the mans Decree: Kai Ping / Chen Ping

Chapter 6201 - 6210

Upon hearing this, the last trace of hesitation in the hearts of the elders vanished completely. They bowed deeply, their expressions solemn, their voices resounding in unison throughout the Lingxiao Palace: “Yes, Your Majesty! The Palace Master is wise!”

…

Yunxian City.

This city, nestled among the mountains, was not the most prosperous place in the myriad realms, but because of the presence of the Heavenly Dragon Clan and Kai, it had become exceptionally peaceful.

In the past, the sun always shone brightly here, the sky was a clear, azure blue, cloudless, and the air was fresh.

In the distance, dozens of giant dragons could often be seen circling and dancing in the sky, their golden scales reflecting a dazzling light in the sunlight.

A clear, resonant dragon’s roar echoed faintly, its majestic and solemn tone enveloping the entire Cloud Immortal City in a powerful protective aura.

The city’s inhabitants were long accustomed to this sight.

They could see the dragon soaring overhead and hear its roars constantly, feeling no fear, but rather pride.

With the powerful Heavenly Dragon Clan protecting them, and with a peerless expert like Kai presiding over the city, Cloud Immortal City was

like a peaceful paradise amidst the chaos of the world—who would dare to invade?

But today ,

this long-maintained tranquility was utterly shattered.

A destructive aura swept in from the distant horizon.

On the city wall of Cloud Immortal City,

the Heavenly Dragon Clan Chief, Long Zhan, stood with his hands behind his back, his posture as upright as a pine tree.

He wore a long robe embroidered with golden dragon patterns, his face resolute, his eyes like stars, usually exuding composure and authority.

But now, his brows were tightly furrowed, forming a deep “川” shape, his eyes filled with solemnity and unease.

His gaze was fixed on the distant horizon.

There, a blinding golden light was slowly emerging.

At first, it was just a faint glimmer, but in a short while, the light grew closer and brighter, like a golden tsunami, sweeping across the sky and spreading wildly, instantly dyeing half the sky a dazzling gold, obscuring the sunlight.

The world seemed to be filled only with this chilling gold.

From within the golden light, countless figures flew through the air, densely packed, stretching as far as the eye could see.

At the forefront was an enormous golden warship.

The warship was hundreds of feet long, stretching across the sky, its entire body forged from rare celestial divine metal, heavy and majestic.

Its hull was engraved with dense, mysterious, and complex divine runes, each rune flowing with spiritual light, radiating a terrifying and oppressive pressure. On

both sides of the warship, hundreds of elite warriors from the temple, clad in uniform golden divine armor, stood in neat rows, perfectly aligned.

Each of them possessed a sharp aura, cold eyes, and a steady yet powerful fluctuation of spiritual energy. The lowest among them was a seventh-grade Upper Immortal, their expressions solemn, their killing intent palpable, like iron-blooded warriors emerging from mountains of corpses and seas of blood. They remained silent, yet exuded a terrifying aura.

Behind the golden warship was an even denser array of temple disciples.

At a glance, there were at least a thousand of them, spread across the sky like a golden wave, completely obscuring the heavens.

They flew in orderly formation, their spiritual energy flowing together, subtly forming a massive military formation, their oppressive force like a towering mountain, crushing towards Cloud Immortal City.

At the very forefront of this army, at the very center of the warship's bow,

stood a figure.

It was none other than the Temple Master, Shen Tong.

He still wore his golden dragon-patterned robe, its hem fluttering in the wind, a purple-gold crown on his head, his face cold and stern, his eyes flashing with golden light, radiating supreme majesty and domineering power.

The terrifying pressure of a peak second-grade True Immortal was unleashed without reservation.

That pressure, like the collapsing sky and overturned mountains and seas, pressed down fiercely on Cloud Immortal City from the heavens.

On the city wall,

Long Zhan's expression changed drastically, his pupils contracted sharply, and a storm of shock surged within him.

"The Temple…it's the Temple's army!"

Behind him, a Heavenly Dragon Clan elder's face was deathly pale, his voice trembling uncontrollably, filled with undisguised horror: "Clan leader…the Temple…they're going to use the entire clan's strength to attack my Cloud Immortal City?! How dare they…how dare they mobilize such a large force!"

Long Zhan took a deep breath, forcibly suppressing the shock and gravity in his heart. His dragon aura surged slightly, stabilizing his stance. He knew that the more critical the situation, the less he could afford to panic.

He was the Heavenly Dragon Clan leader, the guardian of Cloud Immortal City; if he panicked, everyone else would collapse.

"Quickly!"

Long Zhan's voice was deep and urgent, carrying an unquestionable command. "Immediately activate the city's protective formation! Activate it at full power! Summon all clansmen, have them all ascend the city walls, and prepare for battle!"

"Yes!"

The Heavenly Dragon Clan experts behind him responded in unison, not daring to delay for the slightest, and immediately turned to act.

"Whoosh—!"

A deep, urgent, and heavy horn sounded, booming across the sky above Cloud Immortal City.

One horn after another pierced the sky, resounding throughout every corner of the city.

This was a warning horn, a war horn!

The people in the city had been going about their daily tasks, vendors were hawking their wares, pedestrians were coming and going, and children were playing—a scene of peace and harmony.

But when the horn sounded, and when they instinctively looked up at the sky, everyone froze, completely rooted to the spot. “What…what is that?”

“The sky…why is it all golden light? Such a terrifying aura…” ”

It’s the temple! Those are the temple’s robes! It’s the temple’s army!”

“My God…so many cultivators, such a massive force…is the temple…is it going to destroy our Yunxian City?!”

Fear, like the most terrifying plague, swept through the entire Yunxian City in an instant.

The calm and tranquility on the faces of the people were instantly replaced by terror.

They panicked, became chaotic, and were terrified.

The once bustling streets instantly became chaotic.

Vendors hurriedly dropped their stalls, scattering their goods all over the ground, not even bothering to pick them up, and fled in panic;

pedestrians were pale-faced, running frantically towards their homes;

children were frightened by the terrifying atmosphere and cried shrilly; women tightly hugged their children, letting out terrified screams; men's faces were ashen, but filled with despair, as they pulled their families to find a hiding place.

Cries, screams, shouts, running, the shattering of objects…

a cacophony of sounds mingled together, turning the entire Yunxian City from a paradise into a place of utter terror.

Those forces that had previously allied themselves with the Chen family and sought refuge in Yunxian City were now terrified, their faces ashen.

They hid in their homes, tightly shutting their doors and windows, peering through the narrow cracks at the overwhelming, murderous army of the temple in the sky, their hearts filled with despair and regret.

"It's over…it's all over…"

"The temple is serious now, they're going to massacre the city!"

"If only…if only we hadn't stayed in Yunxian City, hadn't sided with the Chen family…now we can't leave!"

The city's protective array, under full force, slowly activated.

A pale golden light curtain rose from all sides of the city, like a giant protective shield, enveloping the entire Yunxian City.

The light barrier shimmered with spiritual energy, radiating protective power, yet under the terrifying pressure of the temple army, it appeared so fragile, so insignificant, as if it would shatter at the slightest touch.

Atop the city wall,

Long Zhan stood tall and imposing at the forefront.

Behind him, dozens of powerful Heavenly Dragon Clan warriors stood ready, each radiating dragon energy, their expressions solemn.

Their numbers were vastly outnumbered by the temple's thousands of elite troops, yet not one retreated, not one showed fear.

They were Heavenly Dragons, proud descendants of the dragon race, who would rather die than surrender!

Long Zhan took a deep breath, raised his head, and gazed at the massive golden warship in the sky. He channeled all his spiritual power and shouted loudly.

His voice, like thunder, echoed throughout the heavens and earth, resounding in all directions: "Lord of the Divine Power Palace!"

"Your temple has mobilized an army without cause, oppressing my Cloud Immortal City. What is your intention?!"

The golden warship's bow...

Shen Tong, high above, looked down at the tiny Cloud Immortal City below, and at Long Zhan atop the city walls. His face was expressionless, his tone indifferent and cold, carrying an undeniable air of authority.

"Long Zhan."

"I have come today for one thing only: to hand over Kai."

His words resonated clearly in everyone's ears.

Long Zhan's expression changed drastically, his heart sinking.

Sure enough, they were after Young Master Chen!

The Divine Temple still wouldn't let Kai go, even resorting to mobilizing such a massive army to threaten Cloud Immortal City!

Long Zhan's eyes flashed, his voice resounding, showing no sign of backing down: " Kai is the Dragon Emperor recognized by my Heavenly Dragon Clan, a distinguished guest of Cloud Immortal City! If you want to capture him, you'll have to get past me first! You'll have to step over the corpses of every member of my Heavenly Dragon Clan!"

A cold, disdainful smirk curled at the corner of Shen Tong's lips.

"Dragon Battle."

His tone was indifferent, yet utterly contemptuous. "Your Heavenly Dragon Clan is but a few hundred strong. Even if each one is an elite, so what? Behind me are thousands of elite warriors from the Divine Palace, and countless True Immortal Realm experts."

"Do you really think that with your meager numbers and this dilapidated city-protecting formation, you can withstand a single blow from my Divine Palace army?"

He paused, his tone growing increasingly icy, carrying a blatant threat: "I'll say it again, hand over Kai."

"I promise to capture only him. This matter has nothing to do with your Heavenly Dragon Clan, nor with the people of Cloud Immortal City.

If you know what's good for you and obediently hand him over, I might spare your lives and order that no innocent person in the city be harmed."

"Otherwise..."

He didn't finish his sentence.

But the unfinished words, the chilling killing intent, the terrifying pressure—the threat was already crystal clear.

Otherwise, a massacre!

Otherwise, not a single chicken or dog will be spared!

Behind Long Zhan, several elders of the Heavenly Dragon Clan's expressions changed slightly, their faces showing hesitation.

They looked at Long Zhan, their lips moving slightly, yet they hesitated to speak.

They weren't afraid of death, but they feared the annihilation of the Heavenly Dragon Clan, feared the innocent civilians in the city being implicated, and the bloodshed flowing like rivers.

On one side was Dragon Emperor Kai, on the other were the lives of their entire clan and the entire city.

A dilemma.

But Long Zhan didn't even turn his head once.

He still stared intently at Shen Tong in the sky, his eyes firm and unwavering, each word spoken clearly and decisively: "If you want to capture the Dragon Emperor, you'll have to step over my dead body first."

"My Heavenly Dragon Clan would rather die than betray!"

"My Cloud Immortal City would rather die than surrender!"

Shen Tong's eyes suddenly surged with killing intent.

He was completely enraged by Long Zhan's stubbornness, and sneered, his voice icy and chilling: "Fine, fine, 'would rather die than surrender'! Since you're courting death, then I'll grant your wish!" As soon as he

finished speaking,

Shen Tong suddenly raised his right hand and waved it in the air.

“Attack!”

he commanded.

In the sky, thousands of temple disciples stepped forward in unison, their movements perfectly synchronized.

They simultaneously raised their hands, various spiritual energy spells coalescing in their palms—gold, blue, red light… dazzling and illuminating the entire sky. The terrifying fluctuations of spiritual energy caused even the heavens and earth to change color.

A great battle was about to erupt.

The air seemed to freeze; the shadow of death loomed over the entire Cloud Immortal City. Deep within the City Lord’s Mansion, outside a secret chamber,

stood a solitary yet imposing figure, as steadfast as a rock, guarding the tightly closed door.

It was Ming Li.

Clad in black, his face was deathly pale, devoid of any color. Beads of cold sweat trickled down his forehead, dripping onto the ground.

In his hand, he gripped the black ghost blade that had been his companion for years, the hilt nearly crushed in his hand.

His gaze was fixed on the massive golden warship in the sky, on the overwhelming army of the temple.

The pressure of the True Immortal Realm pressed down on him like a mountain, making it difficult to breathe, his legs trembling slightly.

Yet he did not retreat a step, nor move an inch, standing there silently, guarding.

Behind him was the secret chamber.

Inside the chamber was Kai.

Liu Qianqian stood beside Ming Li, her elegant blue robes fluttering in the wind, her black hair flying.

Her cultivation was merely at the Upper Immortal Realm. Under the terrifying pressure of the divine army, her body swayed precariously, almost unable to stand, her face as pale as paper.

Yet, she bit her lower lip tightly, drawing faint blood, and stubbornly refused to collapse.

She remained silent, simply standing beside Ming Li, accompanying him, guarding the door together.

Yun Yao stood behind the two.

Her injuries had not fully healed; old wounds unhealed, new pressure added to her already pale face, devoid of any color, her figure thin and frail, as if a gust of wind could topple her.

She raised her head, gazing at the despairing golden waves in the sky, her eyes filled with fear and unease, her delicate body trembling slightly.

Yet, her steps did not falter.

She too stood guard at the entrance to the secret chamber.

The young master had saved her life, giving her a new life.

Today, with the young master in danger, she would risk her life to stay here.

Chen Wanqing stood at the very front.

She was dressed in a simple white gown, ethereal and otherworldly, her beauty unparalleled. Yet, at this moment, her cold face was expressionless, only filled with solemnity.

She gripped a long sword tightly in her hand, the blade trembling slightly, revealing a hint of unease.

Her cultivation was the highest among the four present, but facing the temple's thousand elite troops, facing the divine abilities of a second-grade True Immortal, she felt no chance of victory, no confidence whatsoever.

Strong, too strong.

The opponent's strength was like an insurmountable chasm.

But she did not retreat.

Chen Wanqing slowly turned her head, her gaze falling on the tightly closed door of the secret chamber behind her, a complex expression flashing in her eyes.

Worry, concern, determination, resolve...

Kai was inside.

He was in seclusion, healing his wounds, refining his power, recovering his strength.

He knew nothing of what was happening outside.

He didn't know the temple's army was pressing in, didn't know Yunxian City was in imminent danger, didn't know countless people were risking their lives for him.

But he had to live.

As long as he lived, there was hope.

As long as he was alive, there was still hope.

Chen Wanqing took a deep breath, suppressing all her emotions, and slowly turned her head to look at the sky again, her gaze becoming firm and calm once more.

She looked at Yun Yao behind her, her voice light, yet carrying an undeniable concern: “Yun Yao, your injuries haven’t healed yet, your spiritual power is unstable. Step back, we’ll handle things here.”

Yun Yao shook her head, her eyes filled with fear, her voice trembling slightly, yet revealing an unyielding stubbornness: “Sister, I won’t retreat.”

“Young Master saved me, my life originally belonged to him.”

“Today, even if I die, I will die here, guarding Young Master’s door.”

Chen Wanqing looked into her clear and resolute eyes, a complex and indescribable emotion welling up within her.

She could see that this woman was truly devoted to Kai, truly willing to give everything for him.

Chen Wanqing didn’t say anything more, only nodded slightly, tacitly agreeing to her staying.

Beside them, Ming Li, who had been silent for a long time, suddenly spoke.

His voice was hoarse and dry, like sandpaper scraping, carrying a hint of bitterness: “Miss Chen, do you think… we can survive this time? Can we hold out until Mr. Chen comes out of seclusion?”

Chen Wanqing was silent for a moment.

She looked at the approaching killing intent in the sky, gently shook her head, and said calmly, “I don’t know.”

She didn’t know if they could win.

She didn’t know if they could survive.

She didn’t know if they could hold out until Kai returned.

Everything was unknown.

Ming Li suddenly smiled.

The smile was faint, with a hint of bitterness, a hint of relief, and a hint of liberation.

“It’s better not to know.”

“Anyway, Mr. Chen saved my life long ago, it already belongs to him. Being able to live so many more days, being able to stay by his side, I’ve already gained enough.”

“Even if I die here today, it’s worth it.”

Liu Qianqian still didn’t speak, but reached out and tightly grasped Ming Li’s hand.

The two hands were tightly clasped, conveying each other’s warmth and courage.

During this period of contact, Liu Qianqian had actually developed strange feelings for Ming Li, but Kai was still unaware.

Ming Li turned to look at Liu Qianqian beside him, grinning bitterly yet with a hint of tenderness: “Are you afraid?”

Liu Qianqian gently shook her head, her eyes fixed firmly on Ming Li.

“Afraid? Of course I am. But as long as I’m with you, as long as I’m by your side, I’m not afraid,”

Liu Qianqian said with a smile.

Ming Li smiled and nodded, saying nothing more.

The four of them stood at the entrance of the secret chamber, like four silent statues, motionless.

Their power was insignificant.

Before the army of the temple, they were like ants.

But their will was unbreakable.

In the sky,

the golden light grew brighter and brighter, the pressure heavier and heavier, almost crushing the entire Cloud Immortal City.

Within the city

, cries, screams, pleas for help, wails... rose and fell, endless and chaotic, an atmosphere of despair permeating every corner.

In a corner of the city, in a dilapidated house,

a young mother, clutching her young child tightly, huddled under the bed, trembling violently with fear.

She desperately covered the child's mouth, silencing any sound, lest she attract the wrath of the heavens.

Tears streamed down her face like broken beads, soaking her clothes, yet she dared not utter a sound.

The child, with innocent eyes, looked at his mother, not understanding what was happening, only feeling fear, his small body trembling.

On the street,

an elderly man with white hair stumbled and fell in the chaotic crowd. His frail body crashed onto the hard ground, and he struggled to get up, only to be mercilessly trampled by the fleeing crowd.

His piercing screams of agony rose from the crowd, quickly swallowed by the chaos, ignored and forgotten.

In this chaotic world, human life was cheap.

In a tavern within the city,

a group of cultivators huddled in a corner, trembling, their faces ashen, their eyes filled with despair.

They chanted the names of various gods and Buddhas, clasped their hands together, and prayed incessantly, begging for divine protection and to survive this calamity.

But their prayers seemed so pale and powerless before absolute power.

Fear, despair, helplessness, sorrow...

all sorts of negative emotions, like a black tide, completely enveloped the entire Cloud Immortal City, plunging it into an abyss.

Meanwhile, inside that tightly closed secret chamber, within

the Demon-Suppressing Tower,

Kai sat cross-legged, eyes closed, golden dragon energy flowing ceaselessly around him, his five-clawed golden dragon bloodline surging within him, radiating a terrifying and majestic aura.

He was immersed in his own world, completely focused on healing and breaking through to

the next level. He knew nothing of the war, the fear, the despair, or anything else outside

.

He was still recovering.

Still growing stronger.

Still silently waiting for the moment he would emerge from seclusion. On the city walls of Yunxian City,

a fierce wind howled, and killing intent filled the air.

Long Zhan and Shen Tong stood facing each other across the sky.

One on the city wall, the other in the heavens.

One guarded the city, the other led a massive army to invade.

Their gazes clashed fiercely in mid-air, as if invisible sparks were flying, the air itself seemed to freeze, the atmosphere tense to the extreme, ready to explode at any moment.

Shen Tong's eyes flashed coldly, his voice icy, carrying a final ultimatum: "Long Zhan, I'll ask you one last time, hand over, or not?"

"Hand over Kai, and all will be well; don't, today will be the day your Heavenly Dragon Clan is destroyed, the day Yunxian City is stained with blood!"

Long Zhan did not answer.

He simply raised his right hand slowly, the movement deliberate yet unwavering.

"Roar—!"

A dragon's roar that shook the heavens and earth erupted from his mouth.

Behind him, hundreds of powerful members of the Heavenly Dragon Clan stepped forward in unison, their golden dragon energy surging wildly and soaring into the sky, transforming into countless golden dragons of various shapes, coiling in the air with roars that shook the heavens and earth, their aura overwhelming.

They gave their answer through their actions:

Fight!

Fight to the death! Never hand over the person!

Seeing this, the last shred of patience in Shen Tong's eyes vanished, replaced by icy killing intent and disdain.

"Stubborn to the end,"

he coldly uttered, waving his hand with a merciless wave of his hand, his voice icy and ruthless: "Since you seek death, then I will grant your wish." "

Form the formation! The Heaven-Locking Formation!"

"Kill!"

The command sounded like the horn of war.

In the sky, thousands of temple disciples moved simultaneously.

They dispersed according to the formation they had practiced countless times, their hands flying, forming complex hand seals, various spiritual energy techniques condensing in their palms, their light shooting into the sky.

Golden spiritual energy intertwined, converged, and entwined in the air.

In the blink of an eye, an enormous golden array, enveloping the entire Yunxian City, was fully formed.

The array shone brilliantly with profound divine runes, like a giant golden net descending from the sky, sealing off Yunxian City and cutting off all escape routes.

“Buzz—!”

The city’s protective array trembled violently.

Fine cracks instantly appeared on the pale golden light screen, like shattered glass, threatening to collapse at any moment.

The array’s defenses were utterly vulnerable before the Divine Temple’s Heaven-Locking Array. Long

Zhan’s expression changed drastically, his heart sinking, knowing there was no turning back.

He roared, his voice echoing in the ears of every member of the Heavenly Dragon Clan: “All clansmen, heed my command!”

“Prepare for battle! Follow me, kill!”

“Roar—!”

Hundreds of dragon roars erupted simultaneously, resounding through the heavens.

Hundreds of powerful members of the Heavenly Dragon Clan, no longer suppressing their power, transformed into their true forms. Golden dragons soared into the sky, claws outstretched, tails sweeping across, charging fiercely towards the temple army with unstoppable momentum.

There was no retreat.

No fear.

Only the determination to fight to the death.

The great battle officially erupted!

The sounds of colliding spiritual energy, dragon roars, shouts, and exploding spells… instantly resounded throughout the heavens and earth.

Golden light and blood-red killing intent intertwined. At

the entrance to the secret chamber of the City Lord's Mansion,

Ming Li watched the fierce battle erupting in the sky, feeling the terrifying fluctuations of spiritual energy and sensing the Heavenly Dragon Clan's aura gradually weakening. His heart sank.

He gripped the black ghost blade in his hand tightly, his knuckles turning white, muttering to himself, his voice low and firm: "They've come… they've finally come."

Chen Wanqing did not speak.

She simply gripped her longsword tightly, a resolute glint flashing in her cold eyes.

Liu Qianqian closed her eyes, clasped her hands together, and silently prayed.

She prayed that her young master would emerge from seclusion soon.

She prayed that everyone would survive.

Yun Yao raised her head, gazing at the fierce battle in the sky, tears streaming down her face.

In her heart, she silently repeated again and again, "Young master, you must wake up soon. We… we can't hold on much longer. Yunxian City is waiting for you. We are all waiting for you. I need you."

On the edge of the Demon Realm, shrouded year-round in thick demonic mist, the light in the air carries a oppressive, dark red hue. Even the howling winds carry a chilling demonic aura, whipping across the jagged rocks with mournful cries like ghostly wails.

Deep within this desolate and lifeless region, a majestic palace, forged entirely from black demonic rock, stands atop a mountain peak.

The palace ceiling is adorned with countless ferocious dragon reliefs, each line radiating a malevolent aura. This is the Demon Dragon Palace, feared by all forces within the Demon Realm.

Inside, the palace is spacious and solemn. The floor, paved with smooth black jade, reflects the flickering, dark red candlelight. The flickering candlelight casts long and short shadows, adding to the eerie atmosphere.

Seated in the main seat is a tall, imposing figure—Long Yuan, the leader of the Demon Dragon lineage.

He wore a dark gold robe embroidered with dragon patterns, the edges of which were intricately decorated with demonic runes. A faint aura of demonic dragon power emanated

from him. His usually calm and aloof face was now filled with solemnity, his brows furrowed tightly, forming a deep frown.

His right hand unconsciously and rapidly tapped the armrest beside him, crafted from ten-thousand-year-old mystic ice and demonic iron. Each tap produced a soft “tap, tap” sound, exceptionally clear in the silent hall, revealing the unsettling anxiety within him.

Ever since Senior Ning Zhi made his move, slaying the Grand Elder and several core elders of the Divine Temple with a single sword strike, a persistent gloom had hung over Long Yuan’s heart, like an invisible mountain pressing down on him, making it hard for him to breathe.

He knew all too well the Divine Temple's power and the nature of its supernatural abilities. The Divine Temple had stood in the Fourteenth Heaven for tens of thousands of years, always domineering, tyrannical, and vengeful.

The loss of the Grand Elder, a core member of the fighting force, was a tremendous disgrace. The Temple would not let this go unpunished; Long Yuan had no doubt about this.

He had been on high alert day and night, prepared for a full-scale attack from the Temple. He had even ordered all warriors of the Demon Dragon lineage to be on high alert, activated the Demon Dragon Palace's defensive array, and deployed all stockpiled magic crystals and weapons, ready to fight to the death as soon as Shen Tong led his army to attack.

But to his utter surprise, as the days passed, Shen Tong remained inactive.

Not only did he not immediately lead his army to attack the Demon Dragon Palace, but he also remained completely silent. This unusual restraint intensified Long Yuan's unease. He vaguely felt that Shen Tong was brewing some even more sinister conspiracy.

Just as Long Yuan's thoughts were in turmoil, repeatedly speculating about Shen Tong's intentions, a series of hurried footsteps, accompanied by panicked shouts, suddenly broke the silence inside the hall.

"Report—!"

A dragon scout, clad in black scout armor and covered in dust and faint bloodstains, rushed into the hall, ignoring the guards outside. He ran all the way to the center of the hall, where he knelt down on one knee with a thud, the armor hitting the ground with a dull thud.

He lowered his head, his chest heaving violently, clearly having rushed there. His voice was filled with barely concealed urgency and fear: "Reporting to the leader, something terrible has happened! The entire

army of the Temple has been mobilized, not towards my Demon Dragon Palace, but heading straight for Cloud Immortal City!

The Temple Master, Shen Tong, is personally leading the army, with at least a thousand elite troops under his command, including more than ten True Immortal Realm experts. The army has already arrived outside Cloud Immortal City and is engaged in a bloody battle with the Heavenly Dragon Clan stationed there. The battle is extremely fierce!”

“What?!”

Long Yuan abruptly stood up from his seat, his dragon aura suddenly erupting. The armrest of his chair cracked from the force of his unconscious movement. Extreme shock flashed in his eyes, his pupils slightly contracting. Clearly, this news was completely beyond his expectations.

Shen Tong hadn’t come to the Demon Dragon Palace to seek revenge, but instead led his entire main force straight towards Cloud Immortal City?

He stood frozen, his mind racing. After a moment, the shock in his eyes faded, replaced by a look of realization. Then, a cold, mocking smile curled at the corner of his lips: “What a skill! He can endure what ordinary people cannot.

Instead of avenging the murder of his own family, he went to Yunxian City first. He’s planning to capture Kai alive, seize his opportunities, and completely enhance his own strength. Once his combat power is greatly increased, he’ll come to settle accounts with our Demon Dragon lineage. A truly shrewd scheme!”

He waved his hand, his tone indifferent as he signaled the scout to leave: “Understood. Go and continue to gather intelligence. Report back immediately if there are any new developments.”

“Yes!” The scout respectfully accepted the order, rose, and quickly left the hall.

Long Yuan didn't hesitate any longer. He turned and strode hurriedly towards the back hall. He knew he had to inform Senior Ning Zhi of this matter immediately.

All decisions of the Demon Dragon lineage now rest with Ning Zhi. That seemingly young senior possesses overwhelming power and is the Demon Dragon lineage's greatest asset.

The scenery in the rear courtyard is starkly different from the eerie atmosphere of the front hall, yet it retains the unique eeriness of the Demon Realm.

Several Blood Spirit Trees, which only grow in the Demon Realm, are planted in the center of the courtyard. Their branches and leaves are dark red, and a gentle breeze rustles the leaves, causing a few dark red petals to fall onto the bluestone ground.

Above the courtyard hangs a dark red Demon Sun, its dim light shrouding the entire courtyard in a crimson glow.

Ning Zhi stands with his hands behind his back in the center of the courtyard, his posture upright like a pine tree. His black robes flutter gently in the breeze. He looks up at the Demon Sun in the sky, his eyes deep and cold like a pool, his aura indifferent, as if he were one with the world, and nothing in the world could penetrate his heart.

Su Yuqi stood quietly beside him, dressed in a purple robe that fluttered in the wind. Her black hair swayed gently in the breeze, and her face was cold and beautiful, like a celestial being who had transcended the world. She was out of place with the demonic energy around her, yet she stood shoulder to shoulder with Ning Zhi, appearing so harmonious.

"Senior."

Long Yuan strode into the courtyard, his steps measured and unhurried. He stopped a few steps behind Ning Zhi, bowed deeply, and spoke with utmost respect and urgency: "I just received news from our scouts at the

front. The Temple Master, Shen Tong, has led all the Temple's elite forces in a

full-scale attack on Yunxian City. They are now at war with the Heavenly Dragon Clan. Their objective is obvious: to capture Kai alive while he is in seclusion and seize the opportunity he possesses."

Upon hearing this, a sharp glint flashed in Ning Zhi's previously indifferent eyes. In that glint was the anticipation of a long wait, the chilling aura of facing a powerful enemy, and an indescribable excitement at finally achieving his goal after a long period of silence.

He slowly withdrew his gaze from Mo Ri, murmuring softly, repeating those two words: "Yunxian City... Kai..."

As he finished speaking, the corners of his mouth turned up slightly, forming a meaningful smile. Within that smile lay emotions that no one could understand: the expectation of meeting an old friend, and the fervor of a peak duel.

"Good, very good."

Ning Zhi's tone was calm, yet carried an barely suppressed sense of satisfaction. "I was just about to meet Kai, but the Temple acted first, diverting a lot of trouble for me and saving me a lot of trouble."

He slowly turned around, his gaze falling on Long Yuan, who stood bowing. His tone remained calm, but his words carried an unquestionable, supreme command: "Long Yuan, immediately gather all capable fighters from your Demon Dragon lineage, whether adult Demon Dragon warriors, Demon Generals, or Demon Commanders. Assemble them all and come with me to Cloud Immortal City."

Long Yuan was slightly taken aback, a hint of confusion on his face. He subconsciously looked up and asked, "Senior, are we going... to rescue Kai?"

In his view, Ning Zhi had no connection with Kai, and this mobilization of the entire Demon Dragon army should be to assist Kai in fighting against the Temple.

Ning Zhi glanced at him indifferently, his gaze calm and unwavering, yet it instantly filled Long Yuan with awe, and he dared not say another word.

Ning Zhi spoke slowly, his tone indifferent: “Save? No, the grudge between Kai and me is beyond your imagination. As for those people in the Temple…”

At this point, a flash of extreme disdain and contempt crossed his eyes, as if the thousands of powerful figures in the Temple were nothing more than ants in his eyes: “A bunch of obstructive clowns, blocking my path, just kill them. Kai is mine, and only I can kill him.”

Long Yuan’s heart skipped a beat, a chill rising from the depths of his soul. He dared not question it in the slightest, and quickly bowed again, loudly accepting the order: “Yes! This junior will immediately go and gather the Demon Dragon Army. They will be assembled outside the hall in a moment, awaiting Senior’s command!”

With that, Long Yuan turned and quickly left the courtyard, not daring to delay for a moment.

A moment later, a deep and stirring horn sounded above the Demon Dragon Palace, its sound piercing through the thick demonic mist and spreading throughout the vast demonic realm.

The horn’s call was the battle cry of the Demon Dragon lineage, containing ancient demonic sounds that shook the heavens and earth, making the blood of countless Demon Dragon warriors boil.

As the horn sounded, countless dark red figures rose into the air from the mountains surrounding the Demon Dragon Palace, some transforming into human form, others revealing their true forms.

Enormous, dark red-scaled, ferocious demon dragons soared, their wings blotting out the sun, whipping up gales and churning demonic mist.

The densely packed dragons converged into a dark red torrent, rushing towards Cloud Immortal City, changing the color of the sky and surging with demonic energy.

At the very forefront of this demon dragon army, a supreme demon dragon, a thousand feet long, with scales like blood jade and horns gleaming with an eerie light, flew proudly. It was a descendant of the ancestral dragon of the Demon Dragon lineage, its power far surpassing its kin, and was the natal war dragon of Dragon Abyss.

Ning Zhi stood atop the head of the supreme demonic dragon, his robes fluttering, his expression serene. His gaze was fixed on the distant Cloud Immortal City, as if the impending bloodbath was merely an insignificant journey for him.

Su Yuqi stood quietly beside him, her cool gaze fixed on the distance. Her slender hand clenched slightly as she spoke softly, her voice gentle yet tinged with worry: “Junior brother, this time… are you going to kill him, or to see him?”

Ning Zhi remained silent for a moment. The wind ruffled his black robes, his hair fluttering. He gazed at the horizon and spoke softly, a complex emotion hidden in his tone: “Senior sister, you’ll know when you see him.” As soon as he

finished speaking, the demonic dragon army increased its speed, like a dark red dragon tearing through the sky, breaking through the clouds, and rapidly approaching Cloud Immortal City.

Yunxian City, a renowned immortal city among the fourteen heavens, was once shrouded in mist and abundant in spiritual energy. Its city was filled with towering pavilions, its people lived in peace and prosperity, and cultivators thronged the streets – a scene of tranquility and flourishing.

But now, this once-immortal city has become a devastating battlefield, a scene of utter devastation and ruin.

In the sky, a world-shaking battle has raged for a full hour, the roar of spells deafening, and shockwaves from colliding energy spreading outwards, even slightly distorting space itself.

The city's protective array, built over thousands of years and having withstood countless attacks, has long since shattered under the relentless bombardment of the divine army, turning into countless shimmering specks of light that dissipate into the air without leaving a trace.

The city walls of Yunxian City, forged from ten-thousand-year-old Xuan Jade, are now covered with dense cracks and charred marks – wounds left by magical bombardment and the slashing of divine weapons.

Sections of the city walls had collapsed with a deafening roar, massive stones scattered across the ground. Some destroyed houses, others piled up in the streets, dust billowing and choking the air.

The city's inhabitants were terrified, hiding in their homes, windows and doors tightly shut, huddled in corners, trembling.

They covered their ears, listening to the deafening sounds of battle, dragon roars, and magical explosions outside. Each sound was like a hammer blow to their hearts, filling them with dread, like prisoners awaiting their final judgment, unsure if the next moment would see their homes consumed by war and their lives taken. The cries of

children, the sobs of women, and the sighs of the elderly mingled together, drowned out by the sounds of battle, amplifying the desolation.

Above, golden light intertwined and collided—the dragon energy of the Heavenly Dragon Clan clashing with the golden magic of the temple. Dragon roars shook the heavens, magic boomed, and waves of energy surged and ebbed.

The battle appeared fiercely contested, but a closer look revealed that the brilliant gold was increasingly tinged with a blinding crimson—the blood of the Heavenly Dragon Clan, staining the entire sky red. The

Heavenly Dragon Clan had suffered heavy casualties and was on the verge of collapse.

The Heavenly Dragon Clan Chief, Long Zhan, had long since shed his human form, transforming into his true form: a hundred-zhang-long golden dragon, its scales gleaming with golden light, its horns exuding unparalleled majesty, fiercely battling in the sky.

He was fighting three against one, locked in combat with three True Immortal Realm elders from the Divine Temple, each collision unleashing terrifying energy.

Long Zhan was no longer the imposing figure he once was; his gleaming golden scales were covered with countless deep, bone-revealing wounds.

Some wounds were scorched black by magic, others torn open by divine weapons, golden dragon blood gushing forth like a fountain, dripping onto the walls and streets of Cloud Immortal City, staining the ground crimson.

Even severely wounded and weakened, Long Zhan fought on relentlessly. His massive dragon body stood like an unshakeable mountain above Yunxian City, fiercely protecting the city and Kai, who was in seclusion within.

“Roar—!”

Long Zhan let out a thunderous roar, his voice filled with pain and determination. His enormous dragon tail swept out with immense force, lashing out at a temple elder in front of him, forcing him back several steps.

But just as his old strength was exhausted and new strength had not yet arisen, the other two temple elders seized the opportunity to attack

together. Two golden spells containing the temple's supreme laws condensed into massive blades of light, carrying earth-shattering power, and slammed into his dragon body.

"Boom!"

With a deafening roar, Long Zhan's massive body trembled violently, golden dragon scales flew everywhere, and two more terrifying, deep wounds appeared on his body, dragon blood gushing out.

His breath grew even weaker, his massive dragon body swayed in the air, and his movements became increasingly sluggish, yet he still steadied himself, his gaze fixed firmly on the temple army ahead, without retreating a single step.

The battlefield below was even more horrific.

The Heavenly Dragon Clan, which originally possessed dozens of powerful dragons, now had fewer than twenty still flying in the sky to continue fighting.

The rest had either perished in battle, their massive dragon bodies lifeless, falling from the sky and crashing into the city, stirring up clouds of dust;

or were severely wounded, their wings broken, barely clinging to life, unable to fight any longer, lying helplessly in the ruins, watching their kin fight to the death.

But those Heavenly Dragon warriors who remained steadfast on the battlefield—not one retreated, not one showed fear.

They all knew in their hearts that behind them was Cloud Immortal City, and behind them was their Dragon Emperor, Kai.

The Dragon Emperor was still in seclusion within the city, not yet emerging; they were his last line of defense, and they would rather die than retreat!

“Clan Chief…”

An elder of the Heavenly Dragon Clan, covered in blood, his golden dragon blood soaking through his clothes, struggled to reach Long Zhan’s side. His dragon wings were tattered, his breath weak, and his voice hoarse and sorrowful, filled with endless despair. “We… can’t hold on much longer. Our clansmen are almost wiped out. If this continues, it won’t be long before the Heavenly Dragon Clan is completely annihilated, and Cloud Immortal City will fall!”

Long Zhan slowly turned his dragon head, looking down at the corpses of his kin, at those clansmen still fighting bloodily, refusing to retreat even with their last ounce of strength. A deep, unforgettable pain flashed in his eyes, a pain that almost tore his heart apart. But this pain was instantly replaced by an unwavering belief.

“We must hold on, even if we can’t!”

he said in a deep voice. Though weak and hoarse from blood loss, his voice carried an unwavering determination that resonated throughout the heavens and earth. “The Dragon Emperor is still in the city, he hasn’t emerged from seclusion yet. He is the hope of our Heavenly Dragon Clan, the hope of Cloud Immortal City.

As long as he is alive, we cannot retreat. Even if we fight to the last man, even if we shed our last drop of blood, we will hold this place until the Dragon Emperor emerges from seclusion!”

Looking at the clan leader’s resolute eyes, the Heavenly Dragon Clan elder’s eyes welled with hot tears, which mingled with dragon blood and slid down his cheeks. He nodded fiercely, his voice ringing out, “Yes! Clan leader, we will hold on! Even if we are shattered to pieces, we will never retreat!”

With that, he turned, spread his tattered dragon wings, and once again charged into the battle, clashing with the temple’s cultivators. He was quickly surrounded by several temple experts, his figure swallowed by golden light.

Outside the secret chamber of the Cloud Immortal City Lord's Mansion, a similar scene of carnage unfolded.

Ming Li gripped the ghost blade tightly. The jet-black divine weapon was already stained with blood. His hand trembled slightly, not from fear, but from the intense battle that had lasted for an hour. His mind had been constantly on edge, and his physical and spiritual strength were nearing their limits.

Before him lay the corpses of three temple disciples, the vanguard who had tried to break through the blockade and enter the secret chamber of the city lord's mansion, killed by him, Chen Wanqing, Liu Qianqian, and Yun Yao in a joint effort.

But this victory came at a heavy price.

On Ming Li's left arm, a deep, bone-revealing wound stretched from his shoulder to his wrist, the flesh torn open, blood dripping continuously, staining his robes red.

Every swing of the ghost blade brought excruciating pain, yet he gritted his teeth and persevered, guarding the entrance to the secret chamber.

Liu Qianqian's face was ashen, blood trickling from the corner of her mouth. Her spiritual energy was in disarray. Leaning against the cold wall, she was extremely weak, barely able to stand, yet she still gripped her magical weapon tightly, her eyes warily fixed on the front.

Yun Yao was already exhausted, slumped on the cold ground, her legs weak and her body utterly drained. Yet, her hands still gripped her longsword tightly, her eyes resolute. Even though she could no longer fight, she refused to retreat a single step.

Chen Wanqing stood at the forefront of the four, her pristine white dress now stained a glaring crimson, a shocking sight of red and white intertwined.

Her swordsmanship was unparalleled; in this defensive battle, she had single-handedly blocked most of the attacks, slaying several powerful figures from the temple. But now, her aura was also chaotic, her spiritual energy depleted, sweat pouring down her face, her hair disheveled and clinging to her cheeks, a trace of blood at the corner of her mouth—clearly, she was at her last gasp.

Just then, several powerful auras rapidly approached from the sky, heading straight for the City Lord's Mansion.

Chen Wanqing struggled to look up, and when she saw the cultivation levels of the newcomers, a chilling despair flashed in her eyes.

The newcomers were five peak-level Immortal Realm experts from the Divine Palace, each possessing an incomparably powerful aura, far surpassing the previous vanguard disciples.

In her current exhausted state, she could only barely hold off two at most; the remaining three would easily kill all four of them and break through the secret chamber's barrier.

"It seems... today, we really are going to die here,"

she murmured to herself, her voice soft yet filled with endless relief and bitterness, a sorrowful smile playing on her lips.

She slowly turned her head, her gaze falling on the tightly closed stone door of the secret chamber behind her, her eyes filled with anticipation and reluctance.

Kai, do you know...

we are all waiting for you, the Heavenly Dragon Clan is waiting for you, we are all doing everything in our power to buy you time. "

Come out quickly...

" "Kill!"

Five peak Immortal Realm experts from the Divine Palace shouted simultaneously, their bodies surging with golden light. They joined forces to unleash several powerful spells, their brilliance dazzling and carrying destructive power, as they attacked Chen Wanqing, Ming Li, and the other three, intending to clear away the obstacles in one fell swoop and rush into the secret chamber to capture Kai alive. Chen Wanqing took a deep breath, suppressing the surging blood within her, and gripped her longsword tightly. The blade emitted its last glimmer of light; she was prepared to fight to the death, even if it meant her soul was scattered, to buy Kai a final moment in the secret chamber.

Ming Li, Liu Qianqian, and Yun Yao also struggled to their feet, using their last ounce of strength to assume fighting stances, ready to perish together with their enemies.

Just at this critical moment, on the brink of life and death…

“Boom—!”

A deafening, earth-shattering roar resounded from the heavens!

The sound was like the collapse of the sky and the shattering of the earth, like stars falling; the terrifying sound waves swept across the heavens and earth, causing everyone’s eardrums to ring, their blood to surge, and their spiritual energy to become chaotic.

The two sides fighting in the middle of the battle paused simultaneously, stunned by this terrifying sound.

In the sky, everyone who had been fiercely battling—whether the temple disciples launching a frenzied attack or the Heavenly Dragon Clan members fighting to the death—instinctively stopped, their faces filled with astonishment. They all looked up towards the direction from which the deafening roar had come.

On the distant horizon, an endless expanse of dark red light, like a monstrous wave, rolled in. Within that light, demonic energy surged, ferocious and overwhelming.

Countless enormous figures appeared and disappeared within the demonic energy, radiating a terrifying pressure that was suffocating and soul-shattering. This pressure swept over, filling all the cultivators present with fear, their legs going weak.

It was demonic energy!

A boundless, pure, and domineering demonic energy—the demonic energy of the Demonic Dragon lineage of the Demon Realm!

Everyone was stunned, their faces filled with disbelief and astonishment. No one had expected that at this crucial moment in the bloody battle of Cloud Immortal City, the Demonic Dragon lineage would suddenly appear!

The Temple Master, Shen Tong, stood at the bow of a massive golden warship, coldly directing the battle. When he sensed the familiar yet terrifying pressure of the demonic dragons and saw the dark red torrent in the sky, his expression drastically changed.

His expression shifted from cold to solemn, then to utter shock, his voice trembling: “The Demonic Dragon lineage…it’s the Demonic Dragon lineage! How could they be here?!”

The dark red light grew closer and clearer; countless enormous dark red demonic dragons, blotting out the sun, hovered above Cloud Immortal City, densely packed and stretching as far as the eye could see.

The vast army of demonic dragons faced off against the Temple army, demonic energy and golden light clashing, the atmosphere of the world instantly freezing.

At the very front, atop the largest supreme demonic dragon’s head stood two figures:

a man and a woman, both tall and imposing, possessing extraordinary bearing.

The man, clad in black, possessed unparalleled handsome features. He stood with his hands behind his back, his expression serene and composed, as if all the battles and conflicts of the world were unworthy of his attention. His restrained aura, however, made even a True Immortal like Shen Tong feel a deadly threat.

The woman, dressed in flowing purple, was ethereal and otherworldly, her beauty unmatched. She stood quietly beside the man, silent yet possessing an otherworldly air.

It was Ning Zhi and Su Yuqi.

The demonic dragon army came to a steady halt above Yunxian City, dark red demonic energy shrouding half the sky, rivaling the golden light of the temple.

Long Yuan leaped from the demonic dragon ranks, landing beside Ning Zhi. Clad in a dark gold dragon robe, his body a tapestry of dragon might and demonic energy, his gaze coldly sweeping across the entire scene, his eyes filled with utter mockery and contempt.

The sky was deathly silent.

Everyone stopped what they were doing. The temple disciples were ashen-faced, and the Heavenly Dragon Clan members were filled with astonishment. All eyes were fixed on the suddenly appearing army of demonic dragons, wondering whether they were friend or foe.

Long Zhan slowly transformed into human form, covered in blood and with tattered clothes. He stood atop the ruined city wall, his gaze fixed on Long Yuan, a complex mix of emotions flashing in his eyes.

Though both were dragons, they were natural enemies. The demonic dragons had allied with the demon race and fought the Heavenly Dragon Clan for thousands of years, their hatred running deep. Yet now, the demonic dragons had appeared at the Heavenly Dragon Clan’s most desperate moment, leaving him momentarily unable to discern their intentions.

The temple members were even more grim-faced. They all knew that the temple's Grand Elder had died at the hands of the demonic dragons. With old and new grudges compounded, the appearance of the demonic dragon army was undoubtedly adding insult to injury.

Shen Tong took a deep breath, forcibly suppressing the anger, shock, and unease in his heart. His gaze was fixed on Long Yuan, and he said in a deep voice, "Long Yuan! Your Demon Dragon lineage is not behaving itself in the Demon Realm. Why have you suddenly led a large army to appear in Yunxian City? What exactly do you mean by this?"

Long Yuan looked at him, a mocking smile playing on his lips. His tone was indifferent and arrogant: "Shen Tong, don't you know what I mean?

You led the entire army of the Divine Temple to besiege Yunxian City. It's such a lively battle, so naturally I had to join in the fun. How could I miss such a good show?"

Shen Tong's eyes flashed with anger, almost bursting forth, but he held back.

His gaze swept over Long Yuan and then landed on Ning Zhi beside Long Yuan. The young man in black seemed calm, but he gave Shen Tong an unprecedented sense of danger, as if facing a sleeping primordial beast, making him hesitant to make a move.

A strong sense of unease welled up within him, and he secretly wondered: Could it be that the Grand Elder and several core elders of the Temple died at the hands of this seemingly young man in black?

Suppressing his suspicions and killing intent, Shen Tong said in a deep voice, "Long Yuan, although there are grudges between your Demon Dragon lineage and the Temple, today's matter is an entanglement between my Temple and Kai and the Heavenly Dragon Clan, and has nothing to do with your Demon Dragon lineage.

Today, I only want to capture Kai and do not wish to become enemies with your Demon Dragon lineage and add fuel to the fire. If you

immediately lead your men and leave the Demon Realm, I can forgive and forget about the matter of the Grand Elder and settle it later!”

Upon hearing this, Long Yuan was slightly taken aback at first, then threw his head back and laughed loudly. His laughter was full of mockery and disdain, and it resounded throughout the entire Cloud Immortal City.

“Let bygones be bygones?”

Long Yuan’s laughter abruptly ceased, his face turning cold as he looked at Shen Tong with utter contempt, his tone dripping with sarcasm. “Shen Tong, have you been blinded by war? Have you misunderstood something?

I’ve led the entire Demon Dragon army here today, not to negotiate or settle scores. You have no right to negotiate with me.”

He pointed at Shen Tong, each word deliberate, his voice icy and domineering: “I now order you to immediately take your temple scum and get out of Yunxian City, as far away as possible. Otherwise…”

A cruel and ferocious smile curled at the corner of his lips: “Don’t blame me for showing no mercy and leaving you all here in Yunxian City!”

With Ning Zhi present, Long Yuan’s arrogance swelled considerably; without Ning Zhi, Long Yuan wouldn’t have dared to come at all. Upon hearing this, the elders of the temple were immediately enraged, shouting angrily.

“Insolence! You demonic dragon traitor, how dare you be so arrogant!”

“Palace Master, no need to say anything more to him, give the order! Let’s join forces to wipe out the demonic dragon lineage first, then capture Kai!”

“A bunch of remnants of the Demon Realm, daring to act so presumptuously in the Fourteenth Heaven, today we will completely eradicate them!”

Shen Tong’s face was ashen, his aura surging, and he raised his hand to stop the commotion and agitation of the crowd.

He stared at Long Yuan, his eyes surging with killing intent, almost overflowing, but he still restrained himself from making a move. What he truly feared was that young man in black, whose aura was restrained yet extremely dangerous.

“Long Yuan,”

Shen Tong spoke again, his voice suppressing his anger, “I’ll say this one last time: our grudges can be settled another day. Today, I’m only arresting Kai; this has nothing to do with you.

Get out of my way, and I won’t make things difficult for you. Otherwise, don’t blame me for being impolite!”

Long Yuan scoffed, about to retort, when Ning Zhi beside him gently raised his hand and patted his shoulder.

Long Yuan was startled, instantly understanding the meaning, immediately shut his mouth, and respectfully stepped aside, giving Ning Zhi the seat in front of him, his posture humble and showing utmost respect for Ning Zhi.

Ning Zhi stepped forward slowly, his steps light and deliberate, each step seeming to tread upon the hearts of everyone present. His gaze calmly fell upon Shen Tong, and he spoke softly, his voice not loud, yet clearly carrying to every corner: “You are Shen Tong, the Temple Master?”

Shen Tong’s brows furrowed tightly as he sized up the unbelievably young man in black, his unease growing stronger. He coldly replied, “Indeed, it is I. Who are you? Why are you allied with the Demon Dragon lineage?”

Ning Zhi did not answer his question, seemingly disdaining to respond. His tone was calm, yet carried an overwhelming domineering air: “I will give you three breaths. Take your men and get out of Yunxian City immediately, or you will bear the consequences.”

His voice was flat and emotionless, yet carried an undeniable and irresistible authority, shocking everyone present.

Shen Tong was completely stunned. Then, a surge of boundless rage erupted from the depths of his heart, rushing straight to his mind.

He was the dignified Palace Master, a peak True Immortal Realm Second Grade expert, one of the overlords who had stood in the Fourteen Heavens for tens of thousands of years, a figure who had roamed the world freely. How could he have ever been treated with such contempt and disregard?

Moreover, the other party was merely a young upstart who looked no more than twenty!

“Youngster!”

Shen Tong laughed in fury, his voice icy and chilling, filled with boundless killing intent. “What are you? How dare you spout such nonsense before me?

I’ll give you one last chance, considering your youth and ignorance. Kneel down and beg for mercy immediately, cripple your cultivation, and perhaps I can spare your corpse. Otherwise, today I will annihilate your soul, condemning you to eternal damnation!”

Ning Zhi looked at him, a faint, contemptuous smile playing on his lips. His gaze was as if he were looking at a clown seeking attention, utterly devoid of emotion.

“One breath,”

he slowly uttered, uttering the first word.

Shen Tong's expression changed drastically. He could no longer suppress his anger and shouted, "Arrogant brat! You think you're qualified to contend with me just because you killed a few elders of my temple?

Today I'll show you what true strength is, what the difference in realms is!"

As soon as he finished speaking, his aura exploded. The terrifying pressure of a peak second-grade True Immortal was like a towering mountain, carrying endless weight, and it crushed down on Ning Zhi.

The space itself was slightly distorted by this pressure, and the buildings of Cloud Immortal City below creaked under the weight.

"Two breaths."

Ning Zhi remained calm and composed, standing upright and motionless. It was as if the pressure that could crush everything was just a gentle breeze to him, having no effect whatsoever. His aura remained restrained, but a more terrifying power was quietly awakening within him.

Shen Tong was completely enraged, his anger burning within him, and he refused to say another word.

"You're courting death!"

he roared, raising his hand to unleash a full-force palm strike towards Ning Zhi!

A palm strike roared, its golden light dazzling to the extreme, condensing his life's cultivation and the supreme laws of the divine temple, containing world-destroying power. Wherever it passed, space shattered, air currents reversed, and it hurtled straight towards Ning Zhi's chest.

A hint of disdain flashed in Ning Zhi's eyes. His tone was calm as he uttered the last word: "Three breaths."

The instant his words fell, he slowly raised his right hand.

The movement was slow and light, as if it were merely a casual wave, without any deliberate effort or gathering of power.

But the moment he raised his hand, the world instantly changed color!

A fierce wind arose, demonic energy surged, and dark red demonic clouds in the sky billowed wildly. An aura far more terrifying, more domineering, and more ancient than any divine power erupted from Ning Zhi's body.

Like a primordial beast awakening after billions of years of slumber, like a demon god descending above all heavens, this aura instantly crushed the pressure of the divine power to dust, reducing it to nothingness!

Shen Tong's all-out attack, a dazzling golden palm print, vanished instantly before Ning Zhi like snow meeting the blazing sun, like an ant encountering a mountain. It dissolved without a trace, disappearing into nothingness without even causing a ripple. Shen Tong

's pupils constricted, his face turning deathly pale, devoid of any color. His eyes were filled with extreme fear and disbelief as he cried out in shock, "This…this is impossible! What level has your cultivation reached?!"

Having lived for thousands of years and traversed the Fourteen Heavens, he had never seen such a terrifying existence. The strength of this young man far exceeded his comprehension. He couldn't believe that there was someone so much more powerful than him in the Fourteen Heavens!

Ning Zhi gave him no time to react or escape.

He raised his hand, his index finger lightly tapping, a seemingly casual movement, yet containing earth-shattering power.

A pure black light shot out from his fingertip, its speed unbelievable, transcending the limitations of space, instantly piercing Shen Tong's shoulder!

"Pfft!"

Blood splattered, and Shen Tong let out a shrill scream. His massive body flew backward like a kite with a broken string.

He crashed heavily onto the hull of the golden warship, shattering the sturdy frame. He spat out a mouthful of blood, his life force instantly weakening to its lowest point.

"Palace Master!"

The elders of the Temple of Gods cried out in alarm, rushing forward to shield Shen Tong, their faces filled with fear and panic. They had never seen their Palace Master so disheveled, so vulnerable.

Shen Tong clutched his pierced shoulder, blood gushing out, his face deathly pale, his eyes filled with lingering terror. He stared at the black-clad figure in the sky, only one thought in his mind: Escape! Escape immediately! This person was simply beyond their ability to contend with! "What are you all standing there for? Retreat! Attack! Break through the encirclement!"

Shen Tong shouted fiercely, his voice hoarse and filled with endless panic.

Although the elders of the temple were already shrouded in fear and their souls were about to leave, they had no choice but to obey the temple master's order.

They gritted their teeth, suppressing their fear, and attacked Ning Zhi, summoning their respective divine weapons and spells, trying to buy time for their retreat.

Ning Zhi didn't even glance at them, his gaze indifferent, as if these people were nothing but dust and weeds, not worth his attention. He simply waved his hand lightly, the movement casual and natural.

Instantly, black demonic flames erupted from his palm, raging fiercely, with terrifyingly high temperatures, containing the power to purify everything, transforming into a sea of fire that swept towards the temple members, scorching and distorting the space in its path.

"Ah—!"

Screams of agony rose and fell, utterly devastating. The temple elders and elites at the forefront were instantly engulfed by the black demonic flames, without even a chance to resist. Not even a trace of their bodies remained before they turned to ashes and vanished into the heavens and earth.

The remaining temple disciples were terrified, losing all will to fight. They turned and fled in panic, their formation completely collapsing, like stray dogs scattering in all directions.

Seeing this, Long Yuan's eyes flashed with a fierce light. He waved his hand and shouted, "Demonic Dragon lineage, follow me and kill! Leave no one alive! Sweep away the remnants of the temple!"

The dark red demonic dragon army surged towards the fleeing temple forces like a tidal wave. The dragons roared, demonic flames surged—this was no longer a battle, but a one-sided massacre.

The temple army utterly collapsed, countless dead and wounded, corpses littering the sky and the ground. The golden light dissipated, and demonic energy raged.

Protected by several loyal elders, Shen Tong desperately fled into the distance. His golden warship, badly damaged, turned tail in a panic, fleeing Yunxian City with all its might.

He glanced back at Yunxian City one last time, his gaze fixed on Ning Zhi, his eyes filled with resentment, fear, and unwillingness. He dared not linger any longer, roaring, “Retreat! Retreat quickly!”

Seeing this, Long Yuan was about to lead the Demon Dragon army in pursuit to completely annihilate Shen Tong and eliminate any future threat, but Ning Zhi gently stopped him with a raised hand.

“No need to pursue,”

Ning Zhi said calmly, his gaze sweeping across the battlefield and landing on the blood-soaked figure atop the city wall.

Long Zhan, covered in blood and leaning on a broken sword, stood atop the ruined city wall, looking at Ning Zhi with a complex mix of doubt and awe.

He didn’t know who this terrifyingly powerful young man was, or why he had suddenly intervened to help the Heavenly Dragon Clan repel the Temple army, but he knew that this person’s strength was unfathomable, far beyond his ability to contend with.

Ning Zhi looked at him and spoke calmly, his voice clear: “Are you Long Zhan, the patriarch of the Heavenly Dragon Clan?”

Long Zhan nodded, suppressing the shock and unease in his heart, and clasped his hands, saying, “Thank you for your help, senior, in saving my Heavenly Dragon Clan and protecting my Cloud Immortal City. The Heavenly Dragon Clan will never forget your great kindness. May I ask how you are addressed, senior, and what brings you here?”

Ning Zhi did not answer his question. His gaze went straight past Long Zhan’s body and landed in the direction of the secret chamber of the City Lord’s Mansion below. A complex emotion flashed in his eyes, a mixture of expectation, fervor, and a barely perceptible ripple.

” Kai, is he in the secret chamber below?”

Long Zhan's expression changed, and he instantly became alert. He subconsciously stepped forward, blocking Ning Zhi's path, and gripped his broken sword tightly. Although he knew that the difference in strength between himself and Ning Zhi was vast, he still did not want anyone to disturb Kai's seclusion.

Seeing his wary expression, Ning Zhi's lips curled into a gentle smile, dispelling his concerns: "Don't be nervous. I won't kill him while he's injured. I'll wait for him to recover, making him die willingly." Ning Zhi

was extremely arrogant at this moment...

He seemed to have forgotten the scenes of being repeatedly defeated and humiliated by Kai from the mortal realm to the celestial realm, and now to this celestial realm.

Now, Ning Zhi felt he was already very powerful, so he wanted to repay all the humiliation and hatred he had suffered in the past.

If he simply killed Kai easily while he was injured, Ning Zhi felt that this wouldn't make up for the suffering he had endured over the years, and it would be too easy for Kai.

He wanted to toy with Kai, like toying with an ant, leaving Kai with no say in his own life or death.

Only that feeling of controlling Kai's life and death would make him feel better.

"Senior, do we really have to wait for Kai to recover and come out of seclusion?"

Long Yuan was somewhat puzzled. If Ning Zhi had a grudge against Kai, he might as well take advantage of his weakness to kill him.

Who waits until the enemy becomes powerful before seeking revenge?

Ning Zhi didn’t speak, but merely gave Long Yuan a cold glance, which immediately frightened Long Yuan into taking several steps back, not daring to utter a sound.

Meanwhile, Ning Zhi waited quietly outside Yunxian City for Kai to recover and emerge from seclusion.

Chapter 6211 - 6220

Outside Cloud Immortal City, the world changed color. The

once majestic celestial city, shrouded in celestial energy and surrounded by auspicious clouds, had long since lost all its peace and tranquility.

Thick, inky demonic energy poured down from the heavens like a raging black torrent, frantically washing over the entire city. The

dark red demonic energy intertwined and swirled with the clouds, churning and rolling across the sky, transforming into countless hideous, terrifying faces that roared silently, completely obscuring the once clear and bright heavens.

Sunlight was utterly blocked out, leaving only an oppressive, dark crimson hue between heaven and earth, as if the end of the world had arrived, even the air filled with a chilling aura of destruction.

Above, a dense army of demonic dragons stretched across the sky like a dark cloud that blotted out the sun, above Cloud Immortal City.

Each dragon was enormous, its scales forged from blood-red iron, gleaming with a cold and ferocious light, its monstrous heads...

Pairs of scarlet eyes were fixed on the ruined city below, their mouths spewing black dragon breath. Each flap of their massive wings stirred up howling winds, swirling up rubble and ashes.

Thousands of demonic dragons stood in neat rows, their imposing aura sweeping across the heavens and earth, forming a terrifying force capable of crushing all living beings.

Just their presence alone sent shivers down the spines of every living being in Cloud Immortal City, making even breathing incredibly difficult.

Long Yuan stood at the forefront of the demonic dragon army, his figure as straight as a spear, his demonic energy churning and boiling around him, transforming into black waves of energy that swirled around him.

He raised his head, his gaze as sharp as a hawk's, vigilantly and solemnly scanning every corner of Cloud Immortal City below, from the crumbling city walls to the desolate streets, and even the still stubbornly standing City Lord's Mansion, not missing a single detail.

As a top expert of the demonic dragon race, he knew very well what this confrontation meant.

The black-clad youth beside him was a being capable of overturning the entire celestial realm's格局 (geju, a concept encompassing overall structure, overall situation, and overall situation), while the boy in the city about to emerge from seclusion was none other than Kai, the Dragon Emperor who had once dominated an era.

The enmity between the two had been intertwined for countless lifetimes, an irreconcilable

feud. He dared not be careless in the slightest; the demonic energy around him was constantly on the verge of exploding, his hands clenched tightly, and the demonic essence within his body circulated wildly, ready to deal with any possible emergencies.

Even if the people in the city were already exhausted, he would never underestimate anyone protecting Kai; each of them had displayed astonishing ferocity and courage on the battlefield.

Not far from Long Yuan, Ning Zhi stood with his hands behind his back, his pure black robe fluttering without wind, gently billowing in the swirling wind and demonic energy, without being stained by a speck of dust.

He was tall and slender, with an indifferent and aloof demeanor, as if he were outside of this cataclysmic upheaval.

The surging demonic energy, the ferocious dragons, and the despair permeating the city couldn't stir the slightest ripple in his heart. It was as if all the strife, slaughter, and life and death in this world were irrelevant to him.

Yet, his eyes, as deep as an ancient, icy pool, never left the direction of the city lord's mansion below, his gaze piercing through layers of demonic energy and ruins, firmly fixed on that tightly closed secret chamber.

Deep within his eyes, there lurked a burning anticipation he had forcibly suppressed for so long, along with a hint of resentment and pleasure that had lain dormant for years.

He had waited for this day for far too long.

From the confrontation in the mortal world to the humiliating escape from the celestial realm, and now to the celestial realm's resurgence, he had endured humiliation and hardship, cultivating in seclusion, even falling into the demonic path to gain supreme power, all for this moment.

He would wait for Kai to emerge from seclusion, then personally trample him underfoot, making him experience all the pain and humiliation he had endured.

Su Yuqi stood quietly beside Ning Zhi, her purple robes fluttering gracefully, like a solitary orchid in a secluded valley, pure and ethereal, like a celestial being banished from the heavens.

Her skin was as white as snow, her features exquisite, and her aura ethereal, standing out starkly against the surrounding ferocious demonic energy and monstrous dragons

. She was like a snow lotus blooming in the darkness, pure and dazzling. Her gaze was also fixed on the dilapidated city below, her delicate brows slightly furrowed, her beautiful face bearing an indescribable confusion and unease.

For some reason, from the moment she arrived in Yunxian City, an inexplicable and strange feeling had lingered in her heart.

Her heart was faintly burning, as if an invisible thread extended from the city, tightly binding her heart and constantly pulling her.

It was a familiar yet strange palpitation, a call etched deep within her soul, yet shrouded in a thick fog, making it impossible for her to touch or see clearly.

She tried to find the source of this strange feeling, but her mind was blank, only a faint throbbing pain remained, as if some crucial memory had been forcibly sealed deep within her soul.

She turned her head and glanced at Ning Zhi, who stood calmly beside her, and spoke softly, her voice as clear and cold as a spring: “Junior brother, why are we waiting here? What do the people in the city have to do with us?”

Upon hearing this, Ning Zhi’s lips curled into a very faint smile, his gaze still fixed on the city lord’s mansion, his tone calm and unwavering: “Senior sister, we are not waiting for the people of this city, but for one person. Someone… someone very important to me, and someone very important to you.”

Su Yuqi’s brows furrowed even more: “An important person? But I have no recollection of this city, of anything here.”

“It doesn’t matter.”

Ning Zhi spoke calmly, his voice gentle, yet carrying an undeniable certainty, “You’ll understand when he comes out.”

Su Yuqi didn’t ask any more questions, but simply turned her gaze back to Yunxian City, the strange feeling in her heart growing stronger.

On the city wall of Yunxian City, the atmosphere was extremely oppressive.

Long Zhan was covered in blood, golden dragon blood soaking through his clothes and dripping from the seams of his armor, forming glaring puddles on the city bricks beneath his feet.

His longsword was broken, only half of its cracked blade remaining, which he desperately used to prop up his swaying body.

His injuries were severe; his meridians were badly damaged, and his Heavenly Dragon bloodline was in turmoil. The once brilliant golden dragon energy within him was now dim and weak.

Every breath aggravated his wounds, bringing excruciating pain. Cold sweat poured from his forehead, mingling with the blood and streaming down his face.

Yet, he remained upright, his gaze piercing, fixed on the black-clad figure in the sky, showing no sign of retreat.

He knew very well that the black-clad youth before him possessed unimaginable power.

Even the powerful figures of the temple had been severely injured by his attack and forced to flee in disarray; almost no one in the entire Heavenly Realm could withstand his might. Such an existence, even if the entire Heavenly Dragon Clan were to exert all its strength, in its current weakened state, would be utterly powerless against Kai, and would only be instantly crushed and reduced to ashes.

What puzzled Long Zhan was that Ning Zhi, despite possessing the power to annihilate the entire Cloud Immortal City, had not made a move.

He stood quietly in the sky, neither ordering the demonic dragon army to attack, nor destroying the city lord's mansion, nor taking advantage of Kai's seclusion to strike. He simply waited patiently, waiting for the moment Kai emerged.

Long Zhan couldn't understand what deep-seated grudge this terrifying young man held against Kai.

Why wait until Kai was fully recovered and at his peak before taking action?

This defied the code of conduct for any martial artist; it seemed more like a deliberate humiliation and torture.

He dared not ask, nor did he have the right to ask. He could only muster his last ounce of strength to defend the city wall, making himself the last line of defense.

Silently, they prayed again and again that Kai would turn misfortune into fortune within the Demon Suppression Tower, emerging stronger than before and possessing the power to contend with the terrifying being before them, protecting the city and all those who followed him.

Behind him, the remaining Cloud Immortal City defenders and Heavenly Dragon Clan warriors were equally wounded, each leaning on their weapons, their faces pale, yet their gazes remained resolute as they stared at the sky, not one retreating.

They knew they were protecting not only the City Lord's Mansion, but also the hope of the entire Cloud Immortal City, and the belief of Dragon Emperor Kai.

Outside the City Lord's Mansion, in the secret chamber,

Ming Li, Liu Qianqian, Yun Yao, and Chen Wanqing stood like four statues, guarding the tightly closed door of the chamber, never leaving its side.

The constant fierce fighting had long since exhausted them; each was heavily wounded, their breaths weak, yet not one showed the slightest fear.

Ming Li's left arm was severely injured by demonic energy, the wound so deep that bone was visible. Although it had been simply bandaged with strips of cloth, the dark demonic poison continued to erode his body, blood constantly seeping through the cloth and dripping onto the ground.

His right hand gripped the ghostly blade tightly, the blade stained with blood, his ghostly aura dim, yet he remained in a fighting stance. If the demonic dragon in the sky dared to set foot in the city lord's mansion, he would charge without hesitation and fight to the death.

Liu Qianqian's face was as pale as paper, devoid of any color, her lips cracked and chapped. Her once bright eyes were now bloodshot, and she was utterly exhausted, only able to stand by leaning against the cold wall.

Her spiritual power was almost depleted, her internal energy chaotic, each heartbeat weak and trembling, yet her gaze remained fixed on the secret chamber door, her eyes filled with worry and determination.

Yun Yao was already exhausted, her slender body swaying precariously, her grip on the longsword almost too heavy to hold, yet she still clenched the hilt tightly, her knuckles white.

Her clothes were stained and disheveled with blood and dust, cold sweat beading on her forehead, yet she refused to retreat an inch. She was Kai's maid, and even more so, a warrior who followed the Dragon Emperor; even if she were to be shattered to pieces, she would stand guard before her master.

Chen Wanqing stood at the forefront of the four, her blood-stained white robes fluttering gently in the wind, like a flickering candle, yet possessing an unyielding beauty.

She looked up at the black-clad figure in the sky, her exquisite face filled with solemnity and worry, her eyes hiding an unyielding unease.

She was one of the very few among them who had truly witnessed Ning Zhi's terrifying strength.

It was a power that transcended everything, crushed everything, and was invincible, untainted by any luck, unreliant by any external force, a pure suppression of realm and strength.

Before such power, all struggle and resistance seemed pale and powerless.

After Kai emerged from seclusion, could he truly contend with him?

This question repeatedly lingered in Chen Wanqing's mind, yet remained unanswered.

She didn't know, nor dared she think about it deeply.

She only knew that no matter the outcome, no matter if it was a mountain of knives and a sea of fire or a desperate situation, she would stay by Kai's side, never abandoning him.

In life, they would live together;

in death, they would die together.

"Sister Wanqing, you said... Young Master Chen will be alright after this seclusion, right?"

Yun Yao's voice trembled, tinged with a sob, as she asked softly.

Chen Wanqing lowered her head, looking at the little girl beside her, who was already trembling with fear but still refused to leave. Her heart softened, and she reached out her slightly trembling hand to gently stroke her head.

Then, in a firm tone, she said, “He will. Kai is safe and sound, and we will all be alright.”

Though her words fell, her heart remained suspended in mid-air, tightly gripped, her gaze once again fixed on the sky, looking at the black-clad figure that filled everyone with despair.

Inside the secret chamber, however, was a different scene. Within

the Demon Suppression Tower, a world of its own existed, where the flow of time was completely different from the outside world.

What might have been a few days outside was, within the Demon Suppression Tower, several years had passed under its time-accelerating laws.

Several years is enough for a sapling to grow into a towering tree, enough for a weakling to refine their cultivation and undergo a complete transformation.

Kai sat cross-legged at the core of the Demon Suppression Tower, his eyes closed, his expression serene. Golden dragon energy circulated around him, like a small sun illuminating the entire tower’s interior.

His body shone with golden light, the phantom of a five-clawed golden dragon faintly appearing behind him, its roar echoing softly, majestic and sacred.

Having been tempered by the Demon Suppression Tower’s accelerated time and nourished by countless rare treasures, the severe injuries he sustained in his battle with the temple’s experts had completely healed. Not only had he recovered to his former strength, he was even more formidable than before.

His aura became increasingly solid and profound, like a towering mountain, unfathomable.

The Five-Clawed Golden Dragon bloodline, already awakened, has been further sublimated over the past few years. Its power surges and roars like a vast ocean, coursing through his limbs and bones.

Each flow of blood cleanses his meridians, widening and reshaping them, making them even more resilient and expansive, capable of containing even more terrifying spiritual energy.

The spiritual energy within him is no longer a trickle, but a raging torrent, boundless and powerful, each strand containing terrifying strength.

His cultivation, through years of accumulation, has quietly broken through the bottleneck of the third rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, like a flood bursting its banks, advancing unstoppably into the fourth rank.

Moreover, it wasn't a mere entry into the fourth rank; rather, it surged forward relentlessly, directly reaching the peak of the fourth rank, only a step away from the fifth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm.

This step, though seemingly insignificant, is an insurmountable chasm that countless cultivators cannot cross in their entire lives. But for Kai now, it was already within reach. He only needed a trigger to achieve another breakthrough.

Years of seclusion had turned misfortune into blessing.

Kai slowly opened his eyes.

Two dazzling golden beams shot from his eyes, like two golden divine swords, instantly illuminating the entire Demon Suppression Tower. The demonic energy within the tower vanished instantly under the golden light, completely purified.

He slowly stood up, his aura subtly concealed, without any leakage, yet the domineering majesty emanating from his very bones was enough to make heaven and earth tremble.

“Peak of the fourth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm…”

Kai murmured to himself, his voice calm, yet carrying a hint of satisfaction.

He slowly raised his right hand, gently clenching his fist, feeling the surging, seemingly inexhaustible power within him, feeling the dragon’s might coursing through his bloodline. A faint smile appeared on his lips.

This severe injury, seemingly fraught with danger and a near-death experience, actually allowed him to thoroughly refine his cultivation, break through his bottleneck, and reach a new level.

Every cloud has a silver lining; after great calamity, there is bound to be good fortune.

He waved his hand, and the Demon-Suppressing Tower, suspended in mid-air, instantly transformed into a stream of light, precisely entering his storage ring and disappearing.

Then, he turned around, his gaze calmly fixed on the door of the secret chamber, and with light steps, slowly walked towards it.

He was completely unaware of everything that had happened in the outside world these past few days.

Kai reached out and gently pressed his hand on the stone door of the secret chamber.

“Creak…”

The heavy stone door slowly opened with his gentle push.

Blinding light shone in from outside, carrying a strong, pungent stench of blood, mixed with the smell of gunpowder and dust, assaulting his senses.

Kai frowned slightly, a cold glint flashing in his eyes, and stepped out of the secret chamber.

When he saw what was before him, he was instantly stunned.

The city lord's mansion before him was no longer what it had been before his seclusion.

Pavilions and towers had become charred ruins, carved beams and painted rafters were broken and collapsed, gardens and trees had turned to ashes, and the ground was covered with cracks and bloodstains. Everywhere was a scene of devastation.

The once bustling and ethereal city lord's mansion was now a desolate wasteland, scarred and utterly bleak.

The air was thick with the stench of blood, gunpowder, and demonic energy, a pungent and oppressive smell that made it hard to breathe.

What made his pupils shrink even more was the endless, dark red army of demonic dragons in the sky. Their surging demonic energy almost blotted out the entire heavens, and their ferocious aura swept across the land.

Kai's gaze first fell on Long Zhan, who was covered in blood and barely breathing, atop the city wall.

Seeing Long Zhan's near-exhausted state, yet still stubbornly holding on, seeing the blood still wet on his body, seeing the weariness and determination in his eyes, Kai felt a chilling killing intent surge within him.

Long Zhan was his brother, his comrade-in-arms who followed him.

Now, he was wounded like this to protect him, to protect the City Lord's Mansion.

All of this was a gift from the heavens.

Kai's heart felt as if it were being tightly gripped by an invisible hand; anger, heartache, and killing intent intertwined, almost bursting from his chest.

Then, his gaze slowly moved upward, past the army of demonic dragons, and finally landed on the black-clad figure in the sky.

In that instant, Kai's body jolted violently, as if struck by lightning, frozen in place.

That face, that face etched into his very being, unforgettable for a lifetime.

The faint, mocking smile at the corner of his mouth, those deep, cold, venomous eyes, that familiar aura lurking within the demonic energy, the aura he hated to the core…

there was no mistake.

Absolutely no mistake!

Ning Zhi!

It was Ning Zhi!

Kai's pupils contracted sharply, his eyes instantly surging with overwhelming hatred and killing intent, almost materializing and threatening to devour Ning Zhi completely.

The pursuit in the mortal realm, the grudges in the celestial realm, especially with Ning Zhi with Su Yuqi—Kai had worried countless times that if Su Yuqi were defiled by Ning Zhi, he wouldn't want to live anymore.

Now, seeing Ning Zhi, he wanted nothing more than to rush forward and tear him to pieces to vent his hatred.

But at that moment, his gaze inadvertently fell on the purple figure beside Ning Zhi.

In that instant, time seemed to stand still, and all sound in the world vanished.

Kai was struck dumb, as if by a thunderbolt, completely frozen in place, forgetting even to breathe.

Clad in flowing purple robes, ethereal and aloof, with a slender figure and breathtaking beauty.

That face—the face he had dreamt of day and night, the face he had longed for, the face he thought he would have to traverse countless heavens and face countless life-and-death experiences to see again…

Su Yuqi.

It was Su Yuqi!

Kai's heart pounded wildly, almost bursting out of his chest.

His eyes instantly reddened, tears welling uncontrollably, blurring his vision.

He opened his mouth, wanting to call out the name etched deep in his soul, but found his throat as if blocked by something, dry and tight, unable to utter a sound.

Years of longing, years of worry, years of torment, years of being lost in thought—at this moment, like a flood breaking its banks, all surged into his heart, drowning all reason and composure.

He thought Su Yuqi had disappeared deep within the Heavenly Realm, her fate unknown.

He thought he had to ascend to a higher realm, traversing every corner of the Heavenly Realm, to find her trace.

He thought he would have to endure countless life-and-death experiences and countless moments of loneliness before he could see her again.

But now, she stood there, not far from him, clearly appearing before his eyes.

Without any warning, without any preparation.

The person he had longed for day and night was right before him.

“Yu… Yuqi…”

Kai finally managed to call out, his voice hoarse and trembling, filled with endless longing, excitement, grievance, and ecstasy. Every word seemed to be squeezed from the depths of his heart.

He could no longer control his emotions, no longer care about the army of demonic dragons in the sky, no longer care about Ning Zhi whom he hated to the core, no longer care about all the dangers around him.

His feet moved.

Like an arrow released from a bow, he rushed towards the purple figure in the sky without regard for anything else.

“Yuqi!”

He screamed, his voice hoarse, yet filled with an unwavering obsession.

At this moment, his eyes were fixed only on that purple-clad figure; the entire world seemed to consist of only her.

In this instant, he was no longer the decisive and ruthless Dragon Emperor who commanded respect across the fourteenth heaven.

No longer the composed and fearsome figure who struck terror into the hearts of countless powers.

He was simply Kai.

A Kai driven mad, out of control, and utterly reckless by his longing for his beloved. Years of separation, years of worry—all transformed into the courage to rush towards her the moment he saw her.

From the sky, Ning Zhi took in Kai's distraught, frantic, and utterly dejected state. His smile deepened, becoming increasingly smug and mocking.

This was the effect he wanted.

He wanted Kai to appear so wretched and pathetic, like an ant, under the watchful eyes of everyone.

He wanted to see Kai suffer, to see Kai despair, to see Kai completely lose control because of Su Yuqi.

This was the best torture for Kai, a thousand times more satisfying than killing him outright.

Ning Zhi slowly turned his head, glancing at the bewildered Su Yuqi beside him. A fleeting, almost imperceptible coldness flashed in his eyes, quickly replaced by gentleness.

Su Yuqi's brows furrowed tightly, her beautiful face filled with confusion and bewilderment.

She watched the figure rushing towards her below, disregarding everything, his reddened eyes, his trembling voice, the intense, unyielding longing and love in his eyes. A complex, indescribable emotion welled up within her.

That figure, that face, those eyes filled with deep affection and pain…

so familiar.

So very familiar.

So familiar, as if she had seen it a thousand times, deep within her soul.

Yet, she could

n’t remember. Not a single thing.

She desperately searched her mind, desperately tried to recall everything about this boy, but her mind was blank, only sharp, throbbing pain remained.

It was as if an incredibly strong seal had sealed away all her memories, preventing her from touching them, from breaking through them.

“Do I… know him?”

Su Yuqi murmured to herself, her voice cold, yet filled with deep confusion and bewilderment, and a hint of heartache she herself didn’t even realize.

She only remembered seeing Kai when she climbed the Heavenly Ladder, and Kai had felt the same excitement when he saw her then.

Ning Zhi didn’t answer immediately, but silently watched Kai, who had lost control in mid-air, savoring the thrill of revenge.

Kai soared into the air, golden light radiating from his body, dragon might permeating the air. Just as he was about to reach Su Yuqi, he was instantly stopped by Long Yuan, who was prepared, along with several powerful demonic dragons.

“Stop!”

Long Yuan shouted sharply, his voice like thunder, his demonic energy surging. Several demonic dragons instantly formed a solid defensive line,

blocking Kai's path. Their ferocious heads roared, spewing dragon breath, obstructing Kai's way.

Kai, however, seemed not to hear him. His gaze remained fixed on Su Yuqi, unwavering, his voice trembling and earnest, filled with endless expectation: "Yuqi! It's me! It's me, Kai! Look at me, don't you really remember me?! Have you forgotten everything we went through together?!"

Su Yuqi looked at him, seeing the expectation and pain in his eyes, the piercing pain in her heart intensified, her brows furrowing even more tightly.

Does he remember?

Does he really remember?

Should she remember?

She didn't know.

She couldn't remember anything.

But why, seeing him so distraught and in such agony, did her heart ache as if pricked by needles?

Why couldn't she resist reaching out to soothe the pain in his eyes?

Ning Zhi spoke slowly, his voice indifferent and mocking, like a cold blade slicing through the sky, reaching everyone's ears: "Kai, long time no see. I never expected that someone of the Golden Dragon bloodline would be so distraught. It truly is an eye-opener."

This voice forcibly pulled Kai back to reality from his uncontrollable thoughts.

Kai's gaze finally shifted from Su Yuqi to Ning Zhi's face.

The longing, excitement, and ecstasy in his eyes receded like a tide, replaced by overwhelming hatred, icy killing intent, and suppressed rage.

“Ning Zhi!”

Kai gritted his teeth, each word dripping with murderous intent, almost freezing the air.

“What did you do to Yuqi?! What exactly did you do to her?!”

He knew very well that Su Yuqi would never forget him, would never look at him with such unfamiliar eyes.

This must all be Ning Zhi’s doing!

Ning Zhi must have used some evil means to seal Su Yuqi’s memories!

Ning Zhi laughed loudly, his laughter filled with endless smugness and mockery, utterly arrogant.

“What did you do?”

He leaned slightly forward, his tone flippant and cruel. “I didn’t do anything. I just helped her find her true self. Before, she was blinded by you, a mere ant, losing her true self. Now, she has awakened and completely rid herself of you, this burden.”

He paused, his gaze sweeping mockingly across Kai’s pale face, his tone growing increasingly cruel: “She doesn’t recognize you anymore, Kai. In her heart, you are now nothing more than an insignificant stranger. Do you believe that with just one word from me, she would draw her sword against you?”

Kai’s heart felt as if it had been gripped tightly by an invisible hand and then crushed, the excruciating pain instantly engulfing his entire body.

His face turned ashen, his body swaying uncontrollably, a metallic taste rising in his throat, which he forcibly swallowed back.

He didn’t want to believe it, he refused to believe it.

He turned his gaze back to Su Yuqi, his eyes filled with expectation, pleading, humility, and helplessness—a look never before seen on the once arrogant Dragon Emperor.

“Yuqi…you really don’t remember me? We once roamed the mortal world together, made promises together…we…”

Kai’s voice choked, unable to continue.

He clearly saw that Su Yuqi’s gaze was still unfamiliar, still confused, still devoid of the tenderness and longing he remembered.

Those eyes, once brimming with love, were now filled with only blankness.

Su Yuqi gently shook her head, a hint of apology and confusion on her beautiful face. Her voice was cold and lost, each word clearly reaching Kai’s ears:

“I…I don’t know you.”

Six short words ,

yet like six incredibly sharp knives, pierced Kai’s heart, through his chest, shattering his soul.

Every word carried excruciating pain.

Kai’s body swayed violently again, his face instantly turning deathly pale, the golden light around him dimming, and the light in his eyes extinguished completely.

On the city wall, Long Zhan watched this scene, a surge of indescribable sorrow and anger welling up within him. He gripped his broken sword tightly, utterly powerless.

Outside the secret chamber, Ming Li, Chen Wanqing, Yun Yao, and Liu Qianqian were also completely stunned.

They had never seen Kai like this before.

The Kai who was always calm, always composed, always decisive in battle, and never defeated by any difficulty. The once mighty Dragon Emperor, now, resembled a utterly abandoned child, lost and disheveled, his eyes filled only with despair and pain.

Yun Yao's eyes instantly reddened, tears streaming down her face. She covered her mouth, afraid to cry out.

Chen Wanqing bit her lower lip tightly until it bled, her eyes filled with heartache and helplessness. She longed to rush forward and comfort the agonizing young man, but she knew that at this moment, no one could soothe the pain in his heart.

Ming Li gripped his ghostly blade tightly, his knuckles white, his heart burning with rage. He wanted nothing more than to rush forward and fight Ning Zhi to the death, but Liu Qianqian held him back, gently shaking her head.

Going up there would only be suicide, and would only distract Kai further.

In the sky, Ning Zhi took in Kai's despair, a surge of indescribable pleasure and satisfaction welling up within him.

How many years had passed?

For years, he endured hardship and bided his time, from the mortal realm to the celestial realm, and then to the heavenly realm. He was repeatedly defeated and humiliated by Kai, forced to flee in disarray like a stray dog.

He had never forgotten those humiliations, those pains, those resentments.

Now, he finally possessed the power to crush Kai, finally stood atop Kai's head, finally able to torment and humiliate him at will.

This feeling was even more exhilarating than conquering the world.

He wasn't in a hurry to kill Kai.

Death would be too easy for him.

He wanted to play with him slowly, torment him slowly, let Kai taste all the pain and despair in the world, let him experience everything he had endured, and then, he would personally end his life, letting him die in the deepest despair.

Ning Zhi's lips curled into a cruel smile, his tone casual yet filled with endless mockery and oppression: "Kai, don't worry, I won't kill you while you've just emerged from seclusion and your injuries haven't healed. Winning that way would be dishonorable."

"I'll wait for you, wait until you're fully recovered, wait until you reach your peak, wait until you unleash all your power, and then… I'll defeat you fair and square, making you die with a sense of honor."

He paused, his gaze icy, each word piercing: "Just like back then, when you repeatedly defeated and humiliated me. This time, I'll make you taste all the bitterness of defeat, make you pay the price for everything you've done."

"You're only at the fourth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm now. Your cultivation speed is very disappointing…"

At this moment, Ning Zhi looked down on Kai. Kai, at only the fourth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, was no longer worthy of his attention.

Kai slowly raised his head.

The listless, pale, and desperate face gradually lost all its weakness.

The pain, confusion, and humility in his eyes slowly vanished.

Instead, there was endless coldness, a dormant killing intent, a chilling aura that froze everything, and the rekindled majesty and pride of the Dragon Emperor.

He would not fall.

Nor would he be broken by this pain.

He would help Su Yuqi regain her memories.

He would repay Ning Zhi a hundredfold, a thousandfold, for all the humiliation and pain he had inflicted on him and on Su Yuqi.

“Ning Zhi,”

Kai spoke slowly, his voice low and hoarse, yet carrying a chill that made heaven and earth tremble. Every word was as if forged from ice, resounding and powerful.

“Everything you did to Yuqi, I, Kai, swear here and now, I will make you repay a hundredfold, a thousandfold, until death do us part.”

“As for you…”

He raised his eyes, his gaze clashing fiercely with Ning Zhi’s in mid-air, sparking invisible flames. Demonic energy and dragon energy collided, stirring up a howling wind.

Kai’s tone grew increasingly cold and resolute: “I’d also like to see just how much skill you’ve acquired over the years, daring to be so arrogant in front of me.”

“You are my defeated opponent, you were before, you are now, and you will never change.”

Their gazes locked, and the world fell into a deathly silence.

All sound vanished.

The demonic dragon army ceased its roar, Long Zhan held his breath, and everyone in Yunxian City stared wide-eyed, holding their breath, their hearts pounding, their eyes fixed on the two figures facing off in mid-air.

It was a fateful duel.

It was the prelude to the complete eruption of grudges accumulated over countless lifetimes.

Su Yuqi, however, remained quietly beside Ning Zhi, her purple robes fluttering, her gaze fixed on Kai's face, the confusion and struggle in her eyes growing stronger.

That figure, that sense of familiarity, became clearer and clearer.

The pain in her heart intensified.

Why, when she didn't recognize him, did it hurt so much?

Why, when she couldn't remember him, did it matter so much?

Her brows furrowed deeper and deeper, her head throbbing more and more, as if something was about to break free from its seal and burst forth.

Finally, she couldn't help but raise her hand and gently press her throbbing temples, her delicate brows tightly knit.

Ning Zhi noticed Su Yuqi's unusual behavior beside him. His brows furrowed slightly, a hint of wariness flashing in his eyes, before he quickly regained his calm and gentle demeanor.

He spoke softly, his tone gentle, carrying an undeniable sense of reassurance: "Senior Sister, don't think about it. The past isn't worth

your worry. You just need to remember that I am your junior brother, and I will always protect you. That's enough."

Su Yuqi slowly raised her head, looking at Ning Zhi's gentle face. A complex emotion flickered in her eyes—confusion, bewilderment, and a barely perceptible distance.

She nodded gently, forcibly suppressing the throbbing pain and memories in her mind, refusing to think about it anymore.

But that figure, bathed in golden light, with cold and resolute eyes, was like a brand, deeply etched into her heart, indelible and impossible to erase.

Above Cloud Immortal City, demonic energy surged, dragon might roared, and killing intent permeated the air, creating an atmosphere of extreme tension.

Fated rivals, reunited lovers, forgotten memories, and an irreconcilable feud—

all converged at this moment.

An ultimate feud spanning countless lifetimes, destined to shake the fourteen heavens, was about to officially begin.

No one knew how this duel would end. Above Yunxian City, the sky and earth changed color. Demonic energy surged like a raging torrent, and a thick, dark fog almost completely obscured the heavens. Within the impenetrable darkness, flashes of crimson lightning occasionally streaked across the sky, exuding a ferocious, world-destroying power.

Simultaneously, a mighty dragon's might awakened like a sacred mountain slumbering for millennia, distorting the void and filling the air with visible golden ripples. Wherever it passed, even demonic energy was forced to retreat.

These two completely different yet equally terrifying auras collided and tore at each other in mid-air, each clash unleashing a devastating gale. The gale, carrying debris and sword energy, swept in all directions.

The walls of Yunxian City trembled violently, and the cultivators within were so terrified they prostrated themselves on the ground, too afraid to even look up. They felt the two oppressive forces pressing down on them like two mountains, making it hard to breathe, their very souls trembling.

Kai and Ning Zhi stood a full hundred feet apart, facing each other amidst the raging winds and demonic energy. Their auras locked onto each other, neither yielding an inch.

Their gazes clashed fiercely in mid-air, not merely ordinary eye contact, but a direct confrontation of souls and cultivation. Sparks seemed to fly and explode in the void, accompanied by ear-piercing sonic booms.

The oppressive atmosphere was incredibly thick, like solidified ice, suffocating everyone. Even the ferocious demonic dragons coiled behind Ning Zhi ceased their roars, their massive wings slightly folded, not daring to utter a sound.

Pairs of scarlet eyes were fixed on the figure bathed in golden light. Their bestial instincts clearly sensed a deadly threat, a reverence from the depths of their bloodlines that prevented them from making a move.

Golden dragon energy slowly rose around Kai, like a golden sea of clouds enveloping him, each wisp exuding sacred majesty.

The phantom of a five-clawed golden dragon loomed behind him, its scales clearly visible, its whiskers fluttering in the wind, and its roar echoing faintly between heaven and earth, deep and resonant, making one’s eardrums tingle. It was the majesty of the supreme dragon race, not to be profaned by any evil spirit.

He had just emerged from his secluded cultivation, his aura not yet fully stable, his spiritual energy still surging and harmonizing wildly in his meridians.

Yet, the domineering aura that emanated from his very bones, looking down upon the world and arrogance over all living beings, filled all the cultivators present with awe, even the veteran powerhouses of the Heavenly Realm dared not underestimate him in the slightest.

But even with the overwhelming dragon might surrounding him, Kai's gaze could not be completely taken away from that purple-clad figure, as if an invisible thread was firmly pulling his mind, drawing all his attention to it.

The figure in flowing purple robes stood quietly half a step away from Ning Zhi. Her garments fluttered in the wind, outlining her slender yet upright figure. She was ethereal and otherworldly, like a fairy descended from the heavens, untouched by worldly dust.

Her eyes held a coldness like unyielding ice, yet in Kai's eyes, that face remained etched deep within his soul, haunting his dreams.

Her gaze was filled with unfamiliarity and confusion, devoid of any former tenderness, affection, or dependence, not even a trace of familiarity. It was as if they were complete strangers.

Kai's heart felt as if it were being gripped tightly by an invisible hand, repeatedly kneaded and torn apart. A sharp pain spread through his limbs, making it almost impossible for him to breathe, even causing a momentary disruption in the dragon energy surrounding him.

He longed to rush over, to embrace the person he yearned for day and night, to tell her how much he missed her. But the barrier between them was like an insurmountable chasm, making it impossible for him to move an inch.

He couldn't fall. He

couldn’t fall now .

The thousands of cultivators of Yunxian City were waiting for him, his friends were waiting for him. Even if his heart ached like it was being torn apart, he had to hold on.

Kai took a deep breath, his chest heaving violently, forcibly suppressing the surging pain and longing in his heart, pressing the overflowing emotions deep within his soul. He slowly raised his right hand and gently clenched it towards the void.

In an instant, golden light flashed!

The brilliant golden light pierced through the demonic energy, and a longsword, entirely black with fine golden patterns flowing across its blade, appeared out of thin air in his hand. The blade was thick, the hilt engraved with dragon patterns, warm to the touch, with a familiar feel.

This was the Dragon-Slaying Sword.

The sword trembled slightly, emitting a deep and resonant sword cry, as if a divine weapon slumbering for millennia had awakened, responding to its master’s call, or as if proclaiming to the heavens and earth that its master, after enduring countless hardships, had finally returned.

The golden patterns on the sword spread along Kai’s palm, merging with the dragon energy within him, radiating an increasingly sharp aura.

Kai gripped the Dragon-Slaying Sword, its tip pointing diagonally at the ground. The chaotic energy around him gradually calmed, and the pain in his eyes was completely replaced by a chilling killing intent.

He was like a volcano dormant for millennia, about to erupt; its surface appeared calm and still, but within surged a power capable of destroying everything. That killing intent was directed directly at Ning Zhi, without any concealment.

Ning Zhi looked at Kai's restrained yet resolute appearance, his smile deepening, his eyes filled with mockery and ridicule, as if looking at a clown. The demonic energy around him surged even more violently, making his face appear even more sinister.

"Oh? The Dragon-Slaying Sword?"

He spoke lightly, his voice not loud, but carried throughout Cloud Immortal City by the demonic energy, clearly reaching everyone's ears. His contempt was undisguised. "Kai, you really are nostalgic. So many years have passed, and you're still using this broken sword. How has the mighty Golden Dragon bloodline fallen so low that you can't even produce a decent divine weapon?"

He paused, his gaze sweeping disdainfully over the Dragon-Slaying Sword in Kai's hand, his tone growing increasingly contemptuous, even carrying a hint of condescending mockery: "That's true..." "You're only at the fourth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, practically at the bottom of the fourteenth heaven. Even with an ancient sword like the Dragon-Slaying Sword, how much power can you unleash? You

probably can't even execute a complete sword move. With such meager strength, you dare to fight me? You're simply humiliating yourself."

Kai calmly looked at him, showing no anger or expression. She simply spoke in a cold, emotionless voice: "Ning Zhi, you talk too much nonsense. If you want to fight, then fight. Why bother making a racket here and becoming annoyed?"

"Heh."

Ning Zhi sneered, a cruel smile curving his lips. Just as he was about to continue his taunts, a sharp, clear female voice suddenly broke the silence in the air. "Kai!"

Chen Wanqing's figure soared into the sky from the depths of the City Lord's Mansion. Her white robes were already stained with blood, the bloodstains mottled, fluttering in the gale like a candle in the wind,

seemingly on the verge of collapse, yet possessing a resolute beauty of desperation, revealing a heartbreaking resilience.

She channeled the last of her spiritual power, disregarding everything, and flew to Kai's side. She reached out her slightly trembling hand and gently grasped Kai's sleeve. Her beautiful face was filled with solemnity and worry, her eyes reddening, clearly indicating that she had experienced a fierce battle.

"Kai, listen to me."

Chen Wanqing's voice was urgent and low, filled with barely concealed panic. Her eyes were fixed warily on Ning Zhi not far away, fearing he might suddenly attack. "This person is extremely strong, far beyond your imagination. He's simply not someone you can contend with right now.

Just before you emerged from seclusion, the Temple Master Shen Tong personally tried to suppress this fiend, but he... severely injured him with a single blow, forcing him to flee in a sorry state. He even broke the Temple's protective array!"

Kai's pupils contracted slightly, his heart churning with shock.

Temple Master Shen Tong?

He was one of the true top experts of the Fourteenth Heaven, his cultivation already at the peak of the Second Grade of the True Immortal Realm. He stood at the pinnacle of the Fourteenth Heaven, a figure revered by countless cultivators, his divine abilities and techniques reaching the heavens and the earth.

Such a powerful figure was actually severely injured by Ning Zhi with a single blow, unable to even retaliate, and could only flee in a sorry state?

Kai's heart grew even heavier. He knew Ning Zhi's strength would surge after falling into the demonic path, but he hadn't expected it to surge to this extent, far surpassing the normal realm of the Heavenly Realm.

“This person clearly reached such a level by devouring the souls and cultivation of countless cultivators. The demonic energy around him even has a corrosive effect on the soul.”

Chen Wanqing gripped Kai’s sleeve tightly, her tone full of urgency. “Kai, you must be careful. You must not be careless, and you must not confront him head-on. We must first find a way to retreat and then find a strategy to defeat him.” Kai

was silent for a moment, looking at Chen Wanqing’s worried expression, and nodded slightly, his voice calm but firm: “I understand.”

Of course, he wouldn’t be careless.

From the first moment he saw Ning Zhi, he clearly felt that unfathomable aura, that terrifying power lurking in the dense demonic energy, enough to crush everything. It was a kind of pressure that even he felt apprehensive about, something that the Ning Zhi of the past could never possess.

Ning Zhi was no longer the defeated and pathetic dog he had been, repeatedly beaten and forced to flee.

The current Ning Zhi truly had the right to stand before him, the right to challenge him, and even the right to take his life.

But so what?

A defeated opponent was still a defeated opponent.

Even if he had fallen into demonic ways and his cultivation had skyrocketed, in Kai’s heart, he was still that petty man who only knew how to use underhanded tricks.

Kai’s gaze returned to Ning Zhi, his eyes showing no fear, only a chilling fighting spirit and suppressed killing intent. The dragon energy around him surged once more, and the sword’s cry grew increasingly rapid.

Ning Zhi took in the intimate scene between Chen Wanqing and Kai, a fleeting, almost imperceptible coldness and jealousy flashing in his eyes, which then transformed into a more mocking smile, even carrying a hint of provocation.

He turned his head to look at Su Yuqi beside him, his tone flippant and deliberate, his voice just loud enough for Kai to hear: “Senior Sister, look, those are Kai’s women.

Oh, right, and not just one, there are several more below, all guarding the entrance to the secret chamber, completely devoted to him, each one crying their eyes out, afraid something might happen to him. Tsk tsk, that guy Kai, he’s really got a lot of luck with women, he has female companions wherever he goes.”

Su Yuqi stood quietly, her gaze following Ning Zhi’s words to Chen Wanqing, carefully examining the woman before her.

She was an extremely beautiful woman, her white clothes stained with blood, her temperament aloof and cold, her brows full of concern and worry, tightly holding Kai’s sleeve, as if afraid he might be harmed in any way, her concern genuine and without pretense.

The two stood together, so intimate, so natural, like long-time lovers, without the slightest barrier between them.

For some reason, an indescribable bitterness suddenly welled up in Su Yuqi’s heart, like a sour stone lodged in her chest, dull and aching.

It was a completely unfamiliar emotion, so unfamiliar that she couldn’t understand it, much less control it, and could only let it spread within her.

Why was she so bitter?

She didn’t even know that person, had no relation to him, so why did she feel bitter because he was intimate with another woman?

But why, seeing him standing with another woman, seeing that other woman so intimately holding his sleeve, seeing the gentle look in his eyes towards that woman, did her heart feel as if it had been stabbed by something sharp, a dull ache, making even breathing difficult?

Su Yuqi's brows furrowed tightly, her beautiful face filled with confusion and bewilderment. She tried to suppress this inexplicable emotion, but found it impossible; the bitterness and pain grew stronger and stronger, making her restless.

She desperately suppressed the turmoil in her heart, forcibly averting her gaze from Kai and looking elsewhere, no longer wanting to see the intimate figures, trying to calm herself down.

Ning Zhi took in Su Yuqi's subtle reactions, his smile deepening, a smug gleam in his eyes.

This was exactly the effect he wanted.

To make Kai suffer, to make Kai despair, to make Kai completely lose his dignity in front of Su Yuqi, to see his beloved as a stranger to him, even jealous because of him—this was a thousand times more satisfying than simply killing Kai.

He wanted to destroy Kai's mind little by little, to make him collapse in agony.

"Kai,"

Ning Zhi spoke again, his tone increasingly arrogant, the demonic energy around him churning even more violently. "You want to fight? Fine, I'll give you that chance, to fulfill your obsession."

He slowly raised his right hand, making a casual gesture of invitation, his face full of mockery and disdain, his eyes practically overflowing with contempt. "Come on, let me see just how much power a fourth-grade Upper Immortal can unleash."

Kai calmly looked at him, saying nothing, his aura already reaching its peak.

He simply raised the Dragon-Slaying Sword, its tip pointing directly at Ning Zhi, golden light surging around him, dragon might filling the entire sky, forcing the demonic energy to retreat continuously, his aura instantly reaching its limit, his spiritual power surging wildly within him, preparing to unleash his full power.

But just as he was about to take his first step and strike, Ning Zhi suddenly laughed.

That smile, filled with endless smugness and cruelty, exuded a chilling ruthlessness that made every cultivator present tense. “However…”

Ning Zhi’s tone shifted abruptly, as if discussing a trivial matter, “Dealing with someone like you doesn’t require my personal intervention; it would dirty my hands.”

He turned to Su Yuqi beside him, his voice instantly becoming gentle and tender, carrying an undeniable certainty, as if he were giving a perfectly ordinary order.

“Senior Sister, I’ll trouble you to teach this arrogant fool a lesson, to show him who he should and shouldn’t mess with,” Ning Zhi said.

Upon hearing this, the entire area fell silent.

Time seemed to stand still; the howling wind ceased, the churning demonic energy stopped, and all sound vanished, leaving only the rapid breathing of the crowd.

The cultivators of Yunxian City stared wide-eyed, their faces filled with disbelief. They never imagined that Ning Zhi would actually have Su Yuqi deal with Kai.

Kai was struck dumb, frozen in place, unable to move. He nearly dropped the Dragon-Slaying Sword from his hand, and the dragon energy around him instantly became chaotic and violently fluctuated.

He looked at Ning Zhi in disbelief, his eyes filled with anger and killing intent, then abruptly turned to look at Su Yuqi, his eyes filled with shock, pain, and despair—a collapse of feeling as if he had fallen from heaven to hell, making his very soul tremble.

“Ning Zhi!!!”

Kai roared, his voice hoarse and frantic, filled with boundless grief and indignation. His eyes blazed with murderous intent, almost tearing Ning Zhi to shreds. “You dare let Yuqi make a move?! You despicable scoundrel, are you even human?!”

Ning Zhi merely smiled faintly, as if he hadn’t heard Kai’s roar. His eyes were indifferent, even slightly amusement, as he continued softly to Su Yuqi, “Senior Sister, go. This person is nothing but an insignificant ant, a clown. No need to show mercy, just cripple him.”

Su Yuqi’s brows furrowed tightly, her resistance growing stronger.

She looked at Kai, frozen in place below, at his deathly pale face, at the intense, unyielding pain and despair in his eyes, at his trembling body, and an indescribable resistance welled up within her.

It was an instinctive resistance that made her unwilling to take a step, unwilling to attack this man.

She didn’t want to make a move.

She didn’t know why, there was no reason in her heart, but she just didn’t want to attack that person, even if Ning Zhi ordered her to, she wouldn’t.

“Senior Sister?”

Ning Zhi's voice sounded again, still gentle, but with a hint of coldness that was hard to detect, and a subtle threat permeated the air, "What's wrong? Is there a problem? Or is it that you can't bear to lay a hand on him?"

Su Yuqi turned her head to look at Ning Zhi.

Ning Zhi's face still had that gentle and harmless smile, but deep in his deep eyes, there was a hint of sinister and obsessive power that she couldn't understand. That emotion made her instinctively feel uneasy and her heart pound.

"I..."

Su Yuqi opened her mouth, wanting to refuse, wanting to say that she didn't want to attack, but the words were interrupted gently by Ning Zhi.

"Senior Sister, trust me."

Ning Zhi's voice was gentle yet firm, carrying an irresistible soothing power, as if coaxing a disobedient child. "This person isn't worth your hesitation. He's our enemy, hostile to both of us.

Go, just consider it... to vent my anger. For so many years, he's always been one step ahead of me; I've long since grown to dislike him. If Master were here, he would have let you take action too."

Su Yuqi remained silent for a moment, her mind a jumble of confusion. The blankness of her memory left her with no basis for judgment. In the end, she nodded gently.

She didn't know why she agreed.

Perhaps it was because Ning Zhi was the only person who had stayed by her side since her memories were lost, the only junior brother she trusted;

perhaps it was because deep down, she vaguely wanted to understand why that person made her so concerned, so uneasy;

or perhaps it was because Ning Zhi invoked Master Yan Mo, making her unable to refuse.

Master's majesty was deeply etched into her soul; even with the loss of memories, that reverence remained.

She took a deep breath, suppressing the confusion and resistance in her heart, and slowly raised her right hand.

A flash of crimson light!

A longsword, entirely crimson with dark red flame patterns flowing along its blade, appeared out of thin air in her hand.

Forged from the purest demonic fire, its scorching heat instantly spread, distorting and warping the surrounding air. The sword tip trembled slightly, emitting a sharp and intense sword cry, exuding a killing intent capable of incinerating everything.

This was her sword, the Heaven-Burning Sword, containing the purest and most yang demonic flames, capable of burning away souls and consuming all things.

Su Yuqi gripped the longsword tightly, her fingertips tightening slightly until her knuckles turned white. The sword's heat transmitted through her palm, but it couldn't warm the coldness and chaos in her heart.

Her gaze fell on Kai again, a complex emotion flashing in her eyes—confusion, resistance, bewilderment—ultimately transforming into a resolute determination.

She told herself that she was merely following her junior brother's orders to deal with an enemy.

Her figure moved.

Clad in flowing purple robes and surrounded by crimson flames, she descended like a celestial fire god, her movements light yet carrying a murderous intent capable of incinerating everything. In an instant, she traversed a hundred zhang, hurtling towards Kai!

Her speed was extreme, leaving only a trail of purple and crimson afterimages. The flames of the Heaven-Burning Sword ripped through the sky, carrying a heat capable of burning the soul, aiming straight for Kai's throat!

Kai stood calmly, motionless, as if frozen in terror, his dragon aura completely subsided.

He simply watched the purple figure rushing towards him, looked at the face he had longed for day and night, looked at those eyes that had once been filled with love, now filled with unfamiliarity and murderous intent.

Kai's heart felt as if it were being pierced repeatedly by countless sharp knives, the pain excruciating, the pain unbearable, even his very soul wailing.

Yet he still did not move.

He even slowly lowered the Dragon-Slaying Sword in his hand, letting the tip hang limply, offering no defense, no counterattack.

"Kai!!!"

Chen Wanqing's cry of alarm rang in her ears, her voice hoarse and desperate. She wanted to rush forward and push Kai away, to shield him from the sword.

But her body was locked in place by an invisible pressure, unable to move, and she could only watch helplessly as the crimson flame pierced towards Kai.

But Kai could no longer hear her.

In his world, only that purple figure remained, only that face he loved to the bone.

The sword light arrived in an instant!

The blazing tip of the sword, carrying flames that could incinerate everything, pierced straight towards his throat. Just one more inch, and it would pierce his throat, burning his soul with demonic fire and taking his life. Kai didn't dodge.

He simply looked at Su Yuqi, his eyes filled with pain, longing, guilt, and endless love, without a trace of resentment or anger. His voice was hoarse and trembling, each word seemingly squeezed from the depths of his heart as he softly uttered,

"Yuqi..."

This call was filled with countless thoughts, countless sorrows, and countless obsessions.

The sword tip stopped abruptly just an inch from his throat.

Su Yuqi's hand, gripping the sword, trembled uncontrollably, the flames of the Burning Heaven Sword becoming erratic, and its intense heat dissipating somewhat.

She looked at the person before her, at the pain and love in his eyes, at his pale yet still gentle face, at the deep obsession in his eyes, and an indescribable piercing pain welled up in her heart.

That pain was more unbearable than the burning of any flame, making her almost unable to hold the sword.

Why?

Why couldn't she do it?

Why did seeing his pained and desperate appearance cause her heartache? Why did she feel reluctance?

“Why…why didn’t you dodge?”

Su Yuqi’s voice was cold, yet trembled slightly, a tremor she herself didn’t realize, her tone filled with confusion.

Kai looked at her, his eyes filled with tenderness and heartache, as if the person before him wasn’t someone trying to kill him, but the most precious treasure he cherished and wanted to protect in his life. Even if she were to take his life, he would gladly accept it.

“Because it’s you.”

His voice was hoarse and gentle, filled with endless doting. “No matter when, no matter what you do to me, I will never lay a hand on you, I will never run away from you.

Yuqi…do you really…not remember me at all? Can’t you remember anything at all?”

Su Yuqi’s hands trembled even more violently, the Burning Heaven Sword almost slipping from her grasp, the flames on its blade flickering, mirroring her current state of mind.

She stared into Kai’s eyes, the love in them so intense, so genuine, seemingly unreal. She desperately searched her memory.

Desperately trying to remember something, trying to find fragments of memory about this person, her mind remained blank, only sharp, throbbing pain remained, as if countless needles were piercing her head.

“I…I don’t know you.”

She spoke again, but her voice was not as firm as before, carrying a wavering she herself didn’t even realize, her inner defenses were crumbling little by little.

Kai's heart was stabbed again, the pain making him tremble, but he still didn't give up.

"It's okay."

He spoke softly, his eyes full of determination and tenderness, even in the face of despair, he hadn't given up, "It's okay if you don't remember, I'll wait patiently, I'll make you remember. Yuqi, we've been through so much, so many trials and tribulations.

We've ventured into the mortal world together, faced countless life-or-death crises together, made promises under the starry sky, said we'd be together for life, never to be separated...You must still remember, you must be able to remember..."

He rambled on, talking about those long-forgotten past events, those memories that belonged only to the two of them, every word filled with deep affection.

Su Yuqi's brows furrowed tightly, her head throbbing with increasing pain. The blankness of her memory filled her with panic.

Yet, those words, those descriptions, those so-called experiences stirred a growing tremor within her, as if something was about to break free of its shackles and awaken.

She had no recollection of them, but the pain in her heart felt incredibly real.

Why did hearing these words cause her such pain?

Why couldn't she help but want to believe him? To believe these past events she had never experienced?

"Shut up!"

she suddenly hissed, as if to mask her inner turmoil, and thrust the sword forward again!

The scorching tip of the sword pierced Kai's shoulder, flames instantly searing his flesh. Before the blood could even flow, it was vaporized by the flames, the air thick with the smell of burning flesh. Excruciating pain swept through his entire body.

Kai's body swayed slightly, a sharp pain shooting through his shoulder, but he didn't flinch, not even flinching, as if he felt no pain, still gazing tenderly at Su Yuqi.

He simply gazed at her, his eyes devoid of resentment or anger, filled only with heartache and tenderness, as if the woman before him were the one wounded, not himself.

"Does it hurt?"

he asked softly, his voice full of concern, as if asking if he had hurt her.

Su Yuqi froze, her hand gripping the sword halting.

"It must hurt a lot,"

Kai said to himself, his voice as gentle as if soothing a child. Memories flooded back, a gentle smile playing on his lips. "I remember, you were most afraid of pain..."

"Shut up!!!"

Su Yuqi abruptly pulled out her sword. Blood finally gushed out, only to be instantly evaporated by the flames, leaving the wound charred black. Without hesitation, she thrust again!

This time, the sword was faster, more ruthless, piercing Kai's abdomen. A deeper wound, more intense pain—demonic fire raged within him, scorching his meridians and flesh.

Kai's body swayed violently, his face growing increasingly pale, cold sweat beading on his forehead, his breath weakening, nearly causing him to fall from mid-air.

But he still didn’t dodge.

He simply looked at Su Yuqi, his eyes filled with undiminished tenderness and heartache. Even though he was severely injured, even though demonic fire burned within him, he still held her dearest.

“Yuqi…”

His voice was hoarse and weak, yet still filled with boundless love, “Do you remember? Once, you asked me what I would do if one day you pointed a sword at me, wanting to kill me.

I said I would stand there, motionless, letting you stab me. Because I knew you wouldn’t really hurt me, you couldn’t bear to…”

Su Yuqi’s hands trembled so much she could barely hold the sword. The Burning Heaven Sword swayed incessantly in her hand, the flames flickering. Her eyes had reddened without her noticing, tears welling up, but she stubbornly held them back.

Why?

Why was this happening?

Why did this person cause her so much heartache? So much reluctance?

Why couldn’t she bring herself to kill him, even though she didn’t know him?

“Stop talking…”

she whispered, her voice trembling with a hint of pleading, “Please stop talking…”

She didn’t want to hear it, she couldn’t bear to hear it; those words were breaking her heart, pushing her to the brink of collapse.

Yet, the sword in her hand once again thrust out uncontrollably.

The sword pierced Kai's chest, just a hair's breadth from his heart. Demonic fire surged in instantly, scorching his heart meridian. A little deeper, and it would have pierced his heart, completely incinerating his soul and killing him instantly.

Blood gushed out, then evaporated by the flames, forming a strange blood mist that stained her purple robes and cheeks. The warm blood on her skin sent a shiver down her spine. Kai's body finally gave way, and he collapsed to one knee in mid-air, his face ashen, his breath extremely weak. The dragon aura surrounding him had completely dissipated, leaving only a faint golden light that seemed ready to extinguish at any moment.

Yet, he still looked up at Su Yuqi, his eyes filled with undiminished tenderness and love. Even on the verge of death, even with demonic fire raging within him, his gaze never left her.

"Yuqi…"

he began with difficulty, blood oozing from the corner of his mouth. Each word aggravated his wounds, causing excruciating pain. "I lost you. I'm so sorry to your father. I think of you constantly, I want to find you, but…"

Su Yuqi's body trembled violently, unable to control herself any longer. Tears streamed down her cheeks, dripping onto the Burning Heaven Sword, mingling with the blood and instantly vaporized by the flames.

Looking at the man before her, covered in blood, barely breathing, yet still gazing at her with such tender love, the pain in her heart felt like it was tearing her chest apart, making it hard to breathe.

Why?

Why did her heart ache so much?

Why did her tears flow uncontrollably?

She raised her hand, wanting to stab again, wanting to end it all, but her hand wouldn't go down, as if weighed down by a thousand pounds, impossible to lift.

Below, Chen Wanqing and the others were already in tears, sobbing uncontrollably. Seeing Kai's severely injured state, their hearts ached, yet they were powerless.

"Kai!!!"

Chen Wanqing shouted, her voice hoarse and desperate. She wanted to rush forward, to save Kai, but Kai raised his hand to stop her.

Kai turned his head with difficulty, looked at Chen Wanqing, and gently shook his head. His eyes were weak but firm, clearly saying: Don't come closer, this is between her and me, I'm willing.

Chen Wanqing bit her lip hard, drawing blood, her lip bleeding, but she didn't move again. She could only watch the scene in the air, tears streaming down her face, her heart aching so much she couldn't breathe.

She knew this was Kai's choice.

Even if he died by Su Yuqi's sword, he would never retaliate, never harm Su Yuqi in the slightest. This was an obsession etched into his bones, one that no one could change.

In the sky, Ning Zhi watched this scene, his smile growing ever wider, more triumphant, more cruel, his eyes filled with the pleasure of revenge.

This was exactly what he wanted.

To see Kai stabbed repeatedly by his beloved, to see Kai wretched and insignificant as an ant, to see Kai struggle in pain and despair, to see him suffer a

fate worse than death. This feeling was a thousand times more exhilarating than conquering the world, more powerful than dominating all heavens.

He wanted to destroy everything Kai had, including his love, his dignity, his life.

“Senior Sister, continue,”

he said calmly, his voice gentle yet carrying an undeniable command, devoid of any warmth. “This man is not worth your pity. He is merely seeking your sympathy. Kill him, and eliminate any future trouble.”

Su Yuqi’s body trembled slightly, her tears flowing even more fiercely.

She turned to look at Ning Zhi.

Ning Zhi’s face still wore that gentle smile, but for some reason, Su Yuqi suddenly felt that his face had become somewhat unfamiliar, somewhat sinister, even somewhat frightening.

She looked at Kai again.

Kai was still kneeling in mid-air, covered in blood, his breath weak, yet he still looked at her with those gentle and loving eyes, without a trace of resentment, only heartache.

Those eyes pained her.

Those eyes made her waver.

Her hand holding the sword slowly lowered, the Burning Heaven Sword lost its power, the blade drooped, and the flames gradually extinguished, all killing intent gone.

“I…”

She opened her mouth, not knowing what to say!

Su Yuqi's hand slowly lowered, the flames of the Burning Heaven Sword completely extinguished, and the blade returned to calm.

Looking at the man before her, covered in blood, barely breathing, yet still looking at her with gentle eyes, the piercing pain in her heart almost made her lose her balance.

She didn't want to stab him anymore.

She didn't know who this person was, didn't know what had happened between them, but a voice in her heart told her—she couldn't hurt him anymore.

Su Yuqi took a deep breath, tears silently streaming down her face.

She looked deeply at Kai, a look filled with confusion, heartache, guilt, and a complex emotion she couldn't quite define.

Then, she turned.

Her purple robes fluttered, and she turned her back to Kai, to the man she had wounded so deeply, and leaped into the air.

"Yuqi!!!"

Kai's voice rang out behind her, hoarse and desperate, filled with heart-wrenching pain, "Where are you going? Don't go!"

Su Yuqi paused, her body trembling slightly, but she didn't turn back.

She didn't know how to face him, how to respond to that intense, suffocating love.

Her mind was blank; the only thing she could do was escape.

"Yuqi!!!"

Kai struggled to his feet, wanting to chase after her, but his severely injured body wouldn't obey. The moment he moved, the wound on his chest reopened, blood gushing out, and he collapsed again into the air.

He could only muster his last strength to watch the receding purple figure, his eyes filled with despair and reluctance.

"Don't go...please don't go..."

His voice grew weaker, the light in his eyes dimmed, as if half his soul had been ripped away with Su Yuqi's departure.

In the sky, Ning Zhi's face instantly turned incredibly grim.

He stared intently at Su Yuqi's departing figure, his eyes filled with disbelief and rage.

He never expected Su Yuqi to back down at the crucial moment, to disobey his orders!

"Senior Sister!!!"

Ning Zhi shouted, his voice carrying an undeniable command, "Stop right there! I told you to kill him, did you hear me?!" Su Yuqi

didn't stop.

Her figure receded further and further away, without even turning her head, as if she hadn't heard Ning Zhi's cries at all, or perhaps she had heard them but chose not to respond.

Ning Zhi's face turned completely dark, so sinister it could drip water.

His hands clenched into fists, his knuckles white, and the demonic energy around him surged wildly, radiating an aura of rage.

"Fine, very well."

He gritted his teeth, enunciating each word clearly, his eyes practically overflowing with murderous intent. “If you won’t kill me, I’ll do it myself!”

Before he finished speaking, Ning Zhi vanished from his spot!

The next moment, he appeared several feet in front of Kai, his demonic energy surging like a monstrous wave. With

a flick of his right hand, a jet-black longsword, wreathed in ferocious demonic energy, appeared in his hand. Twisted ghost faces could be vaguely seen on the blade, emitting mournful howls.

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“Kai!”

Ning Zhi’s voice was icy cold, filled with endless killing intent and resentment. “Today is your death day! I will personally end your life, leaving you without a burial place, your soul scattered to the winds!”

As soon as he finished speaking, the demonic blade in his hand slashed down!

The blade’s light was as black as ink, carrying a world-destroying power, cleaving down towards Kai. The void itself was torn apart by this strike, revealing dark cracks. If this strike landed, Kai would surely die!

At this critical moment…

“Stop!!!”

A roar rang out, and Long Zhan instantly appeared in front of Kai. Covered in blood, he held a broken sword, using his last ounce of strength to meet the terrifying blade’s light head-on!

Boom!!!

A deafening explosion erupted, golden and black light clashing wildly. Long Zhan's figure was struck as if by a heavy blow, blasted away.

Blood gushed from his mouth as he crashed heavily onto the city wall, creating a huge crater, from which he could never rise again.

"Dragon Battle!!!"

Kai roared, his eyes filled with grief and rage, but his severely injured body prevented him from even standing.

"Kai!"

Chen Wanqing rushed forward, shielding Kai, her spiritual energy surging, her eyes filled with determination.

"And me!"

Ming Li, wielding a ghost blade, soared into the sky from below, his ghostly aura chilling, blocking Kai's other side. Even though he was already severely injured, even though he knew he was no match, he would never retreat a single step.

"Young Master Chen, we'll protect you!"

Yun Yao and Liu Qianqian also rushed forward. Although they were exhausted and could barely stand, they still exerted all their strength to shield Kai.

Four severely injured and dying people used their last strength to protect Kai behind them, using their bodies to form the last line of defense.

Ning Zhi watched this scene, a cruel smile curling at the corner of his mouth.

"A bunch of ants, daring to block my way?"

He spoke coldly, his tone full of disdain. “You think you can stop me with just a few defeated soldiers? What a joke.”

He raised his hand and waved it lightly behind him.

“Long Yuan, take the demonic dragons and keep these ignorant fools occupied. I want to kill Kai with my own hands, to let him die by my blade.”

Long Yuan accepted the order, and with a single command, thousands of demonic dragons roared in unison, their massive wings flapping as they swooped down!

Long Zhan struggled to his feet from the ruins and charged forward again;

Chen Wanqing, Ming Li, Yun Yao, Liu Qianqian, and everyone else fought with all their might against the demonic dragon army.

They were no match for them; every clash was fraught with danger, and new wounds were constantly being inflicted upon them.

But not one of them retreated, not one of them flinched, holding their positions tightly, using their lives to buy Kai the last bit of time.

Ning Zhi didn’t even glance at them; his eyes were only on Kai.

He walked towards Kai step by step, each step intensifying the demonic energy around him and fueling his killing intent.

“Kai, do you see that?”

Ning Zhi’s voice was filled with boundless smugness. “Your woman, your brothers, are all risking their lives for you. But so what? None of them can save you. Today, you must die by my hand!”

Kai calmly looked at him, even though he was covered in blood and barely breathing, there was no fear in his eyes.

He slowly stood up, gripping the Dragon-Slaying Sword tightly, its tip pointing at Ning Zhi.

“Want to kill me?”

Kai’s voice was hoarse and weak, yet carried an indomitable pride. “Then try.”

Ning Zhi sneered, refusing further words. In a flash, he appeared before Kai, his demonic blade slashing down!

Kai fought with all his might, parrying with his sword!

Clang!

Swords clashed, sparks flew, and a terrifying shockwave swept in all directions!

Kai was sent flying like a kite with a broken string, spitting out blood as he crashed to the ground, creating a huge crater.

He struggled to his feet, but Ning Zhi gave him no chance to catch his breath, slashing down again!

Clang!!!

Kai was blasted away once more, his wounds reopening, blood staining the ground red, but he gritted his teeth and stood up again.

“Kai!”

Chen Wanqing’s shrill cry rang out. She tried to rush over, but was tightly bound by several demonic dragons and couldn’t break free.

“Young Master Chen!”

Yun Yao also cried, her sobs heart-wrenching, but she was also bound by the demonic dragons, helplessly watching Kai being blasted away time and time again.

Ning Zhi watched Kai fall and rise again and again, his smile growing increasingly cruel.

“You’re quite tenacious,”

he said coldly. “But so what? In your current state, you can’t even withstand one of my strikes, yet you think you can resist? You’re simply courting death!”

Before he finished speaking, he attacked again. This time, the blade’s edge was even sharper and more ruthless, aimed directly at Kai’s vitals! Chen

Ping desperately swung his sword to block, but his heavily injured body couldn’t withstand the force. The Dragon-Slaying Sword flew from his hand, and he was blasted away again, crashing heavily to the ground, unable to rise again.

Ning Zhi walked step by step to Kai, looking down at him with mockery and smugness in his eyes.

“Kai, you’ve finally met your match.”

He slowly raised the demonic blade in his hand, the tip aimed at Kai’s throat. “Back then, you defeated me time and time again, forcing me to flee in disarray. Did you ever imagine that this day would come? That you would die by my hand?”

Kai looked at him, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth, yet he smiled.

That smile was filled with mockery, disdain, and an arrogance that refused to yield even in death.

“Ning Zhi…you think…you’ve won?”

Kai’s voice was weak, yet each word was crystal clear. “You…will always…be my defeated foe…always…”

Ning Zhi’s face instantly darkened, his eyes blazing with murderous intent.

“Still daring to talk back when you’re about to die!”

He roared, his demonic blade slashing down fiercely!

The blade’s light was as black as ink, carrying the power to destroy everything, aimed straight for Kai’s head!

Kai quietly closed his eyes, Su Yuqi’s face appearing in his mind, a gentle smile playing on his lips.

Yuqi…

if there is an afterlife, I will find you again, I will love you again…

At this critical moment—

a dazzling black light suddenly bloomed before Kai!

The light was dense yet not blinding, carrying a faint aura of the underworld, instantly enveloping Kai.

Clang!

A deafening clang of metal clashing exploded, and a terrifying shockwave swept in all directions!

Ning Zhi’s demonic blade was firmly blocked by a long, jet-black sword, unable to fall even an inch further.

“Who?!”

Ning Zhi's pupils shrank sharply, and he looked up abruptly.

The light dissipated, revealing a figure standing steadily in front of Kai.

It was an extremely beautiful woman.

She wore a long black dress, her long, ink-black hair cascading over her shoulders, fluttering gently in the wind, her skin as white as snow, her eyebrows and eyes exquisitely beautiful, her features refined to the extreme, and her aura both cold and eerie. A faint ghostly aura emanated from the woman, yet she showed no ferocity, like a ghostly fairy emerging from the underworld. This

was Yun Xi, the princess of the Ghost Clan.

Holding a jet-black longsword, her aura was vast and boundless, her gaze fixed coldly on Ning Zhi, her eyes filled with rage and killing intent.

"Touch him?"

Yun Xi's voice was icy and chilling, each word sharp and piercing, "Did you ask me?"

Ning Zhi's pupils contracted, and he instinctively took a step back.

He could sense that this suddenly appearing woman was incredibly powerful!

"Yun Xi..."

Kai's weak voice sounded behind him, his eyes filled with shock and surprise, "You... how could you..."

Yun Xi didn't turn around, but gently said, "Don't be afraid, I will protect you."

After speaking, she looked at Ning Zhi again, the gentleness in her eyes instantly turning into icy killing intent.

“Dare to hurt him, you’re courting death!”

Before the words were even finished, Yun Xi’s figure vanished from the spot!

The next moment, she appeared before Ning Zhi, her longsword, imbued with overwhelming ghostly energy, slashing down fiercely!

Ning Zhi’s expression changed drastically, and he hurriedly swung his sword to block!

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The two clashed fiercely in the void, sword light and blade light crisscrossing, terrifying shockwaves sweeping in all directions, distorting and shattering the void! The

more Ning Zhi fought, the more alarmed he became.

This woman who had suddenly appeared was so powerful; he had no way to defeat her quickly!

Moreover, her ghostly aura carried a strange power that could corrode his demonic energy, making him feel restricted!

Just then, Kai forced himself to stand up.

He raised his hand, and the Dragon-Slaying Sword flew back into his hand.

Even though he was severely injured and on the verge of death, even though his breath was weak, his eyes still burned with an indomitable fighting spirit.

“Yun Xi, I’m here to help you!”

Kai shouted, forcibly circulating the remaining spiritual power in his body, and golden light shone around him again, though weak, it still carried the majesty of the Dragon Emperor.

He held the Dragon-Slaying Sword and launched a fierce attack on Ning Zhi!

Yun Xi and Ning Zhi worked in perfect harmony, their attacks relentless from either side, gradually suppressing Ning Zhi!

Ning Zhi's expression grew increasingly grim.

Yun Xi alone was already a problem, and now, with the addition of Kai, who, despite being severely injured, was still recklessly aggressive, he was slowly falling into a disadvantageous position!

What angered him even more was that the demonic dragon army led by Long Yuan was also tightly bound by Long Zhan and the others, unable to break free to help him!

"Damn it!"

Ning Zhi gritted his teeth, his eyes filled with resentment and rage.

He was so close to killing Kai, so very close!

But this damned ghost woman had to appear at this crucial moment, ruining his plans!

"Kai!"

Ning Zhi roared, "You're lucky today! But don't be so smug, next time, you won't be so lucky!"

Before he finished speaking, he swung his sword, forcing Kai and Yun Xi back, and instantly retreated.

"Retreat!"

he roared, turning and speeding away into the distance, disappearing into the horizon in the blink of an eye.

Long Yuan and the demonic dragon army ceased their fighting, soaring into

the sky to follow Ning Zhi, disappearing in the rolling demonic energy in the blink of an eye. The demonic energy gradually dissipated, and sunlight shone again, illuminating the ravaged Yunxian City.

Kai could no longer hold on and fell backward, caught by Yun Xi.

“Kai! Kai!”

Yun Xi called out twice.

Kai looked at her weakly, a faint smile forcing a smile.

“Yun Xi… thank you… you saved me again…”

Yun Xi smiled slightly: “You owe me two lives…”

Kai smiled, but his gaze involuntarily drifted into the distance, towards the direction Su Yuqi had gone.

There, it was empty, nothing was left.

Yuqi…

where did you go…

when will you… remember me…?

His consciousness blurred, his vision went black, and he completely fainted.

Seeing this, Chen Wanqing rushed forward and hugged Kai tightly, tears silently streaming down her face. “Kai, rest well. No matter how long it takes, I’ll stay with you until you wake up.”

In the distance, Ning Zhi frantically chased after her, finally catching up with the purple figure a thousand miles away from Yunxian City.

“Senior Sister! Senior Sister!”

He blocked Su Yuqi’s path, his face full of anxiety and confusion. “Why did you leave?! Why did you let Kai go?!”

Su Yuqi looked at him quietly, her eyes eerily calm.

“Junior Brother,”

she said softly, “I don’t know what’s between him and me, I don’t know why my heart aches. But I know I can’t lay a hand on him again.”

Ning Zhi’s expression changed, a flicker of panic in his eyes.

“Senior Sister, listen to me, he’s an enemy, our enemy!”

Su Yuqi shook her head.

Without saying anything, she walked past Ning Zhi and continued forward.

Ning Zhi stood there, staring intently at her back, his eyes filled with resentment, anger, and a hint of panic he himself didn’t realize.

Kai wasn’t dead, and Su Yuqi began to waver.

Everything seemed to be heading in the direction he least wanted to see.

He clenched his fists tightly, his nails digging into his palms, drawing blood.

Kai...

next time, I will definitely kill you with my own hands!

I definitely will! Above Yunxian City, the demonic energy finally dissipated completely, and the long-awaited sunlight pierced through the clouds, illuminating the ravaged city.

But that sunlight could not illuminate the devastation and sorrow within.

Most of the city walls had collapsed, leaving behind charred marks and deep, unfathomable cracks.

Piles of rubble and stones lay everywhere; the once bustling streets were now ruins, and the air was thick with the pungent stench of blood and acrid heat.

The cultivators staggered out of their hiding places, their eyes filled with a mixture of relief at surviving the calamity and profound grief as they gazed upon the ruins.

Yunxian City had suffered devastating losses in this battle.

Countless cultivators had perished, countless families shattered, and this once-mighty city, standing for so many years, was almost completely reduced to rubble.

Long Zhan stood atop the ruins, covered in blood, his wounds still bleeding, but he had no time to tend to his injuries.

He took a deep breath, forcing his exhausted body to stand firm, and loudly commanded:

“All Tianlong Clan members, heed my order! Immediately begin clearing the battlefield, treating the wounded, and collecting the remains of our fallen brothers!”

His voice was hoarse, yet carried an undeniable authority.

The surviving Tianlong Clan warriors readily obeyed, dragging their wounded bodies to begin clearing the ruins and searching for survivors.

Long Zhan then turned to the still-shaken cultivators in the city and said in a deep voice: “Gentlemen, the demonic dragon has retreated, but the casualties in the city are heavy. I implore you all to lend a helping hand, to treat the wounded, and to rebuild Yunxian City!”

The cultivators nodded, suppressing their fear and grief, and threw themselves into the treatment and cleanup efforts.

In an instant, the sky above Yunxian City echoed with cries of agony, sobs, and shouts, weaving together a tragic elegy for the aftermath of the battle.

Long Zhan watched all this, his eyes filled with heaviness.

They had won this battle, but the price of this victory was far too high.

He turned his head, looking towards the City Lord’s Mansion, a hint of worry flashing in his eyes.

Kai…

you must pull through.

Deep within the City Lord’s Mansion, in a relatively intact secret chamber,

Kai lay quietly on the bed, his face ashen, his breath so weak it was almost imperceptible.

His body was wrapped in bandages, blood seeping through them, a horrifying sight.

The wounds left by the demonic fire were charred black; even though Yun Xi had used her ghostly energy to dispel most of the demonic

poison, the wounds were still hideous and terrifying, deep enough to expose bone.

Chen Wanqing sat by the bedside, tightly holding Kai's hand, her eyes reddening, tears silently streaming down her face.

She sat there, motionless, as if she would stay like that until the end of time.

After an unknown amount of time, Kai's fingers twitched slightly.

Chen Wanqing looked up abruptly, her eyes filled with joy.

"Kai! Kai!"

she called softly, her voice trembling.

Kai's eyelashes fluttered, and he slowly opened his eyes.

The first thing he saw was Chen Wanqing's tear-streaked face, her eyes filled with intense worry and joy.

"Wanqing..."

Kai's voice was hoarse and weak, as if squeezed from his throat.

"You're awake! You're finally awake!"

Chen Wanqing cried tears of joy, tightly gripping his hand. "Do you know, I... I almost thought you wouldn't wake up..."

Kai looked at her, a weak smile appearing on his lips.

"I'm sorry to have worried you..."

Chen Wanqing shook her head, wiping away her tears, and said seriously, "Rest well, don't move around. Yunxi said your injuries are too severe, you need at least a month of rest to recover."

Kai nodded gently, his gaze involuntarily drifting to the window, to the empty sky.

Looking into his eyes, Chen Wanqing felt a complex mix of emotions welling up inside her.

She remained silent for a moment, then finally asked softly,

“Kai, who… is that woman?”

Kai’s body stiffened slightly.

Chen Wanqing continued, “It’s that woman in purple who injured you with the flaming sword. Who… is she to you?”

Kai remained silent for a long time, his eyes flashing with pain, longing, guilt, and deep love.

He slowly spoke, his voice hoarse,

“Her name is Su Yuqi… she’s my girlfriend.”

Chen Wanqing’s fingers tightened slightly.

Girlfriend.

Of course, she understood that word.

It was the worldly way of saying it, meaning… the woman he loved most.

“She…”

Chen Wanqing carefully chose her words, “Why did she hurt you? She seemed like she really didn’t know you…”

Kai closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and slowly opened them.

“She has amnesia.”

His voice was filled with endless bitterness. “We came from the mortal world together, experiencing so much. But then, she disappeared, and I searched for her for a very, very long time… I never expected that when we met again, she would be under control, her memories sealed away.”

He paused, his eyes filled with heartache: “She doesn’t remember me, doesn’t remember anything between us. But I don’t blame her, I only blame myself… I lost her, I didn’t protect her.”

Chen Wanqing listened quietly, a surge of indescribable emotions welling up inside her.

Those emotions were bittersweet, envious, and a hint of… jealousy she herself didn’t want to admit.

She looked at the tenderness and heartache in Kai’s eyes when he spoke of Su Yuqi, at his uncomplaining demeanor even when he was utterly broken, and suddenly felt a pang of sadness.

She so wished that one day, someone could treat her like that.

But that person already had someone else in their heart.

Chen Wanqing lowered her head, remained silent for a moment, then raised her head again, forcing a smile.

“She… must be very happy.”

Kai looked at her, a hint of guilt flashing in his eyes.

“Wanqing, I’m sorry, I…”

Chen Wanqing shook her head, interrupting him.

“You don’t need to apologize. It’s perfectly normal for someone like you to have a few close female friends.”

She paused, then said softly, “I only hope you can recover well and get better soon. As for that Miss Su… I believe that one day, she will remember you.”

Kai looked at her, his eyes filled with gratitude.

“Wanqing, thank you.”

Chen Wanqing smiled and said nothing more.

She simply sat quietly by the bed, keeping him company and watching over him.

Even if he had someone else in his heart, she was willing to stay by his side.

That was enough. Meanwhile, in another part of the City Lord’s Mansion,

Yunxi stood in the courtyard, surrounded by ghostly energy, healing her injuries.

She had also sustained some wounds in the battle with Ning Zhi; though not serious, they required rest.

She heard soft footsteps behind her.

Yunxi opened her eyes, turned around, and saw Mingli slowly approaching.

Mingli’s aura was also weak, and although his wounds were bandaged, blood still seeped through.

He stopped three steps in front of Yunxi, bowing slightly: “Princess Yunxi.”

Yunxi looked at him, a strange light flashing in her eyes.

“Mingli…right? One of Kai’s men?”

Mingli nodded: “Yes.”

Yunxi scrutinized him carefully, her brows furrowing slightly.

“You…how come you have the aura of the Gate of Reincarnation on you?”

Mingli was startled, then realized, “Princess, you have good eyesight. Indeed, I have used the Gate of Reincarnation before.”

A hint of surprise flashed in Yunxi’s eyes, “You used the Gate of Reincarnation? Where is it now?”

Mingli smiled bitterly and shook his head.

“To be honest, Princess, the Gate of Reincarnation was indeed in my possession before, and I even used it to control some forces. But later… it was taken away by a powerful figure named Mr. Shi.”

Yunxi frowned slightly: “Mr. Shi?”

Mingli nodded: “Mr. Shi is a friend of Kai, his strength is unfathomable, and his origins are even more mysterious. When he took the Gate of Reincarnation, he said that this thing was of great importance and could not be used casually.”

Yunxi was silent for a moment, then sighed softly.

“I see…”

Ming Li looked at her and tentatively asked, “Princess, if I may be so bold as to ask, why are you so concerned about the Gate of Reincarnation? Could it be… that something has happened to the Ghost Clan of the Fifteenth Heaven?”

Yun Xi gave him a deep look, remained silent for a moment, and slowly said, “You are also a member of the Ghost Clan, so it’s alright to tell you.”

She paused and continued, “The situation of the Ghost Clan in the Fifteenth Heaven… is not optimistic.”

Ming Li’s expression hardened: “Please speak plainly, Princess.”

Yun Xi looked up into the distance, a heavy look flashing in her eyes: “Do you know about the Reincarnation Bureau?”

“Of course I know, it’s the place where our Ghost Clan cultivators reincarnate,” Ming Li said.

“That’s right, that’s the place where our Ghost Clan cultivators reincarnate. Back then, our Ghost Clan suffered a massacre, and many cultivators were annihilated. But many others managed to reach the Reincarnation Bureau with just a wisp of their souls.”

“Over the years, many reincarnated Ghost Clan cultivators have been reborn. But just a few hundred years ago, the Reincarnation Bureau suddenly underwent a strange change, trapping countless Ghost Clan cultivators’ souls within, unable to escape or reincarnate.”

She paused, her voice low: “Those trapped cultivators were the elite of the Ghost Clan, the foundation of our Ghost Clan. If we cannot rescue them, the Ghost Clan’s survival in the Heavenly Realm will become increasingly difficult.”

Ming Li’s pupils contracted, his heart filled with shock.

“Is that so…”

Yunxi nodded. “I came to the Fourteenth Heaven this time to find the Gate of Reincarnation. The Gate of Reincarnation is a supreme treasure of reincarnation, sharing the same origin as the Reincarnation Bureau. Only by using the power of the Gate of Reincarnation can we enter the depths of the Reincarnation Bureau and rescue our trapped clansmen.”

She looked at Mingli, a glimmer of hope in her eyes. “I thought finding the Gate of Reincarnation would solve the problem, but I didn’t expect that it had already been taken away by that Mr. Shi.”

Mingli was silent for a moment, then said in a deep voice, “Princess, don’t be discouraged. Mr. Shi and Kai have a close relationship. As long as Kai recovers, we can ask him to contact Mr. Shi and see if we can borrow the Gate of Reincarnation back.”

A glimmer of light flashed in Yunxi’s eyes.

“You mean… Kai can contact that Mr. Shi?”

Mingli nodded. “He should be able to. Mr. Shi has helped Kai many times, and the two have a deep friendship. As long as Kai asks, Mr. Shi should give him the honor.”

Yunxi took a deep breath, hope igniting in her eyes.

“Alright, then I’ll wait for Kai to recover.”

She paused, looked at Ming Li, and said softly, “Ming Li, thank you for telling me all this.”

Ming Li shook his head: “You’re too kind, Princess. I am also a member of the Ghost Clan. How could I stand idly by when the Ghost Clan of the Fifteenth Heaven is in trouble? If I can help, I will do my duty.”

Yun Xi looked at him, a hint of approval flashing in her eyes.

“Although you are in the Fourteenth Heaven, you still care about the Ghost Clan. That’s rare.”

Ming Li smiled bitterly: “I am just a wandering soul. If I could return to the Ghost Clan and do my part for the clan, it would be my wish.”

Yun Xi nodded and said nothing more.

The two stood side by side in the courtyard, looking at the distant sky.

That sky, once shrouded in demonic energy, had now returned to its clear state.

In the secret chamber, Kai lay quietly, his gaze still fixed on the window.

Yu Qi...

where are you?

When...will you remember me?

He slowly closed his eyes, his consciousness gradually sinking into darkness.

On the distant horizon, a purple figure stood silently atop a mountain, gazing towards Yunxian City.

Su Yuqi clutched her chest, a dull ache throbbing so intense she could barely breathe.

Why?

Why did she feel so terrible?

Why was her mind filled with the image of the man, covered in blood, yet still looking at her with tender eyes?

She didn't know.

She only knew she couldn't forget those eyes.

Couldn't forget that "Yuqi."

Couldn't forget... everything about him.

Tears silently streamed down her face, falling to the ground and glistening in the sunlight.

In the distance, Ning Zhi's figure appeared, standing not far behind her, his eyes filled with malice and resentment.

He looked at Su Yuqi gazing towards Yunxian City, the hatred in his heart almost consuming him.

Kai...

you wait.

One day, I will kill you with my own hands. I

will annihilate your soul, condemning you to eternal damnation!

And Su Yuqi...

can only be mine!

He took a deep breath, suppressing the violence within him, and slowly stepped forward, a gentle smile returning to his face.

"Senior sister, it's time to go back."

Su Yuqi didn't turn around, but simply nodded.

She glanced one last time in the direction of Yunxian City, then turned and followed Ning Zhi away.

But that blood-soaked figure, those gentle eyes, that cry of "Yuqi"...

were etched deep into her heart like a brand,

indelible .

Yunxian City, the City Lord's Mansion.

Night deepened, moonlight bathed the ruins in a silvery glow.

Chen Wanqing remained by Kai's bedside, holding his hand, quietly watching his sleeping face.

She murmured softly, her voice barely audible to herself:

"Kai... do you know, I also... like you a little."

"But I know, you only have her in your heart."

"It's okay, I'll wait. Until you're healed, until she comes back, until you... occasionally look back at me."

Tears streamed down her face, dripping onto the back of his hand.

Kai's fingers seemed to twitch slightly.

But ultimately, he didn't wake up. He didn't know how to face Chen Wanqing.

In front of Su Yuqi, Chen Wanqing was nothing; among all these women, only Su Yuqi held the most important place in Kai's heart.

Recalling his moments with Su Yuqi, Kai remembered that although they had never slept together and Su Yuqi had never truly become his woman

, no other woman could replace her. ...

The main hall of the temple!

Shen Tong sat on his throne, his face extremely grim.

The mere thought of Ning Zhi's seemingly effortless attack, that terrifying, overwhelming power, sent shivers down his spine like a nightmare.

He had lived for ten thousand years, ruled the temple for millennia, and traversed the fourteen heavens, yet he had never seen such a terrifying being, and Ning Zhi looked so young.

“Ning Zhi…the Demon Dragon lineage…”

Shen Tong muttered through gritted teeth, his voice hoarse and dry, filled with boundless hatred, “This enmity is irreconcilable! If there is a future, I will tear you to pieces and make you pay for this blood debt!”

But this hatred was quickly suppressed by a deeper anxiety and fear.

He looked out of the hall at the dejected, wounded surviving disciples of the temple, his heart sinking deeper and deeper.

This expedition saw him mobilize the entire elite force of the Divine Palace—several thousand disciples and over a dozen True Immortal Realm elders. Of these, fewer than two hundred survived, and only four True Immortal Realm elders remained. The rest either perished in the demonic flames or were lost and killed in the rout.

The foundation the Divine Palace had built over tens of thousands of years in the Fourteenth Heaven had been almost entirely destroyed in this battle. The once mighty overlord of the divine race was now nothing but an empty shell, teetering on the brink of collapse.

What alarmed him even more was that once news of the Divine Palace’s crushing defeat spread, the various forces in the Fourteenth Heaven would undoubtedly stir with rage.

In its heyday, when the Divine Palace was at its peak, it acted with tyranny and brutality, using its overwhelming strength to oppress countless smaller forces, seizing opportunities, occupying secret realms, and slaughtering those who dared to defy it, thus forging countless grudges.

Especially under the guise of worshipping at the sacred mountain, using the pretext of praying for blessings and tribulation as bait, he secretly

stole the souls and essence of tens of thousands of cultivators, attempting to resurrect the forbidden Ghost Clan Venerable. Although he tried his best to cover this up, some news still leaked out, causing countless cultivators to dare to be angry but not speak out.

Now that the temple is severely damaged and its strength has plummeted, those forces that were once oppressed will surely take the opportunity to kick it while it's down and launch a group attack.

At that time, the temple will not only fail to avenge itself, but it will probably not even have a foothold. It will be completely devoured and swallowed up, and completely disappear from the map of the Fourteenth Heaven.

"Palace Master, how are your injuries? Your subordinate has prepared a healing elixir for you."

A white-haired elder wearing a golden elder's robe, with a solemn expression, slowly walked into the main control room, holding a radiant elixir in his hands, his tone full of worry.

Shen Tong accepted the elixir and swallowed it whole. The warm, nourishing power of the pill spread throughout his body. He slowly closed his eyes and said in a deep voice, "I will not die, but the Divine Temple... is utterly destroyed this time."

Upon hearing this, the white-haired elder sighed deeply, his face filled with bitterness and despair: "Your subordinate understands. In this crushing defeat, we have suffered heavy losses, our foundation is completely destroyed. The news of the battle at Yunxian City will spread throughout the entire Fourteenth Heaven within half a day.

Those covetous forces will not let this opportunity pass. I'm afraid we can no longer defend our Divine Temple's gates."

Shen Tong opened his eyes, a ruthless glint in them: "We must defend it even if we can't! The Divine Temple's gates are the foundation of our divine race; how can we easily abandon them?"

“No, Lord Temple Master!”

The white-haired elder hurriedly bowed and advised, his tone urgent. “We have just suffered a crushing defeat, and our disciples are in a state of panic and morale is completely gone. Although the protective array is strong, it requires a massive amount of spiritual energy to support it. With our current strength, we simply cannot maintain the array at full power.

Moreover, once the various forces surround us, we will be trapped like turtles in a jar, unable to escape. Defending the mountain gate will only lead to the complete annihilation of the temple’s remaining power. At that time, we will not even be able to preserve the last bit of incense offerings!”

Shen Tong’s face turned pale and then red. The white-haired elder’s words hit the nail on the head, but he was extremely unwilling to abandon the temple that he had painstakingly built up over ten thousand years.

He slammed his hand on the edge of the bed and shouted sharply, “Then what do you suggest I do? Should I lead my remaining disciples to flee everywhere, becoming homeless dogs?”

The white-haired elder was silent for a moment, a resolute glint in his eyes, and said in a deep voice, “Palace Master, the only plan now is to temporarily avoid the limelight and find a powerful backer to preserve the remaining strength of the Temple.

Looking across the entire Fourteenth Heaven, the only one who can protect us at this time, and who has the strength to resist the Demon Dragon lineage and deter all the villains, is the Temple of the Holy Light Domain!”

“The Divine Hall?”

Shen Tong frowned, his face showing resistance and disdain. “That group of hypocritical scoundrels has always disagreed with our Divine Hall’s

ideals, and we've been enemies for millennia, vying for the rightful place of the divine race. They've been deceitful and treacherous, their hatred running deep.

Now that our Divine Hall has fallen so low, why would they take us in? They'll probably only take advantage of our misfortune and devour our remaining strength!"

The white-haired elder shook his head, analyzing firmly, "Palace Master, times have changed. In the past, we fought against the Divine Hall for the hegemony of the divine race, but now the situation has drastically changed. The Demon Dragon lineage has emerged out of nowhere, and a terrifying being like Ning Zhi is in charge, having already broken through the fourteenth level..." "The overall situation is dire.

Although we have old grudges with the Divine Temple, we are ultimately of the same divine lineage, bound by blood, sharing both glory and ruin."

He paused, then continued, "If we are destroyed, the Demon Dragon lineage's next target will likely be the Divine Temple of the Holy Land of Light.

The Temple Master is a man of great talent and ambition; he will surely see the implications. Our voluntary surrender, offering the remaining troops, secret realm resources, and holy mountain secrets, is not an act of submission, but rather a search for an alliance with the divine race to fight against external enemies.

For the sake of the divine race's greater good, the Temple Master will not exterminate us; instead, he will accept us and strengthen the overall power of the divine race."

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Upon hearing this, Shen Tong fell into deep thought.

He knew the white-haired elder's words made sense, but the idea of lowering himself to serve his former nemesis was simply unacceptable.

Looking at the emaciated, terrified disciples of the temple outside the window, at his own severely injured body, and at the temple's precarious future, his pride and resentment were gradually crushed by reality.

He knew he had no other choice.

Staying in the Fourteenth Heaven to defend it would only lead to death;

wandering would ultimately result in being devoured by various forces;

only by joining the Holy Light Domain's temple could he survive.

Even if it meant enduring humiliation and having to be subservient, he had to preserve the temple's flame and wait for a chance to rise again.

"Is there no other way?"

Shen Tong's voice was low, carrying a final, desperate struggle.

The white-haired elder sighed deeply, "This subordinate is also unwilling to take this step, but the current situation is dire.

If the Palace Master is unwilling to submit to the Divine Hall, this subordinate can only suggest disbanding the Divine Hall and letting the disciples flee for their lives, perhaps saving some lives.

But in that case, the Divine Hall's millennia-old foundation will be completely wiped out, and you will become the Divine Hall's eternal sinner."

These words completely shattered Shen Tong's last psychological defenses.

He closed his eyes, a murky tear sliding down his cheek—a vulnerability never before seen in a ruler who had wielded power for thousands of years.

After a long while, he slowly opened his eyes, the struggle and resentment in them completely gone, leaving only a cold resolve.

“Very well, as you say.”

Shen Tong spoke slowly and deliberately, his voice hoarse. “Pass down the order: abandon the temple’s gates. All surviving disciples, immediately proceed to the teleportation array at the back of the temple. Do not carry any unnecessary supplies; travel light and at full speed to the Holy Light Domain to seek refuge with the Divine Hall!”

“Your subordinate obeys!” The white-haired elder bowed and accepted the order, a hint of relief flashing in his eyes. He quickly turned and went out to relay the message.

A moment later, all the temple disciples learned of the news that they were to seek refuge with the Divine Hall. Although they were surprised, they understood their current predicament. No one objected; they simply remained silent, the atmosphere extremely oppressive.

Shen Tong led the surviving disciples towards the back of the mountain. Looking at the teleportation array before him, inscribed with ancient divine runes, he was filled with mixed emotions.

This teleportation array was a backup plan that the temple had prepared in the past to defend against powerful enemies. It led directly to the edge of the Holy Light Domain and was built using countless rare and precious materials. It had never been used for ten thousand years, yet today it had become the temple’s escape route.

“Activate the teleportation array! Everyone, enter in turn, no crowding!”

the white-haired elder commanded loudly. Several temple disciples skilled in array formations immediately stepped forward and injected immortal liquid.

Accompanied by a deep hum, the teleportation array runes lit up, and golden light shot into the sky, forming a huge teleportation portal. On the other side of the portal, the pure white and holy sea of clouds of the Holy Light Domain could be vaguely seen.

Shen Tong looked at the remaining two hundred or so temple disciples behind him, and at the four wounded True Immortal Realm elders, took a deep breath, and said in a deep voice, “Remember today’s humiliation and hardship.

This trip to the Holy Light Domain, where we will temporarily live under someone else’s roof, will inevitably involve some grievances. Endure them all.

As long as we live, as long as the temple’s flame remains burning, one day we will reclaim everything that belongs to us and avenge ourselves!”

“We obey the temple master’s command!”

the surviving temple disciples responded in unison, their voices weak but carrying an indomitable fighting spirit.

Shen Tong nodded. “Let’s go.”

He then stepped into the teleportation array first.

A bright light engulfed his figure.

One disciple after another stepped into the array, disappearing into the light.

When the last disciple entered, the array’s light suddenly surged, then slowly dimmed until it went out completely.

The temple was empty.

Only the night wind howled, stirring the dust on the ruins, as if telling the story of its former glory and present desolation.

At the foot of Holy Light Peak in the Holy Domain of Light,

Shen Tong arrived with over two hundred disciples.

“Who dares trespass into the temple’s territory!”

Dozens of figures instantly appeared around them, surrounding them.

These were the temple’s guards, each possessing a powerful aura, wielding golden spears, their eyes sharp as lightning.

Shen Tong took a deep breath, stepped forward, and clasped his hands in greeting: “I am Shen Tong, the temple master, and I have come with my disciples to request an audience with the temple master!”

The head guard frowned, sizing him up.

“Temple Master?” His gaze swept over the disheveled disciples behind Shen Tong, a hint of surprise flashing in his eyes. “What happened to you…”

Shen Tong gave a bitter smile, making no attempt to hide anything.

“The demons invaded, and the temple was destroyed. We have nowhere else to turn, so we have come to seek refuge in the temple. Please inform the Hall Master that… Shen Tong requests an audience.”

The guard captain was silent for a moment, then nodded.

“Wait a moment.”

He turned and left, his figure disappearing into the light.

Shen Tong stood there, waiting quietly.

The disciples behind him looked anxiously at the temple guards around them, their hearts filled with tension.

They didn't know what awaited them.

Would they be accepted, or expelled?

Would they find a way out, or be trapped in a dead end?

Time passed second by second.

Finally, the light shone again, and the guard captain returned.

He bowed slightly to Shen Tong, his tone becoming more respectful: "The Hall Master requests your presence. Everyone... please follow me."

A great weight lifted from Shen Tong's heart, and he let out a long sigh.

He glanced back at the disciples behind him and nodded.

"Let's go."

More than two hundred people followed the guard captain and stepped into Holy Light Peak.

What awaited them was an unknown fate. The Divine Hall sits atop Holy Light Peak.

Majestic and imposing, the hall is constructed entirely of rare, luminous holy jade. Each piece of jade has been nourished by holy light for countless years, radiating a soft, holy golden light that, while not dazzling, carries a power that inspires awe.

From afar, the entire hall appears as if formed from condensed light, standing silently between heaven and earth, exuding an unchanging sacredness and majesty.

The main gate of the hall is a hundred feet high, its two massive doors carved with the creation myths of the divine race. The sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, plants, and all living beings are vividly depicted on the doors, seemingly containing the essence of an entire world.

Above the lintel hangs a huge plaque inscribed with the four ancient divine characters “Divine Hall,” the characters ancient and powerful, each stroke flowing with holy light, faintly echoing with the sounds of the Great Dao. A single glance is enough to make one’s heart tremble, and one dares not harbor the slightest thought of profanity.

Stepping into the main hall is like entering a true divine kingdom.

Thirty-six massive golden pillars, each requiring dozens of people to encircle, stand in neat rows, supporting the towering dome.

These pillars are cast from pure gold, their surfaces inlaid with countless tiny, luminous crystals. Carved on their surfaces are epic scenes depicting the ancestors of the divine race conquering the heavens, sweeping across all races, and pacifying the four directions.

From the ancient war between gods and demons to suppressing the dark abyss, and protecting the myriad beings of the fourteen heavens, every carving is incredibly detailed and lifelike, as if the ancestors, clad in divine armor and wielding divine weapons, might step off the pillars at any moment to once again conquer the four directions for the divine race.

Each golden pillar exudes a faint pressure, the aura of the divine ancestors, a majesty refined over countless ages, causing those who enter the hall to instinctively restrain their aura and lower their heads.

Above the dome, there were no ornate carvings or jewels of ordinary palaces, only a “Holy Sun” formed from the purest and most primal power of light.

The Holy Sun was not large, yet it seemed to be the core of the entire hall, slowly rotating and casting down endless, warm, and sacred light.

Wherever the light touched, even the dust in the air was purified, and all darkness, filth, and violence were instantly dissolved.

The entire hall was illuminated by the Holy Sun, as bright as day, every corner filled with holy light. Being there felt as if one's soul had been cleansed, and all distracting thoughts, resentment, and bitterness were temporarily suppressed.

This was the most sacred place in the hearts of cultivators of the Fourteenth Heaven's Holy Domain of Light, a holy land that countless people longed to worship at least once in their lifetime.

And at this moment, the Temple Master, Shen Tong, stood in this hall that countless people looked up to.

His figure appeared exceptionally small and forlorn in the vast and majestic hall.

Once upon a time, he was a powerful overlord, a temple lord who rivaled the Divine Hall, possessing tens of thousands of years of divine power, commanding countless powerful warriors, tens of thousands of elite disciples, and believers throughout every corner of the Fourteenth Heaven.

Back then, he was full of vigor and looked down upon all others. A single point of his scepter could change the very fabric of the world, forcing all forces to submit.

Not to mention ordinary clans, even the other top powers had to be cautious and respectful before him.

At that time, how could he possibly take the Divine Hall seriously?

In his mind, the Divine Hall was nothing more than a group of old fogies clinging to tradition and lacking ambition, claiming themselves to be the legitimate successors of the divine race simply because they occupied Holy Light Peak, while in reality they were content with their corner of

the land, afraid to participate in external conflicts, only able to eke out a living hiding in the Holy Domain of Light.

He had even openly mocked the Divine Hall on numerous occasions, in front of countless divine cultivators,

saying that the Divine Hall “had only a hollow reputation, occupying a holy land but doing nothing.”

They called the members of the Divine Hall “nothing more than cowardly turtles hiding in the Holy Domain of Light, clinging to life.”

They said the Divine Hall was unworthy to be mentioned alongside the Temple, much less worthy to bear the name of the legitimate divine race.

Those words, each one resounding and jarring, echoed throughout the Fourteen Heavens. Everyone knew that the Temple Master, Shen Tong, was sworn enemies with the Divine Hall, regarding it as his greatest rival and laughingstock.

Back then, he could never have imagined that one day he would fall into such a predicament.

But now…

everything had changed.

Shen Tong lowered his head slightly, his gaze not fixed on the throne, nor on the elders of the Divine Hall, but only his peripheral vision slowly sweeping over those behind him.

There stood over two hundred disciples of the Temple.

They had long lost the prestige and pride of their former Temple disciples.

One by one, their clothes were tattered, covered in blood and tears. Some had broken arms, others had deep, bone-revealing wounds on their legs,

and still others were as pale as paper, clearly severely injured, barely able to stand.

Their faces had lost their former vigor, replaced by exhaustion, dishevelment, sorrow, and a barely concealed fear and unease.

Looking at these two hundred disciples, Shen Tong felt an overwhelming sense of grief and pain.

In his prime, he had commanded thousands of elite warriors from the temple, each disciple a carefully selected, exceptionally talented individual. When they marched, banners blotted out the sun, their imposing presence reaching the heavens. Wherever they went, all races paid homage—how majestic, how glorious!

But now, after a great battle, those thousands of elite warriors were almost entirely wiped out, leaving only these two hundred.

These two hundred were the last embers of the temple, the last remnants of his tens of thousands of years of foundation.

He had once been high above, revered by thousands, his word law, and none dared disobey him.

Now, however, he had to abandon all pride and dignity, groveling before his former mortal enemy, whom he had once despised and mocked most, begging for refuge. He

had fallen from the clouds to the mire, from a hegemon to a beggar.

This fall, this humiliation, was a thousand times more unbearable than death itself.

His heart was filled with hatred, anger, resentment, and frustration.

But he had to endure it.

For the last embers of the temple, for the lives of the two hundred disciples behind him, he had to endure.

As long as they could live, as long as a trace of the temple's bloodline could be preserved, he could abandon everything, endure any humiliation, accept any mockery.

Shen Tong took a deep breath, suppressing the surging emotions within him, and slowly raised his head, his gaze finally settling on the golden throne, crafted from pure gold and sacred jade, high above the main hall.

The throne was enormous and magnificent, carved with patterns of birds paying homage to the phoenix and gods worshipping, radiating an awe-inspiring majesty.

That was not merely a seat, but a symbol of power, a symbol of the orthodoxy of the divine race, the most prestigious position in the entire Fourteen Heavens.

Seated atop the throne was a figure:

Yao Chen, the Hall Master of the Divine Hall. He wore a pristine white holy robe, spotless and of soft texture, yet exuding boundless holiness.

Ancient and mysterious divine patterns were embroidered on the robe with golden divine thread, these patterns subtly shifting with his breath, echoing the holy light within the hall. Each shift emitted a faint Daoist aura.

His face was handsome and dignified, with sword-like eyebrows, bright eyes, a high nose, and clearly defined lips. Though he appeared to be only middle-aged, he possessed a calm and magnanimous air born from the vicissitudes of countless ages.

There was no deliberate exertion of pressure around him, yet he naturally radiated an aura of holy light that commanded awe and reverence, as if he himself were light, saint, and the most orthodox rule of heaven and earth.

He sat quietly on his throne, upright and serene, his gaze calm as he looked down upon the divine beings below, his eyes as still as water, utterly unwavering, revealing no emotion whatsoever.

There was no anger, no disdain, no mockery, and no pity.

It was like looking at a stranger, at a trivial matter.

Yet, the more tranquil it was, the more unsettling and oppressive it felt.

On either side of Yao Chen stood the twelve guardian elders of the Divine Hall.

Each of these twelve was a True Immortal Realm expert renowned throughout the Fourteenth Heaven; any one of them could easily establish a sect and be revered by thousands.

Their auras were powerful yet restrained, surrounded by holy light, their faces solemn, their eyes sharp, like twelve war gods guarding the Divine Hall, motionless yet exuding a terrifying presence.

At this moment, their gazes were all fixed on Shen Tong and the people of the Divine Hall.

Some gazes were cold, scrutinizing, as if appraising a group of intruders.

Some eyes were contemptuous, disdainful, as if looking at a pack of stray dogs.

Some elders even openly displayed mocking, gloating smiles.

The hall was deathly silent.

Terribly silent.

Only the faint sound of the Holy Sun rotating, only the suppressed breathing of the crowd.

Shen Tong stood rooted to the spot, feeling as if each gaze was a sharp knife, slowly slicing through his body and his heart. The

physical pain was bearable, but this spiritual and dignified torture was like a thorn in his side, making him feel restless and uneasy.

He had lived for ten thousand years, traversing the fourteen heavens, always looking down on others, always mocking others.

He had never suffered such humiliation, never been looked at with such contempt, like an ant.

But he could only endure it. He

had to swallow his anger, even if it meant gritting his teeth.

Shen Tong took another deep breath, suppressing all the turmoil in his heart, and stepped forward, his feet landing heavily on the ground paved with the Holy Jade of Light.

His straight back slowly bent.

Then, facing Yao Chen on the throne, he bowed deeply, his knees touching the ground.

This bow shattered tens of thousands of years of his pride.

This bow erased the temple's former glory.

This bow emptied all resentment and sorrow.

"Temple Master Shen Tong, leading the remaining disciples, pays respects to the Hall Master."

His voice was low and hoarse from the long escape and days of toil, yet he tried his best to maintain a respectful and humble tone, daring not to show the slightest disrespect.

Behind him, more than two hundred temple disciples, ragged and wounded, also suppressed their humiliation and resentment, bowing in unison.

Their movements were uneven; some were too badly injured to bend over, while others trembled slightly, clearly showing extreme anger and resentment.

But they still lowered their heads.

Because they knew that if the Temple Master was enduring, they had to endure too.

On the throne, Yao Chen remained silent, not even his gaze changing much.

He simply looked quietly at the kneeling, bowing Shen Tong and the others, his gaze calm to the point of indifference.

There was no response, no gesture, no telling them to rise.

Time ticked by, second by second.

One second, two seconds, three seconds...

one breath, ten breaths, a hundred breaths...

Shen Tong remained bowed, his back bent so low it seemed about to break, all his strength concentrated in his legs. Fine beads of cold sweat gradually appeared on his forehead, sliding down his cheeks.

The prolonged bowing left him aching all over, but the physical pain paled in comparison to the humiliation in his heart.

Yao Chen showed no intention of letting him rise.

This deliberate neglect, this silent indifference, was more humiliating and devastating than any verbal insult or malicious mockery.

This was a blatant show of force. Shen

Tong understood perfectly well.

Yao Chen wanted him to kneel, to wait, to experience what it felt like to fall from a high and mighty overlord to an ant trampled upon.

He wanted to tell him that from this day forward, on Holy Light Peak, in the Divine Hall, Shen Tong was nothing.

His pride, his dignity, his status—all were worthless.

Shen Tong gritted his teeth, his jaw clenched so tightly that his lips were almost bleeding, the taste of blood filling his mouth.

He endured.

He suppressed all his anger, all his humiliation, all his urge to raise his head and roar, to draw his sword.

For the sake of his disciples, for the sake of the temple's flame, he had to endure.

Finally, after what seemed like an eternity,

Yao Chen slowly spoke from his throne.

His voice was gentle and clear, like a mountain spring, melodious and pleasant, without a trace of hostility. Yet, beneath that gentleness lay a lofty detachment and indifference, an undeniable authority.

"Palace Master Shen Tong, no need for formalities, rise."

His short words were like a decree.

Shen Tong slowly straightened up, his stiff body swaying slightly. He forced himself to steady himself, looked up at Yao Chen, and forced a respectful and humble smile onto his face.

“Thank you, Hall Master.”

Yao Chen looked at him quietly, his gaze lingering on him for a moment. After a while, the corners of his mouth turned up slightly, revealing a meaningful, enigmatic smile.

“Hall Master of Divine Power, I remember the last time we formally met was three thousand years ago, at the Divine Clan Grand Ceremony held in the Fourteenth Heaven.”

His tone was calm, as if recalling a trivial past event, but every word was like a small hammer, gently tapping on Divine Power’s heart.

“Back then, the Lord of the Divine Power Hall was full of vigor and high spirits. Standing on the high platform of the grand ceremony, he pointed his finger at me and said in front of everyone that the Divine Hall was nothing but a bunch of cowards hiding in the Holy Domain of Light, afraid to go out and dare not compete. They were not worthy of being called the legitimate lineage of the Divine Race alongside the Divine Hall.”

“These words are still fresh in my memory. I have never forgotten them.”

His voice was still gentle, but the sarcasm and ridicule in his words were undisguised and nakedly displayed in front of everyone. The atmosphere in the main hall instantly became even more oppressive.

Shen Tong’s face stiffened slightly, turning pale and then flushed, his anger surging within him, but he could only forcefully suppress it.

He bowed slightly again, his tone even more humble, carrying a hint of guilt and remorse: “Back then… I was arrogant and reckless, and in a moment of confusion, I uttered such outrageous words. I beg the Hall Master to be magnanimous and not hold it against me, to forgive my ignorance back then.”

“Forgive me?”

Yao Chen repeated softly, then chuckled lightly, the laughter not loud, but clearly echoing throughout the entire hall.

“Lord of the Divine Power Hall, you flatter me. What you said back then wasn’t entirely unreasonable; in fact, it could be considered the truth.

The Divine Hall has always been content with its corner of the world, clinging to Holy Light Peak, unlike your Divine Hall, which commands respect and influence throughout the Fourteenth Heaven, wielding immense power and prestige. What glory and arrogance you enjoy!”

He paused, his gaze slowly shifting from the Divine Power Hall’s face to the disheveled, wounded disciples of the Divine Hall behind him.

Every disciple seen by that gaze instinctively lowered their head, unable to meet his eyes.

Yao Chen’s tone remained gentle, but beneath that gentleness lay a chilling sarcasm and coldness.

“But… I’m a little curious.”

“Your temple, so majestic and powerful, commanding the winds and rains of the Fourteenth Heaven, how come, after all that shouting and clamoring, you’ve ended up like this?”

“The thousands of elite troops of yesteryear are now reduced to only two hundred remnants; the once magnificent temple is now homeless; the once invincible temple master now has to come to the temple begging for shelter.”

“This contrast is far too great; it truly baffles me.” Upon

hearing this ,

the temple’s guardian elders on either side of Yao Chen could no longer contain themselves and burst into laughter.

“Hahahaha—!”

“The Hall Master is absolutely right! I was just wondering too! The Temple is so powerful, how did they end up in such a sorry state?”

“When I came in just now, I thought I was seeing things. How could the Temple Master, a powerful figure who commands respect, bring only two hundred or so defeated soldiers? This isn’t a Temple Master at all, he’s clearly a bunch of refugees fleeing from their plight!”

“Tsk tsk tsk, how majestic they were back then, pointing their fingers at our Temple and belittling us to nothing. Now look at them, they’re coming to us begging for shelter. What goes around comes around!”

“Where did their arrogance go? Where did their domineering spirit go? Why aren’t they still so arrogant now?”

The laughter was grating, arrogant, and unrestrained.

The sarcastic words were sharp, biting, and merciless.

Each sentence was like the sharpest knife, piercing the heart of Shen Tong, piercing the heart of every Temple disciple. Shen Tong’s face alternated between pale

and flushed, then flushed and dark, looking extremely unsightly. His hands were clenched into fists, his knuckles white, his nails digging deep into his palms, causing excruciating pain. Thin streams of blood dripped slowly from between his fingers, falling onto the luminous jade ground, a stark contrast to his appearance. The rage within him threatened to burst from his chest. Yet he restrained himself. He couldn’t be angry, couldn’t explode, couldn’t act impulsively. If he acted impulsively, everyone would die here today. Shen Tong took a deep breath, suppressing his surging blood and anger, and bowed again, his voice low and hoarse, yet still maintaining utmost respect. “The Hall Master is right. I was arrogant and ignorant back then, and my current predicament is entirely my own fault.” “I have come today to apologize to the Divine Hall and to beg for its aid.” He slowly raised his head, his gaze sincere, with a hint of

pleading, as he looked at Yao Chen. “Recently, the demon race has suddenly risen to power, and the demonic dragon lineage has rampaged across the land, cruel and merciless, leaving devastation and barrenness in its wake. In particular, within the demonic dragon lineage, there is a young man named Ning Zhi whose strength is terrifying beyond imagination, far beyond the reach of ordinary cultivators.” “I could not bear to see the divine beings slaughtered by the demons, so I led all the elites of the temple to war, intending to eliminate this scourge for the divine race and protect the peace of this region. However... the disparity between us and the enemy was too great, and we were ultimately defeated. Thousands of disciples were killed or wounded, the temple’s foundation was destroyed, and I myself was seriously injured, my cultivation level plummeted.” As he said this, his voice became even lower, filled with endless sorrow and helplessness. “Now, the temple is destroyed, our home is gone, and various forces in the Fourteenth Heaven are eyeing us covetously. Some want to take advantage of our misfortune, others want to seize the opportunity to annex us. We, the surviving disciples, have nowhere to go, nowhere to escape.” “With no other choice, we have come to the Divine Hall to seek refuge. We implore the Hall Master to consider our shared divine bloodline and common origins, to take us in and give us a way to survive.” “I am willing to offer all the remaining troops, secret realm resources, treasures, and all the secrets, defenses, and hidden features of the Divine Hall’s sacred mountain to the Divine Hall as a token of our sincerity, without the slightest falsehood.” Having said this, he no longer hesitated, bowing deeply once more, his posture utterly humble. Behind him, the more than two hundred temple disciples, seeing their Hall Master so humble, were filled with grief, yet they too knelt down, heads bowed, not daring to raise their heads. The hall fell silent once more. The earlier laughter and mockery vanished instantly. Yao Chen silently gazed at the kneeling Shen Tong, his eyes deep and unfathomable, a complex and enigmatic light flashing within them. There was scrutiny, amusement, indifference, and a hint of barely perceptible calculation. After a moment, he slowly spoke, his voice still gentle, yet tinged with amusement. “Palace Master Shentong, you say you’re willing to offer up all the resources of the temple’s secret realm and the secrets of the Holy Mountain?” Shentong immediately raised his head, not daring to conceal anything, and nodded hurriedly, his tone firm: “Yes! I have not lied, every word I have said is true! Although the temple was destroyed, the secret realm still contains a

large amount of cultivation resources, divine crystals, immortal herbs, and fragments of divine artifacts, all the foundation accumulated by the temple over tens of thousands of years." "Moreover, deep within the Holy Mountain lies the physical body of a Ghost Clan Venerable, sealed away by our temple's ancestors with painstaking effort. It is a supreme treasure, its value immeasurable. As long as the Hall Master is willing to take us in and forgive past grievances, all these things will belong to the temple, and I will not keep any for myself!" Yao Chen nodded slightly, a satisfied look on his face, clearly very tempted by the conditions offered by Shentong. The temple's tens of thousands of years of heritage, the resources of the secret realm, the secrets of the holy mountain, and even the physical body of the Ghost Clan Venerable... these are all things that the temple has always wanted but has no way of obtaining. Just then, a white-haired guardian elder standing to Yao Chen's left suddenly sneered, took a step forward, and broke the silence.

"Divine Power, you speak more eloquently than you sing. Your words are flowery and full of sincerity, but who knows if you're telling the truth? Who knows if you're deceiving us?"

"What if you're just using the Divine Hall for refuge, temporarily biding your time, and then, once the storm has passed, your injuries have healed, and your strength has increased, you turn your back on us and turn against the Divine Hall? Wouldn't we be letting a wolf into our house, raising a tiger to cause future trouble?"

Another dark-faced elder immediately chimed in, his tone icy and full of distrust: "That's right! The people of your Divine Hall have always been treacherous and cunning, with extremely deep schemes. Back then, in order to seize the rightful place of the Divine Race, you secretly used countless underhanded methods, with endless conspiracies and tricks."

"Now you suddenly come seeking refuge, speaking so humbly. Who knows what your intentions are? Who knows if you have some unspeakable conspiracy?"

Another gaunt elder spoke even more sarcastically and sarcastically, "Besides, your temple values the Holy Mountain more than your own

lives. The secrets and shady dealings hidden within are probably not so simple, are they?"

"I've long heard that over the years, your temple has been using the guise of worshiping and praying at the Holy Mountain to secretly abduct and extract the souls and essences of countless rogue cultivators and cultivators from small clans. Your methods are cruel and utterly depraved, your aim being to resurrect some forbidden being, doing something against the will of Heaven!"

"If such sordid deeds and such shameful secrets were to get out, it would be enough to bring your temple to its doom! If our temple were to take you in, wouldn't we also have to share the blame, be cursed by the world, and become the target of public criticism?"

These words were spoken.

The expressions of everyone in the temple changed drastically, their faces turning ashen, and they shuddered.

Extracting the soul essence of cultivators in an attempt to resurrect a forbidden being.

This was the temple's greatest secret, its most shameful secret, a dark past capable of being besieged and utterly destroyed by all races.

This matter was deeply hidden; aside from the temple's high-ranking officials, almost no one knew of it.

Unexpectedly, the temple already knew!

Shen Tong was shocked, his face turning deathly pale. He hurriedly tried to explain, "Elders, you've misunderstood! You mustn't believe these rumors! They're malicious rumors spread by those with ill intentions, fabricated by enemies who want to frame our temple!"

"Rumors?"

The white-haired elder sneered again, his eyes sharp as knives, directly interrupting Shen Tong.

“Lord of the Divine Power Hall, do you think we’re all three-year-olds, so easily fooled? Do you think our Divine Hall hasn’t investigated those missing cultivators, those rogue cultivators whose souls mysteriously vanished without even a chance to reincarnate?”

“Do you think you can really hide your despicable deeds forever?”

Divine Power opened his mouth, wanting to continue his defense, but the words caught in his throat, and he found himself utterly unable to refute them.

Those things were indeed done by the Divine Hall back then for power and ambition.

The evidence was irrefutable; he couldn’t deny it.

For a moment, Divine Power’s face turned deathly pale. He stood there, helpless, caught in extreme embarrassment and panic.

At this moment of utter oppression,

an elder of the Divine Hall standing behind Divine Power finally couldn’t bear it any longer.

He was a man of fiery temperament; during their escape, witnessing the Hall Master suffer humiliation and his fellow disciples being mocked and trampled upon, his heart had long been filled with endless anger and resentment.

Now, having his sore spot so blatantly exposed and humiliated by the temple elder, he could no longer suppress his anger.

“Enough!”

a furious shout rang out.

It came from a middle-aged temple elder, covered in blood, severely injured, his breath weak and faltering, barely able to stand.

But now, he abruptly stood up, his face flushed, his eyes bloodshot, burning with the flames of anger and humiliation.

“Our temple has indeed been defeated! We have indeed fallen into ruin! We have indeed reached a dead end! But we came with sincerity, seeking help and seeking an alliance with the divine race!”

“If you are unwilling to take us in, fine, but why the cold mockery, the endless humiliation, and the relentless pressure?!”

“Our temple and the divine hall share the same roots and origins, and are of the same divine bloodline. We should help each other and fight against external enemies together! Today, we are in distress, and you not only do not offer a helping hand, but you also disregard our kinship and kick us when we are down, doing everything you can to mock us!”

“With such a heart and such a face, do you deserve to be called the legitimate lineage of the divine race? Do you deserve to occupy Holy Light Peak? Do you deserve to be revered by all cultivators in the world?”

He became more and more agitated as he spoke, his voice rising higher and higher, almost roaring.

“Don’t forget! The Demon Dragon lineage is unstoppable, and that Ning Zhi is terrifying beyond compare! Their next target is very likely your Divine Hall, this Holy Light Peak!”

“You have no idea how terrifying Ning Zhi’s strength is! You have no idea what despair is! Today you laugh at us, humiliate us, but tomorrow, when you are slaughtered by the Demon Dragon and crushed by Ning Zhi, let’s see if you can still laugh!!”

“Insolence!”

A sharp shout interrupted him.

A golden-robed elder of the Divine Hall was furious. Holy light surged around him, and the terrifying pressure of the True Immortal Realm instantly swept through the entire hall, pressing down on the elder like a mountain.

“How dare you roar in the Divine Hall’s main hall and insult the elders of the Divine Hall! You’re courting death!”

The golden-robed elder’s eyes were cold, and he was about to make a move to suppress him.

But before he could make a move,

Yao Chen, who had always had a gentle smile on his face, gently raised his right hand.

A simple movement.

Without releasing any aura, without making any sound. The golden-robed elder, who had been so imposing just moments before, froze instantly .

The surging holy light around him vanished in an instant, and he dared not utter another word. He obediently retreated, bowing his head with utmost respect. The entire hall fell silent. Yao Chen remained seated on his throne, his face still bearing that gentle smile. But that smile no longer evoked warmth; instead, it sent a chill down one’s spine. His gaze calmly fell upon the agitated and roaring temple elder. He spoke softly, his voice gentle yet carrying an absolute, unquestionable, and unyielding authority. “Have you finished?” The temple elder’s heart tightened. Looking into Yao Chen’s eyes, he instinctively wanted to say something more, to continue arguing for himself and the temple.

But before he could speak,

Yao Chen simply raised his right hand and casually pointed at him.

There were no earth-shattering phenomena, no terrifying pressure.

A slender, soft, and not dazzling golden light slowly shot out from Yao Chen’s fingertip.

The light was slow, even deceptively slow, seemingly harmless, like an ordinary ray of holy light.

Yet, this seemingly harmless light seemed to traverse space, ignoring distance, all defenses, and the temple elder’s protective divine light and magical artifacts.

Instantly, it precisely pierced the temple elder’s brow.

There was no explosion, no scream, no splatter of blood.

The temple elder’s body suddenly froze.

His eyes widened, pupils contracted, and his face still bore the marks of anger and agitation, yet he remained frozen in place.

He opened his mouth, as if to speak, to utter a sound, but not a trace of breath escaped him, not a single movement could be made.

The next moment,

a bizarre scene unfolded.

His body, starting from the spot where the light pierced his brow, gradually disintegrated into countless golden specks of light, like sand sculptures scattered by the wind, crumbling, melting, and vanishing bit by bit.

From head to torso to limbs.

In just a few breaths

, a temple elder who had lived for thousands of years, before everyone’s very eyes, completely transformed into countless specks of light, disappearing into the air without a trace.

Not even a scream could be uttered.

Not a drop of blood, not a piece of bone remained.

His soul was scattered.

Utterly annihilated.

Even the chance of reincarnation was erased.

The hall was deathly silent. A

deathly silence.

Everyone was stunned.

The elders of the Divine Hall were slightly startled, but quickly regained their composure, their gazes towards Shen Tong and the others growing even colder and more disdainful.

The members of the Divine Hall, however, were filled with terror, their bodies trembling violently, their faces ashen, their eyes filled with fear and disbelief.

They stared intently at the spot where the elder had vanished, their hearts pounding wildly, as if about to leap from their throats.

One move.

A mere casual flick of the finger.

Not even a single superfluous movement.

An elder had been completely annihilated, leaving no chance for reincarnation.

Was this the power of Yao Chen, the Hall Master of the Divine Hall?

Was this the terror of the orthodox divine race?

Shen Tong froze on the spot, his mind blank, his body ice-cold.

That elder was one of his most loyal and closest subordinates, who had followed him for thousands of years, through countless life-and-death battles, never wavering in his loyalty, never betraying the Divine Hall; he was the person he trusted most.

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Yet now.

He had died right before his eyes.

Died so easily, so decisively, so thoroughly.

Without even a chance to resist.

The anger, grief, and hatred in Shen Tong's heart surged to their peak in an instant.

He desperately wanted to rush forward and fight Yao Chen to the death, to avenge that elder at all costs.

He desperately wanted to draw his divine weapon, unleash his full cultivation, and perish together with everyone in the Divine Hall.

But he couldn't.

He couldn't act impulsively.

Behind him were over two hundred disciples.

They were the last embers of the Divine Hall, vibrant lives.

Their lives were all in his hands.

If he acted impulsively, if he resisted, Yao Chen would show no mercy, and those two hundred disciples would be slaughtered instantly, not a single one surviving.

Then, the Divine Hall would be truly destroyed, its millennia-old foundation utterly reduced to nothing, leaving not even a sliver of hope for a comeback.

Shen Tong gritted his teeth, his gums bleeding, his mouth filled with the strong taste of blood.

His hands were clenched into fists, his nails digging deep into his palms, drops of blood falling and splashing onto the ground.

Did it hurt? Yes,

it hurt.

Even the most intense pain couldn't compare to one ten-thousandth of the agony in his heart.

Yet, he still endured it. He

forcefully suppressed all impulses, all anger, all grief.

He slowly lowered his head, not letting anyone see the bloodshot eyes and hatred within them. His voice was hoarse and trembling, yet he forced himself to remain respectful and humble.

"Thank you for your instruction, High Priest. It was my negligence in disciplining and restraining that madman, allowing him to offend the High Priest and violate the dignity of the temple. He deserves to die; he brought it upon himself." Upon

hearing these words,

the last vestige of stubbornness and hope in the hearts of the temple's members shattered completely.

They looked at Shen Tong's hunched, lonely back, their eyes filled with complex emotions.

There was disappointment, anger, resentment, and humiliation.

But even more so, there was a touch of heartache and understanding.

They all understood.

The High Priest wasn't unwilling to seek revenge, wasn't without anger, wasn't without humiliation.

But for their sake, to preserve the last embers of the temple, the High Priest was enduring.

Enduring what ordinary people could not endure.

He endured humiliation that no ordinary person could bear.

On his throne, Yao Chen looked at Shen Tong's servile, submissive, and angry demeanor, a barely perceptible hint of satisfaction flashing in his eyes.

He slowly withdrew his hand, his face regaining its gentle, harmless smile, as if he hadn't just casually killed an elder.

"The Palace Master Shen Tong is indeed a reasonable person, understanding the bigger picture and prioritizing the overall situation. In my entire life, what I admire most is a wise and pragmatic person like you."

He paused, his tone casual and indifferent, as if arranging a trivial matter.

"In that case, I will accept your sincerity and take in all of you from the Divine Palace."

“However, the Divine Hall has strict rules and doesn’t tolerate idlers or useless people. Now that you’ve come to the Divine Hall and to Holy Light Peak, you should do something for me and for the Divine Hall, and contribute your strength.”

He looked at Shen Tong, a meaningful and mocking smile playing on his lips.

“How about this?”

“From today onwards, all the remaining members of your Divine Hall will be responsible for patrolling and guarding the foot of Holy Light Peak.”

“Palace Master Shen Tong, what do you think?”

Patrol?

Guard?

Foot of the mountain?

These words exploded like thunder in the hearts of everyone in the Divine Hall.

This kind of work, this kind of job, was the kind of hardship that only the lowest-ranking disciples, those without talent or background, the lowest-level disciples, would do. It

was hard, dangerous, low-status, and looked down upon.

They were once high-ranking disciples of the Divine Hall, elites who traversed the fourteenth heaven, revered beings.

Now, they were to do this lowest-ranking menial work?

This isn’t assigning tasks; it’s blatant humiliation!

It’s trampling their dignity underfoot and rubbing it repeatedly! The temple disciples behind Shen Tong felt their eyes blaze with anger and humiliation, almost spitting fire. Their bodies trembled violently, and they longed to rush forward and fight to the death.

But looking at their temple master’s back, they ultimately dared not move.

Shen Tong, however, kept his head bowed, seemingly oblivious to the humiliation in his voice.

His tone was calm and respectful, without a trace of emotion.

“Thank you, Hall Master, for taking us in and giving us a way out. I... am willing to accept this fate without a single complaint.”

With that, he bowed deeply again, prostrating himself on the ground in gratitude.

“That’s good.”

Yao Chen nodded in satisfaction, waved his hand lightly, and said indifferently.

“Step back. I will have the elders arrange your lodgings, food, and duties. Behave yourself, do your job well, and do not cause trouble.”

“Thank you, Hall Master.”

Shen Tong bowed again, then slowly retreated, step by step, respectfully leaving the hall.

Behind him, over two hundred temple disciples, heads bowed, silently followed Shen Tong, their hearts filled with humiliation and sorrow, retreating step by step from the great hall that had brought them such humiliation, a place they would never forget.

The moment he stepped out of the temple ,

Shen Tong slowly raised his head, gazing at the sky.

The sky above the Holy Land of Light was azure and pure, shrouded in holy light, holy and dazzling, breathtakingly beautiful.

Yet his heart was darker, colder, and heavier than ever before.

It felt as if a mountain was pressing down on it.

Humiliation, sorrow, anger, hatred…

all these emotions intertwined, threatening to consume him.

He didn't speak, didn't turn back, but silently walked ahead, step by step, towards the most remote, lowest point of Holy Light Peak.

Behind him, the temple disciples followed closely, equally silent.

No sound, no weeping, no complaints.

Only the heavy sound of footsteps echoed on the mountain path.

Finally, when the group reached a secluded, deserted mountain path…

A young temple disciple could no longer contain his pent-up resentment and anger.

He rushed forward and knelt before the divine power with a thud, tears streaming down his face, his voice choked with sobs and grief.

"Temple Master! Why?! Why must we suffer such humiliation?! We temple disciples have always been unyielding to the death! We would rather die on the battlefield than be humiliated like this, have our dignity trampled upon like this!"

The other disciples also gathered around, their faces filled with grief and indignation, their eyes red, their voices trembling.

“Yes, Lord! That temple doesn’t treat us like human beings at all! They killed Elder Zhang, mocked us relentlessly, and now they want us to do menial tasks and patrol at the foot of the mountain! This isn’t taking us in, it’s treating us like slaves!”

“Lord, let’s rebel! Let’s fight them! Rather than live like this, enduring humiliation, let’s fight a glorious battle, so that even in death we can die with dignity!”

“Lord! Just give the order! We are willing to follow you and fight to the death!”

Shen Tong stopped.

He slowly turned around.

Looking at these young faces, at the grief, resentment, grievance, and anger in their eyes, an endless sorrow and heartache welled up within him.

These disciples were the future of the temple.

They should have been full of vigor, respected, and had bright futures.

But because of a defeat, because of his incompetence as their Lord, they had fallen to this state.

Shen Tong remained silent for a long, long time.

He spoke slowly, his voice hoarse and low, yet carrying an undeniable and irrefutable authority.

“Do you think I don’t want to resist?”

He slowly raised his hand, opening his palm.

Bloodstains stained his palm, the wounds from where he had been pierced by fingernails, wounds that hadn’t yet healed.

“Just now, when that elder died before my eyes, the anger in my heart was stronger than any of yours. I wanted nothing more than to rush forward and fight Yao Chen to the death, to avenge him at all costs!”

“But I cannot.”

He raised his head, his gaze sweeping across the faces of every disciple present, each word spoken with a heavy, iron-like tone.

“Behind me are you all. More than two hundred of the temple’s last embers, its last hope. If I act impulsively, if I act rashly, if I rebel, if I fly into a rage, if I strike… all of you will die.”

“Not a single one will survive.”

“At that time, the temple will truly be destroyed. Ten thousand years of foundation, the blood and sweat of countless ancestors, will be utterly reduced to nothing, leaving not even a sliver of chance for a comeback, not even a sliver of chance for revenge.”

“I can die, I am not afraid of death. I have lived for ten thousand years, that is enough. But I cannot take you all with me to die, I cannot personally bury the temple’s last hope.”

His voice grew louder, heavier, and more resolute.

“I will remember today’s humiliation.”

“Yao Chen’s mockery, the temple’s disgrace, Elder Zhang’s tragic death, I remember them all, etched in my heart, etched in my soul!”

He clenched his fist tightly, blood dripping from his palm again, a chilling ruthlessness flashing in his eyes.

“But we must endure now.”

“When you’re under someone’s roof, you have to bow your head. As long as the green hills remain, there’s always firewood. Only by living, only by

enduring, only by preserving our strength, can we have a chance to turn things around, only then can we have hope for revenge!”

“One day.”

“One day, I will lead you back to your peak!” ”

I will make the Divine Hall, Yao Chen, and all those who humiliated us and trampled on our dignity today pay the most painful price for what they have done!”

“Blood debts must be repaid in blood!”

“The Divine Hall’s hatred must be washed away with blood!”

His voice, powerful and resounding, echoed for a long time on the silent mountain path.

Hearing his words, the anger, resentment, and unwillingness in the hearts of the Divine Hall disciples gradually subsided.

In their place was a profound determination, a belief that was patiently waiting to be unleashed.

Looking at Shen Tong, hope and loyalty rekindled in their eyes.

They all knelt down, kowtowing heavily to Shen Tong, their voices unified and resolute.

“We swear to follow our Lord to the death! We will endure humiliation and await our opportunity! One day, we will avenge our debt and pay for it in blood!”

Shen Tong nodded, saying nothing more.

He slowly turned around and walked back towards the foot of the mountain.

His back, illuminated by the holy light of Holy Light Peak, appeared exceptionally lonely and desolate.

Yet, within that lonely figure shone an unusually resolute and tenacious strength.

Enduring this humiliation for a future opportunity.

This enmity was irreconcilable.

Meanwhile,

atop Holy Light Peak, in the main hall of the Divine Temple,

Yao Chen remained seated on his throne, a satisfied smile of complete control on his face.

He had already witnessed the entire scene clearly through his divine sense.

An elder guardian stepped forward, bowed slightly, and asked in a low voice with a look of confusion and worry, “Master, I truly do not understand.

That Shen Tong is treacherous and cunning, extremely scheming, and ambitious. Although he is now in dire straits, he is still a major threat. Keeping him alive will only bring trouble sooner or later. Why not take this opportunity to wipe them all out in one fell swoop, to eliminate future troubles and remove any lingering worries?” Yao Chen glanced at him, shook his head slightly, and chuckled, his tone carrying a hint of disdain and control.

“Eliminate? Why eliminate them?”

He slowly stood up, his wide holy robe trailing on the ground, and descended the golden steps, standing with his hands behind his back, his gaze sweeping over the entire hall, his aura imposing.

“Although the temple has fallen, they still possess many valuable items that our temple desperately needs. Those secret realm resources, those holy mountain secrets, and the physical body of the Ghost Clan Venerable—these are treasures we’ve long coveted but have never been able to obtain.”

“If we kill them now, these things may disappear forever, never to be found again. Wouldn’t that be a huge loss for us?”

“Besides, although that divine power is fallen from grace, he was once a powerful ruler, and his disciples are all battle-hardened warriors.

They might prove invaluable in dealing with the Demon Dragon lineage and that Ning Zhi, serving as cannon fodder to shield us from harm.”

He paused, a cold killing intent and calculation flashing in his eyes.

“As for the future…”

“Once they’ve squeezed every last drop of value out of me, once I’ve obtained everything I wanted and mastered all the temple’s secrets, then how I deal with them, how I decide their deaths, won’t it all be up to me?”

“Keeping them alive now is merely making use of waste.”

The elder guardian suddenly understood, his eyes filled with admiration, bowing repeatedly: “Hall Master is wise! I am far inferior! Your thorough planning and meticulous steps are truly admirable!”

Yao Chen smiled faintly, saying nothing more, and turned to slowly walk towards the rear hall.

His figure gradually disappeared into the holy light deep within the hall.

Only a cold, indifferent sentence remained, slowly echoing in the empty hall.

“Send men to keep an eye on them, monitor them around the clock, and don’t let their every move slip by. If there’s the slightest unusual movement, don’t report it, kill them without mercy.”

The words fell.

The hall returned to silence.

The holy light remained pure, the holy sun continued to revolve.

But everyone knew…

The relationship between the shrine and the temple is no longer simply one of shelter and being sheltered.

Instead, each harbors its own ulterior motives and hidden agendas.

Beneath the surface of calm, undercurrents surge, and killing intent lurks everywhere.

Meanwhile, in the secret chamber of the City Lord’s Mansion in Yunxian City,

Kai sat cross-legged inside the Demon-Suppressing Tower, golden dragon energy slowly flowing around him.

Three days outside, but several months inside the tower.

These months of seclusion had completely healed his injuries; the wounds scalded by demonic fire had long since healed completely, and his spiritual power was even more solid and substantial than before his injuries.

His cultivation at the peak of the fourth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm showed signs of loosening, just one step away from the fifth rank.

Kai slowly opened his eyes and exhaled a breath of turbid air.

He raised his hand, looking at the golden light flowing in his palm, but there was no smile on his lips.

The image of that figure in flowing purple robes lingered in his mind.

Yuqi…

where are you now?

Have you even thought of me for a moment?

Kai closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and suppressed his surging emotions.

He knew this was not the time to indulge in romantic feelings; Ning Zhi was not yet eliminated, Yu Qi had not returned, and he could not collapse.

Putting away the Demon-Suppressing Tower, Kai stood up and pushed open the door to the secret chamber.

Outside, Chen Wanqing was leaning against the wall. Seeing him come out, she hurried forward, her eyes filled with worry and joy: “Kai, you’re better? So quickly?”

“Yes, thanks to the Demon-Suppressing Tower.”

Kai looked at her haggard face, his heart warming. “You’ve worked hard these past few days.”

Kai no longer hid anything from Chen Wanqing.

Although he and Chen Wanqing hadn’t truly cultivated together, Kai could feel Chen Wanqing’s feelings for him.

If Su Yu Qi hadn’t suddenly appeared, catching Kai somewhat off guard, he might have already pinned Chen Wanqing down.

Chen Wanqing shook her head, about to speak, when footsteps sounded outside the courtyard.

Yun Xi and Ming Li walked in side by side.

Yunxi, dressed in a black dress, appeared much calmer than a few days ago, clearly indicating that her injuries had almost fully healed.

Mingli stood beside her, his face still somewhat pale, but his spirits were good.

“Kai, you’re awake.”

Yunxi approached, looking at him with a complex emotion flashing in her eyes. “How are you recovering?” ” I’m mostly recovered

.”

Kai nodded. “Thank you, Princess Yunxi, for saving my life.”

Yunxi waved her hand, not replying, but simply looking at him, hesitant to speak.

Seeing this, Mingli stepped forward and said, “Kai, the princess and I have something we’d like to ask for your help with.”

Kai, noticing their solemn expressions, asked, “What is it?”

Mingli reiterated Yunxi’s purpose: the Fifteenth Heaven Ghost Clan’s Reincarnation Division had undergone a strange change, trapping countless ghost souls within. Only through the Gate of Reincarnation could they enter the depths of the Reincarnation Division to be rescued.

And the Gate of Reincarnation was currently in Mr. Shi’s hands.

“Mr. Shi and you have a deep friendship, could you perhaps…”

Yunxi looked at him, her eyes filled with hope, “help me contact him and borrow the Gate of Reincarnation? The entire Ghost Clan will surely reward me handsomely.”

Kai was silent for a moment, then slowly shook his head. “It’s not that I don’t want to help, it’s just that… I can’t contact Mr. Shi either.”

Yunxi’s expression dimmed slightly.

Kai looked at her and explained, “Mr. Shi is a mysterious figure, and he acts as he pleases. He’s always the one looking for me, and I can’t find him.

He only appears when I’m in the most critical and desperate situation. Otherwise… I can’t contact him either.”

This was true.

From the mortal realm to the celestial realm, and now to the celestial realm, Mr. Shi’s appearances have always been when Kai was on the verge of despair.

Apart from that, Mr. Shi seems to have vanished into thin air, leaving no trace.

Yunxi lowered her head, her eyes filled with undisguised disappointment.

She had gone through countless hardships to reach the fourteenth heaven from the fifteenth heaven, finally finding out about the Gate of Reincarnation, thinking she had hope, but it turned out to be another dead end.

Seeing her dejected look, Kai pondered for a moment before saying, “Although we can’t contact Mr. Shi right now, Princess Yunxi, don’t be discouraged. Once I’ve dealt with matters in the Fourteenth Heaven, I’ll go with you to the Fifteenth Heaven. I’ll find a way to help you with the Reincarnation Bureau.”

Yunxi looked up at him, a glimmer of light rekindling in her eyes. “You’re willing to go to the Fifteenth Heaven?”

“Of course. You saved me twice; I can’t just not help you.” Kai paused. “But before that, I have something else to do.”

He gazed into the distance, a cold glint in his eyes.

“While I was in seclusion, the Divine Temple led a large army to besiege Yunxian City, killing my Heavenly Dragon Clan members and injuring my brothers and friends. This debt must be settled.” Yunxi

raised an eyebrow slightly. “You’re going to attack the Divine Temple?”

“The Divine Temple is currently severely weakened; this is the perfect opportunity.” Kai stood with his hands behind his back, his aura as steady as a mountain. “Strike while the iron is hot. If the Divine Temple isn’t eliminated, it will surely become a future threat.” Yunxi looked at him, a hint of admiration flashing in her eyes.

This man was indeed extraordinary.

Having just survived a life-or-death ordeal, the first thing he did upon waking wasn’t to indulge in romantic feelings, but to make decisive and swift decisions.

“I’ll go with you,” Yunxi said calmly. “You owe me two lives, and I have to see you repay them.”

Kai chuckled, “Alright, then I’ll owe you another favor.”

Mingli also stepped forward, “I’ll go too. Those bastards from the temple should have been dealt with long ago.”

Kai nodded, his gaze sweeping across the courtyard. Yun Yao and Liu Qianqian were standing not far away. Seeing Kai looking at them, they quickly came over.

“Young Master Chen, we’re going too!” Yun Yao’s face tightened. “Those villains almost destroyed Yunxian City, I want revenge!”

Liu Qianqian didn’t speak, but simply stood quietly beside Mingli, nodding gently.

Kai looked at the people before him, a warm feeling welling up in his heart.

They were all his companions who had shared life and death with him along the way.

“Alright, let’s go together.”

He paused, then looked at Chen Wanqing: “Wanqing, you stay in Yunxian City and help me take care of Long Zhan and the brothers of the Heavenly Dragon Clan. Long Zhan’s injuries are too severe; he needs someone to look after him.”

Although Chen Wanqing also wanted to go, she knew the importance of the matter and nodded: “Don’t worry, I will guard Yunxian City.”

Kai gave her a deep look and said nothing more.

He turned around and, with Yun Xi, Ming Li, Yun Yao, and Liu Qianqian, embarked on the road to the Divine Temple.

The main hall of the Divine Temple was located in the deepest part of the Fourteenth Heaven Divine Domain, occupying the entire Holy Mountain Range, majestic and imposing.

It took Kai and his group three days to reach the gates of the Divine Temple.

But when they stood before the gates, they were all stunned.

The gates were wide open, and there was no sound.

There were no guards, no patrolling disciples, and no sign of any living person.

Inside the gates, the place was in ruins. Fallen leaves piled up, and dust covered everything, clearly indicating that the place had been deserted for many days.

Kai frowned slightly and stepped into the mountain gate.

Along the way, the pavilions and towers were empty, the doors to the cultivation chambers were wide open, and even the most basic formations were not activated. The entire temple was like a dead zone, deathly still.

“This…” Yun Yao’s eyes widened, “Where are they? Why is there no one here?”

Ming Li looked around and said in a deep voice, “It seems the people from the temple have already fled.”

“Fled?” Yun Yao was puzzled, “Why would such a powerful force flee?”

Yun Xi said calmly, “The temple lost all its elites in this battle, its strength greatly diminished. Staying in the Fourteenth Heaven will only lead to them being devoured by their enemies. Rather than waiting to die, it’s better to make plans sooner.” Kai did

n’t speak, but slowly walked through every corner of the temple.

Once upon a time, this was one of the most powerful forces in the Fourteenth Heaven, its prestige shaking the four directions, and no one dared to provoke it.

Now, only an empty shell remained, desolate and dilapidated.

He stood in the main hall of the temple, looking at the empty throne, feeling no joy, only a faint sense of regret.

“What a pity,” he said softly.

It was still a bit of a regret that he hadn’t been able to destroy the temple with his own hands.

But oh well, they’d escaped.

The most important thing now was finding Yuqi and dealing with Ning Zhi’s threat.

Kai turned around, about to speak, but his gaze fell on Ming Li and Liu Qianqian.

The two stood side by side, seemingly normal, but Kai, with his sharp eyes, immediately noticed that Liu Qianqian’s hand was gently resting on Ming Li’s wrist.

Ming Li turned slightly to the side, whispered something in her ear, and Liu Qianqian’s lips curled up slightly, then she suppressed it, looking away with a straight face.

Ming Li’s gaze towards Liu Qianqian was so tender it could melt hearts.

Kai raised an eyebrow.

Good heavens.

When did these two get together?

He didn’t say anything, but just looked a few more times.

And with that, he noticed something else: although Liu Qianqian had a straight face, the smile in her eyes was impossible to hide;

Ming Li, who usually had a cold face, was now beaming, glancing at Liu Qianqian every now and then.

Kai understood.

No wonder he'd sensed something was off about the two of them; now he knew.

He didn't confront them directly, just smiled and led the group to continue exploring the temple.

Along the way, the interaction between Ming Li and Liu Qianqian became increasingly obvious.

When walking on mountain paths, Ming Li would always subconsciously shield Liu Qianqian, afraid she might fall;

during rest periods, Liu Qianqian would quietly hand Ming Li a water pouch, and when Ming Li took it, their fingers would intentionally or unintentionally touch, then quickly separate, pretending nothing had happened.

Yun Yao, that carefree little girl, didn't notice anything at all.

Yun Xi, however, did notice, but only glanced at it indifferently, saying nothing.

Finally, after exploring a side hall, Kai stopped, turned back to look at Ming Li, and smiled faintly.

"Ming Li."

Ming Li was talking to Liu Qianqian with his head down when he heard this and looked up: "Hmm?"

Kai looked at him, then at Liu Qianqian, and slowly asked, "When did this happen between you two?"

Ming Li was stunned, his expression instantly freezing.

Liu Qianqian was also stunned, her cheeks flushed red, and she subconsciously hid behind Ming Li.

“Wh…what is it?” Ming Li stammered, his eyes darting around. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Kai laughed.

“Don’t know?”

He slowly walked over and circled Ming Li. “Then tell me, why haven’t your eyes left Liu Qianqian since you left home?

Why did you always block her way when we were walking on the mountain path? Why did your fingers touch and then quickly separate when she handed you the water bag during our rest?”

Ming Li opened his mouth, his face turning bright red.

Yun Yao finally reacted, her eyes widening. “Ah? Brother Ming Li and Sister Liu? You…you’re together?”

Liu Qianqian’s face turned even redder, wishing she could disappear into the ground.

Seeing that he couldn’t hide it anymore, Ming Li decided to go all out and stubbornly said, “So what if we are! Qianqian and I…we…we are truly in love!”

Kai couldn’t help but laugh at his shy yet stubborn appearance.

“I didn’t say no, why are you in such a hurry?”

Ming Li was taken aback, looking at Kai with uncertainty in his eyes: “You…you don’t object?”

“Object to what?”

Kai patted his shoulder, his tone sincere, “You’ve followed me for so long, through thick and thin, never wavering. Now that you’ve found a woman you like, I’m happy for you, why would I object?”

Ming Li stared blankly at him, his eyes gradually reddening, “Mr. Chen…I…I thought you were so lecherous, you’d take Qianqian too.”

“Damn…” Kai was speechless for a moment: “Although I’ve had many women, none of them were forced. I can’t just take every woman I meet, can I? I’m not a stud.” “Mr. Chen, from now on, I, Ming Li, will follow your lead without hesitation…” Ming Li suddenly hugged Kai, beginning to pledge his loyalty.

“Alright, enough of that, you’re a grown man.” Kai pushed Ming Li away and looked at Liu Qianqian, “Miss Liu, Ming Li isn’t much of a talker, but he’s sincere. If he’s good to you, he truly is. You won’t suffer if you follow him.”

Liu Qianqian blushed and nodded gently.

Yun Yao watched with great interest, her eyes sparkling: “Wow, Brother Ming Li and Sister Liu, how romantic! I want to fall in love too!”

Yun Yao was a pawn kept by the Holy Pure Sect, used for dual cultivation with people of pure blood.

But Yun Yao didn’t want to be used or manipulated, didn’t want to cultivate with men she didn’t like, only wanted to fall in love with men she liked, like Ming Li and Liu Qianqian.

Kai glanced at her indifferently: “Don’t think like that, little girl.”

Yun Yao pouted and didn’t dare to say anything.

Kai looked at Ming Li, curiously asking, “But speaking of which, when did you two… start? I remember when we went to the Holy Land of Light, you two didn’t have much interaction.”

Ming Li scratched his head, somewhat embarrassed, “It was… it was during those few days when you went to the Holy Land of Light.”

“Did you two cultivate together?” Kai asked curiously.

Ming Li nodded, “We cultivated together during the days when the temple besieged Cloud Immortal City…”

“Those few days?” Kai was slightly taken aback, “Those few days were a matter of life and death, and you still had the mind to…”

Kai couldn’t imagine, how could someone about to die still have the mind to do that?

Ming Li’s face turned even redder, and he stammered, unable to speak.

Liu Qianqian gently tugged at his sleeve and whispered, “There’s nothing you can’t say.”

She raised her head and looked at Kai, her face red, but her eyes were frank, “Those few days, we were guarding outside the secret chamber, and we could die at any moment. Ming Li said that he would probably die this time, but it was a pity that he hadn’t tasted the flavor of a woman before he died.”

“So you two…” Kai looked at the two of them in shock.

Ming Li took a deep breath and said, “Yes, Qianqian said I should try it.”

“But I’ve never tasted a man’s flavor before. I was about to die back then…” Yun Yao pouted somewhat displeased!

“Good! Good! Good!”

Kai said three “good”s in a row, patting Ming Li’s shoulder hard. “Ming Li, you’re amazing! You were able to handle that life-or-death situation. You’re a real man.”

Ming Li’s face flushed red, and he said hurriedly, “It’s not that I hadn’t tried it before. I was just a bit excited, so…”

As he spoke, his voice grew softer and softer.

Kai looked at him like this, and his smile deepened.

“Alright, alright, no need to explain. It’s a good thing, a really great thing.”

He said seriously, “Ming Li, you’ve followed me for so long and suffered a lot. Now that you’ve found someone you like and are living the life you want, I’m truly happy for you.”

Ming Li looked at him, and his eyes reddened again.

“Mr. Chen…”

“Alright.” Kai patted his shoulder. “Treat Miss Liu well from now on, don’t let her down.”

Ming Li nodded emphatically: “I know!”

Liu Qianqian stood to the side, looking at Kai with gratitude in her eyes.

She was originally a rogue cultivator taken in by Kai, with no one to rely on.

Now, she was able to follow Ming Li and have her own place to belong, all because of Kai.

“Young Master Chen, thank you.” Liu Qianqian bowed.

Kai waved his hand: “Don’t thank me, it’s your own fate.”

“Kai, the people from the Temple have all run away, where do we go next?” Yun Xi asked.

“The people from the Temple have run away, but the Temple’s sacred mountains are still there. We need to find the remaining sacred mountains of the Temple, where the physical bodies of the Ghost Clan Venerables are located.” Kai said.

“Yes, we need to find those Venerable bodies.” Ming Li strongly agreed with Kai’s approach.

Yun Xi frowned after hearing this.

Ghost Clan Venerables were powerful figures from the ancient Ghost Clan, with cultivation reaching the heavens, who once led the Ghost Clan to conquer all directions.

Later, he perished in the war between gods and demons, his physical body seized by the gods and sealed away somewhere.

Unexpectedly, it ended up in the hands of the temple.

“What do you intend to do?” Yunxi asked.

Kai looked at her calmly: “Destroy it.”

Yunxi was slightly taken aback.

Kai continued, “The temple wants to resurrect the Venerable One; they must have some ulterior motive. If they successfully use the Venerable One’s body, the consequences will be unimaginable. Rather than leaving a future threat, it’s better to destroy it now.”

He paused, looking at Yunxi: “You are a princess of the Ghost Clan, and that is your Ghost Clan’s Venerable One. If you disagree, I won’t force you.”

Yunxi remained silent for a moment before slowly speaking.

“I agree.”

She raised her head, a complex emotion flashing in her eyes. “The Venerable One was indeed a great power of my Ghost Clan during his lifetime, an ancestor I revered.

But now that he has fallen, he should rest in peace. The Temple using his body for such despicable acts is a desecration of the Venerable One."

"Rather than letting the Venerable One's body become a tool of the God Clan, it is better to destroy it and let him be completely free."

Ming Li also nodded and said, "I agree with the princess's statement. How glorious and heroic the Venerable One was in life. If he knew that he was being used by the God Clan after his death, he would probably die with his eyes wide open in disbelief."

Kai looked at the two of them and nodded.

"In that case, let's go."

Kai led the group to find the Temple's sacred mountain.

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Because the sacred mountain was no secret and many people made pilgrimages there, it was easy to find one.

The group entered the sacred mountain, following the winding mountain path deeper and deeper.

Inside the sacred mountain was a hidden world.

Within the mountain's belly was a massive underground palace, magnificent and imposing, its walls covered with ancient runes and arrays, emitting a faint golden light.

At the deepest part of the palace was a huge altar.

Above the altar floated a massive coffin.

The coffin was entirely black, its surface covered with densely packed sealing runes, layer upon layer, densely packed.

Even from hundreds of feet away, one could feel the extremely oppressive and terrifying aura.

Yun Xi looked at the coffin, her pupils slightly contracting.

“It’s the Venerable One’s physical body.”

She could feel the throbbing originating from the depths of her bloodline, the instinctive connection of the Ghost Clan’s descendants to their ancestor.

Kai didn’t speak, but slowly walked towards the altar.

Just then, a blinding golden light suddenly shone around the altar.

A series of array patterns appeared, instantly transforming into a massive light shield that enveloped the coffin.

“A protective array,” Ming Li frowned. “The temple indeed had a backup plan.”

Kai calmly observed the light shield, sensing the terrifying power contained within.

“A True Immortal Realm level array,” he said indifferently. “If it were before, I really wouldn’t have been able to handle it.”

With that, he waved his hand.

The Demon-Suppressing Tower flew out of his storage ring, hovering in mid-air, scattering layers of light.

“Now…”

Kai’s thoughts stirred, and the Demon-Suppressing Tower suddenly enlarged, transforming into a hundred-zhang-tall giant tower, crashing down!

Boom!

The giant tower collided with the light shield, unleashing a deafening roar.

The entire underground palace trembled violently, countless fragments of stone falling from the dome.

The Demon-Suppressing Tower emitted a faint glow, gradually pressing down on the light shield.

Although the light shield was powerful, under the crushing weight of the Demon-Suppressing Tower, it ultimately couldn't withstand it, and cracks began to appear.

Crack—crack—

the cracks multiplied, growing larger and larger.

Finally, with a deafening roar, the protective barrier shattered completely!

Kai retrieved the Demon-Suppressing Tower and slowly walked onto the altar.

He stood before the coffin, gazing calmly at the densely packed sealing runes.

"Venerable One, forgive me."

He raised his hand and slammed a palm onto the coffin.

Boom—!

The coffin exploded, and a terrifying aura instantly swept out.

A gigantic phantom emerged from the shattered coffin.

It was a majestic man, clad in black armor, with a dignified face, closed eyes, and an aura that emanated a suffocating pressure.

It was the lingering aura of the Ghost Clan's Venerable One, his mark from his lifetime.

The phantom hovered in mid-air, seemingly looking down upon the crowd below.

Yun Xi looked at the phantom, her eyes slightly reddening, and slowly knelt down.

Ming Li also knelt down, his expression solemn.

This was the Ghost Clan's ancestor, their revered hero.

Kai stood quietly in place, looking at the phantom, without saying a word.

The illusory figure hovered for a moment, then slowly opened its eyes.

They were deep eyes, seemingly containing the vicissitudes of countless ages.

Its gaze swept downwards, finally landing on Kai.

There was no anger, no resentment, only a faint sense of relief.

The illusory figure opened its mouth, uttering a low, ancient voice: "Thank you."

Those two short words seemed to have exhausted its last strength. As

the words fell, the illusory figure slowly dissipated, turning into countless specks of light, completely returning to nothingness.

At the same time, the enormous physical body began to disintegrate, turning into ashes and scattering with the wind.

Yun Xi knelt on the ground, tears streaming down her face.

“Respectfully bidding farewell to the Venerable One,”

Ming Li said, his head bowed, his voice choked with emotion.

Kai watched all this quietly, a sense of感慨(gǎnkǎi, a complex feeling of mixed emotions, often including sadness, regret, and a touch of melancholy) welling up within him.

An ancient, powerful being had thus completely vanished from the world.

There was no grand spectacle, no earth-shattering event.

Only a single “thank you,” expressing all the relief and liberation.

After a long while, Yun Xi slowly stood up, wiped away her tears, and looked at Kai.

“Thank you.”

Her voice was hoarse, yet utterly sincere.

Kai shook his head: “No need to thank me. Releasing the Venerable One is simply what I should do.”

Yun Xi looked at him, a complex emotion flashing in her eyes.

This man could have ignored this matter, could have simply done his own thing.

Yet he still came, still helped.

Not for any personal gain, but simply because he felt it was the right thing to do.

Yun Xi’s opinion of Kai deepened.

“Let’s go.”

Kai turned and walked away. Over the next few days, Kai and his group found the remaining sacred mountains of the temple and destroyed the Ghost Clan Venerable One’s physical body.

The temple was practically defunct, unguarded, making it easy for Kai and his group to destroy the Ghost Clan Venerable One’s body.

At this moment, Shen Tong was completely unaware, still hoping to use the secrets of the sacred mountains to turn the tables. After destroying all the sacred mountains of the temple, Kai and his group stood on the ruins of the last sacred mountain.

The mountain wind howled, swirling up clouds of ashes.

The physical bodies of the Ghost Clan Venerables, sealed for countless years, had now completely dissipated into the world, turning to dust and returning to nothingness.

Yun Xi stood at the edge of the ruins, gazing at everything before her, speechless for a long time.

Her feelings were complex.

As a Ghost Clan princess, destroying the physical bodies of her ancestors with her own hands was a grave offense.

Yet, she knew in her heart that it was the right thing to do. Allowing the physical bodies of her ancestors to continue to be used by the gods was the true disrespect.

“What are you thinking about?” Kai walked to her side and handed her a pot of water.

Yun Xi took it, took a sip, and said softly, “Nothing, just some feelings.”

Kai nodded, not asking further.

He knew Yun Xi was upset; anyone would need time to process such a thing.

In the distance, Ming Li and Liu Qianqian sat on a boulder, very close together, talking about something.

Liu Qianqian wore a faint smile, while Ming Li looked utterly bewildered, making Kai shake his head.

Yun Yao squatted to the side, listlessly fiddling with the pebbles on the ground, occasionally glancing up at the two with envy in her eyes.

Kai withdrew his gaze and looked at Yun Xi: “Next, I plan to go to the Holy Land of Light.”

Yun Xi was slightly taken aback: “The Holy Land of Light? What for?”

A cold glint flashed in Kai’s eyes: “There are two scores to settle.”

“Two scores?”

“The first, the Holy Purity Sect.”

Kai’s voice was calm, yet tinged with coldness, “They kept Yun Yao captive, using her as a pawn to cultivate with those of pure blood. I cannot tolerate this.”

Yun Xi glanced at Yun Yao not far away, but remained silent.

She had heard Ming Li mention Yun Yao’s background; it was indeed pitiful.

Raised by the Holy Purity Sect from a young age, her fate was not in her own hands, but she could only be manipulated by others.

If she hadn’t met Kai, she would have lived her entire life under someone else’s control.

“And the second score?” Yun Xi asked.

“The Divine Hall,”

Kai said calmly, “Back in the Holy Domain of Light, they deceived me, causing me to lose my essence and blood. Now that I’ve recovered, it’s time to pay them a visit.”

Yun Xi was silent for a moment, then nodded. “I’ll go with you.”

Kai looked at her, a hint of a smile in his eyes: “Aren’t you in a hurry to return to the Fifteenth Heaven?”

“There’s no use in being in a hurry.”

Yun Xi shook her head. “The matter of the Gate of Reincarnation still needs your help. Since you’re going to the Holy Domain of Light, I’ll accompany you.”

Kai nodded, not refusing.

Having an expert like Yun Xi was always a good thing.

“Let’s go.” He turned and walked towards the group. “Next stop, the Holy Domain of Light.”

The Holy Domain of Light, the Holy Purity Sect.

The mountain gate was majestic and imposing.

As one of the oldest forces in the Holy Domain of Light, the Holy Purity Sect occupied an entire spiritual vein, with thousands of disciples and countless experts. Within a radius of ten thousand miles, no one dared to provoke them.

But today, five uninvited guests arrived at the gate of the Holy Purity Sect.

Kai stood at the forefront, followed by Yun Xi, Ming Li, Liu Qianqian, and Yun Yao.

He gazed calmly at the majestic mountain gate before him, a faint smile playing on his lips.

“The Holy Purity Sect…this is it.”

Yun Yao stood beside him, her body trembling slightly as she looked at the familiar gate.

She had lived here for a hundred years, raised in captivity from childhood, taught how to serve men, how to sacrifice her primordial yin.

Countless times she had thought of escaping, yet she had never dared to take that step.

Now, she had returned.

Not as a pawn, but as an avenger.

“Don’t be afraid,” Kai glanced at her, his voice gentle. “I’m here.”

Yun Yao took a deep breath and nodded vigorously.

“Let’s go.” Kai lifted his foot and walked towards the mountain gate.

Just as they reached the gate, several figures rushed out from within, blocking their path.

Leading them was a middle-aged man in a blue robe, his face arrogant; he was clearly a disciple in charge of the Holy Purity Sect.

His gaze swept over Kai and his group, his brow furrowing as he coldly said, “Halt! This is sacred ground of the Holy Purity Sect. Unauthorized personnel are not permitted to enter!”

Kai stopped, looked at him, and said calmly, “Get out of the way.”

“What did you say?”

The managing disciple was stunned, then flew into a rage, “Insolence! Do you know where you are? How dare you cause trouble here? You’re asking for it!”

Kai didn’t bother arguing with him and waved his hand.

A golden light flashed, and the managing disciple didn’t even have time to scream before he was sent flying backward, crashing into the mountain gate, spitting blood, and falling unconscious.

The other disciples were shocked and drew their swords, shouting, “Enemy attack! Enemy attack!”

Kai didn’t even glance at them and walked straight into the mountain gate.

The disciples tried to stop him, but Ming Li stepped forward, his ghostly energy surging, directly blasting them away.

“Those who block the way shall die,” Ming Li said coldly.

The group entered the Holy Purity Sect without hindrance.

Inside the mountain gate, chaos had already broken out.

The alarm bells rang, and countless disciples surged in from all directions, surrounding Kai and his companions.

Leading them was an elderly man with white hair, his aura overwhelming; he was a peak ninth-grade Upper Immortal.

“Who dares to trespass into the Holy Purity Sect!” the white-haired elder roared.

Kai stopped, looked at him, and said calmly, “Summon your sect leader.”

The white-haired elder was furious: “Arrogant brat! Who do you think you are? Do you even deserve to see our sect leader?”

Kai smiled.

He slowly raised his right hand, his five fingers forming a fist.

In an instant, golden dragon energy soared into the sky, and a terrifying pressure instantly enveloped the entire Holy Purity Sect.

The surrounding disciples felt breathless, their legs went weak, and they all collapsed to their knees.

The white-haired elder’s face changed drastically, his eyes filled with shock: “An Upper Immortal… a fourth-grade cultivator with such strength? This… how is this possible!”

He had lived for thousands of years and seen countless geniuses, but he had never seen, or even heard of, anyone who could unleash the power of a True Immortal at the fourth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm!

Kai ignored his shock and simply said, “Now, can you call your sect leader out?”

The white-haired old man trembled, gritted his teeth, and turned to run.

Kai didn’t chase after him, but simply stood there, hands behind his back.

Inside the mountain gate, everything was in ruins.

The disciples of the Holy Purity Sect, kneeling on the ground, trembled, not daring to raise their heads.

The pressure emanating from Kai was tangible, making it hard for them to breathe.

Kai stood calmly in place, hands behind his back, his gaze fixed on the depths of the Holy Purity Sect.

Yun Xi stood beside him, surrounded by ghostly energy, her expression indifferent.

Ming Li and Liu Qianqian stood side by side, while Yun Yao stood behind Kai, looking at the familiar mountain gate, her eyes filled with both fear and anticipation.

A moment later, several powerful auras soared into the sky from the depths of the Holy Purity Sect.

The leader, dressed in a white robe embroidered with golden lotuses at the hem, possessed a refined face and a gentle smile. He was none other than the Vice Leader of the Holy Purity Sect, True Person Qingxu.

Behind him followed more than ten elders, the weakest being at the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, and the strongest reaching the True Immortal Realm.

True Person Qingxu landed before Kai, his gaze sweeping over Kai and the others before finally settling on Yun Yao. A hint of surprise flashed in his eyes, followed by a hearty laugh.

“So it’s you, young friend Chen.”

His smile was radiant, his tone warm, as if he were seeing an old friend he hadn’t seen in years. “Young friend Chen, what are you doing? I kindly betrothed Yun Yao to you, and not only are you ungrateful, but you’ve also come to attack my Holy Purity Sect?”

Kai looked at him calmly, without speaking.

Master Qingxu continued with a smile, “Young friend Chen, you possess a Saint-grade bloodline, and I have genuine feelings for you. If you don’t like Yun Yao, I can find you another one. There are plenty of female

disciples in the sect; you can choose any you like. Why resort to violence and damage our harmony?”

Kai remained silent.

Master Qingxu’s smile froze slightly before returning to normal.

“Young friend Chen, I’m giving you one last chance. Surrender, offer up your bloodline, and I might spare your life, even allowing you to join my Holy Pure Sect as a protector, enjoying endless resources. What do you say?”

Kai finally spoke.

He said calmly, “Finished?”

Master Qingxu was taken aback.

Kai’s lips curled into a faint smile.

“Finished? Then die.”

Before the words were finished, his figure vanished instantly.

The next instant, he appeared before an elder of the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm.

The elder was shocked and hurriedly raised his hand to block, but his movements were as slow as a snail in Kai’s eyes.

Kai raised his hand and struck down with a palm.

“Bang!”

The elder’s head exploded instantly, blood splattering everywhere, and his body crashed to the ground.

“What?!”

The other elders were horrified and retreated hastily.

Kai gave them no chance.

His figure was like a ghost, weaving through the crowd.

With each palm strike, an elder died.

With each punch, an elder was sent flying.

In just a few breaths, more than ten elders at the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, and even the True Immortal Realm, all lay in pools of blood, lifeless.

Kai stopped, stood with his hands behind his back, his robes spotless.

He looked at Qingxu Zhenren and said indifferently, “That’s it?”

The smile on Qingxu Zhenren’s face froze completely, replaced by endless fear.

He stared wide-eyed at the corpses on the ground, his body trembling violently.

“You…you…how is this possible?! You’re only a fourth-grade Upper Immortal, how could you…”

He tried to escape.

He turned and ran, his spiritual power surging wildly, transforming into a streak of light as he desperately fled into the depths of the Holy Pure Sect.

Kai watched his retreating figure without moving.

He simply raised his hand and casually pointed.

A golden sword aura shot out from his fingertip, as fast as lightning, instantly catching up with True Person Qingxu.

“Pfft!”

The sword aura pierced through his back, directly penetrating his dantian.

True Person Qingxu let out a shrill scream, falling from mid-air and crashing to the ground with a “bang,” spitting out blood, his aura instantly weakening.

Kai stepped forward, slowly walking up to him, looking down at him.

True Person Qingxu collapsed to the ground, trembling all over, his eyes filled with fear and despair.

“No…don’t kill me…I…I can give you everything…resources, cultivation techniques, women…I’ll give you whatever you want…”

Kai didn’t speak, but simply turned his head to look at Yun Yao.

“Yun Yao, come here.”

Yun Yao was stunned for a moment, then reacted and quickly stepped forward.

She looked at Qingxu Zhenren, who was slumped on the ground. This man, who had once been high and mighty and controlled her destiny, was now crawling on the ground like a dead dog, his eyes filled with fear and pleading.

“Yun Yao! Yun Yao!”

Qingxu Zhenren hurriedly crawled towards her, his voice trembling, “You…you must speak for me! I…I’ve been good to you! All these years you’ve eaten my food and used my things, I’ve never mistreated you! Please plead for me, let him spare my life!”

Yun Yao looked at him, her eyes filled with complex emotions.

Good?

She remembered the days she was kept in captivity, the arranged Daoist partners, the pills she was forced to swallow.

“You’ve been good to me?”

she repeated softly, her voice eerily calm.

“Have you ever considered me a human being?”

Qingxu Zhenren was stunned.

Yun Yao continued, “You treated me like a tool, a pawn, a commodity. You never asked if I was willing; you only knew how to arrange, force, and threaten. You said it was for my own good, but do you know how many times I wanted to die?”

Qingxu Zhenren opened his mouth, wanting to argue, but couldn’t utter a word.

Looking at him like this, Yun Yao’s last shred of hesitation vanished.

She drew her long sword from her waist, the tip pressed against Qingxu Zhenren’s throat.

Qingxu Zhenren trembled violently, tears streaming down his face: “No…no…Yun Yao, I beg you…I…I can give you freedom…I can give you everything…”

Yun Yao ignored him.

She closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and then opened them.

A flash of sword light.

Qingxu Zhenren's head rolled to the ground, blood gushing out.

Yun Yao gripped the sword, standing there, her body trembling slightly.

She looked at the head, that once high and mighty face, now filled with terror and resentment.

After a long while, she raised her head, looked at Kai, and tears welled up in her eyes.

"Young Master Chen…I…I've taken my revenge…"

Kai walked over and gently patted her shoulder.

"Yes, you did a good job."

Yun Yao threw herself into his arms and burst into tears.

Yun Xi stood aside, watching this scene without saying a word.

Ming Li and Liu Qianqian exchanged a glance, but remained silent.

A moment later, Yun Yao finished crying, lifted her head from Kai's embrace, and wiped away her tears.

"Young Master Chen, what's next…"

Kai turned around, looking towards the depths of the Holy Purity Sect, his gaze icy.

"What's next?"

A slight smile curled at the corners of his lips.

"What's next, of course, is to destroy this Holy Purity Sect."

He took a step forward, walking towards the depths of the Holy Purity Sect.

Yun Xi and the others followed behind him.

Along the way, countless Holy Purity Sect disciples surged forward, trying to stop him.

Kai didn't even glance at them.

He simply walked forward step by step.

With each step, a sword light would slash out.

With each sword light, several disciples would die.

He moved through the Holy Purity Sect as if strolling in a garden.

Those disciples were utterly vulnerable before him.

Whether they were eighth-grade or ninth-grade Immortals, whether they were ordinary disciples or guardian elders, as long as they came within a zhang (approximately 3.3 meters) of him, they would be instantly killed by his sword energy. Blood stained every inch of the Holy Purity Sect's land.

Screams echoed throughout the mountain.

Just then, a terrifying aura surged from the deepest part of the Holy Purity Sect.

Its power far surpassed that of anyone before it.

True Immortal Realm, Second Rank.

A golden light flew out from the depths of the sect, landing before Kai.

It was an old man with white hair, a dignified face, and a terrifying pressure emanating from him.

He wore a golden robe, a jade crown, and held a golden longsword; he was the Holy Purity Sect's leader, whose Daoist name was Qingxuan.

Looking at the corpses scattered on the ground, his face was ashen, his eyes filled with rage.

"You audacious madman! How dare you slaughter my Holy Purity Sect disciples! You're courting death!"

he roared, his golden light surging, the terrifying pressure of a True Immortal Realm Second Rank descending upon Kai like a mountain.

Yun Yao's face turned deathly pale, and she instinctively took a step back.

Yun Xi frowned slightly, her ghostly aura surging, preparing to attack.

Kai, however, smiled.

He looked at the Qingxuan Sect Master, his eyes showing no fear, but rather a hint of amusement.

"Second Rank True Immortal?"

he repeated softly, his tone flat. "Interesting."

The Qingxuan Sect Master roared in fury: "Arrogant brat! I'll show you what the True Immortal Realm is!"

He raised his hand and unleashed a sword strike.

The sword light, like a rainbow, carried a world-destroying force, slashing down towards Kai.

This single strike was enough to cleave mountains and sever rivers.

Kai calmly watched the sword light, neither dodging nor avoiding it.

Just as the sword light was about to strike, he raised his hand and threw a punch.

The fist's energy was like a dragon, radiating golden light.

"Boom—!"

The fist and sword collided, unleashing a deafening roar.

A terrifying shockwave swept in all directions, instantly collapsing surrounding buildings and filling the sky with dust.

When the dust settled, Kai stood motionless.

The Qingxuan Sect Master, however, staggered back several steps, his expression drastically changing.

"This... how is this possible?!"

He stared wide-eyed at Kai as if he were looking at a monster.

He was a True Immortal Realm Second Grade!

This young man before him was merely an Upper Immortal Realm Fourth Grade; how could he possibly force him back with a single punch?

Kai looked at him and said calmly, "Is that all?"

The Qingxuan Sect Master's face turned ashen. He roared and attacked again.

Sword light surged continuously, each strike containing earth-shattering power.

Kai remained standing, neither dodging nor avoiding.

He simply raised his hand and unleashed punch after punch.

Each punch landed precisely on the sword light.

Each punch shattered the sword light.

The Qingxuan Sect Master grew increasingly alarmed and terrified with each blow.

This young man was not human!

He turned and ran.

But after only a few steps, a golden light caught up with him.

Kai appeared before him, raised his hand, and struck down with a palm.

“Bang!”

The Qingxuan Sect Master’s body flew backward like a broken kite, crashing heavily to the ground, spitting out blood.

Kai walked up to him, looking down at him.

The Qingxuan Sect Master trembled all over, his eyes filled with fear and despair.

“You…who exactly are you…”

Kai looked at him and said calmly, “My name is Kai.”

As soon as he finished speaking, he struck down with his palm.

The Qingxuan Sect Master’s head instantly exploded, his life force extinguished.

A second-grade True Immortal Realm expert had died.

Kai withdrew his hand, stood with his hands behind his back, his robes still spotless.

He turned to look at Yun Xi and the others.

“Let’s go, let’s destroy this Holy Qing Sect.”

Yun Xi nodded.

Ming Li and Liu Qianqian exchanged a glance, their eyes filled with shock.

Yun Yao looked at Kai, her eyes filled with admiration.

Half an hour later, within the Holy Qing Sect’s mountain gate, not a single survivor remained.

Those wicked disciples, those elders who aided and abetted the evil, were all dead.

Blood flowed like rivers.

Bones piled up like mountains.

Kai stood outside the mountain gate, glancing back.

That once majestic mountain was now a ruin.

A faint smile appeared on his lips.

“Let’s go.”

He turned and, leading Yunxi and the others, disappeared into the distance.

Behind them, thick smoke billowed and flames soared into the sky above the ruins of the Holy Pure Sect

. The once invincible Holy Pure Sect had been annihilated.

Meanwhile, at the foot of Holy Light Peak in the Holy Domain of Light,

in a simple stone house, Shen Tong sat cross-legged on a futon, meditating with his eyes closed.

Since being assigned to patrol at the foot of the mountain, he had lived in this stone house.

The house was small, with only a bed, a table, and a futon—pitifully simple. Compared to the magnificent palace of the former Temple Master, this was worse than a doghouse.

But Shen Tong didn't complain.

He endured it.

These past few days, he and the Temple disciples had patrolled on time every day, handing over duties on time, not daring to slack off in the slightest.

People from the Temple would come to inspect from time to time, looking them down with condescending eyes, occasionally even making a few critical remarks.

Shen Tong endured it all.

He was waiting.

Waiting for an opportunity.

Once the Divine Hall lowered its guard, once his injuries healed, and once he found the right opportunity, he would lead his disciples away to seek another way out.

As for the secret of the Holy Mountain… that was his last trump card.

As long as he had those resources and the physical bodies of those Venerables, he would have leverage.

Whether negotiating with the Divine Hall or making a comeback in the future, those things would be his capital to turn the tables.

Shen Tong opened his eyes and looked out the window.

Outside the window, several temple disciples sat on stones, staring blankly into the distance.

Their eyes had long lost their former sharpness, replaced only by numbness and weariness.

Shen Tong felt a pang of pain in his heart.

It was all because of his incompetence as temple master that these disciples suffered.

“Just bear with it a little longer,” he murmured softly, “Just bear with it a little longer, there will always be a chance…”

Before he could finish speaking, the door to the stone house was pushed open.

Shen Tong frowned and looked up.

Entering was one of his few remaining elders, surnamed Zhou, an old man who had followed him for thousands of years.

At this moment, Elder Zhou’s face was filled with anxiety, his forehead covered in cold sweat, and his lips trembled.

“Palace Master…Palace Master…Something terrible has happened!”

Shen Tong’s heart tightened, and he quickly stood up. “What happened? Is the Divine Hall going to attack us?”

“No…no…” Elder Zhou gasped for breath, his voice trembling. “It’s…it’s the Holy Mountain…our Divine Hall’s Holy Mountain…” Shen

Tong's pupils shrank. "What happened to the Holy Mountain?!"

Elder Zhou knelt on the ground with a thud, tears streaming down his face. "All destroyed! Several Holy Mountains are all destroyed! The Venerable One's physical body…is also completely destroyed!"

Boom—!

Shen Tong felt a deafening explosion in his mind, his whole body froze on the spot, his face instantly turning ashen.

"You…what did you say?"

He grabbed Elder Zhou's collar, his eyes bloodshot, his voice hoarse. "Say it again! What happened to the Holy Mountain?!"

Elder Zhou cried. "Palace Master, I just received a message from the spies left in the Fourteenth Heaven, saying…saying that someone broke into our Holy Mountain, destroyed all the protective formations, and…destroyed the Venerable One's physical body! Not a single one was left!"

"Who?! Who did this?!"

"It's…it's Kai!"

Kai!

These two words exploded in Shen Tong's mind like thunder.

That reincarnation of the Dragon Emperor, the culprit who brought ruin to the temple!

Destroying the temple wasn't enough for him; he also destroyed the Holy Mountain, destroying his last hope!

"Ah—!"

Shen Tong roared to the sky, unleashing a palm strike. A violent burst of spiritual power erupted, instantly shattering the entire stone house, sending rubble flying and dust billowing everywhere.

He stood amidst the ruins, trembling, his eyes bloodshot, his spiritual power in complete disarray, nearly driven mad.

“Kai! Kai!!!”

he screamed, his voice like that of a wounded beast, filled with rage, despair, and resentment.

“You destroyed my temple! Killed my disciples! Now you won’t even spare my last trump card! I, Shen Tong, am sworn enemies with you! We will fight to the death!!” He unleashed

another palm strike, the ground cracking and rubble flying everywhere.

Several temple disciples rushed over upon hearing the commotion. Seeing their master’s state, they knelt in terror, too afraid to move.

Shen Tong, having vented his anger for so long, finally collapsed, kneeling on one knee, gasping for breath.

His eyes were bloodshot.

His heart was filled with despair.

It was over.

Completely over.

The Holy Mountain was destroyed, the Venerable’s body was destroyed, and his last bargaining chip was gone.

What could he use to negotiate with the temple?

How could he rise again?

How could he avenge his fallen disciples?

Elder Zhou crawled to his side, weeping, “Temple Master, please take care of yourself! We…we haven’t reached the end of the road yet…”

Shen Tong looked up at him, a bitter smile on his face: “Not at the end of the road yet? Tell me, what road is left?”

Elder Zhou opened his mouth, but nothing came out.

Yes, what road was left?

The temple was gone, the Holy Mountain was gone, and only two hundred disciples remained.

Now they were living under someone else’s roof, being treated like dogs.

Once the Divine Hall learns that the Holy Mountain has been destroyed, that they have no more bargaining chips…

Shen Tong trembled.

The Divine Hall!

If Yao Chen knew that the Holy Mountain had been destroyed, that they had no more leverage, what would that ruthless guy do?

He remembered Yao Chen’s gentle smile, the way he casually killed his elders, and his words, “Wait until they’ve squeezed all their value dry.”

Now, the value is gone.

Then… what reason do they have to exist?

“No… no…”

Shen Tong suddenly stood up, his face ashen. “He can’t know! Absolutely not!”

He turned to the elders who had surrounded him, lowering his voice, his tone urgent and fierce: “Listen! The news of the Holy Mountain’s destruction must not be leaked! No one is allowed to tell! Especially the people from the Divine Hall!” The elders

were shocked: “Palace Master, this… can this be kept secret?”

“We have to keep it secret even if we can’t!”

Shen Tong gritted his teeth. “As long as Yao Chen doesn’t know, we have time! We have a chance!”

He paused, a resolute glint in his eyes.

“We can’t stay here any longer.”

“What does the Palace Master mean…?”

“Go.” Shen Tong said slowly and deliberately, “Leave the Holy Domain of Light and continue our escape.”

Elder Zhou said in a trembling voice, “But…but Palace Master, where can we go? We can’t go back to the Temple, we can’t stay in the Holy Domain of Light, are we supposed to go to the Fifteenth Heaven? It’s more dangerous there than here!” Shen

Tong was silent for a moment, then slowly said, “Go to the Demon Realm.”

Upon hearing this, several elders were shocked.

“The Demon Realm?! Palace Master, those are a bunch of lunatics! We have a grudge against them!” ”

So what if we have a grudge?”

Shen Tong said coldly, “Ning Zhi and the Demon Dragon lineage are powerful now. Since they can run rampant in the Fourteenth Heaven,

they must have a place in the Demon Realm as well. Let's go find them and seek refuge with them!"

"But...but they killed so many of our people!"

Shen Tong closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

"I know."

He opened his eyes, his eyes filled with bitterness and determination.

"But do we have any other choice now? The Divine Hall can't accommodate us, and we can't go back to the Divine Temple. Only the Demon Realm, only Ning Zhi's side, might offer a glimmer of hope."

"That Ning Zhi..." an elder hesitated, "Will he take us in? He even killed the Grand Elder when we were negotiating the cooperation."

Shen Tong remained silent for a long time before slowly saying, "I don't know. But it's better than waiting to die here. Besides, this time it's not cooperation, but surrendering to him."

He turned around and looked at the disciples of the Divine Temple who had gathered around him. Seeing the confusion and fear in their eyes, his heart ached.

"Gentlemen," he said in a deep voice, "I know I've made you suffer with me. The temple is gone, the holy mountain is gone, and I, as the temple master, have given you nothing."

"But now, we still have a path. A very dangerous path, one that may lead to death, one that may lead to a fate worse than death. But at least, it's a path."

He paused, enunciating each word clearly: "Those who are willing to follow me, gather outside the mountain gate at midnight tonight. Those who are unwilling... stay and fend for yourselves. I don't blame you."

The disciples looked at each other, remained silent for a moment, and then knelt down in unison.

“We swear to follow our temple master to the death!”

Shen Tong looked at them, his eyes reddening, and nodded heavily.

“Good! Good! You’re all commendable!”

He turned around, looked into the distance, and a ruthless glint flashed in his eyes.

Kai, you wait.

And Yao Chen, you wait too.

As long as I, Shen Tong, live, this debt will be settled sooner or later!

Meanwhile, at the summit of Holy Light Peak, in the main hall of the temple,

Yao Chen sat on his throne, holding a communication jade slip in his hand, his brows slightly furrowed.

“Kai… destroyed the sacred mountains of the temple?”

Below, a guardian elder bowed and said, “Yes, Hall Master. We just received news that Kai led his men and destroyed all the remaining sacred mountains of the temple. The physical bodies of those Venerables have also been reduced to ashes.”

Yao Chen was silent for a moment, then suddenly laughed.

“Interesting.”

He put down the jade slip, a hint of amusement flashing in his eyes.

“This Kai is quite a character. The temple besieged him, but he turned the tables and wiped out the temple’s stronghold. That old codger Shen Tong, he probably can’t even cry now, can he?”

The guardian elder probed, “Hall Master, should we… still keep Shen Tong and the others? With the Holy Mountain destroyed, they’re worthless now.”

Yao Chen glanced at him and said calmly, “What’s the rush?”

He stood up, slowly walked down the steps, and stood with his hands behind his back.

“Shen Tong is probably more panicked than anyone else right now. He knows that once I find out the Holy Mountain is destroyed, they’ll be useless. He’ll definitely try to escape.”

“Then we…”

“Let them escape.”

A cold smile appeared on Yao Chen’s lips. “Send people to follow them and see where they’re going. If we can follow the clues and find other things they’ve hidden, wouldn’t that be even better?”

“Hall Master is wise!”

Yao Chen waved his hand, and the guardian elder bowed and withdrew.

Only Yao Chen remained in the hall.

He gazed out the window, his eyes deep and thoughtful.

“Kai…”

he murmured softly, the smile on his lips growing increasingly meaningful.

“Interesting, truly getting more and more interesting.”

Night fell at the foot of Holy Light Peak.

Shen Tong, leading over two hundred disciples, silently departed their camp under the cover of darkness.

They dared not use the teleportation array, fearing discovery by the Divine Hall. They could only proceed on foot, traversing mountains and valleys, rushing towards the border of the Holy Light Domain.

Shen Tong led the way, his eyes wary, his spiritual energy subtly circulating.

Behind him, the disciples followed closely, not daring to make a sound.

The night wind blew, swirling fallen leaves.

Shen Tong’s figure appeared exceptionally lonely in the moonlight, yet it exuded a stubborn resilience.

And behind Shen Tong and his companions, a faintly visible figure followed closely behind!