

A Man Like None Other

Novel

Chapter 6551

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The two went downstairs to check out. The elderly cultivator, who was dozing behind the counter, was startled awake by the footsteps. He looked up, saw David, and quickly stood up, a smile plastered on his face.

"Sir, are you leaving already?"

"Yes."

David placed the room key on the counter. "Going north out of the city, is there anything I should be careful about on the road?"

The elderly cultivator thought for a moment, then lowered his voice: "Going northeast out of the city leads to the Qingyun Mountains. That road isn't safe; there have been quite a few people there recently. Be careful, sir, and don't meddle in other people's business. If you can avoid it, take a detour."

David nodded, without asking any further questions.

The two left the inn, crossed the narrow streets of the city, and headed towards the north gate.

The north gate of Fire Crow City was much smaller than the south gate, and the city walls were also lower. Only two True Immortal Realm cultivators stood

lazily against the sides of the gate, barely paying attention to those coming and going.

Outside the north gate was a dirt road extending northward, its surface full of potholes, with sparse withered grass and scattered bushes on both sides.

In the distance stretched rolling hills, barren of vegetation, revealing gray-brown rocks that appeared particularly desolate in the morning light.

According to the map, a two-day journey north from here would lead to the outer edge of the Azure Cloud Mountains.

Continuing northeast from the Azure Cloud Mountains, passing through an area marked "infested with demonic beasts," and then another three days north, one would reach the edge of the Northern Netherworld Abyss.

David did not choose to fly.

Not because he couldn't, but because he didn't want to.

The battle in the Fallen God Wasteland had made him realize that the dangers of the Eighteenth Heaven extended far beyond the visible forces. The ancient remnants of souls slumbering deep within the wasteland, the spatial rifts scattered throughout, and the demonic beasts and demonic cultivators lurking in the shadows were all threats that could not be ignored.

Flying, though fast, made him a large target, easily becoming a sitting duck.

Walking, though slower, was safer and made it easier to spot the hidden threats.

The two walked north along the dirt road at a moderate pace.

David's divine sense maintained maximum coverage, perceiving everything within a hundred miles.

Just as they had walked about three or four miles from Fire Crow City, they heard hurried footsteps behind them.

David turned his head slightly, his peripheral vision catching sight of a group of people rushing towards them from the north gate of Fire Crow City.

There were about twelve or thirteen people, dressed in robes of various colors, each with a uniform magical artifact at their waist: a crimson short sword with flame patterns engraved on its scabbard.

Their cultivation levels were generally between the ninth rank of True Immortal and the first rank of Golden Immortal, with the leader being slightly higher, at the peak of the first rank of Golden Immortal.

The group walked quickly and in unison, clearly an organized and disciplined group.

As they passed David and Jiang Xuelan, the leader glanced at David, his gaze lingering briefly on the Dragon-Slaying Sword at his waist, before withdrawing his gaze without saying a word and leading his men to continue their rapid northward journey.

The group quickly disappeared into the distant hills, leaving only a trail of deep footprints and a cloud of dust.

Jiang Xuelan frowned slightly as she watched the group disappear in the direction they had vanished. "These people don't seem like independent cultivators."

"No,"

David nodded. "Their steps were too synchronized. Although their magical artifacts and robes weren't uniform, the short swords at their waists were standard-issue, indicating they came from the same organization. And..."

He paused, "They carried the aura of the divine race."

"The divine race?" Jiang Xuelan was somewhat surprised. "People from the Fire God lineage?"

"I don't know."

David shook his head. "Let's go, ignore them."

David withdrew his gaze and continued walking north.

The two walked for about another hour. The hills gradually became steeper, and the dirt road became narrower and narrower, finally disappearing into a rocky wasteland. The map showed that there was no road from here onwards, and they could only rely on their sense of direction to continue northeast. Just

as David was about to take out the map jade slip to confirm their direction, he suddenly heard a strange sound coming from ahead.

The sound was chaotic, a mixture of shouts, the clash of weapons, and the roars of wild beasts.

The roars were deep and powerful, like some large, ferocious beast in a rage, each roar causing the ground to tremble slightly.

Jiang Xuelan also heard it; her hand was already on her sword hilt, her gaze warily fixed on the direction from which the sound came.

David closed his eyes, extending his divine sense forward. After a moment, he opened his eyes, a hint of surprise flashing in his purple eyes.

"There are people ahead,"

he said. "More than twenty people are besieging a demonic beast. That beast is no ordinary creature; its entire body is engulfed in flames. More than twenty cultivators have been attacking it for a long time without success, and many have already been injured."

"More than twenty people besieging a demonic beast and still can't defeat it?" Jiang Xuelan was somewhat surprised. "What kind of demonic beast is so powerful?"

David didn't answer, because he sensed a violent, primal fire-attribute aura emanating from those cultivators.

But it wasn't a god.

It was a demon.

And specifically, a member of the Flame Demon lineage.

"Let's go, let's go take a look." David didn't hesitate, leading Jiang Xuelan towards the direction the sound came from.

The two didn't swagger over, but quietly approached the battlefield under the cover of rocks and bushes.

After crossing a small hill, the scene before them made Jiang Xuelan gasp.

It was a relatively flat valley, surrounded by steep cliffs. The valley floor was covered with pebbles and withered grass, the ground riddled with dents.

In the center of the valley, a gigantic demonic beast was roaring.

The beast was about three zhang tall and over five zhang long, resembling a lion magnified countless times, but it had no fur, instead being covered in a layer of dark red scales.

Crimson flames burned on the scales, flowing across their surface like lava flowing across cracked earth.

Its head was enormous, with a single, curved horn protruding from the center of its forehead. The horn was wreathed in even more intense flames, the color

of which had changed from crimson to dark gold, the temperature so high that it distorted and warped the air itself.

Its four claws were deeply embedded in the ground, each swing leaving several feet deep trenches in the rock, the rock within melted by the intense heat into slowly flowing, crimson magma.

Its tail was about two zhang long, ending in a bone hammer covered in barbs, also burning with flames.

Each time it swung its tail, the bone hammer slammed into the ground, creating a crater over ten zhang deep, scattering rubble and flames everywhere.

"This is..." Jiang Xuelan looked at the monstrous beast, a hint of shock flashing in her eyes, "The Lava Lion King?"

"You recognize it?" David asked in a low voice.

"I've seen it in ancient books," Jiang Xuelan said in a low voice. "The Lava Lion King, an ancient demonic beast, is said to have the bloodline of an ancient fire beast flowing through its veins. An

adult Lava Lion King's combat power is comparable to a third or fourth-grade Golden Immortal, and its scales have extremely strong resistance to holy light and divine fire, making it very difficult to deal with. This creature was almost extinct in ancient times; I didn't expect it to still exist in the Eighteenth Heaven."

Third or fourth-grade Golden Immortal.

David's gaze swept over the Lava Lion King, estimating its combat power.

Clearly, this Lava Lion King was not yet an adult and hadn't reached the combat power of a fourth-grade Golden Immortal.

Otherwise, these cultivators would have been dead long ago.

However, with his current strength, killing this demonic beast wouldn't be difficult.

But the cultivators currently besieging the Lava Lion King obviously didn't have that kind of strength. In the valley, more than twenty cultivators were frantically attacking the Lava Lion King.

Their robes were of various colors, and they all wore standardized magical artifacts at their waists, but this time not short swords, but various different weapons: spears, broadswords, battle axes, and iron hammers, each burning with dark red flames.

These flames were different from the golden sacred fire of the Flame God Palace; they were deeper in color, hotter, and more violent, carrying a primal sense of destruction.

It was the supreme fire of the demon race.

David's purple eyes swept over these cultivators, discerning their cultivation levels.

Most were at the ninth level of the True Immortal Realm, a few at the first level of the Golden Immortal Realm, and the leader was a burly, bald man at the second level of the Golden Immortal Realm, wielding a double-edged battle axe burning with dark red flames. Each strike left a shallow wound on the Lava Lion King's scales.

However, the Lava Lion King's regenerative abilities were astonishing; the wounds healed quickly under the scorching flames, causing no real damage.

The attack of over twenty people seemed fierce, but to the Lava Lion King, it was merely a tickle.

Each counterattack from the Lava Lion King posed a significant threat to these cultivators.

David saw four or five corpses lying at the edge of the valley; some were charred by the flames, some were smashed into mincemeat by the lion's claws, and one had been struck by the lion's tail's bone hammer, half his body gone.

Their blood seeped into the gravel and sand, staining the valley edge dark red.

"At this rate, these twenty-odd people won't last long,"

Jiang Xuelan whispered. "That Lava Lion King hasn't even used its full strength yet."

David remained silent, his gaze continuing to observe the battlefield.

He noticed that although these cultivators weren't individually strong, their teamwork was remarkably efficient.

They were divided into three groups: one group focused on the front, drawing the Lava Lion King's attention; one group harassed and restrained it from the flanks; and one group provided ranged attacks from the rear using magical artifacts.

Whenever a comrade was injured, others would immediately step in, and the wounded would be quickly dragged to the rear for treatment.

This kind of teamwork couldn't be developed overnight; it showed that this group had fought together for a long time and had a deep trust in each other.

"The Demon Clan's battle formations,"

David said softly. "Unlike the God Clan, their formations are more flexible and emphasize individual coordination."

"Demon Clan?" Jiang Xuelan was somewhat surprised. "You mean, these people are demons?"

"Yes. The Flame Demon lineage."

David's gaze fell on the bald man's forehead, where there was a dark red flame pattern, easily overlooked if not carefully examined. "See that pattern?"

That's the mark of the Flame Demon lineage. Every Flame Demon has it on their forehead, but it can usually be hidden with magic power. It will appear when magic power fluctuates violently during battle."

David himself possessed the Demon Clan's supreme fire and knew the Flame Demon lineage well.

Jiang Xuelan looked closely and indeed found that not only the bald man, but other cultivators also had dark red patterns of varying shades on their foreheads.

"The Flame Demon lineage...aren't they supposed to be mortal enemies with the Fire God lineage, the divine race? How dare they hunt demonic beasts on the territory of the Flame God Palace?" Jiang Xuelan asked.

"Precisely because they are mortal enemies, that's why they hunt them."

David's gaze deepened. "The Flame Demon lineage and the Fire God lineage share the same origin, both wielding the power of the laws of fire. But the Fire God lineage's holy light follows the path of light, while the Flame Demon lineage's ultimate fire follows the path of destruction.

They restrain each other, yet also need each other. If the Flame Demon lineage can hunt demonic beasts like the Lava Lion King, which have the bloodline of ancient fire beasts flowing through their veins, and cultivate using the essence and inner core of these beasts, their cultivation can advance by leaps and bounds. And the Fire God lineage's territory has the most of these demonic beasts."

"That's why they dare to take such a great risk, venturing deep into the Flame God Palace's territory."

Just then, the situation on the battlefield suddenly changed.

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The Lava Lion King seemed enraged by the harassment from these cultivators. It roared to the sky, the sound waves spreading outwards like tangible shockwaves.

The bald giant was the first to be hit, thrown backward by the shockwave, crashing into the rock wall and spitting out a mouthful of black blood.

The other cultivators were also thrown about, some of the lower-level cultivators unconscious. Taking advantage of the moment,

the Lava Lion King pounced on the fallen bald giant, opening its blood-red maw, a ball of blazing dark golden flame gathering within, the temperature so high it seemed to ignite the surrounding air.

The bald giant tried to dodge, but his body was numb from the shockwave, unable to move.

A flicker of despair flashed in his eyes, but it was quickly replaced by madness.

He bit his tongue, his essence blood burning, his body surging with intense heat, preparing to fight the Lava Lion King to the death.

Just then, a crimson light streaked across the valley, striking the Lava Lion King precisely in the head.

It was an arrow burning with intense fire. The arrow itself wasn't particularly powerful, but its angle was extremely precise, striking the Lava Lion King precisely in the left eyelid.

The Lava Lion King, in pain, prematurely spewed out its dark golden flames, deviating from its trajectory and slamming into the rock wall beside the bald man.

A large hole, several meters deep, was blasted into the rock wall, scattering debris and lava everywhere.

The bald man seized the opportunity to scramble out of the Lava Lion King's attack range, panting heavily.

"Brother, are you alright?" A young cultivator wielding a longbow ran to his side and helped him up.

"I'm fine." The bald man wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth, his gaze fixed on the valley entrance, a hint of wariness flashing in his eyes.

But there was nothing there.

Enraged by the arrow, the Lava Lion King abandoned its pursuit of the bald man and instead pounced on the ranged cultivators.

The cultivators scattered and fled, but the Lava Lion King was too fast, catching up with two slower cultivators in the blink of an eye.

With a single swipe of its claw, the two cultivators were smashed into mincemeat before they could even scream, blood and bits of flesh splattering everywhere.

"Don't panic! Maintain formation!" the bald giant roared, dragging his wounded body back to the battlefield.

The other cultivators quickly regrouped and continued to surround the Lava Lion King.

But David could see that their morale had plummeted.

Seven or eight people were dead, and more than half were wounded, while the Lava Lion King was almost unharmed except for a minor injury to its left eye.

At this rate, it wouldn't be long before all twenty-odd people were wiped out.

Jiang Xuelan also realized this, turning to look at David with a questioning look in her eyes.

David shook his head, signaling her not to move.

It wasn't that he was cold-blooded, but that he was waiting.

Waiting not for these people to be wiped out, but for another group.

He had sensed it long ago: atop the rocky cliffs on the north side of the valley, a group of cultivators from Fire Raven City were hidden in the shadows, observing the battlefield.

Their presence was well-concealed, but it couldn't escape David's divine sense.

That group didn't attack; they were waiting.

They waited until the demon cultivators and the Lava Lion King were both severely weakened before emerging to clean up the mess. Sure enough, after about half an incense stick's time, more than half of the demon cultivators had been killed or wounded, and the Lava Lion King was also seriously injured. Its left eye was completely blinded, and many of its scales were scorched through by the extreme fire, revealing the flesh emitting black smoke.

Although it was powerful, it was fighting twenty against one, and the demon's extreme fire could indeed harm it. The prolonged battle had left it exhausted.

David noticed that the Lava Lion King's speed had slowed considerably compared to the beginning, and the flames in its mouth were no longer as intense.

It began to show signs of retreat, attempting to break through and escape several times, but was desperately stopped by the demon cultivators.

The bald, burly man was covered in blood, his left arm hanging limply at his side, clearly broken.

His battle axe was stained with the Lava Lion King's dark golden blood, and the blade was chipped, but it still stood firmly in front of the Lava Lion King.

"Brothers!"

His voice was hoarse but firm. "Hold on a little longer! This beast won't live much longer! Once we kill it and take its inner core, we can..."

Before he could finish, a cold voice suddenly rang out from the valley floor.

"Can what?"

The bald, burly man looked up sharply, his pupils contracting sharply.

Above the rock wall, twelve or thirteen figures slowly rose, looking down at the valley.

It was the group David had encountered outside Fire Raven City.

The leader was a middle-aged man, dressed in a crimson robe, with a crimson dagger hanging at his waist. His face was stern, and a golden flame pattern gleamed in the morning light between his brows.

It was the mark of the Fire God lineage.

The bald, burly man recognized the mark, and his face instantly turned ashen.

"People from the Fire God Palace." His voice seemed to be squeezed out from between his teeth, each word filled with deep-seated hatred.

"Fire God Palace?"

The middle-aged man leading the group sneered. "It's Flame God Palace. The legitimate lineage of the Fire God in the Eighteenth Heaven is Flame God Palace, not some Fire God Palace. You demon bas***s can't even remember your own names, yet you dare to come to our territory to hunt demonic beasts?"

His gaze swept across the valley, looking at the demonic cultivators lying dead and wounded on the ground, then at the Lava Lion King covered in injuries, a satisfied smile curving his lips.

"Not bad, very well done. Saved us a lot of effort."

The bald, burly man gripped his battle axe tightly, the dark red lines on his forehead becoming even more pronounced with anger. "This was our prey, we hunted it first. If you want to reap the rewards, you'll have to ask my axe for permission."

"Your axe?"

The middle-aged man glanced contemptuously at the bald man's dulled battle axe. "A mere second-grade Golden Immortal demon brat, leading a bunch of defeated soldiers, dares to negotiate with me?"

He paused, his voice suddenly turning cold. "This is the territory of our Flame God Palace. You demon cultivators, daring to trespass and hunt demonic beasts, are already guilty of a capital offense.

I'm giving you two choices—either lay down your weapons, surrender, and come back to the Flame God Palace with me for judgment. Or..."

He drew a crimson short sword from his waist, golden holy flames instantly igniting on the blade, "...and die now."

"Bullshit!"

A young cultivator behind the bald, burly man couldn't help but curse. "When did this area become your Flame God Palace's territory? You can at least control a wretched place like Fire Raven City, but what right do you have to call the shots in this desolate wilderness?"

The middle-aged man's gaze fell on the young cultivator, his eyes like those of someone looking at a dead man.

"What right?"

He laughed, a cold smile. "Because we are the gods, and you are the demons. It's only natural for gods to kill demons. Do we need any other reason?"

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Before he finished speaking, more than a dozen cultivators behind him simultaneously drew their short swords, golden holy flames burning on the blades, illuminating the entire valley.

The demon cultivators instinctively took a step back, shielding their wounded comrades behind them.

Their eyes were filled with anger and resentment, but even more so with a deep-seated sense of powerlessness.

The hatred between the gods and demons had lasted for countless millennia. The gods considered themselves the orthodox race, regarding the demons as heretics; whenever they met, it was a fight to the death.

On this land, the gods' power far surpassed that of the demons, forcing demon cultivators to hide in the shadows, eking out a living like rats.

The bald, burly man gritted his teeth; he knew there was no way things would end well today.

It was either death here, or a desperate fight to the death, carving a bloody path through.

"Brothers,"

his voice was low, yet every demon cultivator heard him clearly, "today might be our last day. But even if we die, we'll take a few down with us. Are you afraid?"

"No!"

A dozen demon cultivators roared in unison, their voices echoing through the valley, drowning out the Lava Lion King's growl.

They raised their weapons, dark red flames burning on them, a stark contrast to the golden holy light of the gods.

The two completely different fiery forces clashed in the valley, the air distorting in the intense heat, the ground beginning to crack.

A flicker of surprise crossed the middle-aged man's eyes; he clearly hadn't expected these demon cultivators to have the courage to fight to the death in such a desperate situation.

But after the surprise came an even colder killing intent.

"Seeking death."

He waved his hand, and the dozen or so cultivators behind him charged out simultaneously, leaping down from the rock face and rushing towards the demon cultivators in the valley.

The golden holy light and the dark red flames collided in mid-air, creating a deafening explosion.

The two types of flames are inherently incompatible; their collision generates violent fluctuations of spiritual energy. Each impact is like a small spiritual explosion, scattering the surrounding air in all directions.

David and Jiang Xuelan hid behind a pile of rubble in the distance, quietly watching this battle between gods and demons.

Jiang Xuelan's hand remained firmly on the hilt of her sword, her fingers turning white from the pressure.

She wasn't trying to help, but rather preparing to deal with any attacks that might affect them.

"Who do you think will win?" she asked softly.

"The gods," David replied succinctly.

"Why? Although the demons are fewer in number, their individual strength is greater than that of the gods. That bald man is a second-grade Golden Immortal, while the leader of the gods is only at the peak of the first-grade Golden Immortal."

"It's not a matter of strength,"

David shook his head, "it's about their condition. The demons have been fighting the Lava Lion King for a long time, suffering more than half their casualties, their stamina is exhausted, and their spiritual energy is depleted. The gods, on the other hand, are well-rested and in perfect condition. Even if their individual strength is inferior to the demons, they can overwhelm them with sheer numbers."

His gaze fell on the center of the battlefield, where the bald giant was locked in fierce combat with the middle-aged man.

The bald giant's second-grade Golden Immortal was indeed a small realm higher than the middle-aged man's peak first-grade Golden Immortal, but he

was injured, his left arm was broken, and most of his spiritual energy was depleted, making each swing of his axe seem weak. The

middle-aged man, however, was in perfect condition, the holy light flames on his short sword were intense and stable, his swordsmanship exquisite, each strike aimed at the bald giant's vital points.

With this shift in power, the bald giant gradually fell into a disadvantageous position. Elsewhere, the demon cultivators were suffering a crushing defeat.

While the number of gods wasn't much greater than the demons, nearly half the demons had lost their fighting ability, and the rest were heavily wounded and unable to withstand the gods' onslaught.

In less than half an incense stick's time, three more demon cultivators fell.

The bald, burly man roared, trying to rush to their aid, but was forced back by the middle-aged man's sword.

"Don't rush,"

the middle-aged man sneered, "One at a time, it'll be your turn soon."

The bald man's eyes were bloodshot, his teeth grinding together.

He knew he might really die here today, but he was unwilling to accept it.

He had expended so much effort, lost so many brothers, and was about to defeat the Lava Lion King, only to encounter the gods at this crucial moment.

He would rather die under the Lava Lion King's claws than at the hands of the gods.

At least dying at the hands of a demon beast was a warrior's way of dying.

To be killed by the gods was humiliating.

Just then, the battlefield situation suddenly changed.

Whether provoked by the holy flames of the gods or sensing something else, the Lava Lion King suddenly went berserk.

Its body swelled dramatically, the flames on its scales turned from crimson to dark gold, and the single horn on its forehead blazed with a blazing white flame.

This was its life-saving technique—burning its life essence to temporarily boost its combat power to at least the fourth rank of the Golden Immortal realm.

Using this move would severely deplete the Lava Lion King's life force, leaving it weak for at least several years, even decades, after the battle.

But at this moment, it couldn't care less.

It roared to the sky, the sound wave several times stronger than before, causing countless cracks to appear in the rock walls surrounding the valley, and debris rained down.

The cultivators of the gods and demons were all thrown about by the shockwave; several with lower cultivation levels bled from all seven orifices and collapsed to the ground.

Taking advantage of the chaos, the Lava Lion King charged towards the valley exit; it was trying to escape.

"Stop it!" the middle-aged man shouted, taking the lead in chasing after the Lava Lion King.

If he could capture a Lava Lion King alive and present it to the Flame God Palace, he could at least advance three levels and receive a personal reward from the Palace Master.

He couldn't let this opportunity slip by.

The bald, burly man also gave chase, not for anything else but the inner core.

It was something he had obtained with the lives of more than a dozen brothers, and he absolutely couldn't let the gods take it away.

Cultivators from both the gods and demons chased after the Lava Lion King simultaneously, and the scene became chaotic.

Although the Lava Lion King had gone berserk, it was still severely injured, and its speed was far less than its peak.

Just as it reached the valley exit, it was slashed in the back by the middle-aged man's sword. Golden holy flames exploded on its scales, scorching the dark red scales black.

The Lava Lion King, in pain, turned and pounced on the middle-aged man, its horn, burning with blazing white flames, aimed for the middle-aged man's chest.

The middle-aged man couldn't dodge in time, and the horn grazed his left arm, instantly burning it to a charred remains.

He screamed and flew backward, crashing heavily to the ground.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, the bald giant rushed to the Lava Lion King, raised his battle axe, and cleaved it towards the lion's neck.

This axe strike concentrated all his power and life essence; dark red flames condensed on the axe blade into a three-foot-long blade of light, slashing down with unstoppable momentum.

The axe blade struck the Lava Lion King's neck, and dark golden blood gushed out, splattering the bald giant's face.

The Lava Lion King let out a piercing scream, its body twisting violently, and the bone hammer on its tail slammed heavily into the bald giant's chest.

The bald giant's chest caved in, and the sound of breaking ribs was clearly audible.

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He coughed up blood, was sent flying, crashed against the rock wall, slid down, and couldn't get up again.

Although the Lava Lion King hadn't been decapitated, the wound on its neck was extremely deep, dark golden blood gushing out like a fountain; its life force was rapidly draining away.

It staggered, trying to continue its escape, but after only a few steps, it collapsed to the ground due to blood loss, its massive body leaving a long trail of blood.

The cultivators of both the gods and demons stopped, staring at the fallen Lava Lion King; no one dared to approach.

Although the beast was on its last breath, its final attack was enough to kill anyone who came near. The

two sides remained locked in a stalemate, neither daring to make the first move.

The middle-aged man got up from the ground; his left arm was charred black, the entire arm useless.

His face was deathly pale, but the killing intent in his eyes remained undiminished.

"You demon bas***s,"

his voice trembled with pain, but remained icy, "your men are either dead or wounded, what do you have to fight us for? If you know what's good for you, lay down your weapons, and I might consider giving you a quick death."

The bald giant leaned against the rock wall, blood gushing from his mouth, but his gaze remained defiant.

"Bullshit." He used his last strength to squeeze out these words through clenched teeth.

The middle-aged man's face was extremely grim.

He raised the short knife in his right hand, golden holy flames burning on the blade, and walked towards the bald giant.

He wanted to kill this ignorant demon bas*** with his own hands.

One step, two steps, three steps.

His steps were slow, each step heavy, as if he were enjoying the hunt.

The bald giant closed his eyes, not out of fear, but because he didn't want to see the smug faces of the gods.

"Die."

The middle-aged man raised the short knife and slashed at the bald giant's neck.

Then, his body suddenly froze.

The short sword hovered in mid-air, just an inch from the bald man's neck.

The middle-aged man's pupils dilated suddenly, his mouth opened as if to speak, but nothing came out.

An arrow burning with dark red flames pierced through his chest, the arrowhead protruding from his chest, drawing a spray of golden blood.

He looked down at the arrow in his chest, his eyes filled with disbelief.

This was... the supreme fire of the demon race?

But how could the supreme fire of the demon race be so powerful?

His consciousness rapidly dissipated, his body slowly falling forward, landing with a thud in front of the bald man.

Golden blood gushed from the wound, pooling on the ground.

The bald man opened his eyes, saw the middle-aged man lying before him, was stunned for a moment, then abruptly looked up in the direction the arrow had come from.

Above the valley, three dark red beams of light descended from the sky.

The three beams of light struck the ground, creating three craters about ten feet deep.

As the light dissipated, three figures were revealed.

The three were all demon cultivators, two men and one woman.

The two men were burly and rugged, with dark red markings on their foreheads more pronounced than the bald giant's, and their cultivation was around the third rank of the Golden Immortal realm.

They wore dark red armor, covered with complex fiery runes, and wielded swords burning with intense fire, radiating a violent killing intent.

However, that killing intent was not directed at the bald giant and his companion, but rather at the gods. The woman made David freeze.

She stood between two burly male cultivators, appearing remarkably slender.

She wore a dark red dress embroidered with burning flame patterns on the hem, and her long, ink-black hair swayed gently in the wind.

Her face was exquisitely beautiful, her brows carrying an innate nobility and aloofness, but her eyes were dark red, like burning embers, or deep, blood-red gems, shimmering with an eerie light in the morning light.

Upon seeing this face, David was instantly stunned.

Because he recognized this woman.

Su Yuqi, the woman he had longed for.

The woman who had followed him from the very beginning of the mortal world.

The woman who had followed him from the mortal world to the Celestial Realm.

He wanted to stand up, to rush out, to call out her name.

But his shoulder was held firmly by a hand.

Jiang Xuelan.

Her strength wasn't great, but that hand felt like it was made of iron, firmly pressing down on David's shoulder, preventing him from moving.

"Let go." David's voice was low, so low that only Jiang Xuelan could hear it.

"No."

"No."

Jiang Xuelan's voice was equally low, but her tone left no room for argument. "Look carefully, she's a demon now, and she's on the territory of the Flame God Palace. If you rush out now, you'll harm her." Chen

Ping froze.

Jiang Xuelan was right.

Su Yuqi was now a demon, and clearly held a high position within the demon race. The two Golden Immortal realm demon cultivators were half a step behind her, indicating that her status was above theirs.

David took a deep breath, forcibly suppressing the impulse in his heart, and slowly, little by little, released his grip on the sword.

But his gaze never left the dark red figure.

In the valley, Su Yuqi's appearance stunned everyone.

The divine race cultivators, seeing the corpses of their companions on the ground, seeing Su Yuqi and the two Golden Immortal realm level three cultivators behind her, showed fear for the first time on their faces.

Golden Immortal realm level three.

In the Eighteenth Heaven, this cultivation level wasn't top-tier, but for these lower-level divine cultivators, a third-grade Golden Immortal was an overwhelming force.

Moreover, the opponent wasn't just one Golden Immortal, but two, plus a woman whose cultivation was unfathomable.

"Retreat!" someone among the divine cultivators shouted, turning and running.

The others followed, abandoning their weapons and the corpses of their companions, fleeing wildly towards the edge of the valley.

Su Yuqi didn't chase.

She didn't even glance at the fleeing divine cultivators.

Her gaze swept across the valley, looking at the heavily wounded demon cultivators lying on the ground, her brow furrowing slightly.

Then, she raised her right hand, a ball of dark red supreme fire condensing in her palm.

The supreme fire wasn't large, only about the size of a fist, but the power contained within it made David, hiding in the distance, feel a chill.

Second-grade Golden Immortal? Or third-grade? Or even higher?

Su Yuqi's cultivation was far higher than he had anticipated.

She tossed the supreme fire in her hand into the air, where it exploded into dozens of tiny fire threads, precisely striking each of the wounded demon cultivators.

These fire threads didn't burn their bodies; instead, they transformed into warm spiritual energy, flowing into their meridians and healing their injuries.

The bald giant's chest dent healed at a visible speed, his broken ribs rejoined, and his internal injuries rapidly healed.

In less than ten breaths, all the surviving demon cultivators regained their mobility.

They struggled to their feet, knelt before Su Yuqi, their foreheads pressed to the ground, their posture one of utmost reverence.

"Thank you, my lord, for saving our lives!"

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Su Yuqi didn't speak, only nodded slightly.

Her gaze fell on the dying Lava Lion King, a flicker of emotion flashing in her dark red eyes.

She walked to the Lava Lion King, bent down, and placed her hand on its forehead.

Sensing the intense fire aura in her palm, the Lava Lion King trembled violently, as if in fear, or perhaps in submission.

Su Yuqi's hand lingered on the Lava Lion King's forehead for a moment, then withdrew.

A fist-sized, dark golden inner core appeared in her palm, its surface swirling with intense flame patterns, emanating a rich aura of an ancient fire beast.

The Lava Lion King's life force rapidly dissipated, its massive body slowly losing temperature, the flames on its scales extinguishing layer by layer.

Finally, it closed its still-intact eye and died completely.

Su Yuqi stored the inner core in her storage ring, straightened up, and her gaze swept over the kneeling demon cultivators once more.

"Take your comrades' bodies and leave." Her voice was soft, yet carried an undeniable authority.

"Yes!" The bald, burly man kowtowed heavily, then stood up and directed the other cultivators to clean up the battlefield and move their comrades' bodies.

Su Yuqi turned to leave, but her gaze suddenly froze.

She looked at a pile of rubble outside the valley, a hint of doubt flashing in her dark red eyes.

She sensed something.

Someone was watching her.

Not a cultivator from the Divine Race; they had all fled long ago. Not a cultivator from the Demon Race either; they were all here.

It was... someone else.

Her brows furrowed slightly, her gaze lingering on the pile of rubble for a moment.

Then, she sensed a familiar aura.

That aura seemed...

no, that couldn't be right, how could this aura appear in the Eighteenth Heaven?

She shook her head, dismissing the thought.

Impossible.

He couldn't be here.

She took a deep breath, turned, and leaped into the air, her dark red figure tracing an arc in the sky before disappearing into the horizon above the valley.

Two Golden Immortal level demon cultivators followed closely behind, and the three dark red lights quickly disappeared into the distance, leaving only a mess in the valley.

The bald, burly man led the remaining demon cultivators to clean up the battlefield, carrying the corpse of the Lava Lion King, and staggered out of the valley.

Soon, the valley fell silent again.

Only bloodstains, shattered weapons, and a few corpses of gods that hadn't been taken away remained.

Behind a pile of rubble in the distance, Jiang Xuelan finally released her hand from David's shoulder.

David slowly stood up, his gaze following the dark red light that had disappeared into the horizon, his purple eyes churning with complex emotions.

"She didn't see us," Jiang Xuelan said softly, standing beside him, "or rather, she saw us, but wasn't sure."

David didn't speak.

He knew that Su Yuqi's last glance at the pile of rubble wasn't because she had discovered them, but because she had sensed his presence.

They were too close.

But she didn't recognize him.

Not that she couldn't recognize him, but that she couldn't believe it.

Su Yuqi probably couldn't believe she had arrived at the Eighteenth Heaven.

David was equally astonished; how could Su Yuqi be there?

If Su Yuqi was there, then where was Ning Zhi?

Why hadn't Ning Zhi appeared with Su Yuqi this time? "What do you plan to do?" Jiang Xuelan asked.

David remained silent for a long time.

He stared in the direction Su Yuqi had disappeared, a direction north, the same direction as the Northern Cold Abyss.

"Keep going," he finally spoke, his voice regaining its calm, "To the Northern Cold Abyss."

"And then?"

David didn't answer.

He withdrew his gaze, walked into the valley, squatted down, and picked up a discarded crimson dagger from the ground—the one left behind by the middle-aged man he had killed.

The blade was covered in dust and blood, but it was still sharp.

David turned the dagger over; a small character was engraved at the bottom of the hilt—"Flame."

A standard magical artifact of the Flame God Palace.

He put the dagger into his storage ring and turned to walk towards the northern hills.

Jiang Xuelan followed behind him, without asking any more questions.

She knew what David was thinking.

The Northern Cold Abyss was in the north, and the direction Su Yuqi had disappeared in was also north.

This was no coincidence.

Perhaps they would meet again on the way to the Northern Cold Abyss.

Perhaps not.

But in any case, David's gaze was already locked on the north.

In that direction lay not only the ruins of the Ice God's lineage, but also someone he thought he would never see again.

The two walked in silence for about half an hour. The hills gradually flattened, and the outline of a continuous mountain range appeared in the distance.

That was the Azure Cloud Mountains.

According to the map, crossing the outer perimeter of the Azure Cloud Mountains and traveling north for three days would lead to the Northern Netherworld Abyss.

David stopped, took out a map jade slip from his storage bag, and confirmed the direction.

"We're entering the outer perimeter of the Azure Cloud Mountains from here," he said. "The map indicates that demonic beasts roam this area; we need to be careful."

Jiang Xuelan nodded, her hand on her sword hilt, her gaze warily scanning their surroundings.

The two continued forward, walking north along a dry riverbed.

Towering cliffs lined both sides of the riverbed, covered in moss and vines. Occasionally, a few small demonic beasts would dart out from the vines, fleeing quickly upon seeing the two.

David's divine sense maintained maximum coverage; everything within a fifty-mile radius was within his perception.

The battle in the valley had lasted for more than half an hour. The fleeing divine cultivators should have already returned to Fire Raven City, or were on their way back.

They would certainly report their encounter with the demons to the Flame God Palace.

The people of the Flame God Palace would soon know that demons were lurking in the area north of Fire Raven City, and that there were even Golden Immortals of the third rank or higher among them.

This meant that this area would soon become unsafe.

The Flame God Palace might send people to wipe out the demons, or they might seal off the area, or they might even increase patrols.

David had to cross the Azure Cloud Mountains and enter the Northern Netherworld Abyss before the large force of the Flame God Palace arrived.

The Northern Netherworld Abyss was an extremely cold forbidden land that even Golden Immortals of the fifth rank were unwilling to easily set foot in, and the people of the Flame God Palace would certainly not pursue them there.

Once they got there, they would be safe.

The two walked for about another hour, and the sky gradually darkened.

The gold and crimson of the three blazing suns had already set below the horizon, leaving only the silvery-white moon hanging in the sky, casting its cold moonlight on the earth.

David found a relatively secluded cave and decided to spend the night there.

The cave wasn't large, about three zhang deep, and the entrance was hidden by vines, making it difficult to be discovered.

The cave was dry inside, with no trace of demonic beasts, so it should be a safe temporary shelter.