

the mans Decree: Kai Ping / Chen Ping

Chapter 4521

“Mr. Chen, you can’t block this sword!” Xiao Yuanshan stared at Kai with disbelief. “So many experts failed. How could you, with just the seventh level of the Tribulation Realm, stand a chance?”

Kai smiled confidently. “Don’t worry, Emperor Xiao. It’s not my strength but a treasure I’ll rely on!”

With that, Kai summoned the dragon-patterned bell from his storage ring. Above them, a massive bell materialized in the sky, growing larger and larger until it enveloped Kai and his allies. The Xiao Dynasty’s warriors were stunned. “What kind of treasure is this? Won’t it trap them too?”

Before anyone could question further, the bell emitted a deep hum. Waves of sword energy slammed against its surface, sending vibrations echoing through the air. But no harm came to those inside. The dragon-patterned bell held firm, leaving everyone astonished—especially the Tenth Prince and Zuo Tianzheng. Even the Wuji Taoist scrutinized it closely.

Suddenly, the sword energy shifted. A formless blade—a deadly sword of intent—whirled toward the Wuji Taoist. Kai noticed the change and quickly withdrew the bell. Just the earlier sword waves had pushed them to their limits, but this invisible blade was even more fearsome!

The Wuji Taoist remained calm. He waved his whisk lightly as the invisible sword neared. Boom! The blade exploded, dispersing harmlessly.

But just as the dust settled, the Tenth Prince’s long sword moved on its own, aiming directly at the Wuji Taoist. The sword’s spirit had

awakened, granting it independent action. Now, the Tenth Prince had an extra ally—a sentient weapon.

The Xiao Dynasty's warriors held their breath. One Tenth Prince was already formidable, but with the sword spirit, it was now two against one. Could the Wuji Taoist hold his ground?

Without hesitation, the Wuji Taoist sprang into the air with blinding speed, ready to face this new challenge head-on.

Chapter 4522

Behind Wuji Taoist, bursts of sword power erupted, chasing him relentlessly. The energy exploded like fireworks, scattering countless blades across the sky. Sword energy rained down like a storm, obscuring everything. The figures of the Tenth Prince and Wuji Taoist disappeared into the chaos.

No one could see who held the upper hand—neither Xiao Yuanshan nor Zuo Tianzheng could guess the outcome. Tension gripped the onlookers as faint flashes of white light streaked through the sky. The battle was too intense to follow.

For what felt like an eternity—but was only a dozen breaths—silence fell. Then, both combatants reappeared, their faces calm and unreadable.

The crowd held their breath. No one dared ask who had won.

The silence was broken suddenly. Pfft! The Tenth Prince coughed up a mouthful of blood. “Old fool, mark my words—I’ll have my revenge!” he spat.

Before anyone could react, the Tenth Prince vanished into a shadow, retreating into the distance.

Shock rippled through the battlefield. Zuo Tianzheng and the Demon Sealing Alliance stared in disbelief. The mighty Tenth Prince, who had scorned retreat, had fled, leaving his allies behind.

“Isn’t running worse than retreating?” someone muttered.

Zuo Tianzheng gritted his teeth, trying to mask his frustration. Just moments ago, the Tenth Prince had vowed to stand firm. Now, he had abandoned his comrades, leaving them to face certain doom.

“What do we do now, Leader?” one of the cultivators asked anxiously.

Zuo Tianzheng cleared his throat, forcing a steady tone. “Hold your ground. Don’t panic...”

Before he could finish, his figure blurred, turning into a shadow as he bolted from the battlefield.

The rest of the Demon Sealing Alliance didn’t wait. Panic spread like wildfire, and one by one, they fled in all directions.

After all, staying behind meant only one thing—death.

Chapter 4523

Taoist Wuji watched the members of the Demon Sealing League flee, but he made no move to stop them. Though they deserved punishment, he had no desire to kill them. His reason for getting involved wasn’t because of Xiao Huangchao, but purely for his junior brother, Taoist Wuwei.

The fighters from Xiao Huangchao also chose not to pursue the fleeing enemies. They knew that even if they caught up, they weren’t strong enough to win. The battle had left them battered and weary, with too many wounded to continue the fight. Seeing the Demon Sealing League retreat brought a wave of relief.

However, everyone in Xiao Huangchao knew this was not the end. They would not let the Demon Sealing League off so easily. Yet, as long as Taoist Wuji was with them, they felt reassured.

All eyes turned to Kai, believing that Taoist Wuji supported him. After all, Kai was the partner of Wuji's apprentice. They silently wished Kai would persuade Taoist Wuji to stay.

Kai felt their expectations. He wanted to ask Taoist Wuji to remain but couldn't bring himself to say it. Wuji, unfazed by the crowd, focused on his brother Wuwei, who was now just a fragile wisp of a soul.

"Come with me, brother," Taoist Wuji said calmly. "I will help you rebuild your body."

With a sweep of his sleeve, Wuwei's soul vanished. Then, under the watchful eyes of the crowd, Taoist Wuji also faded away, leaving behind only silence.

Confusion lingered. Xiao Feng turned to Kai and asked, "Mr. Chen, why didn't you try to keep Taoist Wuji here?"

Kai sighed. "Even if I asked, he wouldn't stay."

Xiao Yuanshan, seeing the weariness on Kai's face, nodded in understanding. "The Demon Sealing League won't return anytime soon. Everyone, let's focus on recovering our strength."

The crowd dispersed, tending to their wounds, their hearts heavy but hopeful.

Restoring the bodies of millions of soldiers would be no small task — it would take time and effort.

"Emperor Xiao," Kai said thoughtfully, "I have friends who specialize in soul-shaping and body-cultivation. I can ask them to come and help."

Xiao Yuanshan's eyes lit up. "That's wonderful news! Thank you, Mr. Chen!"

Kai felt a pang of guilt. The chaos that had befallen the Xiao Dynasty was largely because of him. Helping was the least he could do.

He reached for his sound-transmission jade slip and contacted Zhe Yan. As the son-in-law of the Soul Demon Sect, Zhe Yan now held considerable influence. Upon receiving Kai's message, Zhe Yan acted immediately. He arrived with Jiang Yulian and several disciples of the Soul Demon Sect, ready to help.

Thanks to their assistance, the process of reshaping the bodies of Xiao Dynasty's hundreds of thousands of soldiers would be much faster. However, the imperial city lay in ruins. Xiao Yuanshan had no choice but to relocate everyone to other cities under the dynasty's rule. Thankfully, the Xiao Dynasty consisted of dozens of cities, large and small.

Though the damage was extensive, the key leaders had survived. The dynasty's foundations were intact. Rebuilding would be challenging but not impossible.

Meanwhile, Kai devoted himself to crafting elixirs day and night, treating injured monks and soldiers. The effort drained him, but he didn't complain.

Seeing Kai's dedication, Xiao Yuanshan ordered resources and medicinal herbs to be brought from all over the kingdom. "Mr. Chen, please use these resources," he insisted. "You've done so much for us."

But Kai shook his head. "Xiao Yuanshan, keep those resources for your people. They need them to heal and rebuild. I've decided to leave the Xiao Dynasty and attend to my own matters."

Xiao Yuanshan froze, his face clouding with worry. "You're leaving?"

He knew that as long as Kai stayed, the forces backing him would deter the Demon Sealing League from retaliating. If Kai left, the future of the Xiao Dynasty would hang in the balance.

Chapter 4524

Kai noticed Xiao Yuanshan's concern and quickly reassured him. "Don't worry, Emperor Xiao. I'm only leaving temporarily. I've given Prince Xiao a sound-transmission jade slip. If the Xiao Dynasty faces trouble, I'll return immediately."

Xiao Yuanshan let out a relieved sigh and nodded. Though it stung his pride that the powerful Xiao Dynasty now relied on a seventh-grade Tribulation cultivator, the reality was undeniable — the forces supporting Kai were far stronger than any they could muster.

With that reassurance, Kai left the Xiao Dynasty alongside Ji Yun. They boarded an airship bound for Qingniu Peak, home of the Weapon Refining Sect.

Kai's priority was restoring the Dragon Slashing Sword. If the Sword Spirit Zhongli could be freed from the blade, his strength would increase significantly. Zhongli could fight alongside him, serving as a hidden ace in battle.

As the airship cruised through the skies, Kai settled into meditation. The journey would take several days, and he wanted to use the time to cultivate and restore his energy.

Meanwhile, at the headquarters of the Demon Sealing League, the atmosphere was grim. Zuo Tianzheng sat in the main seat, frustration etched on his face. Around him were the league's middle-ranking leaders, their expressions just as weary.

Among them was Zhou Zongzhu, who had managed to escape the disastrous battle with two disciples, Tianluo and Tiansha, unscathed.

Zhou's talent for self-preservation was unmatched, though his survival brought little comfort to the league.

Zuo Tianzheng's voice cut through the tension. "We failed to crush the Xiao Dynasty, but we dealt them a severe blow. Their strength is greatly diminished."

He paused, scanning the room. "Prepare yourselves. We will attack the Xiao Dynasty again. We cannot give up."

With a dismissive wave, he ended the meeting, his mind already calculating their next move. The fight was far from over.

Behind the main hall, in a secret chamber, a swirling black hole loomed ominously. In the dim light, the Tenth Prince calmly sucked on a lollipop, his demeanor unfazed despite having fled the battle. His decision to abandon the Demon Sealing League had been questionable, but Zuo Tianzheng dared not express any discontent. Instead, he remained deferential, his head bowed respectfully.

"Tenth Prince," Zuo Tianzheng said softly, "I am ready. Although we didn't conquer the Xiao Dynasty this time, your contributions should not be overlooked."

The Tenth Prince smiled, his eyes gleaming. "Good. Follow me."

Without hesitation, he stepped into the black hole. Zuo Tianzheng followed closely behind, the void swallowing them whole. The black hole sealed itself behind them, plunging everything into darkness.

Moments later, Zuo Tianzheng's vision cleared. A colossal black palace floated before him, suspended in an endless expanse of stars. The temple seemed to defy reality, its presence awe-inspiring and eerie.

His breath caught in his throat. "Tenth Prince... is this the temple?"

The Tenth Prince nodded. "Yes. This is the tenth temple. The locations of the other nine remain a mystery to me."

He gestured toward the looming structure. “I wanted you to see the majesty of our temple for yourself. If you serve us loyally, you’ll be rewarded beyond your wildest dreams.”

The Tenth Prince’s words were blunt, likening Zuo Tianzheng to a dog. But Zuo Tianzheng felt no insult. Instead, his veins pulsed with excitement. To align with such divine power — it was an honor, not a slight.

Seeing the fervor in Zuo Tianzheng’s eyes, the Tenth Prince smirked with satisfaction. “Come,” he said, leading the way.

With reverent steps, Zuo Tianzheng followed the Tenth Prince into the grand hall of the temple, ready to pledge himself fully to this overwhelming power.

Chapter 4525

Even though Zuo Tianzheng had visited the temple before, the experience never failed to terrify him. The air itself seemed heavy with power. At the entrance to the grand hall, the guards were all Mahayana monks — figures of immense strength. Inside, sixth and seventh-grade Mahayana cultivators lined the walls, standing silently, not even worthy of sitting. And this was only the tenth temple — the weakest among the ten. The thought of the strength held by the higher-ranked temples sent chills down Zuo Tianzheng’s spine.

“Father,” the Tenth Prince called out as they entered, his voice unusually deferential.

Seated on the main throne was a middle-aged man clad in a yellow robe and crowned with authority. His eyes were cold, his presence overpowering. This was the Tenth Palace Master — the supreme authority in the tenth temple.

Zuo Tianzheng dared not look directly at the Palace Master. The monks seated in the hall, far stronger than those standing, also kept their eyes

downcast. He knelt in the center, his former confidence as the leader of the Demon Sealing League utterly gone.

“Defeated?” the Tenth Palace Master’s voice was low and chilling.

The Tenth Prince remained silent, glancing at Zuo Tianzheng.

With a trembling voice, Zuo Tianzheng spoke. “Palace Master, we only made a temporary retreat. The Xiao Dynasty is on the brink of collapse. But... an old Taoist appeared at the last moment and blocked the Tenth Prince’s path.”

“Wuji?” the Tenth Palace Master’s gaze sharpened.

“Yes, Palace Master. Taoist Wuji,” Zuo Tianzheng confirmed, beads of sweat forming on his brow.

The Tenth Prince opened his mouth to explain, but his father’s cold glare silenced him. “Enough! Go face the wall and reflect on your failure. You disgrace the God Clan.”

The Tenth Prince paled, shooting a warning glance at Zuo Tianzheng before retreating from the hall, his shoulders hunched in shame.

The Tenth Palace Master turned his icy gaze to Zuo Tianzheng. “You promised me victory — the unification of the Celestial Realm. And yet, you cannot even conquer the Xiao Dynasty.”

The weight of failure bore down on Zuo Tianzheng, and he bowed his head lower, knowing that his next words could decide his fate.

The Tenth Palace Master’s gaze hardened as he asked, “How can we unify the world of heaven and man?”

Zuo Tianzheng’s heart pounded. “Palace Master, the Demon Sealing League has the power to unify the realm. We just need more time.” He hesitated, then added, “But a man named Kai interfered, disrupting our

plans. And Taoist Wuji... he's been secretly protecting demon cultivators, undermining our influence."

The Tenth Palace Master's eyes narrowed. "Are you making excuses?"

"I dare not," Zuo Tianzheng said quickly, his voice trembling. "The old Taoist Wuji even injured the Tenth Prince and... humiliated him. He told the Prince to 'come back and suck his milk.'"

The hall went silent. Insults against the God Clan were not tolerated.

A surge of rage flared in the Tenth Palace Master's eyes. "Someone dared to insult my God Clan? He courts death."

From the left, a muscular man with a towering presence shot to his feet. His voice boomed like thunder. "I'll crush him with a single punch!"

The Tenth Palace Master turned to him. "Luo Ta, can you handle this old Taoist?"

"Of course, Palace Master," Luo Ta growled, flexing his massive fists. "I'll smash him to pieces."

"Good," the Tenth Palace Master said, his voice like steel. "But avoid conflict with Sun Moon City. Wuji is a VIP there."

Zuo Tianzheng blinked in confusion. Sun Moon City? He'd never heard of such a place in all his years leading the Demon Sealing League. None of the five major regions of the Celestial Realm had a Sun Moon City.

"Yes, sir!" Luo Ta saluted, then grabbed Zuo Tianzheng like a ragdoll and vanished in a flash.

As they disappeared into the void, Zuo Tianzheng's mind spun with questions. The more he learned about the hidden powers of the world, the more fragile his own position seemed.

Chapter 4526

Refining Sect! An airship hovered in the sky above the Refining Sect. Master Tiechui and many disciples rushed out, staring at the airship with puzzled expressions. Several elders sprang into the air, surrounding the vessel. "Who goes there?" an elder shouted angrily. "You've trespassed into our Refining Sect territory. Leave at once, or face the consequences!" Kai stepped out of the airship, smiling at the gathered elders. These were the same people he had once rescued from Wen Haotian. "Elders, it's been a while! How have you been?" he greeted them warmly. Upon recognizing Kai, the elders' stern expressions turned to joy. They quickly surrounded him. "Mr. Chen! We didn't expect you to visit. Please, come inside!" They enthusiastically led Kai to the main hall. The Refining Sect had transformed since his last visit. New buildings rose majestically, showcasing significant improvements made through everyone's efforts. Master Tiechui's face lit up when he saw Kai. "Mr. Chen, what a surprise! Please forgive us for not welcoming you sooner." Master Tiechui's respectful tone reflected his deep gratitude—after all, the Refining Sect owed much of its progress to Kai. Everyone eagerly escorted Kai into the hall, their enthusiasm palpable. Ji Yun watched the scene unfold, his admiration for Kai growing. The Weapon Refining Sect was renowned for its strength, and seeing Kai treated with such respect amazed him. Ji Yun had heard of the Weapon Refining Sect's power, but witnessing this hospitality toward Kai left him in awe. He still didn't understand Kai's history with the sect, making the moment even more bewildering. "Mr. Chen," Master Tiechui said, "you must have a reason for visiting. Whatever you need, just say the word. If it's within our power, we will gladly help." "Call it!" Master Tiechui urged Kai. "Master Tiechui, to be honest, I came to the Weapon Refining Sect to repair the Dragon Slaying Sword." Kai held up the damaged sword. "My Dragon Slaying Sword is broken, and its sword spirit is injured. The spirit cannot leave the sword's body. I was hoping Master Jian could help repair it." At the mention of Master Jian, Master Tiechui's expression froze, a hint of helplessness clouding his face. The other elders lowered their heads, remaining silent. Kai frowned. "Master Tiechui, is something wrong with Master Jian?" Master Tiechui sighed. "Mr. Chen, you may not know this, but after you absorbed the sword energy from the Sword Washing Pond last time, the sword puppets there ran amok. They nearly destroyed the entire area. Master Jian hasn't been seen since then. We've sent people into the Sword Washing Pond to search for him, but none returned. "We've had no choice but to seal the area. No one dares to approach it

now.” Hearing this, Kai’s face tightened with concern. He remembered absorbing the sword energy in the Sword Washing Pond to strengthen his Dragon Slaying Sword. Master Jian had even helped the sword spirit Zhongli manifest a human form. He hadn’t imagined things would turn out this way. The thought of Master Jian being in danger filled him with guilt. “Master Tiechui, may I go to the Sword Washing Pond and take a look?” Kai asked earnestly. Master Tiechui hesitated. “Mr. Chen, the Sword Washing Pond is sealed by a formation we commissioned at great expense. If the seal is broken, the sword puppets could escape, causing havoc. Re-sealing it would require hiring a formation master again, which we simply cannot afford right now. The Weapon Refining Sect is still recovering.” He looked at Kai, his face etched with worry.

Chapter 4527

Master of Formations “Master Tiechui, there’s no need to spend money on hiring a formation master to reseal the Sword Washing Pond. I am a master of formations myself, and my skills surpass those of most formation masters in the Heavenly Realm,” Kai said hurriedly. Master Tiechui looked at Kai in disbelief. “You know the art of formations?” “Of course,” Kai replied confidently. He swiftly pinched his fingers together and traced intricate formation patterns in the air. Buzz! A resonating hum filled the hall as a flame formation materialized, surrounding the entire space. “Master Tiechui, I’ve set a defensive formation around the hall. If anyone tries to attack, the formation will automatically activate,” Kai explained. Everyone watched in astonishment, their faces lighting up with excitement. They hadn’t expected Kai to possess such advanced knowledge of formations. “Well then, Mr. Chen, follow me!” Master Tiechui said, leading Kai toward the Sword Washing Pond. As they approached, the air grew thick with malevolent energy. “Could this pond have been infused with evil spirits?” Kai thought, frowning. He recalled that during his previous visit, while the pond contained sword puppets, there were no traces of evil energy. But now, a sinister aura emanated from the pond. It seemed likely that the presence of this evil spirit had driven the sword puppets to frenzy, making them attack anyone who entered. When they arrived, Kai saw a faint layer of white light covering the surface of the pond. Through the glow, he noticed the water had turned pitch black. The pond’s surface bubbled and roiled, and waves of

dark energy relentlessly battered the protective white light. Kai's eyes narrowed. He immediately realized that the formation sealing the pond was on the brink of collapse. If he hadn't come to the Weapon Refining Sect, the formation would likely have broken in just a few days. He felt a sense of urgency. There was no time to lose. Without hesitation, Kai made a gesture with both hands, then plunged them directly into the water. Array patterns radiated from his palms, spreading outward in all directions. In mere moments, the water of the Sword Washing Pond grew calm, and countless golden lights enveloped the entire area, forming a protective barrier. The disciples of the Weapon Refining Sect watched in awe, their respect for Kai deepening even further. "Master Tiechui, I'm going into the Sword Washing Pond to investigate and look for Master Jian," Kai announced. "If I haven't returned in three days, seal the area and make sure no one enters." Master Tiechui's face tightened with worry. "Mr. Chen, isn't that too dangerous?" "I'll be fine. I've been to the Sword Washing Pond before, so I know my way around," Kai reassured him with a confident smile. "Mr. Chen..." Ji Yun called out, his face etched with concern. Kai patted Ji Yun's shoulder. "Don't worry. I'll come back safely." With that, Kai dove into the Sword Washing Pond. Since he had absorbed much of the sword energy during his last visit, the pond didn't attack him as he descended. He swam deeper, but the black, murky water made it impossible to see far ahead. Visibility was almost nonexistent. Realizing the need for better sight, Kai activated his Heavenly Eye. The mystical vision pierced through the darkness, and what he saw made his heart jolt—a massive swarm of sword puppets swimming toward him. Their numbers were overwhelming, and the violent aura they exuded made it clear they were corrupted by the evil spirit. Kai exhaled sharply. If not for the Heavenly Eye, he would have swum directly into the horde of frenzied sword puppets.

Chapter 4528

Kai used his Heavenly Eye to skillfully dodge the swarm of sword puppets. His priority was to locate Master Jian. Only by finding him could he uncover what had happened to the Sword Washing Pond and understand the sudden chaos—why had so many sword puppets appeared, and where did this overwhelming evil spirit come from? Carefully navigating the murky depths, Kai avoided the sword puppets

and swam deeper into the pond. Despite his caution, one sword puppet spotted him. The puppet's eyes flashed with a sharp light, and it charged toward him, radiating fierce sword intent. Kai was momentarily stunned. He hadn't expected a sword puppet to possess such powerful sword intent—it was astonishing! Without hesitation, Kai drew his Dragon Slaying Sword and lunged forward. A gleaming arc of sword light flashed as his own sword intent surged. Puff! The sword puppet was cleaved in two, and its sword intent was immediately absorbed by the Dragon Slaying Sword. Kai's eyes widened in surprise. The Dragon Slaying Sword was actively absorbing the sword intent from the pond! "If I continue like this," Kai thought, "I can restore the Dragon Slaying Sword by defeating enough sword puppets. Maybe even the sword spirit, Zhongli, can be freed from the blade again!" However, as he looked at the dense mass of sword puppets ahead, he knew rushing in was unwise. Even if he had the strength to defeat them all, it would take far too long. His mission wasn't to eliminate the sword puppets but to find Master Jian and discover the source of the corruption. Kai pressed on, swimming deeper into the pond while deftly avoiding large groups of puppets. When smaller clusters of one, two, or three sword puppets crossed his path, he dispatched them swiftly and efficiently, the Dragon Slaying Sword absorbing their sword intent with each strike. Determined and vigilant, Kai continued his descent into the mysterious depths of the Sword Washing Pond. Kai had ventured deep into the Sword Washing Pond, and the surrounding evil energy grew thicker with every meter he descended. Strangely, as he went deeper, the number of sword puppets decreased, but their strength increased exponentially. At first, Kai could dispatch three or four sword puppets with ease. However, as he descended further, each encounter demanded more effort and precision. Fortunately, the sword intent within these stronger puppets was also more potent, which the Dragon Slaying Sword eagerly absorbed. Suddenly, Kai sensed the faint presence of a formation talisman. He frowned, puzzled. The last time he explored the bottom of the Sword Washing Pond, he had found and broken a formation, retrieving forging fragments. If that formation had been destroyed, why was there still the aura of a formation talisman? Determined to investigate, Kai accelerated his descent. When he finally touched down on the muddy bottom of the pond, the presence of the formation talisman grew stronger. His eyes narrowed in confusion. "Is there another formation hidden here?" he wondered, scanning his surroundings. Before he could make sense of it,

a powerful suction force suddenly erupted beneath his feet, yanking him downward as if an invisible hand had seized his legs. Startled, Kai tried to leap away from the suction, but the force was immense. A swirling vortex formed in the depths of the Sword Washing Pond, and his body was dragged relentlessly toward it. “Damn! What’s going on? Why is there such a strong suction force and this massive vortex?” Kai’s voice held a note of panic. The situation was spiraling out of control. No matter how hard he struggled, he couldn’t break free. It felt as though the pond’s bottom was not solid ground at all. He continued to fall, pulled deeper and deeper by the unrelenting vortex. Realizing he couldn’t fight the suction, Kai took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and resigned himself to the pull. He let the swirling force drag him into the dark depths, disappearing into the mud and sand at the bottom of the pond.

Chapter 4529

After an indeterminate amount of time, Kai suddenly felt his body relax. The crushing pressure of the pond and the ominous aura of the sword puppets had vanished. He opened his eyes and was startled to find himself no longer underwater, but in a strange, otherworldly space. Looking up, he could see the mud, sand, and flowing water above his head, held at bay by some invisible force. The elements seemed suspended in midair, defying gravity. “Where am I? Is there another dimension hidden beneath the Sword Washing Pond?” Kai wondered aloud. He scanned the area, but everything around him was an endless expanse of white. It was impossible to distinguish time, space, or direction. Even extending his spiritual consciousness yielded no clues. Cautiously, he began walking forward. After a short distance, a faint, dark-red glow appeared in the distance. Kai’s curiosity flared, and he hurried toward the light. Upon reaching the source, he stopped in surprise. Floating before him was a glowing talisman mark. It didn’t resemble the formation patterns he was used to but seemed more like an ancient script or symbol. Frowning, he studied the mark, but it made no sense to him. With no other choice, he pressed on. Soon, he encountered another glowing talisman mark, but this one bore a different symbol. Intrigued yet baffled, Kai continued forward, discovering a total of seven talisman marks. Each was distinct, and their meaning remained a mystery. “What is this place? And what do these marks mean?” Kai

muttered in frustration. Just then, the voice of the Red Cloud Demon Lord echoed in his mind. "Boy, haven't you noticed that these seven marks form a circle?" "A circle?" Kai paused, startled. "But I didn't feel like I was walking in circles. I was moving straight ahead." He glanced around, confusion deepening. Though he was certain he'd walked a straight path, the suggestion that he had been unwittingly tracing a circular pattern unsettled him. Kai pondered for a moment, confused by the notion of walking in a circle despite feeling like he'd been moving straight ahead. "How could I have walked in a circle after finding those talisman marks?" he asked in disbelief. The Red Cloud Demon Lord chuckled softly. "You've lost your sense of direction in this space. How can you be sure you've been moving forward?" Realization struck Kai. He had been wandering aimlessly, unable to detect that he was walking in circles due to the disorienting nature of this space. "Heavenly Eye!" he muttered, deciding to rely on his Heavenly Eye to reveal the truth hidden within this mysterious place. As his Heavenly Eye activated, his vision changed, and the surroundings were unveiled in a new light. To his astonishment, he realized he was standing in a sealed chamber no larger than a few hundred meters across. Yet, he had walked for what seemed like an eternity, unknowingly circling within the confined space. Focusing on the talisman marks, he saw with clarity that they indeed formed a circle. "Qian, Kan, Zhen..." he murmured, recognizing the symbols. Upon closer inspection, the arrangement of these marks followed the precise alignment of the Five Elements and Eight Trigrams Formation. His brows furrowed. "But this formation needs eight marks, not seven. Why is there one missing?" Even with the Heavenly Eye activated, he noticed a patch in the center of the chamber that remained obscured, a place his vision couldn't penetrate. Curious, Kai walked toward the hidden area. As he approached, a wave of shimmering light appeared before him, rippling like water when disturbed. He extended his hand and gently touched the surface. The light shimmered and expanded outward in concentric ripples. "A formation within a formation?" he mused aloud, frowning. The wave of light was undoubtedly a barrier created by a formation. There was no way such a phenomenon could exist naturally within this secret chamber. His mind raced with possibilities as he prepared to unravel the deeper mystery hidden within.

Chapter 4530

Kai gently touched the shimmering light wave with both hands, and a divine pattern mark flared in his palms. Within moments, the light wave began to dissipate, gradually revealing the hidden center of the chamber. As the wave completely vanished, Kai's eyes widened in surprise—Jian Lao and several elders of the Refining Weapon Sect were trapped within. Seeing Kai, their eyes lit up with relief and excitement. "Jian Lao!" Kai shouted, rushing forward without hesitation. Suddenly, everything clicked. Now he understood why Jian Lao had vanished and why those sent to find him had also disappeared. They had all been imprisoned in this space. If Kai hadn't come, who knew how long they would have remained trapped? "Mr. Chen, don't come any closer!" Jian Lao warned desperately, his voice urgent. But it was too late. A talisman mark beneath Jian Lao's feet flared brilliantly, its dazzling light filling the chamber. A sudden force struck Kai, lifting him off his feet and hurling him backward. Simultaneously, the seven surrounding talisman marks ignited in unison. In a blinding convergence, a Five Elements Bagua Formation took shape. Eight rays of light converged, spiraling around Kai and sealing him within their glow. Jian Lao and the elders gasped in horror. As the light enveloped Kai, the entire chamber trembled violently. The suspended mud and water above cascaded down in a chaotic torrent, flooding the room in moments. Worse still, the disturbance had agitated the countless sword puppets, which surged forward like a dark wave, their eyes gleaming with malevolent energy. Kai, trapped within the rays of the formation, struggled but couldn't move. Jian Lao and the others, now freed from their confinement, faced the incoming swarm of sword puppets with grim determination. "Protect Mr. Chen! Don't let them get close to him!" Jian Lao commanded, his voice resolute. With that, he charged forward, his weapon blazing with energy. The elders followed, their expressions set with fierce resolve, ready to fight off the horde and buy Kai the time he needed. Then he grasped the sword firmly and took the lead! Several other elders of the Weapon Refining Sect followed suit, shouting as they charged into the mass of sword puppets. In an instant, shockwaves rippled through the air, and dazzling spiritual light illuminated the scene. Under this fierce assault, countless sword puppets disintegrated into sword intents, scattering wildly throughout the Sword Washing Pond. Jian Lao and his

group had no time to absorb and refine these sword intents; they could only focus on relentless destruction. Meanwhile, Kai remained enveloped in the protective glow of the Bagua formation, appearing to be in a deep slumber, completely motionless. Fortunately, none of the sword puppets dared to approach him, instinctively avoiding the radiant barrier from afar. “Ten Thousand Swords Slash!” Jian Lao’s eyes blazed with intense determination as he unleashed his full power. Thousands of swords shot forth simultaneously from his body. Behind him, the void quivered, giving rise to blinding white sword beams, each as sharp as a blade of heaven. With a commanding gesture, Jian Lao directed the ten thousand beams, which quivered briefly before surging toward the sword puppets in unison. His fury was palpable. He had been trapped here for so long, and the Weapon Refining Sect had assumed his demise. Now, he unleashed his wrath with unrestrained force. The countless sword beams collided violently with the sword puppets, causing the energy within the Sword Washing Pond to churn uncontrollably. Outside the pond, Master Tiechui and the others gazed at the chaos with grim expressions. The turbulence within was so intense that it seemed to shake the entire Refining Sect, yet none of them could discern what was happening inside. Kai, still cocooned in the radiant light, appeared serene, as though soaking in a warm spring. “So comfortable...” he murmured, his eyes gently closed, his entire being relaxed. However, within the light, thin black threads, visible to the naked eye, were subtly penetrating his body. Kai remained still, a faint smile on his lips. But just as the threads were about to fully enter him, his eyes snapped open with startling clarity!

Chapter 4531

A flash of disdain appeared in his eyes as he stared directly at the talisman mark in the center of the Bagua formation. “You’re too naive to challenge me in talisman arts!” Kai smirked. With a wave of his palm, the central talisman mark turned to ashes instantly. As it disintegrated, the light from the surrounding talisman marks also vanished. The entire Xijian Pond plunged into darkness, and the sword puppets seemed to lose their frenzy. Though they continued attacking, their strength had clearly diminished. Some even stopped attacking altogether. At that moment, everyone exhaled in relief and turned to Kai. “Mr. Chen, are

you alright?” Jian Lao approached with his sword in hand, concern etched on his face. “I’m fine,” Kai replied, shaking his head. “Old Jian, what’s going on with this secret room and the formation inside it?” Old Jian shook his head. “I don’t know. I only knew of a formation at the bottom of Xijian Pond. I never knew about this secret room beneath it.” “It seems the secret room and the formation were also created by the ancestors of the Refining Sect,” Kai surmised. “Why do you say that? What purpose would it serve?” an elder of the Refining Sect asked, puzzled. “This secret room and the Five Elements Bagua formation were likely left by the ancestors as a backup to protect Xijian Pond from destruction,” Kai explained. “If the primary formation at the pond’s bottom is damaged, the secret room’s formation would activate to preserve the pond’s function.” “In that case, why did this secret room trap us? And why is there an evil aura emanating from this formation?” another elder asked. “Our ancestors wouldn’t create a formation with such an evil presence.” “The talisman marks in this Five Elements Bagua formation have been tampered with,” Kai explained. “That’s why there’s an evil spirit within the formation. The talisman mark was specially protected, but once I destroyed it, the evil spirit vanished, and the sword puppets calmed down.” “Mr. Chen, does this mean Xijiantan will lose its function?” Old Jian asked, his voice filled with sadness. Kai nodded. “Yes, without this formation, Xijiantan will become just an ordinary pool of water.” “Ah!” Old Jian sighed heavily. The Refining Sect relied not only on their forging skills but also on Xijiantan to refine magic weapons. Without it, they might never create another peerless sword. “Old Jian, don’t lose hope. I’ll try to restore the talisman mark and repair the Five Elements Bagua formation,” Kai said quickly. “It may not be perfect, but the Sword Washing Pond’s effectiveness can still be preserved.” “Really? Thank you so much, Mr. Chen!” Old Jian exclaimed, his eyes lighting up with excitement. “Thank you, Mr. Chen...” the other elders echoed, bowing deeply. Kai had saved their lives and offered a chance to restore the pond—a favor beyond repayment. “Old Jian, ensure no sword puppets interfere while I repair the formation,” Kai instructed. “Don’t worry, Mr. Chen! We’ll protect you, even at the cost of our lives!” Old Jian promised without hesitation. Kai nodded, then slowly levitated. Closing his eyes, he emptied his mind. Spiritual energy surged through his body and gathered at his fingertips. As his fingers traced through the air, golden lines appeared, gradually forming intricate words.

Chapter 4532

Kai carved the talisman marks from memory, each stroke precise and deliberate. As he continued, the previously subdued sword puppets suddenly turned frenzied, lunging forward like ferocious beasts. Jian Lao led several Weapon Refining Sect elders, fighting with all their strength. The long sword in Jian Lao's hand swept through the air, forming a protective barrier to keep the sword puppets from reaching Kai. His face flushed red as he swung his sword with increasing desperation. The other elders also fought valiantly, striking down the relentless sword puppets. With each puppet they defeated, the sword intent in the Sword Washing Pond grew stronger. Puff! Jian Lao suddenly coughed up a mouthful of blood, and the barrier of sword light shattered under the relentless assault. His eyes turned scarlet, and he let out a fierce shout. His sword grew larger in his grip, and his body ignited like a flame. With a powerful slash, he obliterated countless sword puppets. Yet, more and more puppets continued to appear, as if they were endless. Jian Lao and the elders were surrounded, their lives hanging by a thread. At that critical moment, Kai completed the final stroke, and the talisman mark took shape. Buzz! The mark descended into the center of the formation, releasing a burst of golden light. The ground shook, and eight beams of golden light shot out from the mark, converging in a brilliant display. The golden radiance illuminated the entire Xijian Pond. The sword puppets shrieked in agony as the light touched them, instantly reducing them to ashes that dissolved into pure sword intent. In mere moments, every sword puppet in the pond had vanished. Jian Lao and the elders stared in disbelief at the scene before them. "So many sword puppets... all gone?" Jian Lao murmured, stunned. The formation at the bottom of the Xijian Pond had always contained sword puppets, but nothing like this had ever happened before. The sword puppets had always existed alongside the formation. But now, the Five Elements Bagua formation had completely eradicated them! The sheer dominance of this formation was astonishing. Kai felt the immense power of the formation and the countless strands of sword intent surging through the Sword Washing Pond. His excitement grew. Sitting within the radiant light, he began desperately absorbing the sword intent. At the same time, the Dragon Slaying Sword also drew in the sword intent, creating whirlpools around him. The energy from all directions flowed into Kai's body and the

Dragon Slaying Sword. Jian Lao and the others watched in awe as Kai absorbed the sword intent with abandon. “Jian Lao, will Mr. Chen suffer backlash from absorbing so much sword intent?” an elder of the Refining Sect asked anxiously. “I don’t think so. He’s already absorbed thousands of years’ worth of sword energy from the Sword Washing Pond before. Mr. Chen will be fine,” Jian Lao reassured, shaking his head. The group continued watching, stunned by Kai’s frenzied absorption of the sword intent. Just then, a voice echoed in Kai’s sea of consciousness. “Master...” Kai looked around and saw the sword spirit, Zhongli. The figures of Jian Lao and the others had vanished. “Master, you’re inside the Dragon Slaying Sword now,” Zhongli explained. “Zhongli, have you... fully recovered?” Kai asked excitedly, stepping towards her. Zhongli nodded. “Yes.” She gently stroked Kai’s face. “Master, did you miss me?” “Of course I did. I came to the Refining Sect just to help you recover,” Kai said, grasping her hand. Zhongli flowed softly into his arms. With his beloved at his side, Kai realized it had been a long time since he practiced dual cultivation. Meanwhile, Jian Lao and the others remained silently watching Kai, unaware that he was already immersed in dual cultivation.

Chapter 4533

“Master, you are incredible...” Zhongli whispered, her face flushed with satisfaction. Kai let out a long sigh and stretched his body. Boom! As he stretched, thunderclouds gathered above the Xijian Pond. Bolts of lightning crackled and flashed across the sky. “Who is undergoing a tribulation?” Master Tiechui and the elders of the Weapon Refining Sect looked up at the ominous clouds, bewildered. None of them knew why someone would be facing a tribulation at this moment. Boom! A deafening crash sounded as a bolt of tribulation lightning streaked straight toward the Xijian Pond. Jian Lao and the others gasped in shock as they saw the lightning strike Kai directly. None of them expected Kai to break through a realm and trigger a tribulation right now! Lightning continued to strike him, and with each bolt, Kai’s strength surged dramatically. “Master, can you endure this?” Zhongli asked, her voice full of concern. “Don’t worry; this tribulation is no longer a threat to me,” Kai replied with a confident smile. After facing countless tribulations, he had mastered the art of surviving them. Boom! Just as he finished speaking, another bolt descended, this one golden and twice as powerful. “What

realm is he in? This tribulation is terrifying! Even we fourth-grade Mahayana Realm cultivators have never faced such a powerful tribulation!” an elder of the Weapon Refining Sect exclaimed. Master Tiechui furrowed his brow, his face filled with confusion. Why was such a devastating tribulation occurring at the Sword Washing Pond? Meanwhile, Jian Lao and the Weapon Refining Sect elders stared in disbelief as the golden lightning struck Kai. “Master Jian, isn’t Mr. Chen only a seventh-grade Tribulation Realm cultivator? How could he be facing a tribulation this powerful?”

“Why is the thunder so terrifying?” an elder of the Weapon Refining Sect asked, bewildered. “Mr. Chen’s breakthrough this time is different,” Jian Lao explained. “If he survives this thunder tribulation, he might advance by two levels. Only when such a rare double-level promotion occurs does the thunder tribulation become so powerful. If he withstands it, his realm will leap by two stages.” “I’ve never heard of anyone advancing by two levels in a single thunder tribulation,” the elder said, shocked. “Indeed,” Jian Lao agreed. “Not just in the heavenly world, but even across the entire universe, such cases are incredibly rare. Advancing like this requires not only opportunity, strength, and luck, but also extraordinary talent. Otherwise, the tribulation will claim your life.” Everyone stared at Kai, silently praying for him to endure the thunder tribulation. As the next bolt struck, Kai’s body trembled, and he dropped to one knee. His face contorted with pain, and his brow furrowed deeply. “Master, are you alright?” Zhongli asked with concern. “Something’s strange. Why did this thunder tribulation suddenly become so powerful?” Kai wondered. The surge in intensity caught him off guard, nearly knocking him down. “Master, let me help you. We’re inside the Dragon Slaying Sword — I can share the burden of the tribulation,” Zhongli offered. “No, don’t!” Kai protested urgently. “I’ll handle it myself. If you get hurt or your spirit body shatters, I’d never forgive myself.” But Zhongli ignored his plea. She leaned in and kissed him, her touch gentle and fragrant. Boom! Another bolt of lightning crashed down, striking Kai with immense force.

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But this time, Kai didn't flinch. Instead, he held Zhongli tightly, enduring the thunder tribulation together. Zhongli also faced the thunder's fury, her eyes resolute and unwavering. The two kissed deeply, lost in each other, oblivious to the bolts of lightning crashing down on them. Thunderbolt after thunderbolt struck Kai, but he felt nothing. He was completely absorbed in Zhongli's presence, her expression eclipsing the pain. Eventually, the storm abated, the thunderclouds dispersed, and calm returned. Yet, Kai and Zhongli remained locked in their embrace, their lips still joined. After a while, they finally parted, and both of their auras had changed dramatically. Kai not only survived the tribulation and advanced his realm, but Zhongli's strength had also grown. "Zhongli, thank you. Without you, I don't think I could've made it through," Kai said, gently stroking her face. "Master, it's you who made this possible. As long as I can stay by your side and serve you every night, I am content," Zhongli smiled softly. "I promise, I will never let you get hurt again," Kai vowed, his eyes filled with determination. Zhongli nodded, and with that, Kai emerged from the Dragon Slaying Sword. When he landed before Jian Lao and the others, they were stunned. The aura surrounding Kai had transformed drastically. He had ascended from the seventh level of the Tribulation Realm to the ninth. His breakthrough to the Mahayana Realm was imminent. "Mr. Chen, I can't believe you advanced two realms in one go! You survived that overlapping thunder tribulation without injury," Jian Lao exclaimed in disbelief. "Overlapping thunder tribulation? Did I really advance two levels?" Kai asked, astonished. He unleashed his aura with a casual wave of his hand, and a terrifying energy surged through the Sword Washing Pond. Water erupted into the air, shooting tens of thousands of meters high. Outside, Master Tiechui and the others recoiled in shock, scrambling to a safe distance. They had no idea what immense power lay within the Sword Washing Pond. Kai's power was beyond anything they had ever seen. His eyes filled with surprise—Kai hadn't expected to be promoted directly to the ninth level of the Crossing Tribulation Realm! It seems the sword intent in the Sword Washing Pond really made a difference, he thought to himself. The sword intent wasn't the only factor, though. The seven-colored elixir given by Taoist Wuji had also played a significant role in helping him advance two realms. This was his second time absorbing the powerful sword energy in the Sword Washing Pond, and repairing the formation ensured its power remained intact. Because of this, the reputation of the Refining Sect was preserved. Kai, along with Jian Lao

and the other elders, rushed out of the Sword Washing Pond. Seeing them return safely, Master Tiechui and the other members of the Refining Sect rejoiced. Relief and excitement filled their hearts, especially since they had feared the worst for Jian Lao and the missing elders. “Jian Lao, who was going through the tribulation in the Sword Washing Pond just now? The thunderclouds were terrifying,” Master Tiechui asked, his curiosity piqued. Jian Lao smiled and glanced at Kai without saying a word. Master Tiechui turned his gaze to Kai, and the aura emanating from him left Tiechui in shock. The devastating thunder tribulation had been Kai’s! “Mr. Chen, thank you for finding Jian Lao and rescuing our elders,” Master Tiechui said sincerely. “We hope you can stay in the Refining Sect for a while longer. Jian Lao can also help repair the Dragon Slaying Sword and fully restore the sword spirit.” But Kai shook his head and replied, “I appreciate your kind offer, Master Tiechui. The Dragon Slaying Sword has already absorbed enough sword intent and is fully restored.” “I still have urgent matters to attend to and cannot stay. However, if the Refining Sect ever needs my help, I will do everything I can.” With that, Kai instructed Ji Yun to prepare the airship and departed from the Refining Sect. His mind was preoccupied with concerns about the Xiao Dynasty. If the Demon Sealing League launched another attack, the Xiao Dynasty might not be able to withstand it.

Chapter 4535

The headquarters of the Demon Sealing League buzzed with a tense undercurrent as Zuo Tianzheng dutifully catered to Luo Ta’s every whim. Whatever Luo Ta desired, Zuo Tianzheng ensured it was provided. After all, Luo Ta wasn’t just anyone—he was a member of the Temple and a senior worshiper in the Ten Palaces. The authority of the Ten Palace Lords had tasked Luo Ta with dealing with the Wuji Taoist. But since his arrival at the Demon Sealing League headquarters, Luo Ta hadn’t shown any urgency to address the Xiao Dynasty. Instead, he indulged in several days of leisure, demanding a dozen female cultivators for dual cultivation, reveling day and night. In the Ten Palaces, Luo Ta was restrained by hierarchy and rules. Senior as he was, he dared not overstep the Lords of the Ten Palaces, nor could he freely summon female cultivators—especially those of the proud God Clan who only agreed to dual cultivation with those possessing true skills and status.

However, within the Demon Sealing League, such constraints did not exist. Female cultivators, whether they consented or not, were compelled to serve Luo Ta under the League's oppressive power. One day, an elder of the Demon Sealing League approached Zuo Tianzheng, speaking in a cautious whisper. "Alliance Leader, it has been days. This man has drained significant resources, and his demands for female cultivators continue. There is growing unrest among the ranks, and many families are now refusing to provide more cultivators." Zuo Tianzheng's face was taut with discomfort. Luo Ta's presence had become a heavy burden. Not only did Luo Ta seem uninterested in dealing with the Xiao Dynasty, but Zuo Tianzheng was unsure of his strength. Could Luo Ta truly defeat the Wuji Taoist? If Luo Ta failed and fell in battle, the entire Demon Sealing League would be exposed to retaliation. The last time they confronted the Xiao Dynasty, they barely escaped, thanks to the Wuji Taoist's restraint. This time, if Luo Ta perished, escape might be impossible. As Zuo Tianzheng weighed his uncertain options, Luo Ta strode into the hall, exuding an air of arrogant satisfaction. He seemed oblivious to the tension simmering around him, his demeanor radiating entitlement and indifference. The room fell silent as all eyes turned toward him, waiting for his next command. He glanced at Zuo Tianzheng and the others. In Luo Ta's eyes, Zuo Tianzheng and the members of the Demon Sealing Alliance were nothing more than humble servants. How could such ordinary people ever compare to their exalted gods? If the gods hadn't faced their catastrophe, the temple would never have stooped to cooperating with mere cultivators like Zuo Tianzheng. "Master Luo, are you satisfied with the female cultivators we've found for you?" Zuo Tianzheng hurriedly stepped forward, nodding obsequiously as he spoke. "Yes, I'm quite satisfied. While you ordinary cultivators lack talent, this woman is truly entertaining," Luo Ta replied, licking his lips. Zuo Tianzheng felt disgusted by Luo Ta's words but forced a smile. "As long as Master Luo is pleased. May I ask when we'll proceed to the Xiao Dynasty?" "We can move at any time. After a few days of indulgence, I'm ready to stretch my muscles," Luo Ta said nonchalantly. "Master Luo, the Wuji Taoist is exceptionally powerful. He even defeated the Ten Princes, so..." Zuo Tianzheng began cautiously, trying to warn Luo Ta not to underestimate the enemy. Before he could finish, Luo Ta shot him a sharp look that sent a shiver down his spine. Zuo Tianzheng quickly fell silent. "Alliance leader..." A voice interrupted. It was Sect Master Zhou, arriving with his disciples Tianluo and Tiansha. "Sect Master Zhou,

what's the matter?" Zuo Tianzheng asked, noticing the grim expression on Zhou's face. Zuo Tianzheng had never liked Zhou. Every time he was sent on a mission, others would die while Zhou somehow always returned unscathed. To Zuo Tianzheng, this only proved Zhou was cowardly and unproductive. "Alliance leader, defeating the Wuji Taoist alone may not be enough to take down the Xiao Dynasty," Sect Master Zhou said gravely. "Why not? Even Xiao Yuanshan couldn't match him. What more could the Xiao Dynasty possibly have?" Zuo Tianzheng responded, clearly displeased with Zhou's caution.

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"Alliance Leader, don't forget that Kai is still within the Xiao Dynasty. Based on my investigation, the reason Kai has repeatedly escaped danger is that a powerful figure supports him—someone who may be in the realm of immortality," said Zhou Zongzhu. "This individual is likely more formidable than the Wuji Old Taoist. A fourth-grade cultivator in the Mahayana Realm could be killed with just a single glance from this strong figure."

Zuo Tianzheng frowned. "Zhou Zongzhu, I know you tend to be cautious and retreat when danger arises, but aren't you exaggerating Kai's strength a bit too much?" "We've been chasing Kai as the Demon Sealing Alliance for so long. If there really were an immortal realm expert backing him, wouldn't they have destroyed us by now?"

Zhou Zongzhu hesitated. "Well..."

Before he could respond, Luo Ta interjected with interest. "An expert in the realm of immortality? More powerful than the Wuji Old Taoist?" "It seems so," Zhou Zongzhu nodded. "'Seems so'? Have you witnessed this person in action?" Luo Ta pressed. "No," Zhou Zongzhu admitted. "The strong figure rarely intervenes, only stepping in when Kai is in imminent danger. But whenever they do, they completely neutralize the threat." "That's it?" Luo Ta smirked. "Yes, that's all," Zhou Zongzhu confirmed.

Luo Ta burst into laughter. “I’ve heard similar stories. Kai is merely a cultivator at the seventh level of the Tribulation Realm, not even in the Mahayana Realm. How strong could his enemies be? A powerful backer intervening doesn’t mean much. Even I could eliminate a fourth-level Mahayana cultivator with just a glance!”

As he spoke, Luo Ta glared at Zhou Zongzhu.

The glare startled Zhou Zongzhu so much that he immediately dropped to his knees, trembling and not daring to meet Luo Ta’s eyes.

Zuo Tianzheng, sensing the tension, quickly added, “Lord Luo, regardless of the realm of Kai’s supporter, they are certainly no match for Luo Gongfeng.”

Zuo Tianzheng knew these celestial beings were exceedingly arrogant and tried to placate Luo Ta. Sure enough, Luo Ta slowly closed his eyes after hearing the flattery. He returned the glare and smiled coldly. “No matter who the so-called strong man is, or even the Wuji Taoist, I’ll kill them all!” “Yes, yes, no one can defeat Lord Luo Gongsheng...” Zuo Tianzheng quickly chimed in.

Sect Master Zhou didn’t dare to say a word. He wanted to warn them but had nearly lost his life already.

Noticing Zuo Tianzheng’s sycophantic expression, Luo Ta sneered. “I know you think I’m boasting, but I don’t blame you. You haven’t seen the world. I’d wager you’ve never even encountered a true master in the Immortal Realm.” “Your so-called ‘masters’ are worthless to me. With a single punch, I can reduce the strongest of them to ashes!”

Zuo Tianzheng lowered his head, nodding and smiling as he replied, “Yes, yes...” Deep down, though, Zuo Tianzheng knew Luo Ta was just bragging. But who would dare call him out?

After all, if he were truly as powerful as he claimed, the Tenth Prince wouldn’t have been humiliated and forced to flee after being defeated by

the Wuji Taoist! Everyone knew the God Clan loved to exaggerate, but no one expected it to be this excessive.

“Come! Follow me to the Xiao Dynasty. I want you to witness how I destroy that so-called strong man and the Wuji Taoist with a single punch!” Luo Ta declared as he strode out of the hall.

Zuo Tianzheng hurried after him, while Sect Master Zhou didn’t dare rise until Luo Ta had left the room.

“Zongzhu, what should we do?” Tianluo asked cautiously.

“We’ll follow them—but keep our distance. I want to see for myself how this braggart meets his end,” Zhou Zongzhu replied grimly. “The strong man behind Kai isn’t ordinary. I went to great lengths to uncover this truth. If no one believes me, we’ll just have to watch and see.”

“If Luo Ta wins, we’ll reap the benefits. If he loses, we’ll turn and run. Under no circumstances are any of you to provoke the people of the Xiao Dynasty!” Zhou Zongzhu instructed Tiansha and Tianluo.

“Understood!” they both nodded firmly.

Chapter 4537

Xiao Dynasty

Kai followed Ji Yun on the airship back to the Xiao Dynasty. Along the journey, Zhongli’s lively company kept Kai entertained, and he enjoyed himself every night. However, Ji Yun wasn’t so fortunate—he had to endure being the third wheel the entire time.

Upon their arrival, Xiao Yuanshan, Xiao Feng, and a dozen other powerful figures from the Xiao Dynasty personally came to welcome Kai.

As Kai descended from the airship, everyone present was utterly stunned.

Kai had reached the ninth level of the Tribulation Realm!

It was unbelievable! When Kai had left, he had only been at the seventh level of the Tribulation Realm. How could he have advanced two levels in such a short time?

Advancing two realms at once was something of legend—stories often told but never witnessed. Yet here Kai was, standing before them, proving it possible.

“Mr. Chen, you must have experienced some extraordinary adventure this time, correct?” Xiao Yuanshan asked curiously.

Kai shook his head. “No adventure—just repaired the sword in my hand.”

Kai didn’t view his time in the Weapon Refining Sect’s Sword Washing Pond as an adventure, even though it had clearly contributed to his rapid progress.

Before Xiao Yuanshan could respond, a messenger arrived in a hurry.

“Your Majesty, the Demon Sealing Alliance has arrived!”

Everyone turned their gaze skyward, and from the horizon, dozens of Demon Sealing Alliance members approached swiftly, their powerful auras filling the air.

At the forefront was the Zhou Sect Master, accompanied by a group of Mahayana Realm cultivators. Their presence radiated strength and menace.

Zhou Sect Master, however, wore a look of unease. He had originally planned to observe the situation from the sidelines and retreat if things turned dire. But Zuo Tianzheng had pushed him to the front lines as a vanguard.

Behind Zhou Sect Master were Zuo Tianzheng and Narota, their commanding figures exuding arrogance and confidence. Zhou Sect Master realized escape would not come easily this time.

As the Demon Sealing Alliance drew closer, the warriors of the Xiao Dynasty glared at them with eyes full of hatred.

Zhou Sect Master's gaze fell on Kai. The moment he saw that Kai had reached the ninth level of the Tribulation Realm, his face froze in disbelief. A subtle change, yet Zhou Sect Master's heart was deeply shaken.

How could this man improve so rapidly? It was utterly abnormal!

Sect Master Zhou's expression turned dark and grave, his mind racing with disbelief.

Meanwhile, Xiao Yuanshan, watching the advancing group from the Demon Sealing Alliance, felt a deep unease reflected in his eyes.

"The Demon Sealing Alliance has found yet another formidable master..." Xiao Yuanshan muttered worriedly.

Kai, too, could sense the overwhelming aura from the distant sky—a presence of absolute power. This figure might even surpass the Tenth Prince in strength.

However, with his newly elevated realm, Kai remained composed. If necessary, he could let the Red Cloud Demon Lord take over his body, which might give him a fighting chance.

"I wonder if Taoist Wuji will show up this time," Xiao Feng remarked.

Kai stayed silent; he knew Taoist Wuji had no reason to intervene on his behalf.

Suddenly, a low hum echoed across the sky. The air trembled violently as two figures emerged from the void—Zuo Tianzheng and Luo Ta.

Luo Ta, towering several meters tall with a fierce and commanding presence, strode forward. Each step he took distorted the void and reduced the ground beneath him to ashes.

Behind him, Zuo Tianzheng followed closely, his demeanor obsequious.

The sight of Luo Ta left everyone in the Xiao Dynasty pale and grim-faced, their unease palpable. Xiao Yuanshan's furrowed brow deepened, his expression one of intense worry.

“Welcome, Lord Luo...”

Sect Master Zhou led the group of Demon Sealing Alliance Mahayana cultivators in a synchronized bow, offering Luo Ta a grand show of respect. This display was meant to bolster Luo Ta's ego and allow him to assert his dominance before the Xiao Dynasty.

Luo Ta, clearly pleased, smiled faintly as he soaked in the deference.

Xiao Yuanshan fixed his gaze on Luo Ta, his worry deepening with every moment.

“This man's power likely exceeds that of the Tenth Prince,” Kai said slowly, breaking the tense silence.

Xiao Yuanshan said nothing; the truth was evident to him as well.

He hadn't expected the Demon Sealing Alliance to command such formidable forces. The Tenth Prince alone had nearly driven the Xiao Dynasty to ruin, and now, an even stronger adversary stood before them.

The Xiao Dynasty was facing its gravest peril yet.

Chapter 4538

“Where is that old bastard Wuji?” Luo Ta demanded.

Everyone was momentarily stunned, then their gazes shifted to Kai.

Kai felt exasperated. Why were they all looking at him? He wasn't the one who summoned Taoist Wuji!

"Mr. Luo, that young man is Kai," Sect Master Zhou said, pointing at him. "There are strong people backing him, and Taoist Wuji has appeared to assist him before."

Luo Ta turned his gaze to Kai, a flicker of disdain in his eyes. "So, the old bastard Wuji is here to help you? Call him out. And while you're at it, summon the strong man behind you as well. I'll deal with them all at once and save myself the trouble."

"I don't know where Taoist Wuji is, and he's not here to help me," Kai replied, shaking his head.

"Mr. Luo," Zuo Tianzheng whispered into Luo Ta's ear, "Wuji only shows up when Kai's life is in grave danger."

Luo Ta frowned. "Do I really need to bother myself with this? What kind of joke is it for me to take action against a mere cultivator in the Tribulation Realm?"

He glanced at Zuo Tianzheng and continued, "Go rough him up a bit. Hurt him, but don't kill him. That'll lure out the strong man behind him."

"Yes, sir!" Zuo Tianzheng nodded obediently, then turned toward Sect Master Zhou. "Sect Master Zhou, you take care of Kai. Handle him carefully."

"Me?" Sect Master Zhou protested, clearly reluctant.

"Why? You're a fourth-grade cultivator in the Mahayana Realm. Are you telling me you can't handle someone in the Tribulation Realm?" Zuo Tianzheng's eyes narrowed, his voice tinged with menace.

“Leader, this boy isn’t as simple as his realm suggests. He can fight well above his level. I’m afraid...” Sect Master Zhou hesitated, knowing full well that Kai wasn’t an opponent to be underestimated. Moreover, Zhou needed to preserve his strength for a potential escape.

“You’ve got two disciples with you, don’t you? The three of you can attack together. If you refuse, don’t blame me for being harsh,” Zuo Tianzheng threatened, his tone icy.

Sect Master Zhou clenched his fists but said nothing, realizing he had no choice.

The plan was clear: forcing Sect Master Zhou to act would prevent him from plotting his escape.

Sect Master Zhou, realizing he had no choice, sighed and nodded reluctantly. He turned to Kai with a stern expression.

“Boy, do you dare to face me one-on-one?” Sect Master Zhou challenged.

Kai glanced at him but shook his head, a faint smile playing on his lips.

“What? Are you afraid? Or are you planning to fight as a group?” Zhou mocked. “Think carefully—if you fight together, none of you will leave here alive.”

Kai smirked and replied calmly, “No, I don’t intend to fight in a group. I’d rather take on all three of you—master and disciples—by myself. Fighting just you alone is far too boring.”

The disdain in Kai’s voice was unmistakable. With his recent advancement to the ninth level of the Tribulation Realm, the restoration of the Dragon Slaying Sword, and the awakening of the sword spirit Zhongli, Kai no longer saw a fourth-grade Mahayana cultivator like Zhou as a threat.

“Arrogant brat! I’ll make you regret underestimating us!”

Tiansha, one of Zhou's disciples, snarled in fury. Without waiting for instruction, he summoned a blood-red longsword and leapt toward Kai.

"Tiansha, stop! Don't be reckless!" Sect Master Zhou shouted, alarmed by his disciple's impulsiveness.

But it was too late. Tiansha was already mid-air, his blood-red sword slicing through the air in a deadly arc. Thousands of crimson light streaks emanated from his blade, forming a dazzling and fearsome attack.

At the second level of the Mahayana Realm, Tiansha was considered a formidable warrior in the world of heaven and man. His attack made many of the onlookers' faces pale in alarm.

"Mr. Chen, I'll help you!" Xiao Jian offered, stepping forward to intercept Tiansha's strike.

Xiao Jian's strength surpassed Tiansha's, and he was confident in his ability to defend Kai.

But Kai raised a hand to stop him. "There's no need. It's just the second level of the Mahayana Realm," he said nonchalantly.

With that, Kai swung the Dragon Slaying Sword in his hand.

Slash!

A brilliant sword light cut through the air, swift and merciless.

Tiansha's charge came to an abrupt and grisly end as his body was split cleanly in two. Blood sprayed out in all directions, and his internal organs spilled onto the ground.

The battlefield fell silent.

A second-level Mahayana cultivator, a master by most standards, had been slain in an instant by Kai, a ninth-level Tribulation Realm cultivator.

All with a single, effortless strike.

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shifted as he moved with incredible speed and precision. The Dragon Slaying Sword in his hand danced like a blur, deflecting Tianluo's blade with ease.

The sound of clashing swords echoed as Kai parried both Sect Master Zhou and Tianluo's strikes simultaneously. Despite being outnumbered, his movements were calm and measured, his confidence unwavering.

Sect Master Zhou growled in frustration. His attacks became more ferocious, each strike carrying more spiritual energy, yet none could land on Kai.

"You're not getting away this time!" Zhou roared, his sword unleashing a wave of cold energy that froze the surrounding air and sent shards of ice flying toward Kai.

Tianluo capitalized on the distraction, lunging forward with a vicious thrust aimed at Kai's back.

But Kai's eyes gleamed sharply. With a single, fluid motion, he spun in place, the Dragon Slaying Sword radiating a powerful golden light.

Clang!

Kai's blade deflected Tianluo's attack effortlessly, sending him stumbling backward. In the same instant, Kai unleashed a crescent-shaped sword light that shattered Zhou's icy wave and struck directly at the Sect Master.

“Argh!” Sect Master Zhou cried out as the force of the attack sent him hurtling backward. His sword flew from his hand, clattering to the ground.

Kai turned his focus to Tianluo, who was now visibly shaken.

“You’re out of your league,” Kai said coldly, his voice steady and filled with authority.

Tianluo hesitated, beads of sweat forming on his brow as he realized the vast gap in strength. But his fear turned to panic when Kai raised the Dragon Slaying Sword once more.

“No!” Tianluo shouted, attempting to retreat.

But it was too late.

Kai’s sword emitted a dazzling flash of light that engulfed Tianluo entirely. When the light faded, Tianluo collapsed to the ground, defeated and powerless.

Sect Master Zhou, clutching his injured side, glared at Kai with hatred but also a deep sense of fear.

The onlookers, including Zuo Tianzheng and Narota, were silent, their expressions a mixture of shock and awe.

Narota’s lips curled into a sinister smile. “Interesting. This boy isn’t as simple as he looks. Perhaps he might actually force me to exert myself.”

Kai stood tall amidst the battlefield, unscathed and commanding. His presence alone seemed to crush the morale of his enemies.

“Who’s next?” Kai asked, his voice calm but brimming with undeniable strength. Kai’s eyes narrowed slightly, exuding a sharp and commanding aura. The Dragon Slaying Sword in his hand hummed with energy, as if responding to its master’s emotions.

“You’re persistent,” Kai said coldly, watching Sect Master Zhou’s frenzied charge.

As Zhou’s sword descended with immense power, Kai sidestepped with precision, the blade missing him by a hair’s breadth. The ground where the sword struck cracked and splintered, revealing the force behind the attack.

Before Sect Master Zhou could recover, Kai retaliated. His Dragon Slaying Sword swept upward in a blinding arc, aiming directly for Zhou’s exposed side.

Clang!

Zhou barely managed to deflect the strike, but the impact sent shockwaves through his arm, nearly making him drop his sword. His expression twisted in frustration and fear as he realized the difference in their strength.

“You’re outmatched,” Kai said, his tone calm but filled with dominance. “Stop wasting your energy.”

But Zhou refused to concede. With a roar, he channeled all his remaining spiritual power into his blade, causing it to glow with a menacing blue light.

“I won’t die without a fight!” Zhou bellowed, launching himself at Kai with everything he had.

Kai sighed, as if disappointed by the futile resistance.

With a fluid motion, he raised the Dragon Slaying Sword high, its blade radiating a golden light that illuminated the battlefield.

“Dragon Slayer’s Wrath!” Kai called out, his voice resonating with power.

A massive, crescent-shaped wave of energy burst from the Dragon Slaying Sword, cutting through the air like a divine judgment.

Zhou's eyes widened in terror as the attack hurtled toward him. He raised his sword to block, pouring all his spiritual power into defense, but it was futile.

The golden wave engulfed Zhou entirely. When the light subsided, he was thrown backward, his sword shattered, his body riddled with wounds. He hit the ground hard, coughing up blood.

Kai approached the fallen Sect Master with an air of authority. He pointed the Dragon Slaying Sword at Zhou's throat, its blade still shimmering with power.

"This is your last chance," Kai said, his voice steady and devoid of emotion. "Surrender or meet the same fate as your apprentice."

Zhou trembled, the fight drained from him. His pride battled with the instinct to survive, but in the end, he bowed his head.

"I... surrender," Zhou muttered, his voice weak and filled with humiliation.

The battlefield fell silent, the onlookers stunned by Kai's overwhelming strength. Even Narota's faint smile faltered, replaced by a look of intrigue.

"Interesting," Narota said softly, his eyes glinting with a mix of curiosity and anticipation. "It seems this boy may be worth my attention after all."

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Luo Ta raised his hand to stop Zuo Tianzheng, his face calm and unreadable.

"A coward like him is of no consequence," Luo Ta said dismissively, his deep voice carrying across the battlefield. "Let him run. It's not him we're here for."

Zuo Tianzheng hesitated for a moment, clearly displeased, but he didn't dare disobey Luo Ta's command. He clenched his fists and stepped back reluctantly.

Kai, watching the exchange, smirked faintly. "It seems even your allies can't be trusted, Zuo Tianzheng. Is this the mighty Demon Sealing League?"

Zuo Tianzheng's face darkened at the taunt, his pride stung. But before he could respond, Luo Ta's booming laughter echoed through the air.

"You have some nerve, boy," Luo Ta said, his tone filled with both amusement and menace. "You've shown strength, but don't think for a moment that you've impressed me."

Kai raised the Dragon Slaying Sword, its blade still gleaming with energy. "Whether I impress you or not doesn't matter. If you stand in my way, you'll fall just like the others."

The surrounding crowd fell silent, their attention fully fixed on the tense standoff.

Luo Ta's grin widened, revealing sharp, predatory teeth. "Bold words. Let's see if you can back them up."

With that, Luo Ta stepped forward, each step shaking the ground beneath him. The very air seemed to ripple with his immense spiritual pressure, causing even seasoned warriors in the Xiao Dynasty to falter.

Kai held his ground, his grip tightening on the Dragon Slaying Sword. His aura flared in response, golden light radiating from his body, forming a protective barrier against Luo Ta's oppressive energy.

"Stay back," Kai said firmly, addressing the Xiao Dynasty warriors behind him. "This fight is mine."

Xiao Yuanshan and the others hesitated but ultimately nodded, trusting Kai's strength and resolve.

Luo Ta raised one massive hand, summoning a weapon from the void—a colossal black mace covered in ominous runes that pulsed with dark energy.

“Let’s test the strength of your resolve, boy,” Luo Ta said, lifting the mace effortlessly.

Kai didn’t respond. Instead, he stepped forward, the Dragon Slaying Sword humming with anticipation. The clash between these two titans was about to begin, and the world seemed to hold its breath. The atmosphere was thick with tension as everyone stared at the plain-clothed man who had seemingly appeared out of nowhere. His calm demeanor contrasted starkly with the chaos moments before.

Luo Ta’s grin faltered for the first time. His eyes narrowed as he scrutinized the newcomer. Though Mr. Shi exuded no visible aura, an invisible pressure began to weigh on everyone present.

“Who are you?” Luo Ta’s voice rumbled, his earlier confidence tinged with caution.

Mr. Shi clasped his hands behind his back, his expression serene. “Just a passing scholar,” he replied nonchalantly. “But it seems you’re causing quite the commotion here, Luo Ta.”

Luo Ta’s eyes flickered with suspicion. “You have no aura. Are you here to die alongside this boy?”

Mr. Shi chuckled softly, shaking his head. “Your arrogance blinds you. Strength isn’t always about what can be seen or measured.”

Kai, standing beside Mr. Shi, felt a surge of relief and admiration. He had always known Mr. Shi was powerful, but this was the first time he’d seen him confront such an overwhelming opponent.

“Master, this Luo Ta is incredibly strong. He destroyed Sect Master Zhou from a hundred miles away with just a punch,” Kai said, still wary.

Mr. Shi glanced at Kai and smiled warmly. “Strength, Kai, is not about brute force alone. Watch and learn.”

Turning back to Luo Ta, Mr. Shi’s gaze hardened slightly, and for the first time, a faint ripple of energy emanated from his body. Though subtle, it carried an unfathomable depth, like the stillness of an ocean concealing its boundless power.

Luo Ta instinctively took a step back, gripping his black mace tighter. “Enough talk!” he roared, swinging his colossal weapon toward Mr. Shi with the force of a collapsing mountain.

The spectators gasped as the ground beneath Luo Ta cracked and shattered from the sheer power of his swing.

But Mr. Shi remained motionless, his serene expression unchanged. Just as the mace was about to connect, he casually raised a single finger.

A dazzling white light erupted, and the mace stopped mid-swing, as if hitting an invisible wall. The force reverberated back toward Luo Ta, causing him to stagger several steps backward.

“Impossible!” Luo Ta growled, his face contorted in disbelief.

Mr. Shi sighed softly. “Strength like yours is nothing more than noise. True power lies in understanding balance.”

With a flick of his finger, an invisible force sent Luo Ta hurtling backward, crashing into the distant mountainside with an earth-shattering impact.

The entire battlefield fell silent, the air heavy with awe and shock.

Kai couldn’t help but stare, his heart pounding. “Master Shi... that was incredible!”

Xiao Yuanshan and the others from the Xiao Dynasty were left speechless, their earlier doubts about Mr. Shi's strength completely dispelled.

Luo Ta emerged from the rubble, battered but still alive. His gaze was filled with both fury and fear. "You... who are you truly?"

Mr. Shi turned to leave, his tone calm yet firm. "I am someone you would do well not to provoke again."

Looking at Kai, he added, "Your journey is just beginning, Kai. Focus, and never let arrogance cloud your path."

As Mr. Shi's figure disappeared into the void, the battlefield remained eerily quiet, the weight of his presence lingering long after he was gone.