A Man Like None Other Novel

Chapter 6631

Chen Ping walked up the steps without pausing.

The gazes of both guards simultaneously fell on him, or more precisely, on the silver jade talisman that had appeared in his hand.

The talisman was entirely silver-white, with a treasure ship traversing the void engraved on the front, the waves beneath it lifelike. The back bore the Void Merchant Guild's mark and the exclusive markings of the Transcendent VIP Token.

The guard took the talisman, glanced at it, and then placed his palm on its edge, using his mind to read the stored access information.

His expression changed drastically in an instant, his professional indifference turning into utter astonishment.

"VIP Token! You are a VIP of the Void Merchant Guild!"

The guard's attitude immediately became respectful, returning the talisman with both hands and bowing deeply. "Please come in! Please come in! The third floor is the VIP reception room; a steward will personally receive you there."

He even subconsciously took a half-step to the side, making way for him.

Zhao Tieshan and the other nine cultivators were stunned.

The Void Merchant Guild's VIP Token, just presented so casually?

That was a VIP token from the Void Merchant Guild, and it was said that fewer than ten people in the entire Bermuda City possessed such a token.

The holder could mobilize most of the resources of the Void Merchant Guild's Bermuda City branch, including cross-heaven communication, emergency resource allocation, high-level intelligence inquiries, and even request military protection from the Void Merchant Guild in times of trouble. What

they didn't know was that this VIP token was personally issued by Han Qianshan, marked as a cross-heaven VIP token, valid in Void Merchant Guild branches from the 19th to the 20th Heaven.

However, in the higher Heaven Void Merchant Guild branches, the jade talisman issued by Han Qianshan was useless, since Han Qianshan was only a member of the 19th Heaven Void Merchant Guild and didn't hold a very high position within the entire guild.

Chen Ping led the group into the Void Merchant Guild. A female steward in a silver-white robe descended the spiral staircase with elegant and composed steps.

Her cultivation was at the fifth rank of the Golden Immortal Realm, and she wore a Void Merchant Guild badge in her hair, at least two ranks higher than the guards at the entrance.

Her gaze lingered on Chen Ping for a moment, showing no disrespect despite his mere Golden Immortal Realm Level 1.

A person who could serve as a receptionist on the third floor of the Void Merchant Guild had seen far too many distinguished guests—those with strange cultivation levels, those whose realms didn't match their combat power, and young masters of prestigious sects traveling incognito. What hadn't she witnessed?

“Respected guest, welcome to the Void Merchant Guild’s Bermuda City branch. How can I help you?” The receptionist bowed slightly, a perfectly measured smile on her face.

“I want to buy a piece of intelligence,” Chen Ping said, “real-time hunting-level intelligence on a Golden Immortal Realm Level 7 Demon Dog King, including its exact location, territory, guard distribution, activity patterns, and optimal hunting route.”

The receptionist’s brow twitched slightly.

Real-time hunting-level intelligence was a high-end item in the Void Merchant Guild’s intelligence system, containing results cross-verified from multiple sources, updated every half day, and could be pushed out in real-time when necessary. Naturally, its price was more than ten times that of ordinary intelligence.

“VIP, the real-time hunting-level version of this intelligence is priced at 20,000 high-grade crystals. Since you are a VIP, you can enjoy a 20% discount, making it 16,000 high-grade crystals.” The steward spoke at a measured pace, each word clear and distinct.

16,000 high-grade crystals.

Zhao Tieshan’s legs went weak.

16,000, just casually announced, even after the discount.

He couldn’t earn that much even after a year of risking his life hunting demonic hounds.

Chen Ping frowned slightly upon hearing this. He had thought that with the jade talisman given by Han Qianshan, he could get it for free. It seemed Han Qianshan wasn’t so great after all.

So damn stingy.

Chen Ping took out 16,000 high-grade crystals from his storage ring and stacked them neatly on the table, each crystal radiating pure spiritual light.

He lacked many things, but he didn't lack money.As the deacon collected the crystals, he noticed that the young man, a first-grade Golden Immortal, hadn't even blinked when paying.

After verifying the count, the deacon took a thumb-sized crystal bead from his robes and handed it to Chen Ping with both hands.

This crystal bead was far superior to ordinary intelligence jade slips; its surface was engraved with densely packed microscopic runes, and within it was sealed a swirling silver light.

"Distinguished guest, the real-time hunting intelligence of the Demon Dog King is stored in this intelligence crystal. You can view it by probing the crystal with your divine sense. The update cycle is once every half day, and you can refresh it three times for free next time you come to the Chamber of Commerce.

Please note that the Demon Dog King is accompanied by at least fifty demon dog guards of the fifth rank of Golden Immortal Realm or above, and at least five elite guards of the sixth rank of Golden Immortal Realm. One of them is marked as the 'Guard Leader,' and its combat strength is assessed as the peak of the sixth rank of Golden Immortal Realm.

If you intend to hunt it, please be very careful. It is recommended that you bring at least twenty combatants of the fifth rank of Golden Immortal Realm or above, or have a powerful expert of the seventh rank of Golden Immortal Realm to support you."

Chen Ping took the intelligence crystal and probed it with his divine sense.

A complete three-dimensional map unfolded in his mind, marked with details down to every undulation of the terrain and the density of every grove of trees.

The Demon Dog King's lair is located deep in the Black Wasteland, about five hundred miles northwest of Bermuda City. Its territory is oval-shaped, covering an area of about two hundred miles in radius.

The locations of over fifty guards were precisely marked with red dots, and the activity range of each guard was circled.

The guard leader was also specially marked: twice the size of an ordinary demon hound, and its beast core was assessed as "close to the peak of the sixth rank."

He withdrew his divine sense and carefully stored the intelligence crystal. "Let's go."

He turned and walked out of the Void Merchant Guild.

Zhao Tieshan followed behind, watching Chen Ping's back, his heart filled with too many questions he wanted to ask, but he didn't know where to begin.

A first-rank Golden Immortal, yet he could kill a fifth-rank Golden Immortal demon beast with a single sword strike.

He knew the price of demon beast materials like the back of his hand, easily selling them for a high price of 240,000.

He had a VIP pass to the Void Merchant Guild, allowing him to freely enter and exit the Void Merchant Guild.

He paid the intelligence fee of 16,000 high-grade crystals without even blinking an eye.

He exchanged a glance with the other nine cultivators, seeing the same thing in each other's eyes—awe.

The group left Bermuda City and traveled along the ancient post road to the northwest.

The roadside gradually became desolate; spirit trees and herbs were replaced by sparse shrubs, and then the shrubs disappeared, leaving only cracked earth and scattered bones.

A faint stench of decay permeated the air, the smell of countless demonic beast droppings and game scraps seeping into the soil over time.

According to the information crystal, the Demon Dog King's lair was located deep within the Black Wasteland, about five hundred miles northwest of Bermuda City.

That wasteland was called the "Black Bone Wasteland," named for the countless black bone fossils scattered across it.

Tens of thousands of years ago, the wasteland was part of an ancient battlefield, later becoming the breeding ground for the Demon Dog race.

About two hours later, a black wasteland appeared ahead.

The land was black, barren, and scattered with countless fragments of black bones, some as thin as a finger joint, others as thick as a roof beam.

The stench of decay in the air grew stronger, so strong that the difference between the smell of fresh blood and the stench of decaying bones could be clearly distinguished.

This indicated that a large number of demonic beasts had been hunted here in the past two days.

In the distance, the skeletons of some demonic beasts could be seen; some were already weathered, with the edges of the bones eroded into a honeycomb pattern; others were still quite fresh, with tendons still clinging to the surface of the bones.

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“Mr. Chen, this is the territory of the Demon Dog King,” Zhao Tieshan said in a low voice, a hint of tension in his tone.

His fingers unconsciously tightened their grip on the hilt of his sword.

Chen Ping’s divine sense spread out, covering an area of several hundred miles.

The power of chaos transformed into invisible ripples, passing through the surface of the wasteland and probing into the caves and fissures underground.

He sensed the auras of a large number of Demon Dogs.

The number of Demon Dogs at the fifth rank of the Golden Immortal Realm was far more than the previously estimated fifty—he counted at least eighty, distributed from the edge to the middle layer of the territory, forming a loose defensive zone.

The number of elite Demon Dogs at the sixth rank of the Golden Immortal Realm was also greater than the intelligence indicated, at least twenty, three of whom possessed particularly strong auras, judged to be at the peak of the sixth rank of the Golden Immortal Realm.

And in the deepest part of the wasteland, there was an extremely powerful aura, more ferocious than all the elite guards combined, like a burning black flame in the darkness.

The peak of the seventh rank of the Golden Immortal Realm, the Demon Dog King.

The intelligence crystal said there were over fifty guards and five elites.

Now it seems that between yesterday and today, another group of guards originally scattered around the territory's perimeter have been summoned back by the king.

Zhao Tieshan also sensed those auras, his face turning deathly pale. "Mr. Chen, this…this is more than the Void Merchant Guild said…at least eighty or ninety demon hounds…our numbers are simply not enough…"

Chen Ping didn't speak, his black eyes gazing further into the wasteland.

His divine sense detected something else: from the west, southwest, and south sides of the wasteland, dozens of auras of human cultivators were rapidly approaching, moving at an extremely fast pace. They were clearly experienced mercenaries or sect elites.

Several of these auras had already broken through to the sixth rank of the Golden Immortal realm.

"They're from Baimu City."

Zhao Tieshan followed Chen Ping's gaze. Although he couldn't see that far with the naked eye, he could already sense the fluctuations of spiritual energy in the air currents. "They've arrived too; they must have seen the city lord's bounty."

He counted; a total of five groups were approaching the center of the wasteland from different directions.

Each team consisted of fifteen to twenty people, with most possessing cultivation levels above the fifth rank of the Golden Immortal Realm, and some leaders even reaching the sixth or seventh rank.

The five teams totaled at least a hundred people, led by several powerful individuals at the sixth and seventh ranks of the Golden Immortal Realm.

“The Iron-Blooded Mercenary Group, Flying Cloud Pavilion, Azure Wolf Gang, Blazing Fire Sect from Baimu City, and another team that seems to be a temporary group of rogue cultivators,”

Zhao Tieshan introduced, a hint of schadenfreude in his voice. “They’re all well-known forces in Baimu City, and their strength is indeed formidable. But that’s perfect; with them holding off the guards, we don’t need to worry about getting past those dozens of guards.”

Chen Ping remained silent, watching as the teams reached the outer perimeter of the wasteland’s core, each taking up advantageous positions and beginning a standoff.

Clearly, no one wanted to let the other enter the Demon Dog King’s lair first.

The five teams each occupied advantageous terrain on the wasteland, forming a loose circle about a hundred feet apart.

No one dared to step into the core area first.

The Demon Dog King’s lair was just three miles away, a massive cave entrance over ten zhang in diameter, its dark opening emanating a dense demonic aura.

Huo Tie, the leader of the Iron-Blooded Mercenary Group, was a burly man, a peak sixth-grade Golden Immortal, wielding a giant axe whose blood-red runes flickered on and off.He stood at the head of the group, slamming his giant axe into the ground, the clanging sound echoing far and wide across the silent wasteland. “Gentlemen,” he said, “there’s only one Demon Dog King, a seventh-grade Golden Immortal, and only one beast core. With so many of us here, how will we divide it?”

Bai Feiyun, the head of the Flying Cloud Pavilion, was a middle-aged scholar in white robes, a sixth-grade Golden Immortal, holding a folding fan, his face refined and elegant.

He unfolded his fan and gently shook it, a hint of inscrutable calculation in his smile. “Of course, it’s based on skill. Whoever can slay the Demon Dog King gets the beast core, plus the City Lord’s bounty of 500,000.”

“Well said!”

Black Wolf, the leader of the Canglang Gang, was a burly man with a face full of scars, a sixth-grade Golden Immortal, with a necklace of demonic beast fangs around his neck. His smile revealed two rows of yellowed wolf teeth. “Our Canglang Gang never argues with anyone. Whoever has the sharpest blade will get the piece of this fat meat!”

Fire Chicken, the leader of the Liehuo Sect, was a red-haired woman, a sixth-grade Golden Immortal, with faint, flickering red flames around her. Her voice was as crisp as a tempered blade: “Then let’s stop talking nonsense and push to the cave entrance first. Each group will choose a direction to clear out. Whoever breaks through the guards and reaches the cave entrance first will fight the Demon Dog King first.”

The rogue cultivator team had the fewest members, only fourteen. Their leader, Song He, was also a sixth-grade Golden Immortal, but most of the team could only barely maintain the early fifth-grade Golden Immortal level.

Song He hesitated for a moment, but ultimately nodded.

Each of the five groups, with their own agendas, began advancing towards the core of the wasteland.

The Iron-Blooded Mercenary Group chose the fastest and shortest route, hoping to reach the cave entrance before everyone else.

The Flying Cloud Pavilion’s chosen route was only slightly slower than the Iron-Blooded Mercenary Group’s, but safer.

The Azure Wolf Gang's aggressive approach had an element of gambling, hoping to use speed to reach the lair faster than the Flying Cloud Pavilion. The Blazing

Fire Sect advanced steadily, not competing for speed but not falling behind either.

The rogue cultivators were the most restrained, staying dozens of feet behind, preferring not to be the first to grab a bite rather than be among the first to be bitten to death by the Demon Dog King.

Chen Ping, along with Zhao Tieshan and others, followed five miles away, maintaining a safe distance.

His divine sense constantly covered the entire battlefield; the position of every person, the distribution of every Demon Dog Guard, and the progress of every wave of combat all formed a dynamic, real-time map in his mind.

"Mr. Chen, are we really going to fight them for it?"

Zhao Tieshan lowered his voice, his gaze never leaving the shimmering spiritual light ahead. "The Iron Blood Mercenary Group and the Flying Cloud Pavilion both have peak sixth-grade Golden Immortal experts. Black Wolf may be arrogant, but he does have some real skills, and Turkey isn't weak either.

The only weaker one is the rogue cultivator team, but they also have a mid-stage sixth-grade Golden Immortal in their ranks. Our team…"

He glanced at the nine cultivators behind him and swallowed hard. "The strongest in our team is me, a mid-stage fifth-grade Golden Immortal."

"Don't rush," Chen Ping's voice was calm, his gaze fixed on the distant battlefield. "Let them fight first. We'll make our move after they've fought enough."

Zhao Tieshan hesitated for a moment, then his eyes lit up.

Watching the tigers fight from the mountain, the fisherman benefits from the snipe and the clam's struggle. Mr. Chen is quite shrewd.

He didn't ask any more questions, quietly crouching in his hidden spot, watching the wasteland ahead illuminated by the multicolored spiritual light.

The five groups advanced less than thirty miles before simultaneously encountering the first wave of demonic hounds guarding their respective directions.

These guards were entrenched among the rocks and piles of bones on the wasteland, some hiding beneath the shallow sand.

As the human cultivators entered their territory, dozens of black holes suddenly cracked open in the ground, and dozens of demonic hounds pounced out from underground, their sharp claws carving deep furrows into the thin surface of the Black Bone Wasteland.

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The battle erupted instantly.

Five teams simultaneously engaged in a fierce struggle from different directions, their various colored spiritual energies weaving a chaotic curtain of light across the wasteland.

The Iron-Blooded Mercenary Group advanced the most aggressively, directly confronting over a dozen demonic hounds. Huo Tie's giant axe transformed into a golden wheel of light, swirling twice within the horde of monsters, splattering demonic blood onto the black earth and sending up plumes of steaming mist.

The Flying Cloud Pavilion opted for a more flexible approach, engaging the enemy while simultaneously utilizing the uneven terrain and rocky outcrops of

the wasteland to maneuver around the monsters, keeping casualties to a minimum.

The Red-Haired Sect Leader of the Blazing Fire Sect, Fire Chicken, decisively led the attack, his crimson fire magic burning several fiery corridors through the monster horde.

The rogue cultivator teams faced the most difficult situation.

Their coordination was less seamless than the other four teams, and their spiritual energy exchange was intermittent. They lost two members in the first wave of attacks from over a dozen demonic hounds.

One was dragged into a pile of rocks by a demonic hound biting his shoulder while covering the retreat; the other had his left arm torn open by claws and, due to excessive blood loss, couldn't receive timely medical treatment.

In less than half an hour, the first wave of guards was completely wiped out.

After a brief rest, the five teams continued their advance. After advancing about twenty miles, they encountered a second, even larger group of guards.

This time, there were no longer only fifth-rank Golden Immortals, but at least ten elite sixth-rank Golden Immortal demonic hounds.

These elite monsters were significantly larger than ordinary demonic hounds, their bone spurs were dark gold rather than black, their attack angles were more cunning, their speed was faster, and their bite force was more than doubled.

The battle on the wasteland became even more brutal.

The Iron Blood Mercenary Group's shield formation cracked after being attacked three times by the elite monsters, and two vanguard members had their calves bitten off by demonic hounds that pounced through the cracks, forcing them to retreat to the rear for emergency hemostasis.

The Flying Cloud Pavilion also suffered heavy casualties. A veteran member at the late stage of the fifth rank of the Golden Immortal realm was surrounded by three elite monsters and couldn't hold out until his teammates returned to help. His folding fan broke in two, and he fell to the claws of the elite monsters.

The Azure Wolf Gang and the Blazing Fire Sect both suffered casualties, but they managed to stabilize their positions thanks to the individual strength of their core experts.

The rogue cultivator teams were hit even worse, suffering continuous losses, with only seven or eight people still struggling to hold on, two of whom were wounded.

However, they were, after all, an old and established force in Baimu City with deep foundations.

Relying on their numerical advantage and years of experience in hunting beasts, they finally managed to kill the second batch of guards.

The five teams finally met at the entrance of the Demon Dog King's lair.

The five teams stood at the edge of the cave entrance, looking at each other.

The cave entrance was more than ten zhang in diameter and bottomless, and the dark cave exuded a dense, almost impenetrable demonic aura.

From the depths of the cave came a series of low roars, filled with majesty and oppression, causing the legs of some of the lower-level team members standing at the cave entrance to tremble slightly.

A seventh-grade Golden Immortal, the Demon Dog King.

It was below.

And it already knew the intruders had reached the entrance.

No one dared to be the first to jump down.

Being the first to go down meant being the first to face the Demon Dog King's direct attack.

Being the first to face the Demon Dog King meant bearing the greatest risk.

Despite the great risk, the chance of obtaining the beast core was also the highest—whoever landed the final blow got the beast core; this was an unspoken rule in the hunting world.

"What, none of you dare go in?"

Huo Tie slung his battle axe over his shoulder, coldly sweeping his gaze over everyone present. "Then don't come to hunt the Demon Dog King! You've come all this way from your respective camps just to stand at the cave entrance and feel the demonic wind?"

With that, he jumped in first.The massive body plunged into the darkness like a meteorite, followed by a dull thud from the depths of the cave, then the crisp sound of a metal axe clashing against the bone spikes of a demonic beast.

Bai Feiyun of the Flying Cloud Pavilion closed his folding fan, gave a wink to his team members behind him, and was the second to follow.

The Azure Wolf Gang and the Blazing Fire Sect followed closely behind. Song He, the leader of the rogue cultivator team, gritted his teeth and reluctantly led the remaining members down.

Only after everyone had disappeared into the darkness at the cave entrance did Chen Ping lead Zhao Tieshan and the others to slowly approach.

They reached the edge of the cave entrance and peered down, only to see a bottomless abyss and faint ripples of spiritual light.

The battle underground had fully erupted; the booming of punches and kicks, the roars of demonic beasts, and the sharp clang of metal clashing rolled out from the depths of the cave, shaking the pebbles at their feet.

“Mr. Chen, shall we go in?”

Zhao Tieshan asked. His voice was low, and his fingers gripping the long sword were slightly white from the force.

Whether it was the hot wind rising from the depths of the cave or tension, beads of sweat had already formed on his forehead.

“Wait a minute,”

Chen Ping said. “Let them wear down the Demon Dog King’s stamina and spiritual energy first. A seventh-grade Golden Immortal beast possesses far greater defensive power in its lair than on the wasteland. Rushing in recklessly is just drawing monsters for others.”

He closed his eyes for a few breaths, simultaneously using his divine sense to lock onto the battlefield below, precisely listening to every sound that rose and fell.

About half an hour passed.

The sounds below the cave gradually subsided; the shouts of battle and the roars of the demon beasts weakened considerably, leaving only sporadic aftershocks.

The Demon Dog King’s roar, which had been continuous at the beginning, now only rang out in long bursts, and its power was noticeably weaker than before.

Chen Ping opened his eyes, a cold glint flashing in his dark pupils.

“Let’s go.” He led the group into the cave.

The cave was extremely deep, a vertical drop of hundreds of feet before reaching the bottom.

The space at the bottom was far larger than what the entrance revealed. It was a natural lair transformed from an underground cavern, dozens of meters high, roughly the size of a martial arts arena.

The cave walls were jagged, covered with centuries of accumulated demonic slime and dried blood, and the surface was littered with broken bones and remnants of old weapons.

Five groups of people, heavily wounded, leaned against the relatively clean stone walls of the cave, panting.

Blood and limbs were everywhere, and the heavy stench of blood in the air was almost solidified into a mist.

Half of the torches and spirit lamps around were extinguished, and the remaining half flickered with an eerie light.

The Demon Dog King stood in the center of the cave, covered in blood, with many deep wounds exposing bone, but its massive body still stood majestically.

A piece of a tattered human cultivator’s robe clung to its bone spikes, and several scraps of cloth from some unfortunate soul dripped from its mouth.

Although the aura of a peak seventh-grade Golden Immortal had weakened considerably compared to before the battle, it was still enough to chill the hearts of every survivor present.

The leaders of the five teams were in even worse condition than the Demon Dog King.

Huo Tie had a laceration over a foot long on his left arm, the edges of which had been torn open by the Demon Dog King's bone spikes, revealing festering poison; the bleeding hadn't completely stopped.

Bai Feiyun's folding fan was shattered in two, blood trickled from his mouth, and his white robe had several tears pierced by the Demon Dog King's claws.

Black Wolf's chest armor had been ripped open, exposing blackish-purple flesh.

Turkey's hair was disheveled, the flames on his body fading to a faint red glow, and his aura was less than half its usual strength.

Song He, the leader of the rogue cultivator team, was in the worst shape; his shinbone had been bitten off, and he lay on the ground, barely alive, his consciousness beginning to fade.

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This was the result of the attrition battle fought by the guards and the subsequent combined attack on the Demon Dog King.

More than half of the hundred or so people were injured, half of whom were too badly wounded to continue fighting; of the five leaders, four were injured, and one was critically wounded.

At this moment, Chen Ping emerged from the shadows of the cave.

His footsteps were light, but on the cave floor, strewn with rubble and bloodstains, each step was clearly audible.

The Demon Dog King's deep breathing echoed in the cave, its blood-red eyes turning to the new intruder, a first-grade Golden Immortal.

The massive beast's instinctive assessment of its enemy quickly reached a conclusion; it soon stopped looking at Chen Ping, continuing to suppress its aura from its wounds, focusing its attention on the five heavily injured leaders.

Huo Tie, clutching his bleeding left arm, looked at Chen Ping, sizing him up, his brows furrowing into a deep knot.

"Golden Immortal Realm, First Grade? You're courting death here! Get out of here while that beast isn't paying attention to you!" Before

he could finish the word "get out," the young man at the Golden Immortal Realm, First Grade, had already walked past him. His pace was unhurried, his steps deliberate, his target clear: the Demon Dog King.

Chen Ping raised his right hand, drawing his Dragon Slayer Sword.

A purple sword light, like a bolt of lightning tearing through the heavens and earth, suddenly erupted in the darkness of the cave.

It was the power of chaos, the primal power that restrained all other forces.

The Demon Dog King's blood-red eyes narrowed sharply. The power contained in this sword strike was completely different from that of all the human cultivators combined; it was a primal destructive force that would make any demon beast instinctively tremble.

Relying on tens of thousands of years of survival instinct, the Demon Dog King dodged in a flash. The sword light sliced a deep wound on its shoulder blade, revealing the periosteum. Black blood spurted onto the cave wall, corroding the hard limestone into countless tiny pits.

The Demon Dog King let out a shrill roar, its blood-red eyes revealing fear for the first time. A

seventh-grade Golden Immortal Demon Dog King had its defensive barrier cleaved by a single sword strike from a first-grade Golden Immortal human. If

this news reached the edge of the Demon Dog Clan's territory, none of the smaller beast packs entrenched on the outskirts of the wasteland would believe it.

Blood gushed from the Demon Dog King's wound, but the higher the grade of the demon beast, the more its ferocity after injury overwhelmed its fear.

It raised its massive head, its blood-red beastly eyes flashing with two violent flames in the dark cave.

Its spiritual power surged, all the bone spurs on its body stood erect, their tips wreathed in black, malevolent energy.

No longer conserving its spiritual power, it pushed its body's defenses to the limit while concentrating all its remaining strength into a destructive energy ball in its mouth.

The next instant, a black-red shockwave, mixed with malevolent energy and corrosive demonic power, erupted from the Demon Dog King's mouth, instantly vaporizing the stalagmites in its path.

Chen Ping didn't take the attack head-on.

At the same moment the shockwave erupted, he used the Seed of Spatial Law to teleport himself to the side of the Demon Dog King.

The destructive black-red torrent grazed his clothes and slammed into the cave wall, melting a bottomless crater in the several-meter-thick rock.

The other demon beast needed some space to move around.

"Wangcai, come out and play too," Chen Ping said softly.

A red light flew from his storage ring, landing on a rock flattened by the shockwave, transforming into a small demon beast.

It was a young Fire Qilin, entirely fiery red, with flowing flames burning from head to tail.

Its golden eyes shone brightly in the dark cave, reflecting the Demon Dog King's enormous projection.The little creature, having been cooped up in the storage ring for too long, immediately unleashed a massive pillar of fire upon landing.

Orange-red Qilin True Fire surged from the depths of its throat, rising several meters high, scorching the cave's ceiling red-hot and simultaneously burning away the dense demonic energy that permeated the cave's bottom, creating a clean void.

The flames were incredibly pure, showing no trace of any acquired cultivation techniques, but rather the most primal, deeply imprinted blood fire.

Looking at the little fire Qilin, Chen Ping smiled. He hadn't let it out for a while, especially after the little Devouring Beast left with the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord; the little fire Qilin had no playmates and was quite bored.

This time, Chen Ping released it to play and see how much its strength had increased after spending all its time eating and drinking in the storage ring.

Everyone stared in astonishment at the emerging fire Qilin, their faces filled with disbelief.

The fire Qilin was a divine beast, far superior to these demonic beasts.

No one could have imagined that Chen Ping, a mere Golden Immortal of the first rank, would have a divine beast as a pet.

Especially Zhao Tieshan and the others, who were even more convinced that Chen Ping was either a young master from a powerful force or a highly skilled individual who had descended from a higher world for training.

Otherwise, he couldn't possibly possess a divine beast like the Fire Qilin.

The demonic dog king's blood-red pupils suddenly contracted, instinctively sensing something within this seemingly small cub that even it feared.

It was a suppression of rank—the Qilin bloodline, the supreme among all beasts.

Normally, it might be able to forcefully suppress the bloodline suppression of a young Qilin using its superior realm.

But now, having exhausted more than 60% of its physical and spiritual energy from five groups of people, with over ten large and small wounds still bleeding, it felt a suffocating sense of impending death under the pressure of the Qilin True Fire's rank.

This seemingly small demonic beast contained fire power within it sufficient to threaten a seventh-rank Golden Immortal demonic beast.

"Use your full strength,"

Chen Ping said to the little Fire Qilin.

The little creature let out an excited growl, its four hooves pounding through pebbles and blood as it pounced on the Demon Dog King.

Its body left a trail of red light as it charged, its speed so fast that only the trail of flame remaining in the air could be seen.

Chen Ping moved as well.

The Dragon Slayer Sword whirled in his hand, purple sword light raining down on the Demon Dog King like a storm.

The coordination between man and beast was so perfect that even a seasoned hunting team couldn't match it.

Chen Ping’s sword held the Demon Dog King at bay from the front, each strike aimed at its vital points, forcing the beast to concentrate on the purple sword that could decapitate it at any moment;

the little fire qilin attacked from the sides, behind, and even from below the Demon Dog King’s abdomen, its true qilin fire burning through the outer scales of its body with astonishing speed.

The Demon Dog King’s massive body was like a trapped beast before them.

It darted to the left, and a purple sword light awaited it in the path of its leftward dodge;

it lunged to the right, and a ball of Qilin True Fire met it at the point of impact of its rightward lunge.

Chen Ping’s sword grew faster and faster, and the purple sword light wove into a huge sword net in the cave, completely enveloping the Demon Dog King within it.

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Ten sword strikes, twenty sword strikes, fifty sword strikes—the long-suppressed penetrating power of chaos tore dozens of large and small wounds into the Demon Dog King’s body.

The flames of the Little Fire Qilin were equally terrifying.

The Qilin True Fire followed Chen Ping’s sword strikes, attacking the breaches in the body wall and scorching the meridians and blood vessels from the inside.

The Demon Dog King’s armor was cleaved open from the outside and burned away from the inside;

the injuries worsened simultaneously from both directions.

The Demon Dog King let out a hysterical roar, gathering its last strength in its claws and clawing at Chen Ping's head.

The claws sliced through the air with such speed that they made a sharp whistling sound.

This claw strike was at its peak speed.

But Chen Ping's figure vanished the instant before the claws struck.

The Demon Dog King could only scan its new location with its divine sense: the young man at the first rank of the Golden Immortal Realm was already standing directly behind its back.

He appeared precisely at the junction of its neck and spine, where the bone armor, weakened by the previous barrage of sword fire, had become only half its original tightness.

Chen Ping thrust the Dragon-Slaying Sword into the back of the Demon Dog King's head.

The sword, imbued with chaotic power, pierced through the skull, passed through the intracranial cavity, and went straight to the jaw.

The Demon Dog King's blood-red eyes widened to their limit, its body stiffening in place. Its massive form slowly tilted, crashing onto the cave floor, stirring up a cloud of bone fragments and blood.

A seventh-rank Golden Immortal, the Demon Dog King, dead.

As the final sword strike that killed the Demon Dog King emerged from its skull, the residual power of chaos slowly dissipated in the cave.

The Demon Dog King's massive body fell to the ground, the resulting shockwaves whipping up bone fragments and droplets of blood, which clattered against the nearest rubble.

The beast core of a peak seventh-rank Golden Immortal beast still emitted the last vestiges of black malevolent energy within its head.

The cave fell into a deathly silence.

Huo Tie clutched his bleeding left arm, his eyes wide like saucers.

Bai Feiyun still clutched half a broken folding fan, his wrist motionless for a long time.

The thick wolf tooth necklace around Black Wolf's neck was stained with blood splattered on it by the Demon Dog King; usually a man of hidden malice behind a smile, he was now speechless. The

flames around Turkey slowly died down, their last red glow fading as she stared blankly.

Song He, the leader of the rogue cultivators lying on the ground with a broken leg, moved his lips a few times, the sounds like a leaky bellows.

That young man, a first-grade Golden Immortal, with a fire unicorn that looked like a cub, had killed a seventh-grade Golden Immortal Demon Dog King.

Chen Ping walked to the Demon Dog King's corpse, slightly raising the tip of his sword to retrieve the fist-sized black beast core.

The beast core was as black as night, its surface covered with layers of dense golden patterns—a hallmark of a seventh-grade Golden Immortal core, indicating superior quality.

He stored the beast core in his storage ring.

“A good thing,” he said.

Zhao Tieshan and nine cultivators emerged from behind a stone pillar in the corner, their legs trembling.

When Huo Tie told them to get lost, they had already prepared for the worst.

And now, the young man who had been called “come in to die” had just overturned the strongest demonic beast in the entire lair right before their eyes. Zhao Tieshan’s tongue stammered, and he could only manage to squeeze out a sentence from his dantian: “Mr. Chen, the corpse of the Demon Dog King is very valuable. The fur, bone spurs, and flesh are all top-quality materials. I’ll have my men dismantle it right now.”

Chen Ping nodded, and nine cultivators surrounded him, skillfully skinning, bone-removing, and spur-removing the beast core.

Huo Tie stood up, clutching his injured arm, and took two steps toward Chen Ping.

“Young brother,”

he forced a smile, his face contorted into wrinkles, but greed outweighed friendliness, “could you sell the beast core you have to our Iron Blood Mercenary Group? We’ll offer 300,000 high-grade spirit stones.”

Chen Ping glanced at him but didn’t speak.

Bai Feiyun threw away his broken folding fan and stepped forward as well. “Young brother, my Flying Cloud Pavilion is willing to offer 400,000.”

“My Azure Wolf Gang offers 450,000!” Black Wolf stood up from beside the stone wall, his voice loud enough, but the pain from the ripped wound in his chest made him grit his teeth.

“The Blazing Fire Sect offers 500,000!” Turkey’s voice sounded less like a bid and more like an ultimatum.

Chen Ping remained silent.

Zhao Tieshan stopped skinning the beast, sweat beading on his forehead again.

These people weren’t genuinely interested in buying the beast core.

They wanted to rob it. They were

only resorting to verbal bargaining because they’d been beaten so badly earlier.

Huo Tie’s face darkened, his smile vanishing completely. “Young brother, if you know what’s good for you, hand over that beast core. A seventh-grade Golden Immortal level demon hound king beast core isn’t something one person can swallow.”

His voice held no room for negotiation, only the threat forced out by his stiff muscles. “Our Iron Blood Mercenary Group has some influence in Bermuda City. If you offend us, you’ll find it hard to move an inch here. Let’s each give way today and consider it a friendship.”

Bai Feiyun of the Flying Cloud Pavilion chimed in, his voice soft but even more sinister than Huo Tie’s threat. “Young brother, although you were able to slay the Demon Dog King, it was only after we had depleted more than 60% of its power. Can you handle so many of us by yourself?”

Black Wolf from the Azure Wolf Gang approached from the side, while the Firebird from the Blazing Fire Sect rekindled its flames.

The surviving cultivators rose from their resting piles and slowly surrounded Chen Ping and his group.

Most of them were injured, but there were still twenty or thirty of them, including four leaders at the sixth rank of the Golden Immortal realm. Even with their injuries, this was still a formidable force capable of overwhelming a single first-rank Golden Immortal cultivator.

“You shameless!”

Zhao Tieshan stood up, holding his blood-stained skinning knife horizontally in front of him. “Mr. Chen personally slew the Demon Dog King! The beast core naturally belongs to him!

You refused to go in when you besieged the Demon Dog King, but now that the king is dead, you have the nerve to come and surround him? Even the hemostatic medicine in the pharmacy can’t grow skin like yours!”

“Why should I?”

Huo Tie sneered, raising his battle axe. Golden axe light re-condensed on the blade, though its brilliance was much weaker than before, it was still sharp and intimidating. “Because we have bigger fists. The strong prey on the weak.”

Before he finished speaking, his giant axe cleaved down towards Chen Ping.

The axe light tore through the dark air of the cave, the sharp, piercing sound of the golden light cutting through the air.

Chen Ping looked at the golden axe light cleaving towards his forehead, his black eyes showing no ripple.

He simply turned his sword and casually slashed out.

Purple sword light, like a straight bolt of lightning, collided with the golden axe light in mid-air.

The axe blade melted the moment it touched the purple light. It wasn't deflected or shattered, but rather its structure was fundamentally devoured by the power of chaos.

It was like a piece of ice thrown into a furnace, skipping the process of melting into water and evaporating directly.

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A purple sword light pierced through the dissipating axe blade. Before Huo Tie's cold smile could turn to fear, the sword light had already cleaved from his head to his chest.

The Iron-Blooded Mercenary Group leader's body was split in two, blood splattering everywhere.

Huo Tie, a sixth-grade Golden Immortal, couldn't even withstand a single sword strike from Chen Ping and was dead.

Even though Huo Tie had been weakened considerably, it was still shocking that Chen Ping killed him so easily.

Bai Feiyun was the first to react.

He threw away his broken folding fan, turned, and ran, simultaneously urging his remaining spiritual energy to accelerate towards the cave entrance. His reaction was extremely fast.

But Chen Ping's sword was faster. The purple sword light caught up with his back, cleaving him and his robes to the ground.

The corpse rolled to the side of the rubble at the corner of the cave entrance.

Black Wolf and Turkey tried to escape in different directions.

Chen Ping kicked away a piece of rubble with his right foot, using the momentum to leap across the entire cave, his purple sword light slashing out from the left and right simultaneously.

With one strike, Black Wolf fell to the ground.

Another sword strike, and Turkey fell to the ground.

Four sword strikes, four heads.

The entire exchange took only two breaths.

The surviving cultivators who had followed were terrified. Some threw down their weapons, knelt, and kowtowed repeatedly; others scrambled towards the cave entrance; still others collapsed against the stone wall, their cries and pleas for mercy mingling together.

Chen Ping looked at those kneeling on the ground, his dark eyes devoid of any emotion.

“Get out,” he said calmly.

The survivors, as if granted a pardon, scrambled towards the cave entrance, using both hands and feet.

In less than a quarter of an hour, only Chen Ping, Jiang Xuelan, Zhao Tieshan, and nine other cultivators remained in the cave, along with corpses and blood strewn across the ground.

Zhao Tieshan looked at the corpses, recalling the fierce and greedy faces of Huo Tie, Bai Feiyun, Black Wolf, and Turkey when they had surrounded them.

These men usually held sway in Bermuda City, their words carrying weight, but now their blood was flowing along the cracks in the cave floor into the low-lying pit of animal bones.

“Mr. Chen…”

His voice still trembled slightly, but the reason for the trembling had changed from fear to awe. “These people all have storage rings and storage bags on them. The Iron Blood Mercenary Group, Flying Cloud Pavilion, Azure Wolf Gang, Blazing Fire Sect… their leaders, their elites, their entire fortunes are on them. This batch of resources is worth at least a million high-grade crystals.”

Chen Ping wiped the remaining black blood from the Dragon Slayer Sword, his expression calm. “Take them all away. These people brought their own wealth, saving us a trip.”

“Alright!” Zhao Tieshan nodded.

Zhao Tieshan and nine cultivators busied themselves, completely dismembering the Demon Dog King’s corpse.

The Demon Dog King was a full size larger than an ordinary Demon Dog, and it took nearly half an hour just to skin it.

The pelt, completely peeled off, was as large as a room spread on the ground, its black fur smooth as satin, gleaming with a cold luster in the dark cave.

They also collected the storage bags from those people.

“Mr. Chen, the Demon Dog King’s pelt is completely intact!”

Zhao Tieshan’s voice was filled with barely concealed excitement. “The pelt of a seventh-grade Golden Immortal realm demon beast is worth at least 200,000 high-grade crystals in Bermuda! If we find a discerning buyer, it could even fetch 300,000!”

Chen Ping nodded without speaking.

The bone spurs were also removed one by one. The bone spurs on the Demon Dog King’s back were almost twice as long as those of an ordinary demon

dog, each one taller than a person, with black, malevolent energy still lingering at their tips.Thirty-six bone spurs were neatly stacked together, gleaming with a chilling light in the dim cave.

The flesh and blood had been cut into pieces and placed into storage bags. The flesh and

blood of a seventh-grade Golden Immortal realm demon beast contained rich spiritual energy, making it an excellent material for refining elixirs and a valuable resource for cultivators.

The flesh and blood of the Demon Dog King weighed at least three thousand catties, and at a market price of fifty high-grade crystals per catty, the flesh and blood alone were worth 150,000.

Bone spurs, inner core, and beast soul—the Demon Dog King's beast soul had not completely dissipated and had been sealed by Zhao Tieshan in a special beast soul bottle.

The beast soul of a seventh-grade Golden Immortal realm demon beast was an excellent material for refining high-level magic weapons and was extremely valuable.

"Mr. Chen, you've already collected the Demon Dog King's beast core. The fur, bone spurs, flesh, and beast soul—all added up to at least 500,000 high-grade spirit stones."

Zhao Tieshan roughly estimated, his smile barely concealed. "Adding the storage rings and bags from the four faction leaders and elite cultivators, this batch of resources is worth at least two million high-grade spirit stones!"

Two million.

This number made Zhao Tieshan's legs go weak.

Several hundred households in Qingfeng Village, after a year of hard work, only earn tens of thousands of high-grade spirit stones.

Two million—enough for Qingfeng Village to save for decades without eating or drinking.

The nine cultivators were trembling with excitement. They had never seen so many resources in their lives.

“Let’s leave once we’re done,” Chen Ping said. “The stench of blood here is too strong; staying too long will attract other demon beasts.”

Zhao Tieshan nodded, leading the nine cultivators to pack up all the spoils, and followed Chen Ping towards the cave entrance.

Outside the cave, it was almost dark. The setting sun cast its last rays upon the wasteland, turning it a dark red, as if soaked in blood.

The group traveled through the twilight towards Qingfeng Village.

After about half an hour, Zhao Tieshan couldn’t help but speak.

“Mr. Chen, there’s something… I’m a little worried.” His voice held a hint of anxiety.

“Speak,” Chen Ping said calmly.

“Today you killed Huo Tie, Bai Feiyun, Black Wolf, and Turkey. They are the leaders of the Iron Blood Mercenary Group, Flying Cloud Pavilion, Azure Wolf Gang, and Blazing Fire Gate. These forces have been operating in Baimu City for hundreds of years, deeply entrenched, with many followers. Although their leaders are dead, their subordinates remain. What if these forces unite to retaliate…”

Zhao Tieshan didn’t finish, but his meaning was clear.

He wasn’t worried about himself, but about Qingfeng Village.

Qingfeng Village only had a few hundred households, and its strongest village chief was only a sixth-grade Golden Immortal, no match for those forces.

Chen Ping stopped and turned to look at Zhao Tieshan.

His dark eyes appeared exceptionally deep in the twilight.

“Do you think they’ll unite?”

Zhao Tieshan paused, taken aback. “Don’t you think they will?” “

What was the relationship between the Iron Blood Mercenary Group, the Flying Cloud Pavilion, the Azure Wolf Gang, and the Blazing Fire Sect before?” Chen Ping asked.

Zhao Tieshan thought for a moment. “They… didn’t get along very well. In Bermuda, they often clashed over business and territory. The Iron Blood Mercenary Group and the Azure Wolf Gang even fought several times, resulting in many deaths.”

“That’s it.”

Chen Ping’s voice was calm. “Four forces that normally hate each other, would they unite just because their leader died? When their leader dies, the first reaction of the subordinates won’t be revenge, but rather a power struggle.

Who will be the new leader? Who will be the new pavilion master? These things will keep them fighting amongst themselves for a while. After their infighting is over, how many will still remember revenge?”

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Zhao Tieshan nodded thoughtfully.

“Even if they really did unite,” Chen Ping’s eyes flashed with a cold light, “I’m not afraid.”

His voice was soft, but every word was like a nail, driven into the hearts of everyone present.

“The seventh-rank Golden Immortal Demon Dog King, I killed. Huo Tie, a peak sixth-rank Golden Immortal, I killed with a single sword strike. Even if they unite, the strongest they can send is only a sixth-rank Golden Immortal. No matter how many come, I’ll kill them all.”

Zhao Tieshan fell silent.

He recalled the scene of Chen Ping slaying the Demon Dog King—the purple sword light, the speed too fast for the naked eye to perceive, the chaotic power that even a seventh-rank Golden Immortal demon beast couldn’t withstand.

Those below the eighth rank of the Golden Immortal realm are truly no match for Mr. Chen.

“As for the eighth-rank Golden Immortal…”

Chen Ping’s lips curled into a cold smile, “I haven’t fought one yet, but I want to try.”

The little fire qilin poked its head out from Chen Ping’s shoulder, its golden eyes gleaming with excitement, letting out a low growl as if to say, “I want to fight too.”

Zhao Tieshan looked at the little fire qilin on Chen Ping’s shoulder, and most of his worries dissipated.

Yes, Mr. Chen also had a fire qilin.

A divine beast fire qilin.

Although it looked like a cub, everyone had just witnessed its strength.

The Qilin True Fire couldn't even withstand the seventh-rank Golden Immortal demon dog king.

One man and one beast, an eighth-rank Golden Immortal, might not necessarily be able to defeat them.

"Let's go." Chen Ping turned around and continued walking towards Qingfeng Village.

…

Just as Chen Ping and his group returned to Qingfeng Village, Baimu City was in an uproar.

The cultivators who escaped from the cave stumbled and crawled back to Bermuda City, their faces deathly pale and covered in blood, looking like demons crawling out of hell.

When they entered the city gates, the guards almost didn't recognize them.

"What happened? What happened to you all?" a guard asked.

One cultivator slumped to the ground, gasping for breath, his voice filled with terror.

"Dead…dead…all dead…Commander Huo is dead…Pavilion Master Bai is dead…Gang Leader Black is dead…Gang Leader Fire is dead too…all dead…one sword…that young man killed them all with one sword strike…all dead…"

The guard's expression changed drastically.

Huo Tie, the leader of the Iron Blood Mercenary Group, a peak sixth-grade Golden Immortal; Bai Feiyun, the Pavilion Master of the Flying Cloud Pavilion, a sixth-grade Golden Immortal; Black Wolf, the leader of the Azure Wolf Gang,

a sixth-grade Golden Immortal; and Fire Chicken, the leader of the Blazing Fire Sect, a sixth-grade Golden Immortal.

These four powerful figures who wielded immense influence in Bermuda City were all dead?

“Who did it?” the guard asked.

“A young man… a first-grade Golden Immortal… with a fire qilin…”

The cultivator’s voice grew weaker and weaker, his eyes filled with fear, “He killed Commander Huo with a single sword strike… a single sword strike… Commander Huo didn’t even have time to react…”

The news spread like wildfire throughout Bermuda City.

In less than an hour, the entire city knew one thing.

The seventh-grade Golden Immortal demon dog king had been killed, and the killer was a young man at the first-grade Golden Immortal level, accompanied by a fire qilin.

The leaders of the Iron Blood Mercenary Group, Flying Cloud Pavilion, Azure Wolf Gang, and Blazing Fire Sect were all killed by that young man with a single sword strike.

And that young man had come with the people of Qingfeng Village.

In an instant, the name “Qingfeng Village” became the talk of the town in Bermuda City.”Qingfeng Village? That small village with only a few hundred households?”

“Never heard of it, never heard of it before.”

“Qingfeng Village must be extraordinary to produce someone like that.”

“What’s the background of that young man? He can kill a seventh-grade Golden Immortal Demon Dog King with just one sword strike, and he can even kill Huo Tie, a peak sixth-grade Golden Immortal?”

“I heard he has a Fire Qilin with him, a divine beast Fire Qilin!”

“A Fire Qilin? That’s an ancient divine beast! How could an ordinary person have a Fire Qilin as a pet? That young man must be a young master from some powerful force, or a master who came down from the twentieth heaven!”

Discussions, speculations, and exclamations rose and fell throughout the streets and alleys of Bermuda City.

But not everyone was exclaiming in amazement.

At the Iron Blood Mercenary Group’s base, chaos reigned.

Huo Tie was dead.

Their leader, Huo Tie, a peak sixth-grade Golden Immortal, was dead.

Vice-leader Ma Kui sat in Huo Tie’s seat, his face so gloomy it could drip water.

His cultivation was at the sixth rank of the Golden Immortal realm, slightly lower than Huo Tie’s, but still a top expert in the Iron Blood Mercenary Group.

“Is the news confirmed?” Ma Kui’s voice was cold.

“Confirmed.”

A mercenary knelt on the ground, his voice trembling slightly. “Commander Huo… is really dead. He was killed by a young man at the first rank of the Golden Immortal realm, who came with the people from Qingfeng Village.”

“First rank of the Golden Immortal realm?” Ma Kui’s eyes narrowed. “A first-rank Golden Immortal can kill Commander Huo?”

“That young man… he wasn’t an ordinary person… he had a Fire Qilin with him… he also killed the Demon Dog King at the seventh rank of the Golden Immortal realm…”

Ma Kui fell silent.

Fire Qilin.

The Demon Dog King at the seventh rank of the Golden Immortal realm.

This information filled him with unease.

But he couldn’t back down.

Huo Tie was dead; he was now the new commander of the Iron Blood Mercenary Group.

If he didn’t even have the courage to avenge Huo Tie, what would his subordinates think of him?

“Gather the men.” Ma Kui stood up. “To Qingfeng Village.”

“Vice-Captain…no, Captain, are we really going?” The mercenary’s voice was filled with fear. “That young man is too strong…”

“Strong?”

Ma Kui sneered. “No matter how strong he is, he’s still just one person. Our Iron Blood Mercenary Group has over three hundred people, including dozens of experts at the fifth rank of Golden Immortal Realm or higher. How many can he kill by himself?”

He paused, a greedy glint in his eyes.

“Moreover, he has the beast core of a seventh-rank Golden Immortal Realm Demon Dog King. Do you know how much that beast core is worth?”

The mercenary’s eyes lit up.

A seventh-rank Golden Immortal Realm Demon Dog King’s beast core is worth at least 500,000 high-grade crystals. Add other materials, and it’s over a million.

This is a sum that can drive anyone mad.

“Go! To Qingfeng Village!” The mercenary stood up, his eyes no longer filled with fear, only greed.

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Flying Cloud Pavilion.

Bai Feiyun is dead.

Vice Pavilion Master Liu Feng sat in Bai Feiyun’s seat, holding a jade slip in her hand, her divine sense probing the transmitted information.

Her face was expressionless, but her fingers holding the jade slip were turning slightly white.

A first-grade Golden Immortal, killed a seventh-grade Golden Immortal Demon Dog King, and killed Huo Tie, a peak sixth-grade Golden Immortal, with a

single sword strike. He was accompanied by a fire Qilin.

Liu Feng put down the jade slip, closed her eyes, and remained silent for a long time.

“Pavilion Master, what do we do?” a disciple asked.

Liu Feng opened her eyes, a complex expression flashing within them.

“Go to Qingfeng Village.”

“Pavilion Master, that young man is too strong, we…”

“Not to seek revenge,” Liu Feng interrupted him, “but to negotiate. That young man can kill Huo Tie, can kill the Demon Dog King; we are no match for him. But we can negotiate with him. We can buy the beast cores he possesses. We can acquire the materials he has.”

She paused, a shrewd glint in her eyes.

“If he’s willing to cooperate with our Flying Cloud Pavilion, it’s not a bad thing for us, it’s a good thing.”

The disciple’s eyes lit up.

“The Pavilion Master is wise!”

…

The Azure Wolf Gang.

Black Wolf is dead.

Several elders in the gang were arguing fiercely over who should be the new gang leader, almost coming to blows.

“What’s all the arguing about!”

A burly man with a face full of scars slammed his fist on the table, his voice like muffled thunder, “Black Wolf is dead, and you’re not in a hurry to take revenge, but fighting over a position? What kind of talk is this!”

“Revenge?” Another elder sneered, “How can we take revenge? That young man could kill Black Wolf, could kill Huo Tie, could kill a seventh-grade Golden Immortal demon dog king. If you went up there, could you withstand one of his sword strikes?”

The burly man with a face full of scars fell silent.

He really couldn’t withstand it.

The young man’s strength was beyond their capabilities.

“So we’re just going to let it go like this? Black Wolf died for nothing?”

“Of course he can’t die for nothing. But we can’t force it. First, send someone to Qingfeng Village to investigate the situation, find out the young man’s background, and then make a plan.”

Everyone nodded.

…

The Blazing Fire Sect.

Turkey is dead.

The atmosphere within the sect is even more chaotic than that of the Azure Wolf Gang.

Turkey was the sect leader and the one who founded the Blazing Fire Sect.

Her death has left the sect without its backbone.

Several deputy sect leaders, each with their own agendas—some seeking revenge, some vying for power, and some considering defecting to other forces—are arguing fiercely.

“Shut up, all of you!”

An elderly woman with white hair stood up, leaning on her cane.

She was the Supreme Elder of the Blazing Fire Sect, a peak sixth-grade Golden Immortal, usually indifferent to worldly affairs, but now she had to step forward.

“Supreme Elder, Sect Leader Turkey…”

“I know.”

The old woman’s voice was calm, but it carried an unyielding authority. “I am also saddened by Turkey’s death. But now is not the time for revenge. That young man’s strength is beyond our capabilities. Let’s go to Qingfeng Village first and assess the situation. If we can negotiate, then we will. If we cannot…”

She didn’t finish her sentence, but everyone understood her meaning.

If they couldn’t negotiate, they would have to accept defeat.

Meanwhile, the reactions of other forces varied.

Some forces sent spies to Qingfeng Village to gather information. Some forces remained inactive, observing the situation.

Others, however, were already plotting how to profit from Qingfeng Village.

In their eyes, Qingfeng Village was just an obscure little village with a few hundred households, the strongest being only at the sixth rank of the Golden Immortal realm.

That young man, though powerful, was alone.

How many people could one person withstand?

Greed is in the nature of cultivators.

Faced with enormous profits, reason is often cast aside.

…

Ma Kui of the Iron-Blooded Mercenary Group led over three hundred mercenaries, arriving at Qingfeng Village overnight.

They rode various spirit beasts, carrying torches that illuminated half the sky.

The sounds of hooves, footsteps, and clashing swords mingled together, echoing in the silent night like a death knell.

The villagers of Qingfeng Village were awakened.

Old people, women, and children ran out of their houses, standing at the village entrance, their faces filled with fear as they looked at the dark mass of people in the distance.

Village Chief Zhao Yuanshan, leaning on his cane, stood under a large tree at the village entrance. His aged body trembled slightly in the night wind, but his back remained ramrod straight.

“Gentlemen, what brings you to Qingfeng Village so late at night?”

Zhao Yuanshan’s voice was loud, trying to maintain composure, but the tremor in his voice betrayed his inner fear.

Ma Kui rode his spirit beast to the front of the group, looking down at Zhao Yuanshan with a cold smile.

“You are the village chief of Qingfeng Village?”

“I am Zhao Yuanshan, indeed the village chief of Qingfeng Village. I wonder if this sir…”

“Don’t try to get close to me.”

Ma Kui interrupted Zhao Yuanshan, his voice as cold as ice. “I heard that the people of Qingfeng Village killed Huo Tie, the leader of our Iron Blood Mercenary Group, and also stole the beast core of the seventh-grade Golden Immortal Demon Dog King. I’ve come today to demand an explanation.”

Zhao Yuanshan’s expression changed.

He knew that Chen Ping had killed Huo Tie; the news had already spread far and wide.

But he hadn’t expected the Iron-Blooded Mercenary Group to arrive so quickly.

“Sir, Mr. Chen… he hasn’t returned yet. The beast core you mentioned isn’t in Qingfeng Village either. Could you wait until Mr. Chen returns?”

“Wait?”

Ma Kui sneered. “I can’t wait. Who knows if that Mr. Chen you mentioned will even return? What if he runs away? Who am I supposed to get the beast core from?”

He waved his hand, and the mercenaries behind him immediately surged forward, pushing Zhao Yuanshan aside and rushing into the village.

“What are you doing!”

Zhao Yuanshan shouted, trying to stop them, but how could an old man at the sixth rank of the Golden Immortal realm stop over three hundred ferocious mercenaries?

The mercenaries rampaged through the village, kicking open every door, ransacking the place, and looting the villagers’ possessions.

Pots and pans were smashed to pieces, bedding and clothing were scattered everywhere, and food and spiritual materials were stuffed into the mercenaries' storage bags.

The villagers cried and pleaded, but no one paid them any attention.

A young mother knelt on the ground, clutching her child, begging a mercenary not to take her last few crystals.

The mercenary kicked her away and stuffed the crystals into his pocket.

The child tumbled from his mother's arms, falling to the ground and wailing.

An elderly man with white hair blocked his doorway, preventing the mercenaries from entering.

A mercenary punched him in the face, knocking out several teeth; blood trickled from the corner of his mouth, staining his beard white.

A boy of about ten years old was dragged out of his house by mercenaries for trying to stop them from taking the magical artifacts left by his father.

The mercenaries threw him to the ground and stomped on his chest; the sound of the boy's ribs breaking could be clearly heard in the night wind.

Zhao Yuanshan watched all this, his eyes reddening.

"Stop! All of you, stop!"

he shouted, rushing towards a mercenary who was smashing things, grabbing his arm. "Do you have no regard for the law?!"

The mercenary violently shook off Zhao Yuanshan's hand and punched him in the chest.

Zhao Yuanshan staggered back, a trickle of blood seeping from the corner of his mouth.

“The law?” Ma Kui, riding on his spirit beast, coldly watched everything. “In Bermuda City, my Iron Blood Mercenary Group is the law.”

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Just then, the Canglang Gang arrived.

Over two hundred members of the Canglang Gang, riding black spirit wolves, surged into the village from another direction.

Their faces wore sinister smiles, their eyes gleaming with greed.

Next, the Liehuo Sect arrived.

Over a hundred Liehuo Sect disciples, their bodies ablaze with flames, illuminated the village in a crimson glow.

Each held a flaming longsword, its flames crackling in the night wind.

Finally, the Feiyun Pavilion arrived.

Liu Feng led over a hundred Feiyun Pavilion disciples into the village from the south.

Her face was expressionless, but a hint of reluctance flashed in her eyes.

But she did not stop them.

She dared not.

The three forces, plus the Feiyun Pavilion, totaling nearly seven hundred people, completely surrounded the small Qingfeng Village.

The villagers of Qingfeng Village were driven to the village square; the elderly, women, and children huddled together, trembling.

The men were held separately to one side, each face filled with anger and fear.

Zhao Yuanshan stood at the forefront of the villagers, his aged body trembling slightly in the night wind, but his eyes were fixed on Ma Kui, filled with rage.

“Ma Kui, what exactly do you want?”

Zhao Yuanshan’s voice was hoarse. “Our Qingfeng Village has lived here for generations, and we’ve never offended you. Why are you treating us like this?”

“I said, I want that beast core.”

Ma Kui’s voice was calm, as if he were discussing a trivial matter. “Hand over the beast core, hand over that Chen Ping, and I’ll let you go.”

“Mr. Chen hasn’t returned yet! The beast core isn’t in the village either!” Zhao Yuanshan shouted. “You can turn the whole village upside down, you won’t find it!”

Ma Kui sneered. “Then I’ll wait. Until he returns.”

He waved his hand, and several mercenaries stepped out from the crowd and began searching the village again.

This time, they didn’t just ransack the place; they started attacking the villagers.

One mercenary took a liking to a young woman in the village. He walked up to her, grabbed her chin, and leered at her.

“Not bad looking,” the mercenary said, his fingers tracing the woman’s face.

The woman trembled with fear, tears welling in her eyes.

She desperately shook her head, trying to escape, but the mercenary's hand was like an iron clamp, gripping her chin tightly.

"Let her go!" The woman's husband rushed out from the crowd, punching the mercenary in the face.

Blood trickled from the mercenary's mouth. He paused for a moment, then flew into a rage.

"You're asking for it!" He drew his long knife and plunged it into the man's stomach.

The man's eyes widened, blood gushing from the wound, staining his clothes.

His body slowly collapsed, his eyes still open, filled with resentment and anger.

"My wife!" the woman cried out in a heart-wrenching sob, throwing herself onto the man's body, embracing his corpse, trembling with sobs.

The mercenary wiped the blood from his mouth, looking at the woman, his lust deepening.

"Now no one's stopping me," he grinned cruelly, reaching to tear at the woman's clothes.

The woman struggled desperately, crying and begging for mercy, but the mercenary's hands were like iron clamps, holding her body down firmly.

The surrounding mercenaries, watching this scene, not only didn't stop it, but instead let out lewd laughter.

"Old Liu, you're lucky, kid!"

"Hurry up, hurry up, take turns!"

"This little wench is really pretty!"

Zhao Yuanshan could no longer restrain himself. He lunged forward, shoving the mercenary aside and shielding the woman behind him.

“Beasts! You bunch of beasts!”

Zhao Yuanshan’s voice was filled with rage and despair. “She’s just a child! How could you do this!”

Ma Kui’s face darkened.

“Old man, I advise you to mind your own business.”

“This is Qingfeng Village! I am the village chief of Qingfeng Village! Every single person here is my child! If you want to harm them, you’ll have to step over my dead body!”

Zhao Yuanshan’s voice was hoarse, but his back was ramrod straight, his eyes filled with fearlessness.

Ma Kui’s eyes narrowed, a flash of murderous intent in them.

“Since you’re courting death, then I’ll grant your wish.”

He waved his hand, and several mercenaries rushed forward, their long knives slashing at Zhao Yuanshan.

Although Zhao Yuanshan was old, he was still a sixth-grade Golden Immortal cultivator.

He swung his cane sharply, a beam of azure spiritual energy surging from it, blasting the mercenaries away.

The mercenaries fell to the ground, spitting blood, unable to get up.

Ma Kui’s face changed drastically.

“Old man, you dare resist?”

“I, Zhao Yuanshan, have lived for tens of thousands of years and have never done anything wrong. Today you want to kill my villagers, and I will fight you to the death!”

Zhao Yuanshan’s voice echoed in the night sky, each word like a heavy hammer blow to the villagers’ hearts.

The villagers wept.

They looked at Zhao Yuanshan’s hunched back, at the old man who had lived for tens of thousands of years, willing to fight to the death for them.

“Village Chief!” a young man shouted, “We’ll fight you!”

“Yes! Fight them!”

“We’re going to die anyway, might as well fight!”

The men stood up, their eyes filled with rage. They picked up stones and sticks from the ground, standing in front of the old man and the children.

Ma Kui looked at the villagers, a contemptuous smile playing on his lips.

“A bunch of ants, daring to contend with the sun and moon?”

He raised his hand and swung it sharply.

The mercenaries charged forward.

Swords flashed, blood splattered.

Although the villagers fought desperately, they were, after all, just ordinary villagers, no match for these mercenaries who had spent years licking blood from the edge of a knife.

One by one, the villagers fell.

Their blood stained the village square, shimmering a dark red light under the moonlight.

The cries of children, the wails of women, and the roars of men mingled together, echoing in the night sky like a symphony of hell.

Zhao Yuanshan was bloodthirsty.

His cane was broken, and he used his hands to cast spells, streams of azure spiritual energy surging from his palms, sending mercenaries flying one by one.

But he was old, and his strength was failing.

Moreover, Ma Kui and several elders of the Canglang Gang were watching closely, looking for an opportunity to strike.

Finally, Ma Kui made his move.

He leaped down from his spirit beast and struck Zhao Yuanshan in the chest with a palm.

Zhao Yuanshan's body flew backward, crashing heavily into an ancient tree, spitting out a mouthful of blood.

His chest was caved in, and countless ribs were broken.

"Village Chief!" the villagers cried out in unison

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Zhao Yuanshan struggled to his feet, blood streaming from his mouth, his aged eyes filled with despair and resentment.

He looked at the corpses strewn across the ground, at the women being dragged away by the mercenaries, at the children crying in pools of blood, tears streaming from his clouded eyes.

“Heavens…”

Zhao Yuanshan roared to the sky, his voice filled with grief and indignation, “I, Zhao Yuanshan, have lived a life of good deeds, never done anything wrong. Why? Why did this happen to me? Why did this happen to my villagers?”

No one answered him.

Only the mercenaries’ sinister laughter and the villagers’ cries echoed in the night sky.

Zhao Yuanshan closed his eyes.

His body began to glow.

Azure spiritual energy surged from his body, growing brighter and hotter.

His body swelled, cracks appearing on his skin, emanating blinding light.

He was about to self-destruct.

The self-destruction of a sixth-grade Golden Immortal was enough to raze the entire village to the ground.

Ma Kui’s expression changed.

“Stop him!” he shouted. “He’s going to self-destruct!”

Several mercenaries rushed forward, but Zhao Yuanshan’s spiritual energy was too strong; they couldn’t get close at all.

Ma Kui took action himself.

He channeled all his spiritual energy and struck Zhao Yuanshan's dantian with a palm.

A palm strike from a peak sixth-grade Golden Immortal landed solidly on Zhao Yuanshan's dantian.

Zhao Yuanshan's body jolted violently, and his spiritual energy instantly dissipated. His body deflated like a punctured balloon, collapsing to the ground, spitting out a mouthful of blood.

His dantian was shattered.

Ma Kui looked at Zhao Yuanshan on the ground, a cold smile curving his lips.

"Self-destruct? You dare to challenge me?"

Zhao Yuanshan lay in a pool of blood, his eyes still open, filled with resentment and despair.

His lips moved, as if he wanted to say something, but no sound came out.

Ma Kui raised his foot and stomped on Zhao Yuanshan's chest.

Crack

—Zhao Yuanshan's chest collapsed, blood gushing from his mouth, staining the ground red.

His eyes were still open, but no longer shining.

Zhao Yuanshan, the village chief of Qingfeng Village, a sixth-grade Golden Immortal, was dead.

Dead in his own village, dead in front of his own villagers.

"Village Chief!" The villagers cried out in heart-wrenching grief.

Women collapsed to the ground in tears, children trembled with fear, and men clenched their fists, their eyes filled with rage, but they were powerless to do anything.

Ma Kui looked at the corpses scattered on the ground, at the women being dragged away by the mercenaries, his face expressionless.

“Keep searching,” he said, “We must find that beast core.”

The mercenaries turned the village upside down, but found nothing. The

beast core wasn’t in Qingfeng Village.

The young man named Chen Ping wasn’t in Qingfeng Village either.

Ma Kui’s face was terribly grim.

“When will that Chen Ping return?”

“I don’t know…” a mercenary said cautiously, “Maybe…maybe he won’t come back…”

Ma Kui remained silent for a long time.

“Then wait,” he said. “Send men to guard all the village entrances. Report immediately if Chen Ping is spotted. The rest of you, continue searching the village. And…”

His gaze fell on the villagers being held captive, a cold glint in his eyes.

“Deal with all of them.”

“Deal with them all?” The mercenary hesitated. “Captain, there are hundreds of them…”

“So what if there are hundreds?” Ma Kui sneered. “Keep them alive, waiting for Chen Ping to return and report back? Kill them. Leave no one alive.”

A cruel glint flashed in the mercenary’s eyes “Yes!”

The massacre began.

Men were dragged out one by one, forced to kneel in the village square, and decapitated one by one.

Blood gushed from their necks, staining the ground red.

Heads rolled on the ground, eyes still open, filled with resentment and rage.

Women were dragged into houses; cries, pleas for mercy, and heart-wrenching screams echoed through the night.

But soon, these sounds ceased.

Children were gathered together; a mercenary raised his long sword and cleaved several children’s heads on the ground.

The other children screamed in terror and scattered, but were quickly caught by the mercenaries, killed one by one.

The elderly knelt on the ground, hands clasped together, chanting Buddhist prayers, begging for divine protection.

But heaven did not protect them.

The mercenaries’ swords fell, and the elderly fell into pools of blood.

The entire Qingfeng Village became a living hell.

Corpses lay scattered across the square, the streets, and inside the houses.

Blood formed streams, flowing from the village and turning the river outside red.

Flames soared into the sky, illuminating half the heavens.

Those once warm and welcoming houses were now a sea of fire.

Those villagers who once laughed and chatted were now cold corpses.

No one survived.

Men, women, the elderly, children—hundreds of people—were all killed.

Not a single one was spared.

As dawn approached, the mercenaries finally stopped.

The village was now a ruin, littered with corpses and blood. The air was thick with the stench of blood and acrid burning, almost nauseating.

Ma Kui stood at the village entrance, staring at the ruins, his face expressionless.

“Did you find the beast core?” he asked.

“No,” a mercenary shook his head. “We searched the entire village, but found nothing.”

Ma Kui’s brow furrowed.

“Where did Chen Ping hide the beast core?”

“Captain, maybe…maybe the beast core isn’t even in the village. Maybe Chen Ping took it and ran away.”

Ma Kui remained silent for a long time.

“Withdraw,” he said. “Back to Bermuda City.”

The mercenaries mounted their spirit beasts and left Qingfeng Village.

The sound of hooves gradually faded into the morning light.

Qingfeng Village had become a dead village.

Hundreds of corpses lay scattered in the ruins, uncollected and unburied.

The blood had congealed, turning into a black film covering the ground.

Ashes drifted in the morning breeze, like black snowflakes.

The ancient tree at the village entrance was charred, its thick trunk lying on the ground, pressing down on several corpses.

The ancient well beneath the tree was stained red with blood, the water turning dark red and emitting a pungent, bloody smell.

The stone platform at the village entrance was soaked in blood, turning dark red.

The sun rose.

Golden sunlight bathed the earth, illuminating the entire land.

But in Qingfeng Village, the sunlight never returned.

For it had become a dead land.

The morning breeze blew, and ashes drifted in the air, as if telling a story.

But no one heard.

No one cared.