the mans Decree: Kai Ping / Chen Ping

Chapter 6281 - 6287

Kai rested for three more days in the Divine Palace.

During those three days, his body recovered rapidly.

The power brought by the Heart of the Northern Abyss was still slowly integrating within him, his cultivation at the peak of the seventh rank of the Upper Immortal Realm was completely stabilized, and his chaotic power was much more solidified than before.

He even took the time to test his limits; with a single sword strike, he was able to slice off half of the thousand-foot-tall ice peak outside the Divine Palace.

Jiang Xuelan stood beside the ruins of the ice peak, looking at the smooth, mirror-like cut, and remained silent for a long time.

“If you go all out now, no cultivator below the fifth rank of the True Immortal Realm should be your match,” she gave a fair assessment.

Kai sheathed his sword, showing little excitement.

The improvement in his strength was certainly gratifying, but he was always preoccupied with another matter:

Yunxian City.

Would Ning Zhi take advantage of his absence to attack Yunxian City?

Could Long Zhan and Liu Wanqing defend it?

Had Yun Xi and the others returned?

These questions gnawed at his heart like worms.

On the morning of the fourth day, Kai found Jiang Xuelan.

She stood beneath the Tree of Life, gazing up at its golden canopy.

Morning light filtered through the leaves, bathing her in white, her long hair as black as ink, making her appear as serene as a painting.

“I’m leaving,” Kai said bluntly.

Jiang Xuelan didn’t turn around, but her shoulders stiffened slightly.

The change was subtle, so subtle that Kai wouldn’t have noticed it if his perception hadn’t been greatly enhanced.

“Your friend has been resurrected and left safely. You truly have no reason to stay here.”

Her voice was calm, almost cold.

Kai walked to her side, standing shoulder to shoulder.

“I promised you three things. Drawing blood counts as one, accompanying you to the ancient battlefield is another. And the last one… have you thought it through?”

Jiang Xuelan finally turned to look at him.

Something flickered in her deep eyes.

There was hesitation, struggle, and a hint of… an emotion Kai couldn’t quite decipher.

“I have,” she said.

“Speak.”

Jiang Xuelan took a deep breath, turned around, and faced Kai directly.

“Help me restore the Ice God lineage.”

Kai was taken aback: “What?”

“The Ice God lineage is now down to just me.”

Jiang Xuelan’s voice was soft, yet every word was clear. “The remnant soul of Bei Mingyuan is within you. You are the only person in this world with a deep connection to the Ice God’s bloodline. If you don’t help me, the Ice God lineage is truly finished.”

Kai frowned: “How can I help you? I’m not a member of the God race.”

“You have the Ice God’s bloodline within you.”

Jiang Xuelan stared into his eyes. “After our dual cultivation, the power of the Ice God lineage has been fused into your chaotic power. If you’re willing, you can use this power to awaken more people who possess the latent genes of the Ice God’s bloodline, allowing them to reawaken.”

Kai was silent for a moment.

“What do you mean by awakening?”

Jiang Xuelan took out an ice-blue jade slip from her sleeve and handed it to him.

“This is the Bloodline Sensing Technique of the Ice God lineage. After cultivating it, you can sense all those within a radius of ten thousand miles who possess the latent genes of the Ice God bloodline.

These people are scattered throughout the Heavenly Realm, and they themselves are unaware that the blood of the Ice God lineage flows within them. As long as you find them and activate their bloodline with the power of chaos, they can reawaken.”

Kai took the jade slip but did not immediately examine it.

“Even if I find these people and awaken them, so what?”

“The Ice God lineage declined not because it lacked talent, but because of the targeting by other races within the God Clan. Now that the God Clan is led by the God Emperor lineage, will they sit idly by and watch the Ice God lineage rise again?” Kai asked.

Jiang Xuelan’s expression changed slightly.

Kai was right.

The decline of the Ice God lineage, on the surface, was due to the dilution and degeneration of the bloodline, but the fundamental reason was the power struggle within the God Clan.

Years ago, a female cultivator from the Ice God lineage eloped with an outsider, violating the ironclad laws of the divine race. The Divine Emperor lineage seized this opportunity, uniting with other races to suppress the Ice God lineage for thousands of years.

Experts were assassinated, resources were cut off, and traditions were destroyed… this is how the Ice God lineage gradually marched towards its demise.

Now, the Divine Emperor lineage has ruled the divine race for tens of thousands of years, its power deeply entrenched.

Even if Kai helps her awaken countless more Ice God bloodline awakeners, as long as the Divine Emperor lineage exists, the Ice God lineage will never be able to hold its head high.

“I know,” Jiang Xuelan’s voice lowered, “but I don’t care.”

Kai looked at her.

“The glory of the Ice God lineage cannot be recreated by hiding.”

Jiang Xuelan's gaze hardened, even carrying a hint of stubbornness. "If the Divine Emperor lineage wants to obstruct us, then destroy the Divine Emperor lineage. If the divine race's alliance system targets the Ice God lineage, then let this system collapse."

Kai gasped.

"Do you know what you're saying? Destroy the Divine Emperor's lineage? Collapse the Divine Alliance? This is tantamount to waging war against the entire Divine Race."

"I know,"

Jiang Xuelan's tone was terrifyingly calm. "I've waited so many years, not to keep waiting. Kai, you have the remnant soul of Bei Mingyuan within you, the power of the Ice God's lineage flows through you, you are a part of this. You cannot stand aside."

Kai remained silent for a long time.

He remembered Jiang Xuelan kneeling before him, remembered her vulnerability as she said, her eyes reddening, "The Ice God's lineage cannot be severed in my hands."

He remembered her desperate protection of him on the ancient battlefield, remembered the relief she felt when she gave him the Heart of Bei Mingyuan.

This woman had already sacrificed too much for her race.

"What do you plan to do?" Kai asked.

Jiang Xuelan's eyes brightened.

"I'll go with you."

Kai was taken aback. "With me?"

“You go back to Yunxian City, and I’ll go with you,”

Jiang Xuelan said. “Didn’t you say that Yunxian City is facing a threat from the Demon Clan? I’ll help you defend the city. In exchange, you help me find awakened individuals with the Ice God’s bloodline in the various heavens of the Celestial Realm.”

“What about the Divine Palace?”

Jiang Xuelan glanced at the Tree of Life behind her, a hint of reluctance flashing in her eyes, but it quickly disappeared.

“The Divine Palace existed to protect the last spark of the Ice God lineage. Now that the spark resides within me, the Divine Palace has no further reason to exist.”

She turned, facing the direction of the Divine Palace, and raised her right hand.

Ice-blue divine light surged from her palm, transforming into countless threads of light that extended towards every palace and every stone chamber within the Divine Palace.

The instant those threads touched the buildings, everything within—books, pills, magical artifacts, spirit stones—was swept up by the threads, turning into streams of light that disappeared into Jiang Xuelan’s sleeves.

In mere moments, the entire Divine Palace was completely emptied, leaving only the empty stone walls and the Tree of Life. “What about the disciples of the Divine Palace?” Kai asked.

“The Divine Palace only has twelve disciples, all orphans I picked up from various places,”

Jiang Xuelan said calmly. “I arranged for them to be placed in a safe place long ago. The disbandment of the Divine Palace is actually a relief for them.”

Kai looked at this decisive woman, a complex emotion welling up in his heart.

She had prepared for everything long ago.

Not today, not yesterday, perhaps from the moment she decided to cultivate with him, she had already been planning all of this.

“Aren’t you afraid I’ll refuse?” Kai asked.

Jiang Xuelan looked at him, the corners of her mouth slightly upturned.

“Would you?”

Kai smiled bitterly.

He wouldn’t.

Not because of the promise, but because he could no longer treat the woman in front of him as an insignificant passerby.

The life-and-death struggle on the ancient battlefield, the side-by-side battle under the Ruins of Return, and that night under the Tree of Life… Some things, once they happen, can never be undone.

“Let’s go,”

Kai sighed. “But before we leave, I need to try out that bloodline sensing technique you mentioned. It would be troublesome if you realized you’d forgotten something after we left and had to come back.”

Jiang Xuelan chuckled and handed him the jade slip.

Kai sat cross-legged, pressed the jade slip to his forehead, and closed his eyes.

The bloodline sensing technique wasn’t complicated; essentially, it was an ability to perceive bloodline fluctuations.

Kai already possessed the Ice God bloodline, and with the power of chaos as a medium, his cultivation was twice as effective.

In less than the time it takes for an incense stick to burn, he mastered this secret technique.

He activated the Ice God bloodline within him, spreading his perception in all directions.

Within a thousand miles, there was no reaction.

Two thousand miles.

Three thousand miles.

When the range of perception expanded to five thousand miles, Kai's brow suddenly furrowed.

He sensed something.

In the southeast direction, about four thousand seven hundred miles away, there was a faint signal.

The signal was very weak, almost drowned out by the surrounding spiritual energy, but it was undeniably present—the faint fluctuations emitted by the dormant latent genes of the Ice God's bloodline.

"There's someone,"

Kai said to Jiang Xuelan, opening his eyes. "Southeast, 4,700 li away."

A flicker of surprise crossed Jiang Xuelan's eyes, but she quickly suppressed it.

"Only one person?"

Kai nodded. “Only one person. However, my perception range is only 5,000 li; I can’t sense anything further. Perhaps when my strength increases, the range will be larger.”

Jiang Xuelan was silent for a moment, then sighed softly.

“One is good. At least it proves that the flame of the Ice God’s lineage hasn’t been completely extinguished.”

She looked up at the Tree of Life, then turned and walked towards the outside of the Divine Palace.

“Let’s go.”

Kai stood up and followed behind her.

The two passed through the Ice Pillar Forest, through the Gale Zone of the Ruins, heading south.

Kai looked back at the hidden place covered in ice and snow, a feeling of being in another world welling up inside him.

When he arrived, he was alone, exhausted and on the verge of death.

When he left, he was with two people, his strength greatly increased, and he had a woman by his side who wanted to rebuild a race with him.

Fate is truly unpredictable.

The two traveled south for about two days.

Kai’s injuries had completely healed, and Jiang Xuelan had almost recovered from her exhaustion.

As they traveled, they exchanged cultivation insights; more accurately, Jiang Xuelan was guiding Kai on how to better utilize the Ice God bloodline within him.

“Your chaotic power is too domineering. Every time you use the Ice God bloodline, you unconsciously mix other powers into it,”

Jiang Xuelan frowned. “While this increases the power, it greatly reduces the tempering effect on the Ice God bloodline.”

“Then what should I do?” Kai humbly asked.

“Pure,”

Jiang Xuelan said with just one word. “The core of the Ice God lineage’s power is ‘purity.’ You must learn to strip away the other components from the chaotic power, leaving only the purest Ice God power.”

Kai tried to follow her method, and the effect was indeed much better.

Although not yet completely “pure,” it was already much better than before.

At noon on the third day, the two arrived at an open plain.

Kai suddenly stopped.

“What’s wrong?” Jiang Xuelan asked.

Kai didn’t speak, but simply raised his head and looked north.

In that direction, an aura he knew all too well was rapidly approaching.

That aura was scorching, domineering, and filled with a madness capable of destroying everything.

It was Ning Zhi.

“What’s wrong?”

Jiang Xuelan asked again; she had already sensed Kai’s unusual behavior.

“A guest has arrived,” Kai’s voice was calm, but his eyes sharpened like knives. “An old friend.”

As soon as he finished speaking, a black dot appeared on the northern horizon.

The dot grew larger and closer, like a black meteor, trailing a long tail of flame, hurtling towards the two.

In just a few breaths, the black streak of light landed a hundred feet in front of them.

The light dissipated, revealing two figures.

Ning Zhi.

And Su Yuqi.

Ning Zhi remained the same, dressed in jet-black robes, hands clasped behind his back, a faint demonic aura swirling around him.

His presence was even stronger than when they last met, clearly indicating he hadn’t been idle during this time.

And beside him, Su Yuqi…

Kai’s gaze fell upon Su Yuqi, his heart feeling as if gripped tightly by an invisible hand.

She wore a fiery red dress, her long hair cascading down, her features exquisitely beautiful.

A faint firelight surrounded her, warm and bright, yet possessing an aloofness that kept everyone at a distance.

Her eyes… were the same as when they last met, empty and indifferent, as if she were looking at a stranger.

No, even less than a stranger.

A stranger would at least attract her attention, but Kai, in her eyes, wasn't even worth a second glance.

"Kai,"

Ning Zhi spoke, a hint of surprise in his voice, "What are you doing here?"

Kai didn't answer his question, his gaze fixed on Su Yuqi.

"Yuqi..."

Su Yuqi frowned slightly, glancing at him.

There was no hatred, no love, not even any emotion in her eyes, like looking at a roadside stone.

"You know me?" Her voice was as cold as ice.

Kai's heart felt as if it had been cut by a dull knife.

Know her?

He knew more than just her.

She was the woman he loved most, the one he was willing to protect with his life.

But she didn't remember him. She remembered nothing

.

"Yuqi, come back with me," Kai's voice was a little hoarse, "I'll find a way to help you regain your memory." Su Yuqi's brows furrowed even more, and she took a half step back behind Ning Zhi.

“Junior brother, this person is so strange,” Su Yuqi said.

Kai’s fists clenched so tightly they cracked, his nails digging into his palms, blood dripping from between his fingers.

He didn’t know what Ning Zhi had done to Su Yuqi this time, that she had completely forgotten about him again.

Back in Yunxian City, Su Yuqi seemed to have recovered somewhat; at least she hadn’t attacked Kai again and had left.

But now, Su Yuqi seemed to be seeing Kai with the same indifference for the first time.

Ning Zhi looked at Kai’s reaction, a playful smile playing on his lips.

“Kai, you’re still so persistent.”

He shook his head. “I’ve told you, Senior Sister Yuqi has woken up; she’s no longer fooled by you. The more you pester her like this, the more ridiculous she’ll find you.”

Kai took a deep breath, forcibly suppressing his anger.

“Ning Zhi, what are you doing here?”

Ning Zhi’s gaze passed over Kai and landed on Jiang Xuelan.

“Palace Master of the Divine Palace?”

His eyes narrowed slightly as he sized Jiang Xuelan up and down. “It seems my information was correct; the Divine Palace is indeed here.”

Jiang Xuelan looked at him expressionlessly. “Who are you?”

“Ning Zhi.”

Ning Zhi announced his name, his tone carrying a hint of arrogance. “You may have heard of me. I destroyed the Divine Temple, and I destroyed the Divine Hall. Today, I’m here to destroy the Divine Palace as well.”

His tone was casual and relaxed, as if he were discussing a trivial matter.

“I’ve long been disgusted by the arrogant attitude of the Divine Race. Each one of them thinks they are superior, of noble blood, and invincible. In reality? A bunch of self-satisfied, corrupt, and decadent trash.”

He looked at Jiang Xuelan, his eyes full of disdain. “You’re lucky to have met Kai. Without him, your Divine Palace would already be ruins.”

Jiang Xuelan’s face darkened.

She had lived for tens of thousands of years and had never been so openly humiliated.

“So you’re Ning Zhi?”

Her voice was icy. “I’ve heard of you. A human cultivator who has fallen into demonic ways, relying on devouring the cultivation of others to improve himself. Does someone like you even have the right to comment on the Divine Race?”

Jiang Xuelan had heard about Ning Zhi from Kai; after all, the Divine Temple and Divine Hall were destroyed by Ning Zhi.

Ning Zhi’s smile froze for a moment.

Then, he laughed.

That smile was even brighter and more dangerous than before.

“Righteous? Of course. Strength is qualification. When your Divine Race was high and mighty, did you ever imagine that one day you would be

trampled underfoot by a human cultivator who has fallen into demonic ways?”

His gaze shifted from Jiang Xuelan to Kai.

“Kai, I’ll give you a chance. Leave now, and I won’t make things difficult for you. My target today is the Divine Palace, not you.”

Kai shook his head. “The Divine Palace no longer exists. Jiang Xuelan is with me now; if you touch her, you’re touching me.”

Ning Zhi’s eyes narrowed slightly.

“So, you want to protect her?”

“Yes.”

Ning Zhi was silent for a moment, then sighed, looking like he was looking at a stubborn child.

“Kai, you’re always like this. You sacrifice yourself for others. Last time it was for those two ants of the divine race, this time it’s for this woman of the divine race. When will you learn to live for yourself?”

“You don’t understand.” Kai’s voice was calm and firm.

“I understand.” Ning Zhi’s smile turned somewhat bitter. “You think you’re doing the right thing, that you’re protecting something important. But have you ever thought about whether what you’re protecting is worth your life?”

He didn’t wait for Kai’s answer, and laughed self-deprecatingly.

“Forget it, there’s no use talking to you. You’re just that kind of person, you can’t change.”

He raised his right hand, black demonic energy gathering in his palm.

“Then come on. Let me see how much skill you’ve gained these past few days.”

Ning Zhi moved.

His speed was extremely fast, his black figure leaving a blur in the air, his fist already slamming into Kai’s face.

This punch was even more ferocious than the last time they fought. Demonic energy condensed into a rapidly spinning vortex at the tip of his fist, sucking in the surrounding air with a piercing shriek.

Kai didn’t dodge.

He also wanted to see just how much his strength had increased after absorbing the Heart of the Northern Abyss.

The Dragon-Slaying Sword was drawn.

Golden sword light intertwined with purple chaotic power, transforming into a sharp sword beam that met Ning Zhi’s fist head-on.

Boom!

Fist and sword collided, unleashing a deafening roar.

A terrifying shockwave spread outwards, the ground as if plowed over, soil, rubble, vegetation—everything was hurled into the air, then shredded into pieces by the violent energy.

Kai remained unmoved.

Ning Zhi was forced back seven steps.

His expression changed.

Last time they clashed, he could steadily suppress Kai.

But this time, Kai's power was clearly several levels stronger than before.

That feeling… was like facing a completely different person.

"You broke through?" Ning Zhi's voice was somewhat hoarse.

Kai didn't answer, thrusting his sword forward.

The sword strike was incredibly fast, its light like lightning slicing through the night sky, aimed directly at Ning Zhi's throat.

Ning Zhi gritted his teeth, throwing both fists simultaneously, demonic energy condensing into a black shield in front of him.

The sword light struck the shield, producing a piercing scraping sound. Countless cracks appeared on the shield, and Ning Zhi was pushed back repeatedly by the force of the sword.

"Impossible…" Ning Zhi's eyes were filled with resentment, "You were clearly no match for me last time…"

"People always improve." Kai's voice was calm, but his hand showed no mercy.

The second sword strike followed immediately.

This sword strike was faster, more ruthless, and more decisive than the first.

The sword light tore through the void, leaving a pitch-black rift.

The spatial fragments at the edge of the rift shattered and annihilated under the impact of the sword energy, emitting a piercing shriek.

Ning Zhi desperately channeled the demonic energy within his body, unleashing a torrent of black demonic flames that coalesced into a ferocious black fire dragon before him.

The dragon roared as it charged towards Kai, scorching the ground in its wake, leaving deep trenches several meters deep, the soil melting into dark red magma.

Kai neither dodged nor evaded, unleashing a slash with his sword.

The golden sword light collided with the black fire dragon, erupting in a deafening roar.

The fire dragon struggled for less than a breath under the sword light before being cleaved in two. Black demonic flames scattered in all directions, blasting countless craters into the surrounding ground.

Ning Zhi was struck by the aftershock of the sword light, a deep, bone-revealing gash torn open in his chest, blood gushing forth.

He staggered backward, kneeling on one knee, gasping for breath. “Junior Brother!” Su Yuqi exclaimed, rushing to Ning Zhi’s side and supporting him.

Ning Zhi pushed her hand away and struggled to his feet.

His face was covered in blood, but the fighting spirit in his eyes burned even brighter.

“Good… very good…” His voice was hoarse, yet carried an almost manic laugh, “Kai, you really haven’t disappointed me.”

He turned to look at Su Yuqi.

“Senior Sister, help me.”

Su Yuqi hesitated for a moment.

“Help me kill him.” Ning Zhi’s voice was calm, yet carried an unquestionable command.

Su Yuqi hesitated.

Her hand tightened on the fiery red longsword at her waist, but she didn't immediately draw it.

Her gaze shifted back and forth between Kai and Ning Zhi, a complex emotion flashing in her eyes.

The emotion was faint, almost imperceptible, but Kai caught it.

It was… a struggle.

A struggle between the subconscious and the brainwashing technique.

"Yuqi…"

Kai called her name softly, his voice as gentle as if coaxing a lost child, "You don't recognize me, that's alright. But I beg you, don't let him use you. You are Su Yuqi, you are not anyone's tool."

Su Yuqi's body trembled slightly.

The tremor was so slight that Kai wouldn't have noticed it if he hadn't been watching her closely.

But Ning Zhi noticed it.

A shadow crossed his eyes, his voice becoming even softer, yet carrying an irresistible allure.

"Senior sister, do you remember Master's instructions? Don't be deceived by any man."

Su Yuqi's eyes became confused.

"Master… Master he…"

"That's right, Master was afraid you would be hurt by a man again." Ning Zhi's voice was like a venomous snake's whisper, "You were seriously

injured by the man you loved before, have you forgotten? It was Master who saved you."

A strong hatred welled up in Su Yuqi's eyes.

Her sword was drawn.

The fiery red sword light, like a fire dragon, carrying scorching heat, swept towards Kai.

Kai did not dodge.

He couldn't dodge.

He feared that if he dodged, the sword's edge would injure Jiang Xuelan behind him.

He was even more afraid that if he retaliated, he would hurt Su Yuqi.

The fiery red sword light struck his chest squarely.

"Pfft..."

Kai spat out a mouthful of blood, his entire body thrown back several steps.

A deep wound was torn open in his chest, golden blood gushing from it, dripping onto the ground with a sizzling sound.

"Kai!" Jiang Xuelan cried out, rushing to his side.

Kai raised his hand to stop her, his gaze never leaving Su Yuqi.

"Yuqi, I won't fight back." His voice was hoarse, yet unusually firm. "If you really want to kill me, then kill me."

Su Yuqi's hand trembled slightly.

She looked at the wound on Kai's chest, at the golden blood, and a strange, piercing pain welled up in her heart.

That feeling… was very strange.

She clearly didn't know this person, so why did seeing him injured cause her such heartache?

"Senior sister, don't be fooled by his sweet words," Ning Zhi's voice rang in her ear. "Kill him. Kill him, and it will all be over."

Su Yuqi gritted her teeth and raised her sword again.

The fiery red sword light was even more intense and ferocious than before.

She poured all her spiritual power into this sword strike, aiming for Kai's throat.

Kai closed his eyes.

He didn't dodge.

The sword light stopped three inches from his throat.

Su Yuqi's hand trembled.

Her hand gripped the hilt, her knuckles white, veins bulging.

Her face was covered in sweat, her eyes filled with helplessness and confusion.

"I…I can't do it…" Her voice trembled, "I don't know why…I can't do it…"

The sword slipped from her hand and fell to the ground with a clatter.

She clutched her head, squatted on the ground, trembling all over.

“Why…why is this happening…I clearly don’t know him…why does my heart hurt so much…”

Jiang Xuelan watched this scene, a complex emotion welling up inside her.

She understood.

This woman was the wife Kai had mentioned.

The woman Kai would rather die than fight back.

She took a deep breath and walked to Kai’s side.

“Leave it to me.”

Her voice was soft, yet carried an undeniable power. “You deal with Ning Zhi, I’ll deal with her. I promise, I won’t hurt her.”

Kai glanced at her, hesitated for a moment, and finally nodded.

“Don’t hurt her.” He repeated.

“I know.”

Kai turned to look at Ning Zhi.

His eyes changed.

No longer the gentle, compassionate gaze of before, but a cold, razor-sharp killing intent.

“Ning Zhi, what did you do to Yu Qi?”

Ning Zhi wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth and smiled.

“Nothing. Just let her see the truth.”

“The truth?” Kai’s voice was icy. “The truth you’re talking about is erasing her memory and turning her into your tool?”

Ning Zhi’s smile froze.

“I didn’t erase her memories. I just… shielded her from some things that shouldn’t be there.”

“Then give those things back to her.”

Ning Zhi shook his head: “Impossible. She’s awake now, she won’t be fooled by you anymore.”

Kai stopped talking.

He raised the Dragon Slayer Sword, purple chaotic power condensing on the blade.

“Then I’ll fight until you give her back her memories.”

Ning Zhi gritted his teeth, the demonic energy within him surging once more.

The two clashed again.

This time, Kai held nothing back.

Purple sword light rained down like a storm, each strike faster and more ruthless than the last.

Every strike carried earth-shattering power, enough to flatten a mountain.

Ning Zhi fought with all his might, but his strength was like a mantis trying to stop a chariot before Kai.

The first strike shattered his protective demonic energy.

The second strike slashed a deep, bone-revealing wound into his left arm.

The third strike pierced his chest, blood gushing out.

Ning Zhi knelt on one knee, gasping for breath. His face was ashen, his eyes dimmed to the extreme.

“You…when did you become so strong…”

Kai stood before him, the Dragon-Slaying Sword pressed against his throat. “Give Yuqi her memories.”

Ning Zhi looked up at him.

A bleak smile appeared on his blood-stained face. “Impossible. Never.”

Kai’s sword tip moved closer, and a trickle of blood seeped from Ning Zhi’s throat.

“Do you think killing me will make a difference?” Ning Zhi’s smile became even more manic. “Her memories are sealed deep within her sea of consciousness, and only I know how to unseal them. If I die, her memories will never return.” Kai’s hand trembled slightly.

Just then, the battle on the other side also came to a conclusion.

Jiang Xuelan’s icy blue divine light clashed dozens of times in the air with Su Yuqi’s fiery red sword light. The clash of ice and fire turned the surrounding area of several hundred feet into a wasteland of scorched earth and frozen ice.

Although Su Yuqi’s strength was not weak, she was still far inferior to an ancient monster like Jiang Xuelan who had lived for tens of thousands of years.

Jiang Xuelan’s ice needles pierced through Su Yuqi’s protective firelight, precisely sealing seven major acupoints on her body.

Su Yuqi's body instantly froze, standing there like an ice sculpture, unable to move.

"Don't hurt her!" Kai shouted.

"I know," Jiang Xuelan replied calmly, withdrawing the icy blue divine light from her hand.

Su Yuqi was frozen in place, unable to move, but her consciousness remained clear.

Her gaze passed over Jiang Xuelan and landed on Kai.

In those eyes, there was confusion, struggle, and a complex emotion that she herself could not explain.

Jiang Xuelan walked to Kai's side, glancing at Ning Zhi kneeling on the ground. "What should we do with this person?"

Kai was silent for a moment. "Make him return Yuqi's memories."

Ning Zhi laughed, his laughter full of mockery. "Kai, you're still so naive. Do you think I'll obediently listen?"

He raised his head, looking in Su Yuqi's direction.

A very subtle glint flashed in his eyes.

"Senior Sister, let's go."

As soon as he finished speaking, a blinding flame suddenly erupted from his body.

That flame was not an ordinary flame, but a power that Kai had never seen before. It was neither demonic energy nor spiritual power, but a more primal and ancient power.

The flame enveloped Ning Zhi, forming a blazing pillar of light.

The pillar of light shot into the sky, tearing a huge hole in the clouds.

“He’s trying to escape!” Jiang Xuelan shouted, her icy blue divine light blasting towards the pillar of light.

But the power of the pillar of light was too terrifying; Jiang Xuelan’s divine light was repelled the moment it made contact.

The pillar of light extended to Su Yuqi’s side, enveloping her as well.

The ice encasing Su Yuqi melted rapidly in the flames, and her body was lifted by the power of the pillar of light, drifting towards Ning Zhi.

“Yuqi!” Kai rushed forward, trying to grab her hand.

But the power of the pillar of light was too strong; his hand was bounced back the moment it touched the edge, his palm scalded and torn.

Su Yuqi’s body drifted further and further away, her gaze fixed on Kai.

Suddenly, something shattered in her eyes.

Just before the pillar of light completely engulfed her, her lips moved slightly.

Kai didn’t hear a sound, but he understood her lip movements.

“Kai… I’m in so much pain…”

Then, a flash of fire, and Ning Zhi and Su Yuqi vanished simultaneously.

Only the torn cloud and the charred air remained in the sky.

Kai stood there, staring blankly in the direction where the two had disappeared.

His hand was still dripping blood, and the wound Su Yuqi had inflicted on his chest still throbbed, but none of that compared to the pain in his heart.

“I’m in so much pain…”

She wasn’t talking about physical pain.

It was pain in her heart.

Although she didn’t remember him, although her memories were sealed, although Ning Zhi had been manipulating her, her heart still remembered.

She remembered who he was, and what had happened between them.

Kai squatted down, his hands on the ground, panting heavily.

Jiang Xuelan stood behind him, silent for a long time.

Then, she sighed softly, walked to his side, squatted down, and placed her hand on his shoulder.

“She will come back.”

Kai didn’t speak.

He just looked in the direction where Ning Zhi and Su Yuqi had disappeared, a cold killing intent flashing in his eyes.

“Ning Zhi, next time we meet, I won’t give you another chance to escape.”

He stood up, wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth, and sheathed the Dragon Slayer Sword.

“Let’s go.” His voice was hoarse, but unusually firm, “Back to Yunxian City.”

Jiang Xuelan nodded and followed behind him.

The two walked south, one after the other.

“Kai, what happened to your wife…? And what deep-seated hatred do you have for Ning Zhi?” Jiang Xuelan asked curiously.

She didn’t know the whole story.

But it seemed that Kai and Ning Zhi were old acquaintances, and how could Su Yuqi have become like this, not recognizing Kai?

“Ah, it’s a long story. My hatred for Ning Zhi started in the mortal world…”

Kai sighed, a cold glint in his eyes: “With Ning Zhi’s strength alone, he couldn’t control Yuqi’s consciousness at all. It’s all because of that Flame Demon…”

“One day, I’ll cut off that old Flame Demon’s head and kick it around like a ball.”

Feeling the terrifying aura emanating from Kai, Jiang Xuelan dared not speak anymore. Although Jiang Xuelan didn’t know who the Flame Demon was, he was definitely very powerful.

But Kai, facing such a powerful person, was still full of killing intent, without any fear or retreat.

She felt that she had chosen the right person to follow. Following Kai, she would definitely be able to restore the glory of the Ice God lineage. Kai and Jiang Xuelan traveled south, traversing icy plains and barren frozen tundra, finally setting foot on the road to Yunxian City.

After flying for about five days, the silhouette of a majestic city appeared on the distant horizon.

Yunxian City.

This city, once ravaged by war, had now recovered seven or eight tenths of its former strength.

The city walls had been reinforced, and the number of cultivators patrolling them was double what it used to be.

Caravans and independent cultivators came and went in a steady stream at the city gates; while not exactly prosperous, it was at least no longer desolate.

“This is Yunxian City?” Jiang Xuelan looked at the distant city, raising an eyebrow slightly. “It’s larger than I imagined.” ”

A top ten city in the Fourteenth Heaven, of course it’s not small,”

Kai said. “But compared to your Divine Palace, it’s still far inferior.”

Jiang Xuelan chuckled: “The Divine Palace only has me, what’s so big about it? Your Yunxian City, just the number of cultivators patrolling the city walls alone is no less than three hundred.”

The two talked as they walked towards the city gate.

The guards at the city gate recognized Kai and quickly bowed, “Mr. Chen is back!”

Kai nodded, “How’s the situation in the city lately?”

“Reporting to Mr. Chen, everything is fine,” the guard replied respectfully. “Lord Long Zhan has managed the city very well. It’s just…”

“Just what?”

The guard glanced at Jiang Xuelan beside Kai, hesitated for a moment, and whispered, “It’s just that Miss Chen Wanqing keeps asking when you’ll be back…”

Kai: “…”

Jiang Xuelan gave him a half-smile.

“Let’s go.” Kai coughed and strode into the city gate.

The city lord’s mansion of Yunxian City was located in the very center of the city, a vast residence.

Two guards stood at the entrance of the mansion. Seeing Kai return, they immediately ran inside to report.

Before Kai even entered the courtyard, a black figure rushed out.

It was Yun Xi.

She was dressed in a black outfit, her long hair tied up high, looking capable and dashing.

“Kai!” She rushed to Kai and grabbed his arm. “You finally decided to come back! Do you know how many days you’ve been gone? Almost a month! You said you’d only have seven days at most!”

“If I had come back a few days later, I would have led my men to attack the Divine Palace…”

Kai hurriedly explained to Yun Xi, “Something unexpected happened, I was delayed.”

Then Kai glanced at Jiang Xuelan, his face full of apology, but Jiang Xuelan just smiled and didn’t seem to care about Yun Xi’s words.

“An accident? What kind of accident?” Yun Xi’s gaze passed over Kai and landed on Jiang Xuelan behind him.

Her eyes narrowed slightly.

It was an extremely beautiful face.

Her features were delicate and aloof, her eyebrows like distant mountains, her eyes like cold stars.

Dressed in white like snow, her long hair like ink, she exuded an innate noble temperament.

Most importantly, this woman was beautiful.

Not the kind of beauty that was deliberately made up, but a natural beauty that made people unable to look away.

Yun Xi's gaze lingered on Jiang Xuelan for three seconds, then turned to Kai.

"Who is she?"

The voice was calm, almost dangerously calm.

Before Kai could answer, another person walked out of the courtyard.

Chen Wanqing.

She wore a light blue dress, her long hair flowing over her shoulders, her face gentle.

But her eyes narrowed slightly the moment she saw Jiang Xuelan.

"Kai, you're back." Her voice was gentle as water, but beneath that gentleness lay a barely perceptible wariness. "And who is this?"

Kai looked at the two women before him, suddenly feeling uneasy.

He subconsciously looked at Jiang Xuelan, wanting her to explain.

Jiang Xuelan simply stood there calmly, a slight smile playing on her lips, an expression of anticipation.

Kai: "..."

He took a deep breath and forced himself to speak: “This is Jiang Xuelan, the Palace Master of the Divine Palace.”

The courtyard instantly fell silent.

Yunxi’s eyes widened: “Palace Master of the Divine Palace? That most mysterious Divine Palace of the Divine Race?”

Chen Wanqing was also surprised: “Palace Master of the Divine Palace? Isn’t that a legendary figure?”

Jiang Xuelan nodded slightly, her tone calm: “That is indeed me. However, the Divine Palace no longer exists; I am now just a rogue cultivator.”

Yunxi and Chen Wanqing exchanged a glance, both seeing shock in each other’s eyes.

Especially Yunxi, whose eyes held a hint of embarrassment, after all, she had just said she would attack the Divine Palace.

However, the Divine Palace was the oldest place of inheritance for the Divine Race, more mysterious than the Divine Temple and Divine Hall combined.

Legend has it that the Palace Master of the Divine Palace possessed unfathomable strength, and even True Immortal Realm experts dared not easily provoke him.

How could such a legendary figure have returned with Kai?

Chen Wanqing’s gaze shifted back and forth between Kai and Jiang Xuelan, her jealousy intensifying.

“Kai, what is your relationship with her?” Yunxi asked directly.

Kai opened his mouth, unsure how to answer.

His relationship with Jiang Xuelan… was indeed somewhat complicated.

They were friends, having cultivated together under the Tree of Life.

They were Daoist partners, but it was merely a transaction.

They were unrelated, having faced life and death together, and Jiang Xuelan had even given him the Heart of the Northern Abyss.

“She helped me revive my friends,” Kai finally chose the safest explanation. “In exchange, I did some things for her.”

Yun Xi was clearly not satisfied with this answer, but she didn’t press further.

Chen Wanqing didn’t say much, but simply walked over and gently took Kai’s hand.

“It’s good you’re back,” her voice gentle. “Everyone’s waiting for you.”

Kai felt a warmth in his heart and tightened his grip on her hand.

“Where’s Long Zhan?”

“In the council hall,” Chen Wanqing said. “He’s been studying the movements of the Demon Realm these past few days, saying that the Demon Dragon lineage has been acting strangely lately.”

Kai nodded, looking at Jiang Xuelan: “You rest for a bit, I’ll go check on things.”

Jiang Xuelan shook her head: “Don’t worry about me, go about your business.”

Yun Xi glanced at her, her tone indifferent: “I’ll take Palace Master Jiang to the guest room to rest.”

Jiang Xuelan glanced at Yun Xi, the corners of her mouth slightly upturned: “Thank you for your trouble.”

The two women exchanged a glance, something seemed to crackle in the air.

Kai coughed and pulled Chen Wanqing towards the council hall.

Behind them, Yun Xi and Jiang Xuelan walked towards the guest room one after the other. After

taking a few steps, Yun Xi suddenly spoke: “Palace Master Jiang, you and Kai... are you really just in a transactional relationship?”

Jiang Xuelan didn’t stop walking, and said indifferently: “What do you think?”

Yun Xi bit her lip: “I don’t think so. The way you look at him doesn’t seem like you’re looking at a transactional partner.”

Jiang Xuelan stopped and turned to look at her.

A hint of a smile flashed in those deep eyes.

“Then what kind of look do you think it should be?”

Yun Xi felt a little uncomfortable under her gaze and turned her head away: “How should I know?”

Jiang Xuelan chuckled and continued walking forward.

“Don’t worry, I won’t take your place.”

Her voice was soft, yet clearly reached Yunxi’s ears. “I have my mission, and he has his path. We’re just... walking together for a while.”

Yunxi paused, standing there, watching Jiang Xuelan’s figure disappear at the end of the corridor.

A complex emotion welled up within her.

This woman… didn't seem so bad after all.

To be precise, her relationship with Kai was nothing more than a transaction; it was just that over this period of time, she herself had slowly grown fond of Kai. Inside the council chamber, Long Zhan frowned as he stared at a massive map.

The map marked the terrain of the Demon Realm, its cities, and the distribution of power within the Demon Dragon lineage.

The dense red markings almost covered the entire northern half of the map.

"Mr. Chen!" Seeing Kai enter, Long Zhan quickly stood up, a flicker of surprise in his eyes. "You're finally back!"

Kai walked to the map and glanced at the markings. "How's the situation?"

Long Zhan's expression turned grave. "Not optimistic. The Demon Dragon lineage has been amassing forces recently, seemingly preparing for some major operation. Our scouts report that Long Yuan has recalled all the Demon Dragons scattered throughout the region; there are now at least a thousand Demon Dragons gathered deep within the Demon Realm."

"A thousand?" Kai frowned.

"Yes."

Long Zhan pointed to several red markers on the map. "And it's not just the Demonic Dragon. Long Yuan also brought in a demonic cultivator from the depths of the Demon Realm, whose strength is said to be unfathomable. Our scouts saw him from afar and said that the demonic cultivator was surrounded by black flames, and the sky within a hundred miles was dyed black."

Kai's brows furrowed even more.

Black flames…a demonic cultivator…

could it be Ning Zhi?

No, it shouldn't be.

Ning Zhi's demonic energy is pure black, without any flames.

Moreover, Ning Zhi just appeared at the Divine Palace; it's impossible for him to have gone to the Demon Realm so quickly.

"What is the background of that demonic cultivator?" Kai asked.

Long Zhan shook his head: "We can't find out. That person's whereabouts are extremely secretive; he never shows his true face. Our scouts only saw his demonic energy from afar; they didn't even see what he looked like."

Kai was silent for a moment.

"However…"

Long Zhan hesitated for a moment, "There's something strange. Although the Demon Dragon lineage has been gathering, they haven't launched an attack on Yunxian City. Given Long Yuan's personality, he should have attacked long ago. But he hasn't moved, as if he's waiting for something."

"Waiting for what?"

"I don't know." Long Zhan shook his head, "Maybe they're waiting for reinforcements, or maybe they're waiting for some opportunity."

Kai pondered for a while, then raised his head, a cold glint in his eyes.

"We can't wait any longer. We'll take the initiative."

Long Zhan was taken aback: “Take the initiative?”

“Yes.”

Kai pointed to a mark deep within the Demon Realm on the map. “Instead of sitting here waiting for them to attack, we should just storm their doorstep. We’ll wipe out the Demon Dragon lineage, cut off that demon cultivator’s claws, and then drag that demon cultivator out.”

Long Zhan’s expression changed: “Mr. Chen, the Demon Realm is the territory of the demon race.

If we rashly venture deep into it…” “I know.” Kai interrupted him. “But have you considered that the reason the Demon Dragon lineage dares to act so arrogantly outside Cloud Immortal City is because we’ve been on the defensive? As long as we demonstrate enough strength and let them know we’re not to be trifled with, they will actually back down.”

He paused and looked at Long Zhan.

“Besides, I won’t take too many people. You, the core fighting force of the Heavenly Dragon lineage, plus me, that’s enough.”

Long Zhan hesitated for a moment, then finally nodded.

“Okay. I’ll listen to Mr. Chen.”

Kai patted his shoulder: “Go prepare. We’ll depart tomorrow.”

Long Zhan turned and left the council hall.

Kai stood before the map, staring at the red marker deep within the Demon Realm, a cold glint in his eyes.

Dragon, no matter who’s backing you, this time, I won’t give you another chance.

That night, when Kai returned to his room, he found Chen Wanqing sitting on his bed waiting for him.

Her expression was complex, as if she wanted to say something but didn't know how to begin.

"What's wrong?" Kai walked over and sat down beside her.

Chen Wanqing was silent for a moment, then asked softly, "That Jiang Xuelan... are you really not related?"

Kai paused, then smiled bitterly, "You're still thinking about this?"

"I just want to know."

Chen Wanqing looked up at him, her gaze different from how you look at others.

Kai was silent for a moment.

"Her..." Kai chose his words carefully, "I can't say we're not related. We've been through life and death together. She saved me, and I saved her. She helped me a lot, and I helped her a lot. But as for feelings... I can't really explain it."

Chen Wanqing bit her lip: "Then do you like her?"

Kai didn't answer immediately.

He thought for a moment, then said seriously, "I don't know if that counts as liking. But I'm sure of one thing: she's already my woman, and we've already practiced dual cultivation."

"You two practiced dual cultivation?"

Chen Wanqing's eyes reddened slightly.

She and Kai were considered husband and wife, after all, they had chosen each other through a martial arts contest. Although she had initially intended to scheme against Kai, she now genuinely liked him.

Now Kai was actually practicing dual cultivation with Jiang Xuelan, while she hadn't even done *that* with him!

"You're really annoying," her voice choked with emotion. "Knowing I'd be jealous, you still brought another woman back."

Kai reached out and pulled Chen Wanqing into his arms.

"I'm sorry,"

Chen Wanqing leaned against him, listening to his strong heartbeat, and the jealousy in her heart slowly dissipated.

"Never mind," Chen Wanqing said sullenly, "Anyway, you have many women, one more won't matter."

Kai: "..."

He decided to remain silent.

"I also want to practice dual cultivation with you..." Chen Wanqing said.

Kai looked at Chen Wanqing, hesitant.

He then said, "Wanqing, I might be going to the Fifteenth Heaven in a while. I won't be able to take you with me. You'll have to stay in Yunxian City. As for when I'll be back, I don't know."

Kai thought of how many women he had slept with in the Heavenly Realm, and perhaps they were all waiting for him to return.

But he couldn't turn back; he could only climb towards the highest peak of the Heavenly Realm until he saw his father.

But what about those women?

Kai had even forgotten some of their names.

Therefore, Kai didn't want to continue his philandering; he felt somewhat guilty towards Chen Wanqing.

Although they had a martial arts contest to choose a husband, it was all just for show; both of them had their own ulterior motives, so it didn't count.

"It's alright, I can wait for you..." Chen Wanqing said.

"Wanqing, listen to me, I might never return to the Fourteenth Heaven, so you should find a man you like," Kai advised.

But to everyone's surprise, Chen Wanqing burst into tears, saying through her tears, "If you never come back, I'll cultivate with you even more. I want to preserve your last bit of tenderness."

After saying this, Chen Wanqing took off her clothes...

Seeing this, Kai could only helplessly submit!

As he pressed himself against Chen Wanqing, Kai inwardly cried out, "This isn't because I'm a scumbag, it's because these women are so proactive. I can't help it, my charm is just too great."

Chapter 6288 - 6290

The

next morning, Kai woke up refreshed, while Chen Wanqing was still lying in bed, too weak to move.

Kai, leading Long Zhan and twenty elite warriors from the Heavenly Dragon lineage, set off for the Demon Realm.

Yun Xi, Yun Yao, Ming Li, and Liu Qianqian all wanted to go with him, but Kai refused.

“I’m enough on my own,” he said calmly, yet with an undeniable confidence. “You stay in Yunxian City and guard the home.”

Yun Xi was somewhat unwilling, but she knew Kai was telling the truth.

With Kai’s current strength, there weren’t many people in the Fourteenth Heaven who could stop him.

“Then be careful,” Yun Xi cautioned.

“Okay.”

Kai, along with Long Zhan and the others, transformed into streaks of light and disappeared into the horizon.

Jiang Xuelan stood on the city wall, watching their departing figures, her brows slightly furrowed.

She had wanted to go with them, but Kai hadn’t allowed it.

Jiang Xuelan turned and walked down the city wall.

Yunxi stood on the city wall, watching Jiang Xuelan’s retreating figure, and suddenly asked, “Do you like Kai?”

Jiang Xuelan paused, but didn’t turn around.

“Whether I like him or not, does it matter?”

Yunxi was taken aback.

Jiang Xuelan’s voice was very soft, as if she were talking to herself: “I’ve lived for tens of thousands of years, I’m long past the age of romance. My mission is to rebuild the Ice God lineage, everything else… is unimportant.”

She continued walking forward, disappearing around the corner of the city wall.

Yunxi stood there, watching that aloof figure, a strange emotion welling up inside her.

That woman was far more lonely than she had imagined.

The Demon Realm was thirty thousand miles north of Yunxian City, a desolate land shrouded in black mist.

The sky here was always gray, the sun obscured by thick clouds, with only a few pale rays occasionally piercing through the gaps.

The ground was barren, with only charred rocks and cracked earth.

The air was filled with a stench of sulfur and decay, making one want to vomit.

After entering the Demon Realm, Kai and his group slowed down noticeably.

Not because of any resistance, but because of the eerie silence.

An unnatural silence.

“Mr. Chen, something’s wrong,”

Long Zhan whispered. “There are usually many low-level demons wandering the outer edges of the Demon Realm, but we haven’t seen a single one after walking for so long today.”

Kai nodded .

He sensed it too.

This Demon Realm seemed to have been emptied out by something.

“Keep going,” he said calmly. “Whatever tricks they’re playing, we’ll settle this today.”

The group continued deeper into the area.

After walking for about another hour, a huge valley appeared ahead.

Towering black cliffs lined both sides of the valley, and a wide passage ran through the valley floor. At the end of the passage, a massive stone gate could be vaguely seen.

The stone gate was carved with ferocious dragon reliefs, its two enormous eyes inlaid with blood-red gems, emitting a faint red glow in the darkness.

“That’s the lair of the Demon Dragon lineage, Dragon Abyss Valley.” Long Zhan’s voice was a little tight. “Dragon Abyss is named after this valley.”

Kai looked at the stone gate and suddenly smiled.

“Dragon Abyss Valley? The name is not bad. Unfortunately, after today, this place will be renamed.”

He took the lead and walked towards the valley.

Long Zhan and twenty elites from the Heavenly Dragon lineage followed closely behind.

The group had just stepped into the valley when a rumbling sound suddenly came from behind them.

Countless boulders rolled down from the mountain walls on both sides, completely blocking their retreat.

At the same time, at the end of the valley passage, countless pairs of blood-red eyes lit up.

One after another, demon dragons emerged from the darkness.

They varied in size, the largest being a hundred feet long, and the smallest still several tens of feet long.

Their bodies were covered with jet-black scales, and dark red light flowed from the gaps in the scales, like magma from the ground. They spewed black smoke from their mouths, their eyes filled with bloodthirsty ferocity.

Leading them was the largest demon dragon.

Its body was a full two hundred feet long, and its horns were twice as thick as those of other demonic dragons. The demonic energy surrounding it was so dense that it almost solidified.

The moment it saw Long Zhan, a complex emotion flashed in its eyes.

“Long Zhan, long time no see.”

Its voice was low and hoarse, with a metallic quality.

Long Zhan looked at it, his eyes filled with hatred: “Long Yuan.”

Long Yuan’s gaze shifted from Long Zhan to Kai.

A hint of apprehension flashed in Long Yuan’s eyes.

He had witnessed Kai’s power; his combat strength was enough to instantly kill a second-grade True Immortal cultivator.

Such strength was beyond his ability to deal with.

Moreover, it seemed that Kai’s cultivation had increased again; even a third-grade True Immortal cultivator might not be a match for him.

” Kai, I know you are very capable,”

Long Yuan's voice was low, "but this is the Demon Realm, my territory. No matter how strong you are alone, can you defeat my thousands of demonic dragons?"

The demonic dragons behind it simultaneously let out a low roar, the sound waves shaking the valley.

Kai glanced around at the densely packed demonic dragons, a slight smile playing on his lips.

"A thousand? Quite a few. But..."

He raised his hand, purple chaotic power gathering in his palm.

"For me, quantity is meaningless."

The moment he finished speaking, he moved.

A purple sword beam, like lightning, ripped through the darkness of the valley.

With the first strike, the ten demonic dragons at the forefront were struck and torn to shreds like paper.

With the second strike, demonic dragons attempting to ambush from the mountainside were cleaved in two, black blood cascading down like a torrential rain.

With the third strike, Kai transformed into a purple streak of light, plunging into the horde of dragons.

His speed was too fast for the naked eye to follow.

Wherever the sword light passed, demonic dragons fell in droves, like wheat being harvested.

One sword, ten dragons.

Ten swords, a hundred dragons.

In just a few breaths, nearly half of the thousand demonic dragons were slain.

The remaining dragons finally collapsed.

They roared in terror and scattered, fleeing desperately into the depths of the valley. Kai didn't pursue.

He sheathed his sword and turned to look at Long Yuan.

Long Yuan's face had turned deathly pale.

It knew Kai was strong, but it hadn't expected him to be this strong.

Thousands of demonic dragons hadn't even lasted an incense stick's time before Kai.

This kind of strength was beyond its ability to contend with.

"Long Yuan," Kai's voice was calm, "I'll give you a chance. Kneel down, and I might spare your life."

Long Yuan's body trembled slightly.

It looked at Kai, then at Long Zhan, a struggle flashing in its eyes.

Then...

it slowly knelt down.

The massive dragon body lay prostrate on the ground, its head bowed, its voice hoarse: "I... surrender."

Long Zhan watched this scene, a complex emotion welling up inside him.

He hated Long Yuan.

He had hated him for countless years.

But when Long Yuan actually knelt before him, he found that he didn't feel the satisfaction he had imagined.

"Long Zhan..." Long Yuan's voice was low, "I know you hate me. But I was forced to side with the Demon Clan."

Long Zhan's expression changed: "Forced?"

"Do you think I wanted to be a lackey of the Demon Clan?"

Long Yuan's voice carried a hint of bitterness, "Back then, the Heavenly Dragon lineage was suppressed by the God Clan and was on the verge of extinction. If I hadn't side with the Demon Clan, the Heavenly Dragon lineage would have been wiped out long ago. At least... at least after sidelining with the Demon Clan, the bloodline of the Heavenly Dragon lineage could continue."

Long Zhan's fists clenched so tightly they cracked.

"You still have the nerve to say that? After you sidelined with the Demon Clan, how many members of the Heavenly Dragon lineage did you kill?"

Long Yuan was silent for a moment.

"I killed those who refused to submit. If I hadn't killed them, the Demon Clan would have wiped out our entire clan. I had no choice."

A trace of pain flashed in Long Zhan's eyes.

He knew that what Long Yuan said made some sense.

Back then, the Heavenly Dragon lineage had indeed reached a dead end.

Suppressed by the God Clan, if they hadn't found a backer, the Heavenly Dragon lineage might have truly been wiped out.

But that doesn't mean what Long Yuan did was right.

"Mr. Chen," Long Zhan turned to Kai, "I want… to handle this myself."

Kai glanced at him and nodded.

"This is a family matter of your Heavenly Dragon lineage; you decide for yourself."

Long Zhan walked up to Long Yuan and remained silent for a long time.

Then, he spoke.

"Long Yuan, I won't kill you."

Long Yuan looked up, his eyes full of surprise.

"But you must take us somewhere."

"Where?"

"The lair of that demonic cultivator behind you."

Long Yuan's body stiffened.

"That demonic cultivator… has already run away."

His voice was low. "Three days ago, he suddenly disappeared. Before leaving, he took all his belongings, leaving nothing behind."

Kai frowned: "Ran away?"

"Yes."

Long Yuan nodded. "He left in a hurry, as if he was frightened by something. I asked him why, but he wouldn't say. I guess it's because of Ning Zhi's departure."

“Ning Zhi left several days ago and hasn’t returned since.”

Even Ning Zhi couldn’t defeat Kai; how could that demonic cultivator dare to remain in the Demon Realm?

“Take me to see,” Kai said.

Long Yuan led the group through the valley to a grand hall deep within the Demon Realm.

The hall was quite large, but it was now deserted. The doors were wide open, and the interior was a mess, clearly hastily emptied.

Kai entered the hall and looked around.

A faint trace of demonic energy remained in the air, but it was so faint as to be almost imperceptible.

He walked to the deepest part of the hall, looked at the empty space, and suddenly laughed.

“You ran fast.”

He raised his hand, and purple chaotic power condensed in his palm, transforming into a ball of purple flame.

The flame landed on the floor of the hall, instantly spreading and engulfing the entire hall.

The purple firelight illuminated the gray sky of the Demon Realm, dispelling the surrounding darkness completely.

Kai turned and walked out of the hall without looking back.

“Let’s go. Home.”

Long Zhan glanced at the burning hall, then at Long Yuan kneeling on the ground, and remained silent for a moment.

“Long Yuan, I won’t kill you. But from this day forward, you and your people are forbidden from ever setting foot on the territory of the Heavenly Dragon Clan again. Otherwise…”

He didn’t finish his sentence, but the meaning was clear.

Long Yuan lowered his head: “I understand.”

Long Zhan turned and followed Kai away.

Behind them, the purple flames were still burning, reducing the once invincible palace to ruins.

On the way back to Yunxian City, Long Zhan remained silent.

Kai walked beside him, not disturbing him.

He knew Long Zhan needed time to process what had happened today.

His enemy, whom he had hated for countless years, knelt before him begging for mercy.

But when the time for revenge finally came, he discovered that what the other party had done was not simply evil.

“Mr. Chen,” Long Zhan suddenly spoke, “Did I make a mistake by not killing Long Yuan today?”

Kai thought for a moment and shook his head.

“There is no right or wrong, only choices. You chose not to kill him; that is your decision. As long as you don’t regret it, you’re not wrong.”

Long Zhan remained silent for a long time.

“I don’t regret it.” His voice was soft, yet firm, “But I won’t forgive him either.”

Kai patted his shoulder: “That’s enough.”

The group quickened their pace, flying towards Yunxian City.

Behind them, the black mist of the Demon Realm gradually dissipated in the purple flames.

For the first time, the land shrouded in darkness revealed its original colors:

grayish-white rocks, cracked earth, and faint green glimpses in the distance.

Three days later, Kai and his group returned to Yunxian City.

At the city gate, Yun Xi, Chen Wanqing, Yun Yao, Ming Li, Liu Qianqian, and Jiang Xuelan stood waiting.

Seeing Kai’s figure appear on the horizon, Chen Wanqing was the first to rush forward.

” Kai!” she cried, throwing herself into his arms and hugging him tightly. “You’re back!”

Kai patted her back and smiled, “It’s not like we’re going to war, what’s there to be nervous about?”

Chen Wanqing didn’t speak, but buried her face in his chest, her eyes red.

Yun Xi walked over, looked Kai up and down, and only breathed a sigh of relief after confirming he wasn’t injured.

“How’s it going in the Demon Realm?” she asked.

“It’s resolved,” Kai briefly recounted the events.

When she heard that Long Yuan had knelt and begged for mercy and that the demon cultivator had fled beforehand, Yun Xi's brows furrowed slightly.

"That demonic cultivator ran away? Will he come back?"

"No." Kai shook his head. "The person behind him is Ning Zhi. Ning Zhi suffered a defeat at the Divine Palace and won't dare to show his face again for a while. He's gone, so that demonic cultivator won't dare to stay in the Demon Realm either."

Yun Xi nodded and didn't ask any more questions.

The group returned to the City Lord's Mansion. Long Zhan arranged for the disciples of the Heavenly Dragon lineage to rest, while he followed Kai into the council hall.

"Mr. Chen, what are your plans next?" Long Zhan asked.

Kai was silent for a moment.

"I'm going to the Fifteenth Heaven."

The council hall instantly fell silent.

Yun Xi's eyes lit up; she had been waiting for this day for a long time.

Jiang Xuelan's expression didn't change, but her fingers twitched slightly.

Chen Wanqing's face instantly turned pale.

"So soon?" Chen Wanqing's voice trembled slightly.

Kai looked at her, a wave of guilt washing over him.

His relationship with Chen Wanqing was somewhat absurd.

During the martial arts contest for marriage, both of them had their own ulterior motives, and neither of them took it seriously.

But over time, Chen Wanqing had developed genuine feelings for him, and he couldn't deny his own affection for her.

Especially after that night... some things, once done, can never be undone.

"Wanqing, I have to go."

Kai's voice was soft, yet firm. "Yuqi was taken away by Ning Zhi, and I don't know where she went. I suspect they might have gone to the Fifteenth Heaven. I have to find her."

Chen Wanqing bit her lip, remaining silent.

She knew Kai was right.

Su Yuqi was his wife, the woman he loved most.

Kai couldn't abandon her.

Yet, she still felt a deep sadness.

"Then go."

Chen Wanqing's voice was soft, almost inaudible. "I'll wait for you here."

Kai walked over and took her hand.

"I'll come back."

Chen Wanqing looked up at him, her eyes red, but she didn't let the tears fall.

"I know."

She smiled, a forced yet gentle smile. “You never break your promises.”

Kai felt a warmth in his heart and pulled her into his arms.

Beside them, Yun Xi and Jiang Xuelan exchanged a glance but remained silent.

That evening, Kai hosted a banquet at the City Lord’s Mansion as a farewell feast.

During the banquet, Yun Yao, holding a cup of wine, approached Kai.

“Young Master Chen, this cup of wine is for you.” Her voice was choked with emotion. “Thank you for saving my life. If it weren’t for you, I would have…”

“Don’t say that.” Kai took the cup and drank it all in one gulp.

Yun Yao’s tears finally fell.

“Young Master Chen, you must be careful when you go to the Fifteenth Heaven. I heard from my sister that the Fifteenth Heaven is much more dangerous than the Fourteenth Heaven…”

“Don’t worry.” Kai patted her shoulder. “I will take good care of myself.”

Yun Yao wiped away her tears, nodded, and turned back to her seat.

Ming Li also stood up.

“Mr. Chen, I’ll go to the Fifteenth Heaven with you.”

Kai glanced at him, then at Liu Qianqian sitting beside him, and shook his head.

“No.”

“Why?” Ming Li frowned. “Although my strength is not as good as yours, I can at least be of some help.”

“It’s not because of strength,” Kai interrupted him. “It’s because of her.”

He looked at Liu Qianqian.

Liu Qianqian’s expression changed slightly, and she tightened her grip on Ming Li’s hand.

Kai’s voice softened: “Ming Li, I know you want to help me. But have you thought about what will happen to Qianqian if you come with me to the Fifteenth Heaven? She’ll be waiting for you alone in the Fourteenth Heaven. Do you know what that feels like?”

Ming Li fell silent.

Of course he knew.

He himself had waited for Liu Qianqian in the Fifteenth Heaven. He understood

that longing, that torment, that fear of not knowing if she was alive or dead better than anyone else.

“Mr. Chen is right.” Liu Qianqian gently tugged at Ming Li’s sleeve. “Don’t go. I… I don’t want to be alone.”

Ming Li looked at her, remained silent for a long time, and finally nodded.

“Okay. I won’t go.”

Kai smiled: “That’s right. Stay with her and don’t let her be alone.”

Ming Li’s eyes reddened slightly, but he didn’t let the tears fall.

“Mr. Chen, take care.”

“Take care.”

After the banquet, Kai went alone to the backyard of the City Lord’s Mansion.

Long Zhan was standing there, looking up at the stars.

“Mr. Chen.” Seeing Kai approach, Long Zhan turned around and bowed respectfully.

Kai walked to his side and stood shoulder to shoulder.

“Long Zhan, I entrust Yunxian City to you.”

Long Zhan nodded solemnly: “Rest assured, Mr. Chen, I will definitely guard Yunxian City well.”

Kai was silent for a moment, then took out a jade slip from his robes and handed it to him.

“These are some insights I’ve gained from cultivation, along with annotations on some techniques. Take them and show them to the disciples of the Heavenly Dragon lineage. Perhaps they will be helpful to you.”

Long Zhan accepted the jade slip with both hands and carefully put it away.

“Mr. Chen, when will you return?”

Kai looked up at the sky and remained silent for a long time.

“I don’t know.” His voice was soft. “Perhaps soon, perhaps a long time. But I promise you, I will definitely return.”

Long Zhan nodded and didn’t ask any more questions.

Kai patted his shoulder and turned to leave.

Behind him, Long Zhan stood there, watching his figure disappear into the night, motionless for a long time.

The next morning, before dawn.

Kai, Yun Xi, and Jiang Xuelan stood at the city gate, ready to depart.

Yun Xi was dressed in a black outfit, her long hair tied up high, and the ghost blade hung at her waist, making her look heroic and dashing.

Jiang Xuelan was still wearing that plain white dress, her long hair as black as ink, standing quietly to the side, like a white lotus blooming in the snow.

Kai wore a simple blue robe, his Dragon-Slaying Sword hanging at his waist, looking like an ordinary rogue cultivator.

The city gate was crowded with people seeing him off.

Chen Wanqing stood at the front, her eyes red-rimmed, but she didn't cry.

She wore a light blue dress, which swayed gently in the morning breeze, like a willow branch swaying in the wind.

" Kai, you promised me," her voice was slightly hoarse, "you must come back."

Kai walked over and gently hugged her.

"I promise you."

Chen Wanqing leaned against him, listening to his strong heartbeat, feeling the warmth of his body, wanting to remember this moment forever.

"Let's go." She released his hand, took a step back, and smiled, "Don't keep them waiting."

Kai nodded, turned, and walked towards Yun Xi and Jiang Xuelan.

Yun Yao walked over and handed Kai a bundle.

“Mr. Chen, these are some immortal herbs and pills I prepared for you. You’ll need them on the road.”

Kai took the bundle and smiled, “Thank you, Yun Yao.”

Yun Yao shook her head and stepped aside.

Ming Li and Liu Qianqian stood together, hand in hand, looking at Kai.

“Mr. Chen, take care,” Ming Li’s voice was low.

“You two too,” Kai glanced at them and smiled, “Get married soon, don’t delay.”

Liu Qianqian’s face flushed red, and Ming Li scratched his head somewhat embarrassedly.

Kai laughed heartily and turned to walk towards the city gate.

“Let’s go.”

Yun Xi and Jiang Xuelan followed behind him, the three of them transforming into three streaks of light and disappearing into the horizon. At

the city gate, Chen Wanqing stood there, watching the direction they had disappeared, motionless for a long time.

Tears finally fell.

” Kai, you must come back.”

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…

Through the void passage, the three figures were enveloped by endless spatial power, flying towards the fifteenth heaven.

This wasn't Kai's first time traversing the void passage.

Last time, when traveling from the thirteenth to the fourteenth heaven, his palms sweated with nervousness, fearing the passage would suddenly collapse and he would fall into a spatial rift and be shattered to pieces.

But this time, his mindset was much calmer.

Perhaps it was because his strength had increased, or perhaps it was because—he had someone with him.

Yun Xi was on his left, black ghostly energy surging on her body, resisting the erosion of spatial power.

Her expression was calm, even somewhat expectant; after being away from the fifteenth heaven for so long, they were finally going back.

Jiang Xuelan was on his right, icy blue divine light flowing across her body, freezing spatial power into tiny ice crystals, then gently shattering them.

She closed her eyes, as if resting, or perhaps sensing something.

"What's the fifteenth heaven like?" Kai asked.

Yunxi thought for a moment, "It's more desolate and dangerous than the Fourteenth Heaven. The spiritual energy is denser, but the laws are also more stringent.

There, cultivators at the Upper Immortal Realm can barely protect themselves; only those at the True Immortal Realm can truly have a foothold."

“Then how did you manage to get from the Fifteenth Heaven to the Fourteenth Heaven?” Kai asked.

Yunxi was silent for a moment, seemingly choosing her words carefully.

“The Ghost Clan was slaughtered by the God Clan. My people were either dead or scattered. We barely survived. For the future of the Ghost Clan, I could only place my hopes on the Gate of Reincarnation. Once the souls of the Ghost Clan cultivators trapped in the Reincarnation Division are released, then the Ghost Clan will have hope,” Yunxi said.

“I’ll try my best to help you, to contact Mr. Shi and get the Gate of Reincarnation,”

Kai sighed softly.

He knew that feeling; being chased and hiding was something Kai had also experienced.

He was all too familiar with that sense of powerlessness.

Yunxi glanced at him, the corners of her mouth slightly upturned, but she didn’t speak.

Just then, Jiang Xuelan suddenly opened her eyes.

“Something’s wrong.”

Her voice was cold, so cold it seemed to lower the surrounding temperature.

Kai felt it too.

The void passage was vibrating.

Not the normal, slight tremors caused by natural fluctuations in spatial power, but a violent tremor forced by external interference.

Spatial fragments began to peel off the passage walls, emitting a piercing shriek.

“Someone’s interfering with the passage!”

Yun Xi’s expression changed drastically. “That’s impossible! Void passages are randomly torn apart, not fixed passages. How could someone interfere?”

Before she could finish speaking, a terrifying force crashed into the passage from the outer wall.

Boom!

The entire void passage twisted violently, spatial fragments scattering like a torrential rain.

Kai felt his body being torn apart by an irresistible force, Yun Xi and Jiang Xuelan growing further and further away.

” Kai!” Yun Xi’s voice came from afar, growing increasingly faint.

“Yun Xi! Jiang Xuelan!”

Kai desperately reached out, trying to grab something, but all around him were empty spatial fragments and endless darkness.

His body was swept up by the spatial storm, plummeting in an unknown direction.

During the fall, he sensed a trace of energy.

It was demonic energy.

Black, cold, and filled with endless malice.

He recognized it; it was Ning Zhi’s.

No, not exactly the same.

Ning Zhi's demonic energy was pure black, while this energy also contained a trace of scorching heat, like magma.

Could it be the Flame Demon?

Thinking this, Kai's heart trembled. If the Flame Demon wanted to attack him, his strength wouldn't be enough!

Kai gritted his teeth, trying to steady himself, but the power of the spatial storm was too great.

His chaotic energy circulated wildly within him, purple light surging from his body, barely protecting his vitals.

Then, everything went black.

He lost consciousness.

...

Kai was awakened by a sharp pain.

He opened his eyes to an unfamiliar sky.

The sky was deep purple, with two suns hanging high, one golden and one silver.

Two suns shone simultaneously, dyeing the earth a strange golden-purple hue.

The spiritual energy in the air was at least ten times denser than in the Fourteenth Heaven, and its quality was purer and more substantial.

But Kai had no time to appreciate this.

Every part of his body ached.

The bones in his left arm seemed cracked, his right leg was sprained, and there was a wound on his chest, cut open by a spatial fragment, from which golden blood was still seeping.

Most of his chaotic power had been consumed, and several small cracks had appeared on the blade of his Dragon-Slaying Sword.

He struggled to sit up and looked around.

It was a wasteland.

The scorched, gray-black earth stretched to the horizon, barren of any vegetation.

The ground was covered with cracked ravines and weathered rocks, and the distant hills cast long shadows under the purple sky.

A faint smell of sulfur permeated the air, along with an indescribable stench of decay.

“Yun Xi? Jiang Xuelan?” he called out twice.

No one answered.

He had been swept away by the spatial storm.

Yun Xi and Jiang Xuelan were nowhere to be found.

Kai took a deep breath, forcing himself to calm down.

Yun Xi was a member of the Ghost Clan; the Fifteenth Heaven was her homeland, and she should know how to survive.

Jiang Xuelan’s strength was unfathomable; there were only a handful of people in the entire Fifteenth Heaven who could harm her.

In comparison, he was the one who needed to worry.

He checked his injuries; they weren't fatal, but they weren't minor either.

With the regenerative abilities of his Golden Dragon bloodline, it would probably take two or three days to fully recover.

Just as he was about to find a place to heal, a sound suddenly came from afar.

It was the sound of metal clashing, mixed with shouts and screams.

A battle was taking place.

Kai hesitated for a moment, then stood up and walked towards the direction of the sound.

He wasn't one to meddle, but this was the Fifteenth Heaven, and he knew nothing about it.

Finding a local to understand the situation was far better than blindly searching alone.

He walked for about the time it takes for an incense stick to burn, crossed a small hill, and saw the scene below.

Below the hill was a dry riverbed, where a one-sided massacre was unfolding.

On one side were warriors in black armor, about a dozen in number.

Their armor was tattered, covered in knife marks and bloodstains, and their weapons were varied—some wielded knives, some swords, and others spears.

They were protecting a group of elderly, weak, women, and children, huddled in a corner of the riverbed, trembling.

On the other side were cultivators in white robes, about thirty or forty in number.

Their white robes were embroidered with golden divine patterns, shimmering in the purple sunlight.

Their equipment was excellent, and their movements were perfectly synchronized, clearly indicating rigorous training.

Kai's pupils contracted slightly; he recognized the divine patterns on those white robes.

Similar patterns appeared in the divine halls and palaces of the Fourteenth Heaven.

They were gods.

The black-armored warriors fought desperately, but they were too few in number and their strength was vastly inferior.

Leading them were several True Immortal Realm First-Rank warriors, while the opposing leader was a middle-aged man with a sinister expression, a True Immortal Realm Third-Rank.

A True Immortal Realm Ghost Clan warrior was surrounded by three God Clan cultivators, managing to cut down two with all his might, but was pierced through the chest by the third's sword.

As he fell, he still clung tightly to the God Clan cultivator's ankle, buying time for his clansmen to escape.

"Retreat! Retreat quickly!"

the old man in the black armor shouted.

His voice was hoarse and weary, but carried an undeniable authority.

As he shouted, he swung his sword to block an attack from a God Clan cultivator, then with a backhand strike, forced the cultivator back.

But his movements were noticeably slower; his left arm hung limply at his side, blood dripping from his fingertips, clearly indicating a serious injury.

The elderly, women, and children stumbled and swam towards the riverbed, but they were too slow.

A little girl of seven or eight years old was at the very back when she stumbled and fell to the ground.

A divine cultivator rushed forward, grabbed the little girl by the collar, and lifted her up. “Let me go! Let me go!”

The little girl struggled desperately, kicking and biting, but her strength was like an ant trying to shake a tree before the divine cultivators.

“Stop!”

the old man roared, trying to rush over to save her, but two divine cultivators blocked his way, one with a sword and the other with a knife, forcing him to retreat repeatedly.

The middle-aged man leading the group slowly walked over, took the little girl from his companion, pinched her chin, and looked her up and down.

“A little brat from the Ghost Clan.”

His voice was cold, with a cruel, cat-and-mouse-like quality. “She’s quite good-looking. It’s a pity, the bloodline of the Ghost Clan doesn’t deserve to live.”

He raised his hand, a ball of golden light condensing in his palm, and slapped it towards the little girl’s head.

The little girl closed her eyes, tears sliding down her cheeks.

“Grandpa… save me…”

“Xing Lie, stop…” the old man shouted at the middle-aged divine man.

But Xing Lie seemed not to hear him.

Just at this critical moment, a purple light pierced the darkness of the riverbed.

Before Xing Lie’s palm strike could land, he was blasted away by a terrifying force.

He tumbled several times in the air before crashing heavily into the riverbed’s rocky wall, creating a large crater.

Golden blood spilled from the corner of his mouth.

“Who?!” he shouted sharply, his gaze sweeping towards the direction from which the light had come.

Kai stood on the hill, slowly withdrawing his hand.

His face was still somewhat pale, and his injuries hadn’t fully healed, but his eyes were as cold as knives.

“A human cultivator?”

Xing Lie recognized Kai, paused for a moment, then sneered, “A human cultivator, you dare interfere in the affairs of the gods? Do you know who we are?”

“No.” Kai walked down the hill, each step steady, “and I don’t want to know.”

Xing Lie’s eyes narrowed.

He sensed something unsettling about this human cultivator who appeared to be only at the Upper Immortal Realm.

“I advise you not to meddle in other people’s business,”

Xing Lie's voice lowered. "The Divine Clan's Judgment Hall is handling matters; idlers should stay away. If you know what's good for you, you can still leave now."

Kai ignored him.

He walked to the little girl's side, squatted down, and softly asked, "Are you alright?"

The little girl opened her eyes, saw Kai's face, and burst into tears, throwing herself into his arms.

"Don't be afraid." Kai patted her back, stood up, and shielded her behind him.

Then, he looked at Xing Lie.

"Get lost."

Only one word, but the killing intent contained in that word made the Divine Clan cultivators behind Xing Lie involuntarily take a step back.

Xing Lie's face turned ashen.

"You're courting death!"

He waved his hand, "Kill him!"

Thirty or forty Divine Clan cultivators attacked simultaneously, golden holy light surging towards Kai like a tide.

Kai raised his right hand, purple chaotic power condensing in his palm.

He didn't use the Dragon Slayer Sword; the Dragon Slayer Sword had been damaged in the spatial storm, and he didn't want to add to its burden.

He simply clenched his fist and then unleashed a punch.

The purple fist energy, like a shooting star, trailed a long, fiery tail as it crashed into the golden tide of holy light.

Boom!

The golden holy light was like paper before the purple chaotic power, torn apart, devoured, and annihilated layer by layer.

Wherever the fist energy passed, the divine cultivators fell like wheat being harvested.

Some were blasted away, some had their protective holy light shattered, and some were directly stunned.

In less than three breaths, thirty or forty divine cultivators lay on the ground.

Xing Lie's expression finally changed.

"You…who are you?"

His voice trembled, "Immortal Realm…this is impossible…"

Kai did not answer.

He took a step forward, his figure like a purple lightning bolt, instantly appearing in front of Xing Lie.

Xing Lie was shocked and exerted all his strength to activate his holy light, the golden light condensing into a thick light shield in front of him.

Kai punched the light shield.

Crack!

The light shield shattered.

The second punch struck Xing Lie's chest.

*Pfft…

* Xing Lie spat out a mouthful of golden blood, his body sent flying again, crashing into a boulder on the riverbed.

He struggled to his feet, the fear in his eyes impossible to conceal.

“Retreat!” he hissed, “Retreat quickly!”

The surviving divine cultivators helped him, and they scrambled away.

Silence returned to the riverbed.

Kai turned to look at the ghost warriors and the elderly, women, and children.

They were looking at him with complex expressions.

There was gratitude, surprise, but mostly a cautious wariness.

Like a small animal wounded countless times, hesitant to trust anyone’s kindness.

The leading elder struggled to his feet, walked to Kai, and bowed deeply.

“Thank you for saving my life, my benefactor.” His voice was hoarse and weary. “I am Youying, an old servant from Youyue Kingdom.”

Kai helped him up. “No need for formalities. You are badly injured, please sit down and talk.”

Youying shook his head. “It’s nothing, just superficial wounds. But you, my benefactor…”

He looked at Kai’s pale face and the unhealed wounds on his body, a trace of guilt flashing in his eyes.

“My benefactor aggravated his injuries while saving us. This old man…”

“I said no need for formalities.” Kai interrupted him. “I was just passing by and couldn’t bear to see it.”

He paused, then asked, “Are you the Ghost Clan? Were those who were chasing you the God Clan?”

Youying nodded, a trace of hatred flashing in his eyes. “The people of the God Clan’s Judgment Hall. They have been chasing our Ghost Clan for thousands of years. My people… are either dead or scattered, and now only these old, weak, and disabled remain.”

His voice grew softer and softer, until it was almost a muttering to himself.

Kai was silent for a moment.

He recalled Yunxi’s words: the gods, under the guise of “eliminating evil,” had launched a massacre against the ghost race.

Less than one in ten ghosts survived, the survivors hiding in various places.

So these were Yunxi’s people.

“Where are you going?” Kai asked.

Youying said, “We’re going back to Youyue Kingdom, the last hiding place for the ghost race. Deep in the Youming Mountains, the gods haven’t found it yet.”

He glanced at the elderly, women, and children behind him and smiled bitterly: “There were originally over three hundred of us, but we were hunted down all the way, and now only these are left.”

The little girl still clung to Kai’s leg, refusing to let go.

Tears still clung to her face, but she had stopped crying, only looking at Kai with her bright black eyes, as if afraid he would disappear.

Youying looked at the little girl and sighed: “This is Xiaoyou, her parents... in that battle just now...”

He didn’t finish, but the meaning was clear.

Kai looked down at the little girl and reached out to pat her head.

“Your name is Xiaoyou?”

The little girl nodded, her voice soft, “Yes.”

“Where’s your grandfather?”

Xiaoyou’s eyes reddened again, “Grandpa... Grandpa protected me...”

She couldn’t continue, burying her face in Kai’s legs, her shoulders shaking.

Kai didn’t ask any more questions.

He was silent for a moment, then said to Youying, “I’ll take you back.”

Youying was taken aback, “My benefactor, how could I accept this...”

“Just call me Kai.”

Kai interrupted him, “Besides, I have a friend who is also a ghost. She was swept away by the spatial storm, and she might be nearby. I’ll take you back and look for her.”

Youying’s eyes suddenly lit up, “A friend? Also a ghost?”

Kai nodded, “Her name is Yunxi.”

Youying’s body trembled violently.

“Yunxi... Princess?”

His voice was trembling, “You know Princess Yunxi?”

“Yes!” Kai nodded.

Overwhelmed with emotion, Youying burst into tears: “Princess Yunxi is the princess of our Youyue Kingdom! She is the daughter of King Yunquan!

Princess Yunxi left some time ago, saying she was going to find the Gate of Reincarnation, and there has been no news of her since. The king is still worried about her…”

He grabbed Kai’s arm, his voice trembling: “My benefactor, is the princess… is she still alive?”

Kai nodded: “She is alive. She got separated from me in the spatial storm, but she should be out of danger.”

Youying knelt down, tears streaming down his face: “Heaven has eyes… Heaven has eyes…”

The ghost warriors, the elderly, women, and children behind him, upon hearing the news that Princess Yunxi was still alive, also knelt down. Some cried, some laughed, and some murmured to themselves.

Kai helped them up one by one: “Get up, don’t kneel. When we return to Youyue Kingdom, I will find a way to find her.”

Youying wiped away his tears and nodded repeatedly: “Okay, okay. My benefactor… no, Mr. Kai, let’s set off now. Youyue Kingdom is deep in the Youming Mountains, two days’ journey away.”

Kai nodded, bent down, and picked up Xiaoyou.

Little You nestled on his shoulder, her tiny hands clutching his clothes tightly, and soon fell asleep.

The group headed towards the Netherworld Mountains.

Behind them, the winds of the wasteland whipped up gray-black sand, slowly burying the bloodstains and traces of battle on the riverbed.

Under the purple sky, two suns shone brightly, casting long, long shadows.

Two days later, Kai and his group finally arrived at the Netherworld Mountains.

This was a mountain range shrouded in black mist, with steep peaks, deep valleys, and strangely shaped rocks and unknown plants everywhere.

The black mist flowed through the mountains, blocking out the sunlight and shrouding the entire mountain range in darkness.

“This is the Netherworld Mountains

,” Youying said softly. “It’s shrouded in ghostly energy year-round, and outsiders easily lose their way. Our ghost race has hidden here for thousands of years, and the gods have never been able to find our exact location.”

Kai nodded and followed Youying into the black mist.

Youying knew the terrain intimately, leading the group through the mountains, avoiding all traps and dangerous areas.

After about two hours, they arrived at a massive mountain gate.

The gate was natural, forming a natural archway between two mountain peaks, behind which lay a deep valley.

The rock walls on both sides of the valley were covered with ancient runes, emitting a faint blue light.

“These runes were left by our ancestors,”

Ghost Shadow explained. “They can block outside detection and also resist the holy light of the gods.”

Passing through the canyon, the view suddenly opened up.

This was an ancient underground city.

Built against the mountainside, layer upon layer, it stretched from the bottom of the canyon deep into the mountainside.

The buildings were constructed of a black stone, ancient and heavy, still showing traces of its former glory despite the passage of time.

But that glory was long gone.

Now, the ancient city was dilapidated, with collapsed buildings and dried blood everywhere.

Countless marks from attacks adorned the city walls, some places still bearing the scorch marks of holy light.

Several Ghost warriors stood at the city gate, wearing the same black armor as Ghost Shadow and his companions, but looking far more weary and haggard.

Seeing Youying return, a young warrior ran over: “Elder Youying! You’re back!”

His gaze fell on Kai, instantly turning wary: “This is…”

“One of us,” Youying said. “He’s a friend of the princess, he saved us.”

“The princess?” The young warrior’s eyes widened. “Princess Yunxi?” ”

The princess is alive.” Youying’s voice choked slightly. “This Mr. Kai is the princess’s friend.”

The news spread, and the ancient city was in an uproar.

Ghosts poured out from all directions, surrounding Kai, bombarding him with questions about Yunxi.

“Is the princess really alive?”

“Is she alright?”

“When will she return?”

Kai was surrounded, unsure of whose questions to answer.

Just then, a deep voice came from behind the crowd.

“Make way.”

The crowd parted automatically, making way.

A tall, middle-aged man stepped out from the crowd.

He wore a long black robe, his face was gaunt, his eyes sunken, and his temples were already gray.

His eyes were bloodshot, and his face was etched with the marks of time and hatred. Even in his exhaustion and haggard state, he still possessed an aura that commanded respect.

His gaze lingered on Kai for a long time.

Then, his eyes widened suddenly.

“You… carry Xi’er’s aura.”

Kai looked at the haggard middle-aged man, a complex emotion welling up within him. “Are you Yun Xi’s father?”

The middle-aged man nodded, his voice hoarse: “I am Yun Quan. The ruler of Youyue Kingdom.”

He walked up to Kai, scrutinizing him from head to toe, his eyes filled with indescribable emotions—concern, pain, and a sliver of hope suppressed for too long.

“Xi’er… is she still alive?”

Kai nodded: “Alive. She was swept away by the spatial storm, and we don’t know where she landed. But I assure you, she is still alive.”

Yun Quan’s body trembled slightly.

He closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and when he opened them again, the tears in his eyes had vanished, replaced by a heavy, resolute determination.

“Come in.” He turned and walked deeper into the ancient city. “Tell me, what exactly happened?”

In the council hall of the ancient city, Yun Quan sat in the main seat, listening to Kai recount his journey from the fourteenth to the fifteenth heaven.

When he heard about Yun Xi’s experiences in the fourteenth heaven, his brows furrowed and relaxed intermittently.

When he heard that the void passage had been interfered with and the three of them had been separated by the spatial storm, his expression darkened.

“Mr. Chen, could you tell me if Xi’er obtained the Gate of Reincarnation?” Yun Quan asked.

Kai shook his head and then recounted the situation regarding the Gate of Reincarnation to Yun Quan.

When he learned that obtaining the Gate of Reincarnation was not guaranteed, Yun Quan’s expression turned very grim.

“The Reincarnation Bureau is a place where the souls of our Ghost Clan cultivators transition.”

“Its purpose is to house and protect the souls of Ghost Clan cultivators who died in war.”

“For tens of thousands of years, the Reincarnation Bureau has been the place where the souls of hundreds of millions of Ghost Clan cultivators have been reincarnated and reborn…”

“But in the last few hundred years, for some reason, the souls within the Reincarnation Bureau have been unable to leave; tens of thousands of Ghost Clan cultivators’ souls are trapped there.”

His voice grew heavy: “If these souls could be released, the Ghost Clan would have hope for revival.”

“Is there any other way?” Kai asked.

Yun Quan remained silent for a moment.

“Yes, but it’s very difficult.”

Yun Quan sighed softly. “Ancient texts record that as long as three supreme treasures are collected and the Netherworld Lamp is lit, the Path of Reincarnation can be opened, releasing all trapped souls.

The three supreme treasures are the Netherworld Lamp, the Core of Reincarnation, and the Soul-Guiding Fire. Unfortunately, the Ghost Clan has been hunted down for so many years, and these three supreme treasures have been lost; their whereabouts are unknown.” ”

However, there are rumors that the Netherworld Lamp is in the hands of the God Clan’s Judgment Hall, the Core of Reincarnation is in the hands of the Demon Clan’s Shadow Hall, and the Soul-Guiding Fire is in the hands of the Beast Clan’s Heavenly Wolf Tribe.”

“With our current strength, we can barely protect ourselves, let alone collect these three supreme treasures.”

“As long as there’s another way, that’s fine.” Kai breathed a sigh of relief.

If the only option was the Gate of Reincarnation, Kai was truly in a dilemma. He couldn’t contact Mr. Shi; did he have to risk his life again?

Perhaps Mr. Shi would appear when he was about to die.

But Kai didn’t want to do that. Since there was another way, that was fine!

“I beg you, help us.” Yun Quan looked at Kai, his face full of pleading.

Kai remained silent for a long time.

He wasn’t a saint and didn’t want to get involved in the messy grudges of the Heavenly Realm.

But he had to deal with the matter of the Ghost Clan, for Yun Xi and for Ming Li.

“Don’t worry, I’ll help you.” Kai nodded. “Not for the Ghost Clan, but for Yun Xi.”

Yun Quan was taken aback when he heard Kai say this and looked him over.

He opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but didn’t.

Then he only said, “Thank you.”

Kai smiled slightly: “Don’t thank me. You should still send someone to look for Yun Xi, and my other friend Jiang Xuelan.”

“Don’t worry, Mr. Chen. I’ve already sent people. Since you’re here, Xi’er and the others can’t be too far away. The opening of the void passage also has its limitations.”

Kai breathed a sigh of relief after hearing this.

He stood up, walked to the entrance of the council hall, and looked at the dim sky outside.

Purple sunlight shone through the black mist, dyeing the ruins of the ancient city in an eerie color.

Outside the council hall, Xiao You, holding a tattered rag doll, sat on the steps waiting.

Seeing Kai come out, she ran over and grabbed his sleeve.

“Uncle Chen, are you leaving?”

Kai squatted down, looking into her eyes: “No. I’ll take you home.”

Xiao You’s tears flowed again, but this time she didn’t cry out loud, only nodding vigorously.

“Okay.”

Kai picked her up and walked deeper into the ancient city.

Behind him, Yun Quan stood at the entrance of the council hall, watching Kai’s back, motionless for a long time.

“Xi’er, this Kai, is he related to you…” he murmured.

Then, he turned and walked into the council hall.

Kai carried Xiao You as they walked for a while through the ancient city.

Xiao You nestled on his shoulder, her small hands gripping his clothes tightly, her breathing gradually becoming steady.

She was asleep, tears still clinging to the corners of her eyes, but a slight smile played on her lips, as if she were having a sweet dream.

Kai slowed his pace, not wanting to wake her.

The streets of the ancient city were narrow, the buildings huddled together, their walls covered with ancient ghostly runes.

Some runes had faded, while others still emitted a faint blue light, like fireflies flickering in the darkness.

The ghostly cultivators they encountered on the road stopped, looking at Kai with complex expressions.

There was gratitude, curiosity, but mostly awe.

They had heard about what had happened on the riverbed: a human cultivator, at the Upper Immortal Realm, had repelled a True Immortal Realm third-grade divine race adjudicator with a single punch.

Just who was this young man?

“Mr. Chen,”

Youying caught up from behind, panting, “I’ll take you to your lodgings. The King said you are a distinguished guest of our Youyue Kingdom and has arranged the best room for you.”

Kai nodded and followed Youying through several streets to a relatively intact stone hall.

The stone hall wasn’t large, but it was very clean.

Two ghost warriors stood guard at the entrance, and immediately straightened their backs when they saw Kai approaching.

“This was the princess’s former residence,”

Youying pushed open the door, his voice tinged with emotion, “After the princess left, the King had it cleaned, saying he was waiting for her to return. Please rest here for now, and when we find the princess…”

He didn’t finish his sentence, but the meaning was clear: once Yunxi was found, this would be her home.

Kai entered the stone hall, which was simply furnished.

There was a stone bed, a stone table, a few stone chairs, and a painting hanging on the wall.

The painting depicted a young woman with delicate features, whose eyes and brows bore a resemblance to Yunxi.

“That was the Queen Mother,”

Youying said softly. “Many years ago… she died at the hands of the gods.”

Kai was silent for a moment, then gently placed Xiaoyou on the stone bed and covered her with a thin blanket.

Xiaoyou turned over, mumbled something, and fell into a deep sleep again.

“Mr. Chen, please rest. I’ll go prepare some cultivation resources for you.” Youying said, turning to leave.

“Wait a moment.”

Kai called after him, “Elder Youying, I want to ask you something.”

Youying stopped. “Mr. Chen, please speak.”

“How many people are there in the Ghost Clan?”

Youying was silent.

He stood at the door, his back to Kai, his shoulders trembling slightly.

After a long time, he finally spoke, his voice hoarse as if sandpaper was being rubbed.

“Originally… there were tens of millions.”

He said, “Thousands of years ago, the gods began to slaughter us. Ghost Clan cultivators began to die, flee, or escape to the lower realms.”

“I don’t know exactly how many Ghost Clan members are left in the entire Heavenly Realm now, but we…”

Youying paused, looking at Kai, his eyes reddening.

“Now, in the Youyue Kingdom, there are fewer than three hundred people who can wield weapons. The old, weak, women, and children combined number less than a thousand. A thousand… Mr. Chen, our Youyue Kingdom once had a population of one hundred thousand, and now only a thousand remain.”

His voice trembled.

“We are not demons. We are simply… born ghosts. We cultivate ghost energy because of our bloodline. We don’t harm or kill; we only want to live peacefully.

But the gods say we are demons, that we pollute the spiritual energy of the heavens, that our existence is a desecration of the heavens.”

“They kill our men, steal our women, and throw our children into the fire to burn them. They say this is purifying the heavens.”

Youying’s tears finally fell.

“Mr. Chen, what did we do wrong?”

Kai remained silent.

He didn't know how to answer this question.

He thought of the humans and demons of the Celestial Realm, of the innocent people slaughtered indiscriminately because of their race.

He thought of Dashi Village, of the villagers slaughtered by the demons.

This world had never changed.

"Elder Youying," Kai's voice was soft, "I will help you."

Youying looked up at him, her eyes blurred with tears.

"Not for any grand cause, nor for the revival of any race,"

Kai said, "but simply because it shouldn't be like this. You shouldn't be treated like this."

"One day, I will establish a completely equal celestial realm, even a universe, without classes."

"Regardless of race, all should live together equally, and intermarriage between races is permissible, without any distinction of rank."

Youying opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but in the end, he only bowed deeply.

Then he turned and left. He knew Kai's idea was good, but what use was it?

The way of Heaven is such, and who can defy the laws of Heaven?

Kai sat down by the stone bed, looking at Xiaoyou's peaceful sleeping face, a complex emotion welling up inside him.

This child, her parents are dead, her grandfather is dead.

She is only a few years old, yet she already knows what loss is, what fear is.

But she is still smiling.

She smiled when she was in his arms.

Perhaps that is why he was willing to help them.

It wasn't for any grand cause, not because of any promise, it was simply because…

a child smiled in your arms, and you wanted to protect her.

That's all.

Kai had just closed his eyes to rest when a series of hurried footsteps suddenly came from outside.

"Quick! Quick!"

"Assemble! Everyone assemble!"

"Take the children to the basement! Quick!"

Kai abruptly opened his eyes and jumped out of bed.

Xiao You was woken up, rubbing her eyes as she sat up, asking groggily, "Uncle Chen, what's wrong?"

"Nothing." Kai patted her head. "You wait here, Uncle will go check."

He strode out of the stone hall and saw chaos on the streets outside.

Ghost warriors were running, some towards the city gate, others towards the city wall.

Elders were carrying children to the basement, women were gathering supplies, and everyone's face was etched with tension and fear.

Kai's heart sank.

Had the gods attacked?

He grabbed a ghost warrior who ran past him and asked, "What happened?"

The warrior recognized Kai and quickly said, "Mr. Chen, the king sent me to invite you. He's waiting for you at the city gate!"

Kai followed the warrior through the chaotic streets to the city gate.

Yun Quan was standing on the city wall, looking at the distant sky.

His face was even paler than yesterday, but his eyes were bright, almost frighteningly so.

"King Yun Quan, what happened?" Kai walked up to the city wall and asked.

Yun Quan turned to look at him, his expression grave.

"Mr. Chen, we found her. We found Xi'er."

Kai was stunned: "Found her?"

"Yes." Yun Quan pointed to a ghost cultivator on the city wall, "We just received news that our scouts discovered Xi'er's aura in the eastern section of the Netherworld Mountains. She... she's still alive."

Kai's heart skipped a beat: "Where is she?"

Yun Quan turned around and pointed east.

"Heavenly Fire Pit." "What is the Heavenly Fire Pit?" Kai asked.

Yun Quan didn't answer immediately.

He was silent for a moment, then walked down the city wall and led Kai to a stone hall in the center of the ancient city.

Three large characters were carved on the door of the stone hall: "Scripture Repository."

"This place stores tens of thousands of years of records and texts of the Ghost Clan."

Yun Quan pushed open the door and led Kai inside.

The interior of the stone hall was much larger than the exterior. Rows of stone shelves were filled with jade slips and ancient books. Some jade slips were already dim, and some ancient books were yellowed and brittle.

Normally, such a place would be the most secret place of every race, and outsiders would never be allowed to enter.

But now, Yun Quan had actually brought Kai here, showing his trust in him.

Yun Quan walked to the innermost stone shelf and took down a dark red jade slip.

"The records of the Heavenly Fire Pit are here."

He pressed the jade slip to his forehead, and it glowed faintly.

After a moment, he handed the jade slip to Kai.

"Take a look for yourself."

Kai took the jade slip and probed it with his divine sense.

The information from the jade slip flooded in like a tidal wave.

Tens of thousands of years ago, a celestial fire descended from the sky, landing on the eastern section of the Netherworld Mountains.

This celestial fire was no ordinary flame.

The instant it struck, it smashed a mountain range tens of thousands of feet high, creating a crater

thousands of miles in diameter. Rocks melted, the earth cracked, and all living beings within a radius of tens of thousands of miles were reduced to ashes in that instant.

The celestial fire did not extinguish.

It burned in the crater for tens of thousands of years, never extinguished.

No one had ever witnessed the aura of the flames within the crater, hence the name “celestial fire.”

This celestial fire possessed its own will, its own anger, and its own hunger.

It would devour any living being that approached it, then turn their souls into new fuel, making the flames burn even brighter.

There was also a creature in the crater… the Celestial Fire Beasts.

They were ferocious beasts that naturally formed within the crater after the celestial fire descended.

Their bodies were formed from condensed flames, and each possessed strength above the True Immortal Realm.

They guarded the Celestial Fire Crater, attacking any living being that approached.

For tens of thousands of years, cultivators at the fifteenth level of the Heavenly Realm had avoided the Celestial Fire Crater.

No one dared approach, no one dared fly overhead.

A True Immortal of the fifth rank had once attempted to explore the secrets of the Heavenly Fire Pit, but never returned.

The Heavenly Fire Pit was the most dangerous place in the Fifteenth Heaven.

Without a doubt.

Kai finished reading the records in the jade slip and remained silent for a long time.

Then he raised his head and looked at Yun Quan.

“Yun Xi and Jiang Xuelan are in the Heavenly Fire Pit?”

Yun Quan nodded, his face ashen.

“The scouts reported that they are trapped on the edge of the Heavenly Fire Pit. They are injured and still being attacked by Heavenly Fire Beasts. They can’t get out of the Heavenly Fire Pit, and those outside can’t get in either.”

“But…” He paused, his voice becoming even lower, “They are still alive. The scouts could sense Xi’er’s aura; although it was weak, she was indeed still alive.”

Kai stood up and placed the jade slip back on the stone shelf.

“I’ll go.”

Yun Quan looked at him, a complex emotion flashing in his eyes, “Mr. Chen, the Heavenly Fire Pit…”

“I know.” Kai interrupted him, “But I must go.”

He didn’t say why.

But Yun Quan understood.

It wasn't for any grand cause, nor for any promise.

It was simply because there were people there he needed to protect.

That was all.

Yun Quan remained silent for a long time.

Then, he did something that surprised Kai: he knelt down on one knee.

"Mr. Chen, on behalf of the Youyue Kingdom and the Ghost Clan, I beg you for something."

Kai quickly helped him up: "What are you doing? Get up and speak!"

Yun Quan didn't get up.

"Xi'er is my daughter, the princess of the Youyue Kingdom. She's been disobedient since she was little, always running away, always making me worry.

During the time she was gone, I thought I would never see her again. Now she's back, but she's trapped in the Heavenly Fire Pit."

His voice trembled, his eyes were red, but he didn't let the tears fall.

"I, as her father, am useless. I can't defeat the God Clan, I can't protect my people, and now I can't even save my own daughter. I can only... I can only beg you."

He raised his head and looked at Kai.

"Mr. Chen, please bring Xi'er back."

Kai looked at him.

This man, tormented by hatred for thousands of years, this man who had lost his wife, lost his people, lost almost everything.

He wasn't the ruler of Youyue Kingdom, nor the leader of the Ghost Clan; he was simply a father.

A father worried about his daughter.

"I'll bring her back," Kai said.

Yun Quan's tears finally fell.

The news spread, and the entire Youyue Kingdom was in an uproar.

It wasn't fear, nor retreat, but a long-suppressed determination finally erupting.

"The princess is trapped in the Heavenly Fire Pit!"

"We must go save her!"

"Your Majesty, let me go!"

"Me too! My life was saved by the princess!"

Below the city wall, hundreds of Ghost Clan warriors gathered. Though their armor was worn and their weapons uneven, a fire burned in every one of their eyes.

Yun Quan stood on the city wall, looking at these people, her eyes red-rimmed.

"Brothers,"

his voice was hoarse, yet it resonated in everyone's ears like the tolling of a bell, "I know she is your princess, my daughter, the hope of our Youyue Kingdom."

“She is trapped in the Heavenly Fire Pit, injured, and besieged by Heavenly Fire Beasts. You all know what the Heavenly Fire Pit is. This trip might not be a return.”

He paused, his gaze sweeping across each face.

“I will not force you. Those who wish to go, stand on the right.”

No one moved.

Then…

everyone stepped forward simultaneously, standing in unison on the right.

Yunquan’s lips trembled.

“You…”

An old warrior stepped forward, a scar running from his brow bone to his chin, a mark left many years ago during the pursuit of the gods.

“Your Majesty, have you forgotten?”

His voice was calm. “If it weren’t for the princess holding off the gods’ pursuers, we would all be dead long ago. The princess saved our lives. Now that she is in danger, if we cower in the back, would we still deserve to be called the Ghost Clan?”

“Yes!” another young warrior shouted. “What do we care about the Heavenly Fire Pit! Even if it’s the eighteen levels of hell, we’ll go!”

“Save the princess!”

“Save the princess!”

The shouts rose like a tide, wave after wave.

Kai stood on the city wall, watching this scene, a warm feeling welling up in his heart.

This was the Ghost Clan.

Hunted for thousands of years, slaughtered millions, the Ghost Clan, hiding in the darkness, barely surviving.

They were poor, weak, exhausted, and desperate, but when their princess was in danger, they stood up.

Without hesitation, without retreat.

Yun Quan took a deep breath and nodded vigorously.

“Alright. Let’s go then. Everyone, take your best weapons and all the elixirs. We’ll depart in an incense stick’s time!”

The ghost warriors responded with a roar and turned to prepare.

Kai walked to Yun Quan’s side and whispered, “Your Majesty, I have a request.”

Yun Quan looked at him: “Please speak, Mr. Chen.”

“Once we reach the Heavenly Fire Pit, let me go in first. You all wait outside.”

Yun Quan’s expression changed: “How can that be…”

“The Heavenly Fire Beasts in the Heavenly Fire Pit are too much for ordinary ghost warriors to handle.”

Kai interrupted him, “Your going in will only increase casualties. I’ll go in alone, find Yun Xi and Jiang Xuelan, and bring them out.”

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“But you…” Yun Quan frowned.

“My chaotic power can devour all power, including heavenly fire,” Kai said. “The Heavenly Fire Pit isn’t as dangerous to me as you imagine.” What

he didn’t say was that the source of supreme fire within him also craved heavenly fire.

It was the power of flame that had been accumulating since the Celestial Realm, dormant deep within his bloodline. He could feel the source of supreme fire within him trembling when the aura of the Heavenly Fire Pit appeared within his perception range.

Excited.

Hungry.

Yun Quan looked into Kai’s eyes and remained silent for a long time.

“Mr. Chen, are you sure?”

Kai nodded.

“Okay.” Yun Quan didn’t try to persuade him further. “We’ll wait for you outside. One incense stick’s time. If you don’t come out within one incense stick’s time, we’ll rush in.”

Kai smiled: “Okay.”

After one incense stick’s time, Yun Quan personally led three hundred ghost warriors toward the eastern section of the Netherworld Mountains.

Kai carried Xiao You and handed her over to an old woman.

“Xiao You, Uncle is going out for a bit, I’ll be back soon.”

Xiao You tugged at his sleeve, refusing to let go. “Uncle Chen, you’re lying. They all say the Heavenly Fire Pit is dangerous, and once you go in, you can’t come out.”

Kai squatted down, looking into her eyes.

“Xiao You, do you believe Uncle?”

Xiao You nodded.

“Then Uncle will tell you, Uncle will definitely come back. When Uncle comes back, I’ll tell you a story.”

Xiao You hesitated for a long time before finally letting go.

“Then you must come back.”

“I will.”

Kai stood up, turned around, and caught up with the group.

Behind him, Xiao You stood at the city gate, hugging her doll, watching his figure disappear into the black mist.

…

The Heavenly Fire Pit is located in the eastern section of the Netherworld Mountains, about half a day’s journey from the Netherworld Moon Kingdom.

Yun Quan led the group through the mountains, walking faster and faster, more and more urgently.

His face grew increasingly grim, because he could feel Yun Xi’s aura weakening.

“Faster!” he shouted, “Faster!”

The ghost warriors gritted their teeth, running with all their might.

Finally, after crossing the last mountain ridge, they saw the Heavenly Fire Pit.

Kai's breath caught in his throat.

It wasn't a pit.

It was a sea.

A sea made of flames.

Crimson flames surged, burned, and roared at the bottom of the enormous pit, covering the land for thousands of miles around.

The temperature of the flames was extremely high; even standing on the ridge, dozens of miles from the edge of the pit, Kai could still feel the scorching heat hitting him.

The color of the flames constantly changed: crimson, orange-yellow, golden-white, and dark blue—each color representing a different temperature.

The flames at the very center had become almost transparent white, a color so high that even light was distorted.

Within the flames, something was moving.

They were Heavenly Fire Beasts.

Their bodies were formed from condensed flames, and they came in various shapes.

Some resembled dragons, some tigers, some birds, and some fish.

They moved through the Heavenly Fire, emitting deep roars that shook the mountain ridges.

And on a rocky platform near the northern edge of the Heavenly Fire Pit, Kai saw two familiar figures.

Yun Xi and Jiang Xuelan.

They leaned against a massive rock, surrounded by an ice-blue light shield.

It was a shield formed from Jiang Xuelan's Ice God power.

The shield was constantly melting under the scorching flames, and Jiang Xuelan was continuously injecting new power to maintain it.

Yun Xi leaned against Jiang Xuelan, covered in blood.

Her left arm hung limply at her side, her Ghost Blade stuck in the ground in front of her, its blade riddled with cracks.

Before them stood a horde of Heavenly Fire Beasts.

At least twenty of them.

They surrounded the ice shield, ramming it with their bodies and scorching the ice surface with their flames.

The shield was already covered with dense cracks, on the verge of shattering.

"Xi'er!" Yun Quan's voice trembled.

He turned to Kai, his eyes filled with pleading.

Kai didn't speak.

He raised his hand, purple chaotic power gathering in his palm.

Then, he slapped Yun Quan's shoulder.

Yun Quan’s body jolted violently, a gentle force pushing him back onto the ridge.

“Wait outside,” Kai said.

Then, he leaped into the Heavenly Fire Pit.

A long trail of purple light traced its path through the pit.

Kai didn’t use the Dragon-Slaying Sword; it had been damaged in the spatial storm, and he didn’t want to burden it further in this place.

He simply clenched his fist, gathering chaotic power at his knuckles, and then unleashed a punch.

The first Heavenly Fire Beast pounced head-on, its body resembling a giant, burning tiger, its jaws agape as it lunged at Kai.

Kai slammed his fist into its head.

The purple fist energy collided with the heavenly fire, erupting in a blinding light. The

Heavenly Fire Beast’s head shattered instantly under the devouring power of chaotic energy, turning into a shower of sparks.

Before its body even fell, the second and third Heavenly Fire Beasts pounced.

Kai didn’t retreat.

His fists rained down like a storm, each punch carrying the devouring power of chaotic energy.

The Heavenly Fire Beasts were as fragile as paper before the chaotic power; one punch after another, they fell one by one.

Wherever the purple light passed, the Heavenly Fire Beasts shattered, turning into sparks that scattered in all directions.

But there were simply too many Heavenly Fire Beasts.

They surged in from all directions, endless and relentless, impossible to kill.

Wounds began to appear on Kai's body; the claws of the Heavenly Fire Beasts tore through his arms, their teeth pierced his shoulders, and their tails lashed his back.

Golden blood dripped, evaporating into golden mist as the Heavenly Fire swept away.

But Kai didn't stop.

His eyes were fixed on the distant rocky platform, on the two familiar figures.

Yun Xi sensed something, looked up, and saw the purple light.

Her eyes reddened.

" Kai..."

Jiang Xuelan also looked up, watching the approaching purple light, a slight smile playing on her lips.

"It's here."

When Kai was still a hundred feet from the platform, the largest Heavenly Fire Beast appeared.

It was ten times larger than the other Heavenly Fire Beasts, its body no longer crimson, but almost transparent white.

It resembled a dragon, with two burning horns on its head and two bottomless fiery holes in its eyes.

Its aura was that of a True Immortal Realm Fifth Grade.

Heavenly Fire Beast King.

It stood between Kai and the platform, its jaws wide open, unleashing a deafening roar.

The roar contained the power of heavenly fire, the sound waves transforming into a tangible shockwave of flames that swept towards Kai.

Kai didn't dodge.

He charged forward into the flames, chaotic energy coalescing into a layer of purple armor on his body.

The flames struck the armor, being devoured, transformed, and absorbed by the chaotic energy.

The Heavenly Fire Beast King's eyes flickered; it seemed to sense something—a power within this human that unsettled it.

But it didn't retreat.

It opened its jaws, lunging at Kai.

Kai didn't use his fist.

He extended his right hand, fingers spread, palm facing the Heavenly Fire Beast King's gaping maw.

Then, the source of supreme fire within him awakened.

It was the source of supreme fire that had begun accumulating in the Celestial Realm—the supreme fire of the demon race, the fire of the earth's core… countless flame powers slumbered deep within his

bloodline. Now, awakened by the power of the Heavenly Fire Pit, they were like a sleeping dragon opening its eyes.

Purple chaotic power and golden supreme fire essence converged in his palm, transforming into a dazzling pillar of light.

The pillar shot into the Heavenly Fire Beast King's mouth, pierced its body, and exited from its tail.

The Heavenly Fire Beast King froze.

Its body began to crumble, starting from its head, turning into sparks bit by bit.

It let out a low hiss, a hiss containing anger, resentment, and a hint of fear.

Then, it vanished.

Countless sparks scattered like fireflies, dyeing the entire Heavenly Fire Pit golden.

Kai landed on the platform, his legs buckling, almost collapsing to his knees.

Yun Xi rushed over and caught him.

"You're crazy!" Her voice trembled, tears streaming down her face. "Who told you to come! Who told you to come!"

Kai looked at her and smiled. "Have you forgotten? We agreed to save your people together."

Yun Xi bit her lip, her tears flowing even more fiercely.

Jiang Xuelan stood to the side, watching Kai, saying nothing.

Her hands trembled slightly, her eyes filled with complex emotions.

“You’re injured,” she finally spoke, her voice hoarse.

“Just a superficial wound,” Kai said. “What about you?”

Jiang Xuelan shook her head. “I’m fine. Yunxi is more seriously injured and needs to get back for treatment as soon as possible.”

Kai nodded, bent down, and carried Yunxi on his back.

“Let’s go.”

He turned and walked towards the edge of the Heavenly Fire Pit.

The Heavenly Fire Beasts surrounded them, growling softly, but none dared to charge.

They looked at the purple light emanating from Kai, their ferocity gradually replaced by fear.

That man had killed their king.

The power emanating from that man instilled fear in them to the very core.

Kai walked steadily, step by step.

Yunxi, clinging to his back, could feel his heartbeat—strong, steady, and reassuring.

” Kai,” she whispered.

“Hmm?”

“Thank you,”

Kai smiled. “You

‘re welcome. Hold on tight, I’m going to speed up.”

He took a deep breath, and the chaotic power and the essence of the supreme fire within him erupted simultaneously.

Purple light and golden flames intertwined on his body, transforming into a pillar of light shooting into the sky.

Then, he leaped up, carrying Yunxi on his back and Jiang Xuelan in tow, and rushed out of the Heavenly Fire Pit.

Behind him, the flames in the Heavenly Fire Pit suddenly surged violently.

It wasn't anger, nor a roar, but a kind of... resonance.

The moment Kai, carrying Yunxi, landed on the ridge after rushing out of the Heavenly Fire Pit, his legs gave way, and he collapsed to his knees.

Yunxi slid off his back and was caught by Yunquan.

"Xi'er! Xi'er!" Yunquan's voice trembled as he held his daughter, tears streaming down his face. "Are you alright? Are you alright?"

Yunxi leaned against her father's chest, forcing a smile on her pale face: "Father, I'm alright."

"You say you're alright!" Yunquan looked at her covered in blood, his heart aching so much he couldn't speak.

He turned and shouted, "Medical cultivators! Where are the medical cultivators!"

Two ghost clan medical cultivators rushed over, frantically examining Yunxi's injuries.

Her left arm was broken, three ribs were broken, and her internal organs were damaged to varying degrees.

But for the Ghost Princess, these weren't fatal injuries.

What was truly worrying was the almost depleted ghost energy within her body, and the soul scorched by the Heavenly Fire.

“She needs to rest,” the older healer breathed a sigh of relief. “The princess’s injuries aren’t serious, just too much exertion. She’ll recover after a period of rest.”

Yun Quan was finally relieved and turned to look at Kai.

Kai sat on the ground, panting heavily.

His condition wasn’t much better than Yun Xi’s; his body was covered in wounds left by the Heavenly Fire Beast, golden blood was still seeping out, and most of his chaotic power had been consumed.

But his eyes were bright, frighteningly bright.

“Mr. Chen,”

Yun Quan walked over and bowed deeply, “I can’t thank you enough. From now on, you are the most honored guest of Youyue Kingdom. Whatever you ask, the entire Youyue Kingdom will do our utmost.”

Kai waved his hand: “Don’t thank me. Send them back to recover first.”

Yun Quan nodded and arranged for people to lift Yun Xi up.

Jiang Xuelan refused anyone’s help. Although she was also quite exhausted, her injuries were much lighter than Yun Xi’s.

She walked up to Kai and looked down at him.

“You’re injured too.”

“Just a superficial wound,” Kai smiled. “I’ll be fine after a rest.”

Jiang Xuelan didn’t speak.

She reached out her hand, a ball of icy blue light gathering in her palm, and gently pressed it against Kai's shoulder.

The cool power flowed into his body through his shoulder, gradually dispelling the burning sensation from the wound.

Kai felt much better: "Thank you."

Jiang Xuelan withdrew her hand and said calmly, "You owe me."

Kai was taken aback: "What?"

"You owe me a favor." Jiang Xuelan turned around and walked towards the group. "Remember to pay it back later."

Kai watched her retreating figure, not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

The group began to walk back.

Yun Xi was at the front, with Yun Quan following closely beside her.

The ghost warriors surrounded Yun Xi, some singing, some cheering, some wiping away tears.

"The princess is back!"

"The princess is back!"

The voices echoed through the mountains, lingering for a long time.

Kai walked at the back of the group, his steps somewhat heavy.

Not because he was tired, although he was indeed very tired, but because he always felt that something was watching him.

The feeling was very subtle, like an invisible thread extending from the direction of the Heavenly Fire Pit, gently tying itself to his heart.

He stopped and looked back.

The Heavenly Fire Pit was still burning.

Crimson flames surged at the bottom of the pit, but were much quieter than before.

The Heavenly Fire Beasts no longer roared, but lay quietly in the flames, as if waiting for something.

They didn't chase after him.

They were waiting.

Waiting for what?

Kai shook his head and turned to follow the group.

But he knew in his heart that this matter was not over yet. By the time they returned to Youyue Kingdom, it was already dark.

Yunxi was taken back to the stone hall, the same room Kai had stayed in, which had originally been her room.

The healers went in and out, changing her bandages, feeding her medicine, and channeling ghost energy into her.

Yunquan stayed by her bedside, holding her daughter's hand, unwilling to leave for a moment.

Kai was arranged to rest in a stone hall next door.

Jiang Xuelan was in another room, the two separated by a wall.

Kai lay in bed, tossing and turning, unable to sleep.

It wasn't because he was particular about his bed, but because that feeling was still there.

The things in the Heavenly Fire Pit were still calling to him.

That call wasn't a sound, not language, but something more primal, more direct.

Like a resonance of blood, like a resonance of the soul. He could see the flames in the Heavenly Fire Pit with his eyes closed, he could feel the breath of those Heavenly Fire Beasts.

They were waiting for him.

He sat up, put on his clothes, and walked out of the stone hall.

Moonlight streamed through the gaps in the black mist, dyeing the ruins of the ancient city silver-gray.

The ghost warrior on night watch saw him and tried to salute, but he waved him off.

"Couldn't sleep, came out for a walk."

The warrior nodded, asking no further questions.

Kai walked around the ancient city and arrived at the city gate.

He stood there, looking east.

The eastern sky was tinged with a dark red by the light from the Heavenly Fire Pit, like a piece of red-hot iron.

The light flickered in and out of the black mist, eerie and captivating.

"You felt it too?"

a cold voice came from behind.

Kai didn't turn around; he knew it was Jiang Xuelan.

“You felt it too?” he countered.

Jiang Xuelan walked to his side, standing shoulder to shoulder with him, looking at the dark red sky in the east.

“I felt it when we were in the Heavenly Fire Pit,”

she said softly. “There’s something at the bottom of the pit. Not a Heavenly Fire Beast, but something deeper, something more ancient, calling to you.”

Kai turned to look at her: “How do you know it’s calling me?”

Jiang Xuelan glanced at him: “Because it didn’t call before you appeared. You came, and it woke up.”

Kai fell silent.

Jiang Xuelan continued, “The Heavenly Fire Pit has existed for tens of thousands of years. Countless powerful figures have entered and never emerged. But you went in, not only did you come out, but you also killed the Heavenly Fire Beast King. Don’t you find that strange?”

“I was lucky,” Kai said.

Jiang Xuelan’s lips curled slightly, a hint of mockery in her smile: “You always say it’s luck, you’ve said it’s luck all along. Kai, don’t you think you’re being too modest?”

Kai remained silent.

Jiang Xuelan looked at the eastern sky, her voice softening: “You possess the essence of supreme fire within you, the same origin as the Heavenly Fire in the Heavenly Fire Pit, and you also possess the power of chaos, encompassing all things. I can sense that the thing in the Heavenly Fire Pit is waiting for someone; it has waited for tens of thousands of years, and finally, it has found you.”

Kai took a deep breath: “Do you think I should go back?”

“Do you think you should go back?” Jiang Xuelan countered.

Kai remained silent for a long time.

“I think I should go back. But I don’t know what I’ll face when I return,” Kai said truthfully.

Jiang Xuelan nodded: “Then let’s go back. Your intuition has never lied to you.”

She turned and walked towards the stone hall.

After a few steps, she stopped, without looking back.

“Come back alive.”

Then she left.

Kai stood at the city gate, watching her figure disappear into the moonlight, a warm current welling up in his heart.

This woman, though cold on the outside, was actually very gentle inside.

He turned and looked east.

Dark red light flickered in the black mist, as if winking at him.

“Come back alive,” he murmured, “Of course I’ll come back alive.”

…

The next morning, Kai found Yun Quan.

Yun Quan was feeding Yun Xi medicine. Seeing Kai enter, she quickly stood up: “Mr. Chen, what brings you here? Are your injuries better?”

Kai nodded: “Much better. Your Majesty, I have something to tell you.”

Yun Quan looked at his expression, a bad premonition rising in her heart.

“I want to go back to the Heavenly Fire Pit,” Kai said.

The stone hall fell silent.

Yun Xi’s hand holding the medicine bowl stopped. She looked up at Kai, her eyes filled with disbelief.

“Are you crazy?” Her voice was shrill. “You just came from there! Your injuries haven’t healed yet!”

“I know,” Kai said, “but I have to go back.”

“Why?” Yun Xi almost shouted, “What is there there worth going back to die for?”

Kai looked at her and remained silent for a moment.

“I don’t know what’s there. But I can feel it waiting for me. I have to find out what it is.” Kai explained truthfully.

Yun Xi bit her lip, her eyes reddening.

She put down the medicine bowl and struggled to sit up in bed, but Yun Quan held her down.

“Xi’er, don’t move.”

“Father!” Yun Xi’s voice trembled, “He wants to go back to die! You’re letting him go?”

Yun Quan remained silent for a moment. He looked at his daughter, then at Kai, and finally sighed.

“Mr. Chen, are you sure?”

Kai nodded.

Yun Quan released Yun Xi’s hand, stood up, and walked to Kai.

“Then I’ll go with you.”

“No need.” Kai shook his head. “You stay here to take care of Yunxi. I can go alone.”

“But…”

“Your Majesty.” Kai interrupted him. “The thing in the Heavenly Fire Pit can’t be dealt with by just having more people. It’s waiting for me, not someone else. If you go, you’ll only increase unnecessary casualties.”

Yun Quan opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but in the end, he said nothing.

He knew Kai was right.

“Then you…” his voice was a little hoarse, “you must be careful.”

Kai smiled: “Don’t worry. I promised Xiao You I would tell her a story when I got back.”

He turned to leave, but Yun Xi’s voice came from behind him, “ Kai.”

He stopped. “Promise me,” Yunxi’s voice was soft, almost inaudible, “You must come back.”

Kai didn’t turn around.

“I promise you.”

Then he left.

Yunxi sat on the bed, watching his figure disappear through the door, tears finally falling.

Yunquan came over and gently hugged his daughter.

“He will come back,” he whispered, “He’s not an ordinary person.”

Yunxi leaned against her father’s chest, saying nothing.

But in her heart, she thought, of course he’s not an ordinary person.

If he were an ordinary person, why would he go to the Heavenly Fire Pit to his death?

Kai came to the Heavenly Fire Pit, stood on its edge, and looked down.

Flames surged at the bottom of the pit, the crimson light reflecting on his face, casting a long, long shadow.

The Heavenly Fire Beasts, moving through the flames, stopped when they saw him return, turning their heads in unison.

Hundreds of eyes were watching him simultaneously.

No hostility, no attack, just quiet observation.

As if confirming something, as if waiting for something.

Kai took a deep breath and leaped down.

This time, no Heavenly Fire Beast attacked him.

They parted to make way for him, like subjects yielding to their king.

Kai passed through the flames, the heatwaves, and the layers upon layers of fire beasts, descending towards the deepest part of the pit.

The flames grew denser, the temperature higher.

Crimson turned orange-yellow, orange-yellow turned golden-white, golden-white turned ghostly blue, and ghostly blue turned almost transparent white.

Kai's chaotic power flowed across his body, purple light shielding him from the fire.

Even so, he could still feel the scorching heat, a temperature that could ignite even the soul.

He fell for a long time.

The fire pit was much deeper than he had imagined.

It stretched for thousands of miles, its bottom unseen.

He was like a pebble falling into the deep sea, surrounded by endless flames, plummeting towards the unknown abyss.

Finally, he saw the bottom of the pit.

It was a flat rocky surface, scorched by the fire for tens of thousands of years, transformed into a strange, glassy substance.

Ancient patterns were carved into the rocks, not by human hands, but naturally formed by the power of the fire.

In the very center of the rock, there was a ball of flame.

It wasn't large, only about the size of a fist.

Its color was pure white, almost transparent.

It burned quietly, unhurriedly, gently, like the first ray of light at the beginning of time.

Kai landed on the rock and walked towards the flame.

With each step, the primordial fire within him trembled slightly.

With each step, the flame grew brighter.

When he reached it, it shone like a small sun.

Kai crouched down and extended his right hand.

The moment his fingers touched the flame, the entire world changed.

Kai found himself standing on a fiery red plain.

The sky was a burning orange-red, the earth was churning lava, and the air was thick with the scent of sulfur and fire.

But there was no fear, no destruction, only a primal, pure, and vibrant warmth.

On the plain were a group of people.

No, not people, but fire spirits.

Their bodies were formed from flames, their features blurred, but their general humanoid shapes were discernible.

Some were running, some were playing, and some were practicing controlling flames.

Among them stood an old man.

His body was also formed from flames, but his flames were more refined and purer than the other fire spirits.

His features were clearly visible: an aged face, deep-set eyes, and a white beard.

He stood there like an ancient tree that had burned for millennia, old yet resilient.

“Children, watch closely,” the old man’s voice was like the crackling of flames, warm and powerful.

He raised his right hand, palm up. A ball of flame appeared in his palm, initially just a small flame, then slowly growing larger, transforming into a blooming lotus flower.

The lotus petals unfolded layer by layer, each burning with a different color of flame: crimson, orange-yellow, golden-white, and deep blue.

The fire spirits exclaimed in amazement.

“So beautiful!”

“Grandpa, teach us!”

The old man smiled: “Alright, alright, I’ll teach you all.”

He put away the flaming lotus and began to teach the fire spirits.

He started with the most basic flame manipulation, teaching little by little, demonstrating again and again.

The fire spirits learned diligently, clumsily but each one trying their best.

Kai stood aside, watching this scene, a strange feeling welling up inside him.

This world, this place, these people… he

felt like he’d seen them somewhere before. But he’d never been here before.

Time began to accelerate.

The fire spirits grew up.

Their flames became more condensed, their control more skillful.

Some learned to condense weapons with their flames, some learned to heal injuries with their flames, and some learned to sense the aura of all things with their flames.

Among them was a child, the most talented.

From a young age, he could control more flames than the other children, and he learned the fastest.

What the old man taught once, the other children had to practice ten times, he only needed to practice three times to master.

He grew very quickly.

From a toddler fire spirit, he grew into a spirited young man.

His flames were crimson, more intense and fiercer than the flames of the other fire spirits.

But he wasn't satisfied.

"Grandpa, are there stronger flames?" he asked.

The old man looked at him, silent for a long time.

"Yes," the old man said, "but you're not ready to learn yet."

"When can I learn?"

"When you understand what fire is,"

the boy said, puzzled.

He felt he already understood fire; he could control it, condense it, and unleash it.

What more did he need to understand?

He began to explore on his own.

He left the plains and ventured into the wasteland.

The flames there were more violent, more dangerous, but he didn't care.

He devoured the flames of the wasteland, absorbing them into his own body.

His flames changed from crimson to orange-yellow, then from orange-yellow to golden-white.

He grew stronger.

But he was still not satisfied.

He returned to the plains and found the old man. "Grandpa, I understand. Flame is power. Whoever has the greatest power is the strongest."

The old man looked at him, his eyes filled with sorrow.

"Child, you are wrong. Flame is not power, it is life."

The boy didn't believe him.

He turned and left the plain, going to a farther place.

Time accelerated again.

The boy became a young man, and the young man became a middle-aged man.

His flame changed from golden white to dark blue, and then from dark blue to almost transparent white.

He became stronger and stronger, and also more and more lonely.

He devoured too many flames, and the will within those flames clashed, collided, and tore apart his soul within him.

He began to become irritable, easily angered, and no longer trusted anyone.

He returned to the plain.

There were no more fire spirits on the plain.

The old man had also disappeared. Only a desolate expanse of lava and scorched earth remained.

He stood there, looking at this barren land, silent for a long time.

Then, he raised his head and looked at the sky.

“I will prove it to you,” he whispered, “Flame is power.”

He raised his hand, and a ball of white flame condensed in his palm.

The temperature of that flame was so high that even space was distorted, so high that even light was bent.

He threw that ball of flame into the sky.

Flames soared into the sky, piercing the barriers of celestial laws, and crashed onto the land of the fifteenth heaven,

creating a crater a thousand miles in diameter.

Then the young man fought his way through countless battles, seeking the power of the supreme flame. Tens of thousands of years passed in the blink of an eye...

The young man of yesteryear was now old and gray, his eyes filled only with a thirst for power.

His flames had long since turned from their initial white to an evil black.

He had entered the demonic path and acquired his own resounding title—the Flame Demon.

Kai suddenly opened his eyes.

He was still standing at the bottom of the crater, his fingers still touching the white flame.

But his hand was trembling, and his forehead was covered in cold sweat.

“That was… the Flame Demon.”

He finally understood.

That boy, that fire spirit with the highest talent, that young man who was not satisfied with the status quo and pursued ultimate power, was the Flame Demon.

That celestial fire didn’t fall from the sky.

He had thrown it himself.

The crater wasn’t a natural disaster.

It was a mark he left behind.

That white flame, the flame he touched with his fingers, was the last trace of purity left behind by the Flame Demon before its departure.

Untainted by the desire to devour, undistorted by the pursuit of power, it was simply the first flame lotus condensed by the child under the old man’s guidance. A

pure, warm, and vibrant flame.

Kai closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

Then, he opened his mouth and swallowed the white flame.

The moment the flame entered his body, Kai felt his body ignite.

Not pain, but an indescribable heat.

That heat spread from his throat to his chest, from his chest to his limbs, from his limbs to every inch of flesh, every bone, every meridian.

The source of supreme fire within him began to boil.

Countless flame powers, dormant deep within his bloodline, were now awakened by the essence of heavenly fire, like a sleeping dragon opening its eyes.

The essence of heavenly fire surged into his meridians, merging with the source of supreme fire.

Initially, there was repulsion.

The essence of heavenly fire was too domineering, while the source of supreme fire was too complex.

The two forces clashed, tore at each other, and devoured one another within his body.

Kai felt as if his body were a battlefield, with two fiery energies clashing within his meridians, sizzling and burning his flesh.

Golden blood seeped from his pores, evaporating into golden mist under the intense heat.

His skin began to crack, the cracks radiating a crimson light, like magma flowing through the cracks of rock.

Pain.

Pain so intense he wanted to scream, but no sound came out.

Pain so intense he wanted to cry, but the tears evaporated before they could fall.

Pain so intense he wanted to give up, but the thought was immediately suppressed by another thought.

“Flame is not power. It is life.”

The old man’s voice echoed in his mind.

Kai gritted his teeth, enduring the excruciating pain, and began to guide the fiery energy within his body.

He did not suppress the essence of heavenly fire, nor did he resist the source of ultimate fire, but instead allowed them to meet, collide, and merge in his dantian.

Just as the old man had taught the fire spirits, do not try to control the flame, but understand it, accept it, and become it.

The essence of heavenly fire began to soften.

The source of the ultimate fire began to purify.

The two flame powers intertwined, entwined, and merged in his dantian, finally transforming into a brand new flame.

The color of that flame constantly changed: crimson, orange-yellow, golden-white, dark blue, and transparent.

Each color represented a different source of flame power.

They slowly rotated in Kai’s dantian, like a small sun.

His cultivation began to break through.

Peak of the seventh rank of the Upper Immortal Realm.

Eighth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm.

Middle stage of the eighth rank of

the Upper Immortal Realm. High stage of the eighth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm.

Only when he reached the peak of the eighth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm did that power gradually subside. He

was only one step away from the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm.

Kai opened his eyes and exhaled a long breath.

That breath was crimson, carrying a scorching temperature, and burned in the air for a moment before dissipating.

He looked down at his hands.

The cracks on his skin had healed, replaced by a layer of faint golden lines.

Those lines were like the trajectory of flames, spreading across the back of his hands and extending to his fingertips.

He clenched his fist, a ball of flame coalescing in his palm.

That flame was no longer simply purple chaotic power, but a new power interwoven with purple and gold—

the Chaos Fire.

He stood up and looked around.

The Heavenly Fire Pit was still burning, but the flames were much dimmer than before.

The Heavenly Fire Beasts lay on the rocks, quietly watching him, the ferocity in their eyes completely gone, replaced by a sense of relief.

As if to say: “Finally, we’ve waited this long.”

Kai looked at them, silent for a moment.

Then, he leaped into the air and flew towards the edge of the Heavenly Fire Pit.