

A Man Like None Other

Novel

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"Speak."

"Since the Palace Master wanted to kill those two, why didn't you do it in the Heavenly Pole Palace? The Palace Master was seriously injured at the time. If we had forcibly detained them and retrieved the Soul-Suppressing Pearl, it wouldn't have been difficult. Why did you let them go and then send people to the Loose Cultivator City to hunt them down?"

The Heavenly Pole Venerable glanced at him but didn't answer immediately.

He slowly stood up, stepped down from his throne, and came before the four elders.

"Do you know who Chi Yan and Han Yuan are?"

Elder Zhao was taken aback. "They are newly promoted Golden Immortals of the Divine Race, here to report for duty in the Palace."

"Yes. They are here to

report for duty." The Heavenly Pole Venerable's voice was soft, but every word was heavy. "You should know the rules of the Divine Race in the Golden

Immortal Realm. All newly promoted Golden Immortals must report for duty in the Palace designated by the main altar.

If they die during their reporting period, if they die in the Heavenly Pole Palace, how will I explain it to the main altar? Will I still be able to hold my position as Palace Master?"

The four elders remained silent.

"But if they leave the Heavenly Pole Palace and go to the Loose Cultivator City, and die there, then it has nothing to do with the Heavenly Pole Palace."

A cold smile curled at the corner of the Heavenly Pole Venerable's lips. "In a place like the Loose Cultivator City, murder and robbery are commonplace. Who would investigate the death of a few Golden Immortals? Even if the main altar investigates, they won't be able to trace it back to the Heavenly Pole Palace."

Elder Zhao suddenly realized and bowed, saying, "Palace Master is wise."

The Heavenly Pole Venerable waved his hand, "No need for further words. Go quickly and return quickly. The Soul-Suppressing Pearl must be brought back. I am determined to obtain that supreme treasure."

"Yes!"

The four elders accepted the order in unison and turned to leave the main hall.

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The Crimson Flame Venerable and the Cold Abyss Venerable rested in the Loose Cultivator City for two days.

On the first day, the two did not go out, but simply recuperated and healed their injuries in the inn.

The Crimson Flame Venerable's old injuries had not fully healed, and the Cold Abyss Venerable also needed to stabilize his divine soul.

The two went into seclusion, neither disturbing the other.

On the evening of the second day, the Cold Abyss Venerable suggested going out to gather information.

Crimson Flame Venerable initially wanted to refuse, but after thinking it over, he reasoned that staying here would only lead to waiting idly, so going out for a stroll might be better.

The two changed into ordinary gray robes, concealed their auras, and blended into the crowd of the rogue cultivator city.

The night in the rogue cultivator city was even more bustling than the day.

Shops along the streets lit up with spirit lanterns, their multicolored lights intertwining to illuminate the entire street.

There were more vendors, selling a wider variety of goods.

Some sold broken magical artifacts unearthed from ruins, some sold pills of unknown origin, and some sold spirit beast inner cores that supposedly could enhance cultivation.

It was difficult to distinguish the genuine from the fake, the good from the bad; whether to buy or not depended entirely on one's discernment.

Crimson Flame Venerable and Cold Abyss Venerable walked through the crowd, their eyes scanning every stall, their ears catching every piece of information.

They were listening, listening to people discuss the situation in the Seventeenth Heaven, listening to people talk about the powerful figures and forces in various places.

"Have you heard? The Guiyuan Sect in the Northern Region is recruiting recently," a rogue cultivator whispered to his companion.

"Guiyuan Sect? That sect made up of rogue human cultivators?" another rogue cultivator asked.

"Yes. I heard their sect leader, Guiyuanzi, is currently searching for rare and precious materials that can repair damage to the soul. He's offering a high price, but his requirements are also very high."

"Repair the soul?" The first rogue cultivator smiled. "Whose soul is injured? Who knows? Anyway, the Guiyuan Sect isn't short of money. If we can find something like that, we'll be rich."

Upon hearing the words "repairing the divine soul," Venerable Chiyan's heart stirred slightly, but he quickly suppressed it.

The Guiyuan Sect was a human power, irrelevant to him.

The two continued walking.

Just then, Venerable Hanyuan suddenly paused.

"What's wrong?" Venerable Chiyan asked in a low voice.

A cold glint flashed in Venerable Hanyuan's silver eyes. "Someone is following us. Not ordinary rogue cultivators, but Golden Immortals."

Venerable Chiyan's expression changed.

He quietly released his divine sense, spreading it outwards.

Soon, he also sensed it; four Golden Immortal-level auras were surrounding them from four directions.

He recognized those auras; they were from the Tianji Palace.

"Old man Tianji!" Venerable Crimson Flame gritted his teeth, his voice filled with rage. "He really won't let go."

Venerable Cold Abyss didn't say much, turning and walking towards the city gate. "Let's go, don't fight here. There are too many people in the Loose Cultivator City, fighting will expose our identities."

The two quickened their pace, passing through the bustling crowd, and hurried towards the city gate.

The four auras behind them followed closely behind, unhurried, like hunters driving their prey.

After leaving the city gate, the two leaped into the air, transforming into two streaks of light, one red and one silver, and sped towards the northern wasteland.

The four golden lights behind them also soared into the sky, pursuing them relentlessly.

Seventeenth Heaven, the vast wasteland stretched endlessly.

The dark purple sky pressed down extremely low, three blazing suns hung high, their golden, silver, and crimson rays intertwining and pouring down, dyeing the barren wasteland a dark, blood-red hue.

The atmosphere was oppressive and heavy, the wind howled through the withered grass, stirring up fine dust, desolate and chilling.

This wasteland had no mountains to shield it, no dense forests to conceal it, no caves to hide in; the view was unobstructed. Anyone who took to the air could not hide within a thousand miles. It was an excellent place for battle, and also a place for desperate escape.

Whoosh—

A sharp sound tore through the air, six powerful streaks of light suddenly ripped through the dark golden sky, moving at extreme speed, leaving six long, blinding streaks of light in the sky. The commotion was immense, causing the spiritual energy of the surrounding wasteland to tremble violently.

The two streaks of light ahead fled in panic, their auras disordered, their spiritual energy severely depleted. They were none other than the fleeing Crimson Flame Venerable and Cold Abyss Venerable.

Both were exhausted, their old wounds aroused, the road ahead uncertain, and the killing intent closing in from behind. They were already in a passive and desperate situation.

Four golden beams of light relentlessly pursued them from behind, relentlessly closing the distance, their oppressive aura surging forth. Every inch the distance closed meant death was just around the corner.

The distance was rapidly shrinking, a matter of life and death hanging by a thread.

The Crimson Flame Venerable suppressed the churning blood in his chest and endured the throbbing pain within his body, unable to resist turning back to glance at them.

One glance was enough to darken his expression, a chill running down his spine; the situation was dire.

Of the four golden beams behind, the two leading beams surged with incredible speed and explosive power, like arrows released from a bow, quickly leaving their companions behind and relentlessly closing the distance to the two men. The gap was now less than a hundred feet, and close combat was imminent.

The golden figure at the very front, clad in standard golden armor, surrounded by a thick, condensed golden aura of primordial energy, its sharpness

intimidating—it was none other than Elder Zhao, a core elder of the Heavenly Pole Palace.

This person's cultivation was firmly established at the second rank of Golden Immortal, specializing in the domineering and extreme Golden Element Great Dao Technique. His physical body was incredibly strong, his spiritual power fierce, and his explosive power overwhelming.

Most importantly, his Golden Element movement technique was exceptionally superior, allowing him to break through the air at a speed far exceeding that of other cultivators of the same level,

even surpassing the two newly promoted Golden Immortals, Chi Yan and Han Yuan. Now, in his all-out pursuit, he was like a tiger with wings, quickly pinning down their retreat and giving them no chance to catch their breath.

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"If we continue to flee like this, we're doomed!"

Crimson Flame Venerable's mind raced, his thoughts racing. His back was already soaked with cold sweat. Exhaustion, injuries, and the pursuit of his pursuers pressed down on him, leaving no room for maneuver. "There are four of them, all at the Golden Immortal level. If the two of us flee side-by-side, we'll be too conspicuous. We

'll be easily surrounded and locked down, without even a chance to fight our way out. Only by splitting our escape routes and scattering the pursuers can we have a sliver of hope. Even if only one of us escapes, we can still preserve the Soul-Suppressing Pearl!"

In this critical moment, Crimson Flame Venerable no longer hesitated. He lowered his voice and

shouted sharply, "Split up! You head southeast, I'll head northeast. Break out separately. Don't linger in battle, focus on escaping!" Cold Abyss Venerable was always calm and decisive, with rich battlefield experience. He knew the current situation was perilous, and every word he uttered increased the risk of death.

Without the slightest hesitation, without turning back or answering, he suddenly shifted his body, his silver robe fluttering, and an extremely cold spiritual light instantly spread around him.

Transforming into a sharp silver arc, he sped off into the vast southeastern wilderness without looking back, his movements fluid and efficient, creating distance at all costs.

In the same instant, the Crimson Flame Venerable's crimson flames surged three zhang high, the flames scorching the sky, waves of heat rolling in, forcefully changing direction and hurtling towards the northeastern wilderness at full speed, flames tearing through the air, desperately diverting the pursuers' attention.

The two, one silver and one red, separated abruptly, heading in different directions, forcibly splitting the battlefield and breaking up the pursuers' formation.

From the void behind, Elder Zhao's powerful and domineering voice boomed like thunder from the heavens, echoing across the entire wasteland. His tone was decisive and ruthless, leaving no room for escape: "Split up and pursue! Form a tactical encirclement, giving them no respite!

Crimson Flame is injured and his combat strength has greatly decreased; he is the slowest, so I will personally take him down! Elder Qian, go quickly to intercept Cold Abyss and hold him back at all costs, not allowing him to escape even a step!

Elder Sun and Elder Li, flank and outflank him, cutting off all escape routes. Today, neither of them will escape! The Soul-Suppressing Pearl must be

brought back intact; anyone who fails will be severely punished by the Palace Master!”

With the order given, four golden streaks of light instantly broke formation, each fulfilling its role with seamless coordination.

Two golden lights locked onto Crimson Flame Venerable, relentlessly pursuing him;

the other two golden lights changed direction, rushing southeast at full speed to surround Cold Abyss Venerable.

On the wasteland, killing intent spread everywhere, two pursuit battles unfolded simultaneously, and the spiritual energy between heaven and earth was stretched to its limit.

The Crimson Flame Venerable exhausted the last of his remaining primordial spiritual power, recklessly activating his innate sacred fire. Crimson flames raged around him, the fire reaching the heavens, the temperature so intense it distorted and rippled the surrounding air, making the void itself feel slightly hot.

He forcefully squeezed the potential of his Golden Immortal foundation, disregarding the loss of lifespan and the worsening of his injuries, all to gain a sliver of speed and shake off his pursuers.

However, his old injuries had already taken root and were causing him persistent pain. The previous night, the aura of the Great Luo Golden Scripture had severely damaged his soul and shaken his meridians, and he hadn't had a moment to rest and recuperate during his all-night escape.

Under the intense, continuous high-intensity flight, excruciating pain, as if his meridians were tearing, surged wildly in his chest, and he couldn't suppress it; a trickle of golden blood slowly spilled from the corner of his mouth, staining his chin and clothes.

His aura visibly weakened rapidly, his movement speed decreased, and his stamina completely waned.

"Crimson Flame, stop your futile struggle, you can't escape."

Elder Zhao's voice grew closer, his oppressive aura heavier, like a leech clinging to his ear. "The Palace Master has ordered that as long as you obediently hand over the Soul-Suppressing Pearl, your past transgressions will be forgiven, and your life will be spared. You will

retain your Golden Immortal Dao Foundation and can still serve in the Heavenly Palace and enjoy its offerings. If you resist stubbornly, only death and annihilation of your soul and spirit will ensue."

Crimson Flame Venerable gritted his teeth, his eyes filled with ferocity and resentment. He remained silent, focusing only on fleeing at full speed, his heart already ice-cold. He knew better than anyone that a second-grade Golden Immortal was far superior to a first-grade Golden Immortal; the difference in their cultivation levels was like an insurmountable chasm.

Adding to this, he was severely injured, his spiritual energy depleted, and his stamina exhausted. Two Golden Immortals were also pursuing him relentlessly. With no way forward and pursuers behind, he was in a desperate situation with absolutely no hope of escape.

He couldn't escape.

Having fully accepted reality, the Crimson Flame Venerable's panic subsided, and his composure instantly returned.

Rather than futilely fleeing, exhausting his spiritual energy, and ultimately being helplessly killed, it was better to turn around, calmly plan his next move, and fight to the death, perhaps still managing to create a glimmer of hope.

With a sudden low shout, the Crimson Flame Venerable abruptly stopped all his escape light, abruptly halting his movements in mid-air. He stepped firmly

into the void, turning steadily to face the two blinding golden streaks of light approaching from behind, his expression cold and fierce, his fighting spirit surging.

In the next instant, Elder Zhao and Elder Sun landed simultaneously, one in front of the other, their positions perfectly blocking all escape routes, leaving no way out.

Elder Zhao, clad in golden armor, exuded an imposing aura, his oppressive power overwhelming;

Elder Sun, with a chilling aura, gathered his spiritual energy, ready to strike from both sides at any moment.

The two worked in perfect harmony, forming a net that trapped and killed the Crimson Flame Venerable on the spot.

"Crimson Flame, a wise man submits to circumstances. Hand over the Soul-Suppressing Pearl obediently to avoid further suffering."

Elder Zhao's face was icy and expressionless. With a flick of his wrist, a pure gold, sharp longsword shot out from the air, firmly grasped in his hand.

Layers of golden killing runes covered the blade, its sharp light soaring into the sky, slicing through the surrounding air, a chilling aura emanating from it, its killing intent palpable.

The Crimson Flame Venerable sneered coldly, his eyes showing no fear. He calmly raised his hand and took out the dark, gleaming Soul-Suppressing Pearl from his sleeve, holding it steadily in his palm.

Then, he deliberately raised it high, gesturing for the other to see it clearly. "You've been longing for this. If you have the ability, come and take it yourself."

Elder Zhao's pupils contracted slightly, his gaze fixed on the Soul-Suppressing Pearl, a flash of intense, undisguised greed crossing his eyes. A priceless treasure was right

before his eyes, within easy reach; it would be difficult for anyone to remain calm.

But he forcibly suppressed his restless greed, not moving an inch, maintaining a safe distance, not daring to rashly touch it.

What he feared was not the heavily injured and weakened Crimson Flame Venerable, but the Soul-Suppressing Pearl itself.

Venerable Tianji had already given strict warnings to everyone beforehand: the Soul-Suppressing Pearl contained a supreme treasure with terrifying backlash power; even a wisp of its aura could severely injure a top-tier Golden Immortal of the third rank. He, a mere Golden Immortal of the second rank, possessed a soul essence far inferior to the Palace Master's.

If he rashly approached and touched it, the backlash would erupt, instantly shattering his soul and causing his immediate demise—a loss far outweighing the gain, a death sentence for greed.

"You dare not step forward?"

Venerable Chiyan, seeing through the other's apprehension, sneered even more, his tone deliberately mocking. "Since you dare not, then I will lend you a hand and bestow upon you an opportunity."

Before his words finished, Venerable Chiyan suddenly exerted force in his arm, flicking his wrist, and forcefully hurled the Soul-Suppressing Pearl from his palm into the depths of the desolate wilderness.

The pitch-black pearl streaked through the sky, leaving a short, dark shadow, its arc graceful as it flew rapidly towards the deserted wilderness, instantly disappearing from the scene.

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Elder Zhao's expression changed drastically. Forgetting the encirclement of Crimson Flame Venerable and the current battle, prioritizing the treasure above all else, he instinctively turned and sped off towards the direction the Soul-Suppressing Pearl had flown, fearing he would miss the opportunity if he was even a step too late.

Elder Sun beside him also lost his focus and followed closely behind, both heading towards the depths of the wasteland to seize the treasure.

Their backs were completely exposed, their defenses breached.

Crimson Flame Venerable seized this fleeting opportunity, turning into a streak of crimson light without hesitation, using his last bit of spiritual power to flee in the opposite direction. With a flash, he quickly created distance, temporarily escaping danger.

On the other side of the wasteland, in the southeast, the killing intent was equally intense, and a fierce battle had begun.

Cold Abyss Venerable sped along at full speed, his movements swift and powerful, but he still couldn't shake off his pursuers.

Two golden streaks of light surrounded him from the front and back, blocking him in the center of the wasteland, leaving him with no way to retreat or escape.

The one intercepting on the left was Elder Qian, a second-grade Golden Immortal, specializing in water-based, yin-cold techniques. His spiritual energy was gentle yet cold, adept at entanglement, attrition, sealing techniques, and freezing meridians.

The one intercepting on the right was Elder Li, also a second-grade Golden Immortal, specializing in violent fire-based techniques. His attacks were fierce

and domineering, with extremely high explosive power, adept at frontal assaults, tearing through defenses, and crushing opponents.

Water and fire, two completely opposite spiritual energy attributes, complemented each other perfectly, complementing each other's weaknesses. They were a unified force of offense and defense, advancing and retreating in an orderly manner. When they joined forces, their combat power doubled, and their suppressive power was extremely strong.

The two had been partners in missions for many years, their cooperation was seamless, and they were experienced in encirclement and siege warfare, specifically designed to counter lone Golden Immortals.

Venerable Hanyuan stood there, his silver robe fluttering slightly in the wind, his expression remaining as cold as water from beginning to end. His silver eyes showed no ripples, no panic, no fear, and no anxiety.

With a formidable enemy at hand and encirclement imminent, his composure remained as firm as a mountain. His only movement was to slowly raise his hand and grasp the hilt of the silver-white longsword hanging at his waist. A clear

,

resonant sword cry echoed across the wasteland, instantly spreading a chilling aura.

The silver-white longsword was drawn half an inch from its sheath, and a chilling, bone-deep cold aura instantly swept over him. The surrounding withered grass froze instantly, the air temperature plummeted, and wisps of cold air seeped into his skin, an aura of murderous intent washing over him.

This sword had accompanied Venerable Hanyuan in his battles for ten thousand years, slaying countless enemies. Its chilling aura could sever souls, and its sharp edge could shatter spiritual treasures; it was his most prized possession and weapon of mass destruction.

"Hanyuan, surrender and hand over the Soul-Suppressing Pearl."

Elder Qian's tone was calm and even, not a threat or coercion, but rather a statement of fact as if it were a routine matter. "Alone, you cannot withstand the combined might of the two of us. To resist stubbornly will only increase your injuries and lead to your death in vain, utterly meaningless."

Venerable Hanyuan remained silent; his silence was the only response.

His eyes turned cold, and with a sudden burst of power, his longsword was drawn from its sheath with full force. He lunged forward, and in an instant, a three-zhang-long (

approximately 10 meters) horizontal, extremely cold sword beam slashed through the air, its energy carrying a chilling, freezing force. Wherever it passed, the void frosted, and the air currents froze, sweeping straight towards Elder Qian's throat—a deadly move from the start, leaving no room for retreat.

Elder Qian's expression changed slightly; he dared not meet the attack head-on. A flash of spiritual light appeared beneath his feet, and he swiftly slid to the side, barely avoiding the fatal strike.

At the same moment, he slammed out a palm strike, his palm gathering a thick layer of azure spiritual energy. A chilling aura swirled around the palm wind, transforming into a large watermark, carrying a suppressive force, and slammed fiercely towards Venerable Han Yuan's chest and dantian, intending to

severely damage his foundation and suppress his combat power. Venerable Han Yuan blocked with his longsword, precisely parrying the attack. The azure palm print slammed into the sword's spine, exploding with a deafening roar, sending water droplets flying everywhere.

The chilling water-based spiritual energy surged wildly along the sword's blade, colliding violently with the sword's extreme cold aura. The two energies clashed and compressed, unleashing a piercing, sharp shriek that tore through

the air. The shockwaves churned, whipping up the surrounding withered grass and dust, sending it flying everywhere.

Just as the two forces were locked in a stalemate, a deadly attack suddenly appeared from the flank. Elder Li seized the opportunity, his figure suddenly lunging forward. Crimson flames surged around him, the fire reaching the heavens. Scorching fire-elemental spiritual energy coalesced into a ferocious, roaring fire dragon, complete with scales and claws, its aura menacing.

Carrying the intense heat of burning everything, it swiftly pounced from a blind spot on the flank, aiming straight for Venerable Han Yuan's vital back, intending to attack from both sides and inflict a fatal blow.

Venerable Han Yuan remained calm under pressure, his mind utterly composed. His footwork was unpredictable, his body instantly spinning to avoid the attack from behind.

Simultaneously, he swung his longsword backhand, unleashing another sharp, silvery-white sword beam that precisely struck the roaring fire dragon.

Boom!

The deafening roar echoed across the surrounding area.

The icy silver-white sword energy collided violently with the crimson flames of the fire dragon, ice and fire clashing at their extremes, a violent shockwave of spiritual energy instantly sweeping in all directions.

Flames flew everywhere, and layers of icy air spread. Within a radius of ten feet, vegetation was instantly either burned to ashes or frozen solid, leaving the ground cratered and a scene of utter devastation.

The fierce battle had officially reached its climax.

Elder Qian's water-based spiritual energy was relentless, layer upon layer, binding and sealing Han Yuan Venerable's meridians, restricting his movement, pressing forward relentlessly, and wearing down his stamina.

Elder Li's fire-based attacks were ferocious and continuous, wave after wave of powerful assaults, directly overwhelming him, tearing through his defenses, and giving him no chance to recover.

The two, one soft and the other hard, one entangling and the other attacking, cooperated seamlessly, forming a perfect encirclement.

Although Han Yuan Venerable was a first-grade Golden Immortal with considerable combat power and superb swordsmanship, one fist could not fight four hands, and even a hero cannot withstand a group attack.

Faced with the tacit cooperation of two Golden Immortals of the same level, under the prolonged battle, his spiritual energy was rapidly depleted, the pressure was increasing, and he gradually fell into a disadvantageous position, unable to hold on.

With a soft hiss, a flash of fire swept across, tearing the silver robe. The aftershock of the flames struck Venerable Hanyuan's left shoulder, instantly charring and shattering his robes. His skin burned and stung, revealing a charred wound.

Immediately afterward, a surge of icy water-based spiritual energy struck, hitting the meridians in his left arm. Ice instantly spread, sealing the meridians, leaving his arm numb and stiff, making even exertion incredibly difficult.

More wounds appeared, his spiritual energy weakened, his movements slowed, and his stamina dwindled. Defeat was inevitable; it was only a matter of time.

Just as the battle was about to end and Venerable Hanyuan was on the verge of being captured, a dark shadow suddenly swept across the sky, its arc smooth, before crashing to

the ground not far from the battlefield. It bounced lightly twice before settling still.

It was the Soul-Suppressing Pearl that Venerable Chiyan had forcefully thrown.

In an instant, all three sides stopped fighting simultaneously, their movements synchronized, their gazes fixed intently on the jet-black bead. Their breathing slowed in unison, and a fierce glint flashed in their eyes.

Elder Qian and Elder Li's eyes gleamed with undisguised greed and elation; the treasure was right before them, within their grasp.

Han Yuan Venerable, however, was filled with astonishment and confusion, his mind reeling, unsure of Chi Yan's intentions.

The next instant, a crimson figure, bearing the aura of a wounded warrior, sped to the edge of the battlefield. His robes were tattered, golden bloodstains covered his body, and his aura was weak and feeble—it was Chi Yan Venerable, who had risked his life to return.

"Go!"

Chi Yan Venerable, disregarding his injuries and the excruciating pain, shouted rapidly.

Simultaneously, he grabbed the Soul-Suppressing Bead from the ground, gripped it tightly in his palm, and without hesitation, turned and flew at full speed towards the distant wasteland, attempting to break through the encirclement.