even the wind could be heard, as if the entire world had been muted.

The aurora borealis in the sky had changed from a vibrant blue-green to an eerie pale white, like a dying flame, flickering silently overhead.

David didn’t know how far he had flown, nor where he was.

He had completely lost his bearings.

He could only rely on his intuition, flying and flying further north.

On the sixth day, he encountered his first gale.

The gale blew from the depths of the aurora, silent yet carrying a chill that could shatter the soul.

When it swept over David's indestructible golden body, the golden scales, powerful enough to withstand a full-force attack from a first-grade True Immortal, were instantly covered with fine frost. The frost spread along the scales, making a teeth-grinding "crackling" sound. David's heart skipped

a beat. He activated his Golden Dragon Bloodline with all his might, golden dragon energy burning fiercely on his body, barely managing to keep the gale at bay.

But his spiritual energy consumption rate instantly increased tenfold. "This is the gale of the Ruins of Return..." David gritted his teeth and increased his flying speed.

He didn't know how many more such gales lay ahead, nor how long he could hold out. But he couldn't stop, nor could he retreat. The seventh day.

David's spiritual energy was already mostly depleted, and his protective dragon energy was more than half dimmer than when he set out.

His lips were cracked, and thick frost covered his brows; every breath felt like swallowing razor blades. He was almost at his limit. But just then, he suddenly sensed something ahead. It was an extremely faint aura, so faint as to be almost imperceptible, yet the power contained within it made his heart leap.

That aura... was alive. David's spirits lifted, and he used his last bit of strength to fly in that direction. After flying for about two more hours, the scene before him suddenly changed.

The vast expanse of white vanished, replaced by a deep blue ice field. Countless enormous ice pillars stood atop the field, each tens of meters tall, resembling a stone forest or a natural labyrinth. A faint mist flowed between the ice pillars.

Chapter 6259

The mist wasn't white, but an extremely thin, pale gold, radiating a faint warmth that contrasted sharply with the surrounding frigid air.

As David stepped into the ice pillar forest, he immediately felt the surrounding gale weaken considerably.

The pale gold mist seemed to have an insulating effect on the gale; the further he went, the weaker the gale became, until it finally disappeared completely.

His steps grew slower and heavier. His

spiritual energy was almost exhausted; his vision began to blur, and his legs felt like lead.

Just as he was about to collapse, he suddenly heard a clear, ringing bell.

The bell's sound came from the depths of the ice pillar forest, melodious and ethereal, like a mountain spring, or an ancient chant.

With each ring, the surrounding mist trembled slightly, as if in response.

David followed the sound.

His steps faltered, his consciousness began to blur, but his unwavering determination sustained him step by step.

Finally, he passed through the last row of ice pillars.

What he saw before him made his breath catch in his throat.

It was a lake.

A vast, circular lake, its surface as still as a mirror, reflected the pale aurora borealis overhead.

The water wasn't blue, nor black, but a deep, inky blue, as if it had melted the entire night sky into it.

In the center of the lake lay a small island.

There were no palaces, no pavilions, only a single tree.

The tree was enormous, its canopy blotting out the sun, its trunk so thick that dozens of people couldn't encircle it.

Its leaves were golden, each one like a tiny sun, radiating a warm glow.

And the golden mist rose from these leaves.

David stared blankly at the tree, a strange feeling welling up within him.

He felt... this tree was alive.

Not just any living plant, but a tree possessing consciousness, a soul, an ancient wisdom that transcended all things.

"You've come,"

a voice suddenly sounded behind him.

The voice was soft and gentle, like a spring breeze across a lake, like moonlight falling on a snowfield.

Her voice carried an innate coolness, yet also a strangely comforting warmth.

David whirled around.

A woman stood three steps behind him, silently watching him.

She wore a long, plain white dress, the hem trailing on the ice, blending seamlessly with the surrounding snow.

Her long, ink-black hair was simply styled in a bun, secured with a white jade hairpin, a few stray strands falling beside her ears, fluttering slightly in the cold wind.

Her face... David couldn't find the right words to describe it.

It wasn't the kind of beauty that could topple kingdoms, nor the ethereal beauty of someone untouched by worldly affairs.

Her features were delicate and aloof, her eyebrows like distant mountains, her eyes like cold stars, her lips slightly pursed, carrying a subtle sense of detachment.

But those eyes...

those eyes were too deep.

So deep that David felt he wasn't facing a person, but an ocean, a starry sky, an ancient world that had existed for countless millennia.

Her aura was so calm it was almost imperceptible, yet David's intuition was frantically warning him that this person's strength was unfathomable,

even surpassing Ning Zhiqiang's. He was stronger than anyone he had ever met.

"You are..."

David began, his voice so hoarse he barely recognized himself.

"Isn't this the person you've been looking for?"

the woman said calmly, a slight smile playing on her lips, so faint it was almost imperceptible. "You traveled ten thousand miles north, braving the fierce winds of the Ruins of Return, venturing into the Ice Pillar Forest, all to find this place?"

David's pupils constricted slightly. "You are... the Palace Master of the Divine Palace?"

The woman didn't answer, simply gazing at him silently.

Her gaze was calm, almost cold, yet beneath that calmness flowed a barely concealed curiosity.

"The Divine Palace is indeed here,"

she finally spoke, her voice still calm. "However... it's been many years since anyone has been able to find this place. The last person to come here was a rogue cultivator a hundred years ago. He strayed into the Ruins of Return, was severely injured by the fierce winds, and drifted to the lakeside, barely alive. I rescued him, healed his wounds, and sent him away."

She paused, her gaze sweeping over David.

"And you... are the first person to actively seek this place out."

David took a deep breath, forcing his nearly broken body to stand up, and clasped his hands in a respectful bow: "I am David. I have come here to ask the Divine Palace for assistance."

"Assistance?"

She repeated, a hint of amusement in her tone. "You're quite direct. Usually, when asking for help, people would exchange pleasantries first, build rapport, and then get down to business. But you, without even a sip of water, just blurted it out."

David smiled wryly: "I don't have much time left; there's really no room for pleasantries."

He took out the Soul Crystal from his robes and held it in his palm.

The two beams of white light within the Soul Crystal had dimmed to their lowest point, like candles flickering in the wind, ready to be extinguished at any moment.

"This Soul Crystal contains two remnant souls, the souls of an old friend and his wife." David's voice was somewhat hoarse. "I heard that the Divine Palace has a secret technique that can release the remnant souls within Soul Crystals and reshape their physical bodies. I have nowhere else to turn but to come and seek an audience."

The woman looked at the Soul Crystal in his palm and remained silent for a moment.

She reached out and took the Soul Crystal from David's hand. Her fingers were long and slender, white, with a faint golden glow at the tips, creating a strange contrast with her aloof demeanor.

She held the Soul Crystal up to her eyes, examining it closely.

The two white lights within the Soul Crystal seemed to sense something, trembling slightly and moving a little faster.

"Two remnant souls, a man and a woman, indeed a married couple,"

the woman said calmly. "The remnant souls are relatively intact, but they are too weak. If you had come three days later... no, two days later, these two remnant souls would have completely dissipated."

David's heart tightened: "Can they be saved?"

The woman didn't answer immediately.

Her gaze shifted from the Soul Crystal to David's face.

Something flickered in those deep eyes.

There was scrutiny, consideration, and a trace of indescribable emotion.

"They can be saved," she finally spoke, "but what will you give in exchange?"

David was taken aback.

The woman returned the soul crystal to him, stood with her hands behind her back by the lake, and gazed at the enormous golden ancient tree in the center of the lake.

"There's no such thing as a free lunch. You asked me to save someone, so I have to pay you. That's the rule."

Her tone was calm, yet unquestionable. "What do you intend to offer in exchange?"

David was silent for a moment. "What do you want?"

The woman turned to look at him, a slight smile playing on her lips, a smile more genuine than before, yet also more enigmatic.

"What do you have on you?" the woman asked.

Chapter 6260

David paused for a moment, then began to take stock of his possessions.

He rummaged through his storage ring, taking out each item one by one.

Spirit stones, pills, cultivation manual jade slips, several decent-grade magic artifacts, some refining materials... a jumbled mess spread out on the floor.

Then he glanced at the sleeping fire qilin, but didn't take it out.

If the fire qilin knew that David intended to use it as a bargaining chip, it would probably be angry.

The woman glanced at it and gently shook her head: "The Divine Palace doesn't lack any of these things."

David frowned.

He really didn't have anything worth mentioning.

All his wealth combined, in a place like the Fourteenth Heaven, was probably less than that of an ordinary rogue cultivator.

"Then what do you want?" he asked.

The woman didn't answer, but instead slowly circled David, her gaze sweeping over him.

That gaze made David feel as if he were seen through, as if he had no secrets in front of those eyes.

"Golden Dragon bloodline..." she murmured, her voice soft, as if talking to herself, "Royal bloodline... Interesting."

She stopped and stood before David, looking directly into his eyes.

"I want you."

David: "..."

He wondered if he had misheard.

"What?"

the woman said calmly, "I said, I want you. You stay in the Divine Palace and do three things for me. In return, I will help you release those two remnant souls and rebuild their physical bodies."

David was silent for a moment: "What three things?"

"Haven't thought about it yet." The woman answered confidently, "I'll tell you when I've thought it through."

David: "..."

He took a deep breath, trying to keep his tone calm: "You mean, I'm selling myself to you, and I don't even know what I'm supposed to do?"

The woman thought for a moment and said seriously, "You can understand it that way."

David felt like he might have encountered a liar.

"How do I know you can do it?" He stared into the woman's eyes, "How do I know you're not lying to me?"

The woman wasn't angry; instead, she smiled slightly.

The smile was faint, yet it softened her entire face, transforming her from a cold, snow-capped mountain into a lake rippled by a spring breeze.

"If you don't believe me, you can leave," she said calmly, "but your remnant soul will only await death."

David gritted his teeth.

He knew he had no choice.

The remnant souls of Mu Sha and his wife wouldn't last much longer; he had no time to find another way.

Even if the woman wanted him to stay in the Divine Palace to do three things, even if it cost him half his life, he would have to agree.

"Alright," David took a deep breath, "I agree."

The woman nodded slightly, seemingly unsurprised by the answer.

"Follow me."

She turned and walked towards the small island in the center of the lake.

Her steps were light, making no sound on the ice. Her

white dress fluttered slightly in the wind, blending seamlessly with the surrounding ice and snow, as if she herself were a part of this icy plain.

David took a step to follow, but after only two steps, his legs gave way, and he collapsed to his knees on the ice.

His spiritual energy was completely exhausted.

Seven days and seven nights of non-stop flight, piercing through the fierce winds of Guixu, had exhausted all his strength.

Now, the moment his taut nerves relaxed, his body immediately gave way.

The woman stopped and glanced back at him. That glance held a hint of helplessness, and a touch of tenderness she herself didn't even realize.

"Troublesome,"

she murmured, walking back and bending down to drape David's arm over her shoulder, helping him to his feet.

Her body was cool; even through her clothes, one could feel its chill.

Yet her movements were light and steady, like helping a child who had fallen.

David tried to push her away, but his body was completely unresponsive.

"Don't move," the woman's voice remained calm, yet carried an undeniable authority. "If you move again, I'll throw you into the lake."

David: "..."

He wisely remained still.

The woman helped him onto the lake's surface.

Strangely, the seemingly fragile ice didn't budge, not even a crack.

Beneath the ice, the dark blue water was unfathomable, and something could be vaguely seen swimming slowly in the depths.

The island in the center of the lake seemed close, but the journey felt unexpectedly long.

David's consciousness grew increasingly blurred, and the scene before him began to distort.

He could only sense the aloof figure beside him and the faint, delicate fragrance emanating from her, like plum blossoms in winter.

"What's your name?" he asked with his last strength.

The woman was silent for a moment.

"Jiang Xuelan."

Her voice was soft, almost drowned out by the wind.

David wanted to say something, but his consciousness plummeted into darkness at that moment.

His body went limp, leaning heavily against Jiang Xuelan's shoulder.

Jiang Xuelan glanced down at the young man leaning on her shoulder and frowned slightly.

"Quite bold," she muttered softly, "daring to lean on me on our first meeting."

She didn't push him away, but simply adjusted her position to make him more comfortable.

Then, she continued walking towards the small island in the middle of the lake.

Her steps remained steady, her figure still aloof.

Only the hand supporting David tightened slightly.

David had a very long dream.

In his dream, he stood in a golden ocean, soft sand beneath his feet, and a dazzling starry sky above.

Countless golden leaves floated on the sea, each one shimmering faintly, like stars fallen to earth.

He looked down and saw that the reflection in the water wasn't his face, but a strange one.

The face was blurry, only a pair of eyes were exceptionally clear.

Those eyes... were very similar to Jiang Xuelan's eyes.

Equally deep, equally aloof, equally holding endless years within them.

"What do you see?"

a voice came from behind.

David turned around and saw Jiang Xuelan standing three steps behind him, quietly watching him.

Her white dress was tinged with a warm hue in the golden light, no longer as aloof and distant as before, but rather possessing a touch of human warmth.

"A tree," David said, "a very large tree."

Jiang Xuelan raised an eyebrow slightly: "And what else?"

"A sea," David thought for a moment, then added, "and your eyes."

Jiang Xuelan fell silent.

She looked at David, her gaze filled with scrutiny, contemplation, and a very subtle fluctuation.

"You're quite interesting." She finally spoke, her tone softening slightly. "In 30,000 years, you're the first person to say something like that to me."