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Behind him, the flames in the Heavenly Fire Pit began to die out.

Not suddenly, but like a long sunset.

Starting from the bottom of the pit, the flames dimmed, cooled, and dissipated layer by layer. Crimson turned to dark red, dark red to grayish-black, and grayish-black to a deathly silence. The

Heavenly Fire Beasts let out low, mournful howls, devoid of sorrow or anger, only a peaceful farewell.

Their bodies dissipated as the flames died down, turning into countless sparks that drifted into the darkness.

The Heavenly Fire Pit, which had existed for tens of thousands of years, finally extinguished at this moment.

Chen Ping landed on the ridge and turned to look at the Heavenly Fire Pit behind him.

It was no longer a sea of fire.

Only a huge, pitch-black, deathly deep pit remained.

The rocks at the bottom had been scorched into a glassy state, reflecting a faint glow in the moonlight.

There were no flames, no Heavenly Fire Beasts, no scorching heat.

Only silence.

Chen Ping stood there, watching for a long time.

He thought of the old man, of the fire spirits, of the most talented child.

That child later became the Flame Demon.

He pursued ultimate power, and was ultimately devoured by it.

The last trace of purity he left behind burned for tens of thousands of years in the Heavenly Fire Pit, waiting for someone who possessed the essence of fire.

Perhaps, the old man had known this day would come.

Perhaps, this was what he meant by “when you understand what fire is.”

Fire is not power, it is life.

And life needs to be passed down.

Chen Ping turned around and walked towards the direction of Youyue Kingdom.

Behind him, the Heavenly Fire Pit stood silently under the moonlight.

A breeze blew up from the bottom of the pit, carrying a hint of warmth, like the old man’s sigh.

When Chen Ping returned to Youyue Kingdom, it was already dawn.

At the city gate, Yun Quan, Jiang Xuelan, You Ying, and hundreds of ghost warriors were all standing there waiting.

The moment they saw him appear on the mountain path, everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

“Mr. Chen!” Yun Quan greeted him, looking him up and down, “Are you alright?”

Chen Ping shook his head: “I’m fine.” ”

The Heavenly Fire Pit…” You Ying pointed east, his voice trembling slightly, “The Heavenly Fire Pit has been extinguished.”

Everyone looked east. The sky there was no longer a dark red, but a normal, grayish-black shrouded in black mist.

“I did it. I absorbed the essence of the Heavenly Fire in the Heavenly Fire Pit. The Heavenly Fire Pit will never exist again,” Chen Ping said.

Silence.

Everyone looked at him with complex expressions.

This young man, a human cultivator with the cultivation of an Upper Immortal Realm, first fought his way through the Heavenly Fire Pit and rescued the princess.

Then he returned alone, absorbing the essence of the Heavenly Fire Pit accumulated over tens of thousands of years, completely erasing this most dangerous place in the Fifteenth Heaven.

Who exactly was he?

“Uncle Chen!”

A clear voice broke the silence.

Xiao You ran out from the crowd and threw herself into Chen Ping’s arms.

“Uncle Chen! You’re back! You said you’d tell me a story!”

Chen Ping bent down, picked her up, and smiled.

“Okay. Tell a story.”

He carried Xiao You and walked towards the ancient city.

Behind him, Yun Quan, Jiang Xuelan, You Ying, and hundreds of ghost warriors watched his back, motionless for a long time.

“This person…” You Ying murmured, “What is his background?”

Yun Quan remained silent.

He watched Chen Ping’s retreating figure, a complex emotion welling up within him.

“Xi’er, you’ve made a good friend.”

Jiang Xuelan stood at the back of the crowd, watching Chen Ping’s retreating figure, a slight smile playing on her lips.

This man always managed to surprise her.

She turned and walked towards the stone hall.

…

The news of the Heavenly Fire Pit’s extinguishing spread like wildfire throughout the entire Fifteenth Heaven.

The first to notice was the Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall, located closest to the Netherworld Mountains.

The Heavenly Fire Pit had existed for tens of thousands of years, its flames a constant landmark in the eastern sky of the Fifteenth Heaven.

When the dark red light suddenly vanished, the Judgment Hall’s guards immediately noticed the anomaly.

“The Heavenly Fire Pit… is extinguished?”

The news was reported up the chain of command, eventually reaching the ears of the Judgment Venerable.

The Judgment Venerable stood at the highest point of the Judgment Hall, looking east.

The sky there was no longer dark red, but a normal gray-black.

His brows furrowed, a hint of unease flashing in his eyes.

The Heavenly Fire Pit had existed for tens of thousands of years; countless powerful figures had entered it, but none had ever emerged.

How could it suddenly extinguish?

Who did it?

“Send people to investigate,” he said coldly. “I want to see them alive or dead.”

At the same time, the Demon Clan’s Shadow Palace, the Beast Clan’s Sky Wolf Tribe, the Human Clan’s Loose Cultivator Alliance, and hundreds of other forces large and small across the Fifteenth Heaven all received the same news. The Heavenly

Fire Pit was destroyed.

That deathly place that had entrenched itself in the Netherworld Mountains for tens of thousands of years had vanished.

Everyone’s first reaction wasn’t shock, but greed.

The Heavenly Fire Pit had existed for tens of thousands of years, accumulating tens of thousands of years’ worth of Heavenly Fire essence.

Even if the essence was gone, the rocks at the bottom of the pit, scorched by Heavenly Fire for tens of thousands of years, must have undergone some kind of transformation.

Those rocks might be extremely precious refining materials.

More importantly, no one had dared to approach the area around the Heavenly Fire Pit for tens of thousands of years. Could there be other rare and precious materials there?

In an instant, countless forces dispatched scouts, swarming towards the Netherworld Mountains. ...

In the council hall of Youyue Kingdom.

Yun Quan's face was grim.

"The scouts report that at least thirty forces have sent people."

He handed a report to Chen Ping, "The Divine Clan's Judgment Hall, the Demon Clan's Shadow Hall, the Beast Clan's Sky Wolf Tribe, the Human Clan's Loose Cultivator Alliance... big and small, they've all come."

Chen Ping took the report, glanced at it, and remained silent.

"They ostensibly come to investigate the cause of the Heavenly Fire Pit's extinguishing, but actually..."

Yun Quan gritted his teeth, "they're here to steal. The rocks in the Heavenly Fire Pit have been scorched for tens of thousands of years, transforming into extremely rare 'Heavenly Fire Crystals.' These crystals contain fire-attribute spiritual power, making them treasures for cultivating fire-based techniques."

He stood up and paced back and forth in the council hall, his steps becoming increasingly hurried.

"If they search the Netherworld Mountains, they might discover our Youyue Kingdom's hiding place. Then..." He didn't finish his sentence, but the meaning was clear.

At that time, the Divine Clan would be the first to attack.

The Ghost Clan's last hiding place would cease to exist.

The council hall fell silent.

Yunxi sat to one side, her face still pale, but she was already able to get out of bed and walk.

She looked at her father's anxious back, wanting to say something, but unsure what to say.

Jiang Xuelan leaned against the doorframe, her eyes closed, as if resting.

She wasn't particularly concerned about the survival of the Ghost Clan, but she was waiting for Chen Ping to speak.

Youying stood in the corner, her hands clenched tightly, her knuckles white.

Chen Ping placed the intelligence report on the table and stood up.

"Your Majesty, don't be afraid."

Everyone looked at him.

Chen Ping's voice was calm, almost cold: "With me here, no one can harm you."

Yunquan stopped and looked at him.

His haggard face was filled with complex emotions—gratitude, doubt, and a glimmer of inexplicable hope.

"Mr. Chen, you alone..."

"I'm enough on my own,"

Chen Ping interrupted him. "They didn't come to fight, they came to steal. A motley crew, each with their own agendas, they can't possibly

join forces. As long as I demonstrate sufficient strength, they won't dare to act rashly." He

walked to the door and glanced at the sky outside.

"Besides, I also want to get to the bottom of the Heavenly Fire Pit. Those crystals... can't fall into the hands of the gods."

Jiang Xuelan opened her eyes and glanced at him.

"I'll go with you."

Chen Ping nodded, not refusing.

"I'll go too." Yun Xi struggled to stand up, but Yun Quan held her down.

"You can't go." Yun Quan's voice was unquestionable, "Your injuries haven't healed yet."

"But..."

"No buts." Chen Ping turned to look at Yun Xi, "You stay here to recover. Jiang Xuelan and I are enough to handle things at the Heavenly Fire Pit."

Yun Xi bit her lip, wanting to argue, but meeting Chen Ping's calm eyes, her words caught in her throat.

"Then be careful." She finally managed to say only those four words.

Chen Ping smiled, turned, and walked out of the council hall.

Jiang Xuelan followed behind him.

The two passed through the ancient city, walked out of the mountain gate, and disappeared into the black mist.

Yun Xi stood at the entrance of the council hall, watching their backs, a strange emotion welling up inside her.

She wanted to go.

But she knew that if she went now, she would only be a burden.

“Xi’er.” Yun Quan walked over and gently patted her shoulder. “He’s right. You need to recover now.”

Yun Xi nodded without speaking.

She turned and walked back to the stone hall, lay down on the bed, and closed her eyes.

But her mind was filled with Chen Ping’s image.

His back as he fought his way through the sea of fire in the Heavenly Fire Pit, his heart pounding as he carried her out of the fire, his profile as he stood at the city gate saying, “I promise you.”

This man always treated her affairs as his own.

He always valued other people’s lives more than his own.

She turned over and buried her face in the pillow.

“He must come back,” she murmured.

…

The Heavenly Fire Pit.

The sea of fire had been completely extinguished.

The giant pit, spanning thousands of miles, opened like a gaping mouth, its walls made of scorched, glassy rocks that reflected an eerie light in the sunlight.

At the bottom of the pit was a patch of black scorched earth, scattered with countless dark red crystals—rock crystals scorched by the Heavenly Fire for tens of thousands of years.

Heavenly Fire Crystals.

They varied in size, some as small as a fist, others as large as a millstone.

Each piece radiated a scorching heat, its surface flowing with a dark red light, like solidified magma.

At this moment, the edge of the Heavenly Fire Pit was crowded with people.

Gods, demons, beastmen, humans… more than thirty forces, thousands of cultivators, surrounded the center of the Heavenly Fire Pit.

Their eyes were all fixed on the dark red crystals at the bottom of the pit, their eyes filled with greed.

But no one made the first move.

Because whoever moved first would become the target of everyone's attacks.

"Gentlemen,"

a divine cultivator in a golden robe stepped forward. He was a fourth-grade True Immortal, an elder of the Judgment Hall named Jin Huan, "The Heavenly Fire Pit is within the sphere of influence of our divine race's Judgment Hall. Its resources naturally belong to our divine race. Please return."

Before he could finish speaking, a demon cultivator sneered, "Jin Huan, your words are utterly shameless. The Heavenly Fire Pit has existed for tens of thousands of years. When has your divine race ever dared to approach it? Now that the Heavenly Fire is extinguished, you claim it as your territory?"

“Exactly!” a beastman cultivator echoed, “The Heavenly Fire Pit is unclaimed land; whoever seizes it owns it!”

“Right! Whoever seizes it owns it!”

“Let’s all rely on our abilities!”

The crowd was indignant, and Jin Huan’s face turned grim.

Although he was only a fourth-grade True Immortal, there were dozens of other fourth-grade True Immortal experts present; he couldn’t possibly suppress them all alone.

He gritted his teeth and retreated back into the divine race’s ranks.

“Then let’s see who has the best skills,”

he said coldly. “But don’t forget, everyone, the Lord of the Judgment Hall of my Divine Clan is a True Immortal of the Eighth Rank. Whether you can take back what you’ve stolen is still a question.”

Upon hearing this, everyone’s expression changed.

A True Immortal of the Eighth Rank.

That was the pinnacle of combat power in the entire Fifteenth Heaven.

All those present combined wouldn’t be enough to defeat the Judgment Venerable alone.

After a moment of silence, an elder from the Loose Cultivator Alliance stepped forward.

“Elder Jin Huan, you’re mistaken

,” his voice was neither humble nor arrogant. “The Heavenly Fire Pit belongs to all people, not just the Divine Clan. While the Judgment Venerable is powerful, he can’t be an enemy of all people, can he?” ”

Exactly! All people!”

“Our Loose Cultivator Alliance may be weak, but we’re not to be bullied!”

Jin Huan’s face darkened further.

He knew he had misspoke. Threats were acceptable, but not too obvious ones, otherwise they would only provoke public outrage.

“That’s not what I meant.”

He softened his tone. “I’m just reminding everyone that the matter of the Heavenly Fire Pit will ultimately be decided by the Divine Race’s Judgment Hall. Wouldn’t it be better if everyone got what they needed and lived in peace?”

No one responded.

But the atmosphere clearly eased somewhat. Jin Huan sneered inwardly. This rabble would crumble at the slightest provocation.

Once they were fighting tooth and nail, the Judgment Hall could easily clean up the mess.

“Since no one objects, then…”

Before he could finish, a commotion erupted from the bottom of the pit.

“A crystal! A huge crystal!”

Everyone’s gaze turned to the bottom of the pit.

In the very center of the Heavenly Fire Pit, on the largest glassy rock, lay a massive Heavenly Fire Crystal.

It was over a meter tall, entirely crimson, with golden patterns flowing across its surface, like a solidified sun.

Everyone's breathing quickened.

The fire-attribute spiritual power contained within that crystal was enough to raise a True Immortal cultivator's cultivation by a small realm.

"It's mine!"

The first to rush out was a True Immortal Realm second-grade warrior from the Beast Clan.

He transformed into a streak of light, charging towards the bottom of the pit, his eyes filled with fanaticism.

Clad in animal hide armor, his muscles bulged, and he gripped a massive bone axe, resembling a wild beast unleashed.

"Don't even think about it!"

A demon cultivator followed closely behind.

Enveloped in black demonic energy, his face was blurred, only his blood-red eyes gleaming in the darkness.

He moved with ghostly speed, arriving at the crystal almost simultaneously with the beastman warrior.

"This is mine!" the beastman warrior roared, his bone axe slashing towards the demon cultivator's head.

The demon cultivator sneered, dodging the axe with a swift movement, simultaneously striking the beastman warrior's back with a palm strike.

Black demonic energy surged into the beastman warrior's body, corroding his flesh.

"Ah..." the beastman warrior screamed, turning to retaliate.

A blinding light erupted from the bone axe—the beastman's unique bloodline power, violent and ferocious.

The two clashed beside the crystal.

More people rushed forward.

A cultivator from the Loose Cultivator Alliance, a True Immortal of the first rank, appeared to be in his fifties, sporting a goatee and wearing a faded Daoist robe.

Taking advantage of the chaos, he grabbed a fist-sized crystal, stuffed it into his pocket, and turned to run.

"Stop!" Another Loose Cultivator chased after him, grabbing his collar. "Hand over the crystal!"

"I got it first!"

"I saw it first!"

The two wrestled, displaying none of the decorum expected of cultivators, like two beggars fighting over food.

A demon cultivator seized the opportunity to launch a sneak attack, slashing down a divine cultivator and snatching the crystal from his hand.

The divine cultivator lay in a pool of blood, his eyes wide open in death, unable to believe that a demon would dare attack a divine being.

"Are you demons insane? How dare you touch my divine race?" Jin Huan roared at the edge of the pit.

"The Heavenly Fire Pit is unclaimed; whoever gets it keeps it!" the demon cultivator shouted without turning back.

Jin Huan's face was ashen, but he didn't immediately attack. He waited, waiting until everyone was nearly defeated before wiping them all out.

A female beastman warrior, a first-grade True Immortal, tall and imposing, with battle markings painted on

her face, single-handedly fought off three rogue cultivators, snatched three crystals, and laughed loudly, "Hahaha! Long live the Heavenly Wolf Tribe!"

Before her laughter subsided, a demon cultivator attacked from behind, piercing her shoulder with a single blow.

The female warrior screamed, the crystals scattering across the ground, quickly snatched away by those around her.

"Bastard!" the female warrior roared, turning to fight her attacker.

The melee at the bottom of the pit grew increasingly fierce.

Some stuffed the crystals they grabbed into their storage rings, some stole others' storage rings, some took advantage of the chaos to commit atrocities, and some formed temporary alliances, only to turn into bitter enemies over the unequal distribution of spoils.

The crystals changed hands constantly in the chaos.

A fist-sized crystal was first picked up by a rogue cultivator, then stolen by a demon, then reclaimed by a beastman, then confiscated by a god, then snatched back by three rogue cultivators working together, and then stolen again by two demons working together... In the short span of an incense stick's time, it changed hands seven or eight times.

Screams, curses, and pleas for mercy rose and fell.

Blood flowed at the bottom of the pit, staining the black scorched earth dark red.

The air was filled with the stench of blood, burnt smells, and the scorching heat emanating from the Heavenly Fire Crystal.

A rogue cultivator at the first level of the True Immortal Realm had his arm severed and lay groaning in a pool of blood.

No one came to his aid; everyone was busy grabbing the crystal, some even taking it as they passed by.

A beastman warrior, besieged by three demons, fought his way out of the pit, wounded all over.

He had just climbed to the edge of the Heavenly Fire Pit when he collapsed and never rose again.

Jin Huan stood at the edge of the pit, watching everything unfold, his smile deepening.

“That’s about enough,” he murmured.

He raised his hand, and the divine cultivators behind him simultaneously drew their weapons.

Golden holy light shone at the edge of the pit, like more than thirty small suns, blindingly bright.

“Go down and drive everyone away. Take all the crystals.”

“Yes!”

More than thirty divine cultivators rushed into the Heavenly Fire Pit at the same time.

“The Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall is handling this! Everyone

, retreat!” “Those who do not retreat will be killed without mercy!”

Golden holy light exploded at the bottom of the pit, shaking the various forces engaged in the chaotic battle.

Jin Huan personally intervened, slapping a beastman warrior at the first rank of True Immortal Realm away with a single palm strike.

The beastman warrior's body tumbled several times in the air before crashing heavily against the pit wall with a muffled thud.

A large crater was created in the pit wall, and the warrior coughed up blood, instantly losing consciousness.

"You!"

A leader of the beast race, a True Immortal Realm Rank 3, roared in fury. He wore a wolf-skin cloak, and his face was etched with three bloody scars. He was Wolf Fang, a renowned warrior of the Heavenly Wolf Tribe.

Wolf Fang pointed his battle axe at Jin Huan, his voice booming like thunder: "Jin Huan, you've gone too far!"

Jin Huan sneered: "Gone too far? I've already said, the Heavenly Fire Pit is the territory of my divine race. If you don't listen, then don't blame me for being impolite."

He unleashed a palm strike, golden holy light transforming into a gigantic hand that pressed down on Wolf Fang.

The palm blotted out the sky, casting a large area at the bottom of the pit into shadow.

Wolf Fang gritted his teeth and took the blow head-on, his battle axe erupting with a blinding crimson light—the bloodline power of the Heavenly Wolf Clan, violent and ferocious.

Boom…

The two forces collided, unleashing a deafening roar.

A large crater was blasted into the ground at the bottom of the pit, sending debris flying and dust billowing.

Wolf Fang was knocked back several steps, a trickle of blood escaping from the corner of his mouth.

His hands trembled, his tiger's mouth split open, blood flowing down the handle of his battle axe.

The difference between a fourth-grade True Immortal and a third-grade True Immortal was too great.

"Who else?" Jin Huan surveyed his surroundings, his voice filled with arrogance.

No one spoke.

The chaotic battle at the bottom of the pit had completely ceased.

The cultivators from various factions were driven aside by the Divine Race cultivators; though angry, none dared to resist.

The prestige of the Divine Race's Judgment Hall was not something they could challenge.

A demon cultivator at the second rank of True Immortal Realm, unwilling to accept defeat, stepped forward and roared, "What's so great about the gods? We demons…"

Before he could finish speaking, Jin Huan struck out with a palm, golden holy light hitting his chest.

The demon cultivator's body flew backward like a kite with a broken string, crashing into the pit wall, spitting out blood. "Who else?" Jin Huan asked again.

Silence.

A deathly silence.

Everyone lowered their heads, not daring to meet Jin Huan's gaze.

Their fists clenched so tightly they cracked, their teeth gnashed, but no one dared to step forward.

Jin Huan nodded in satisfaction.

He walked to the largest crystal, reached out and touched it, his eyes filled with greed.

Golden patterns flowed across the surface of the crystal, and the scorching heat transmitted through his palm to his entire body, making him feel as if every pore of his body was cheering.

"A good thing," he murmured, "The Palace Master will definitely like it."

He was about to reach out and put the crystal into his storage ring when a voice came from the edge of the pit.

"Put it down."

The voice wasn't loud, but it clearly reached everyone's ears.

All eyes turned to the edge of the pit at the same time.

A young man in a blue robe walked out from behind the rocks.

A sword hung at his waist, its blade bearing several cracks, as if it had survived a fierce battle.

His face was calm, but his eyes were as cold as knives.

Behind him followed a woman in white, her face aloof, her long hair as black as ink, and a faint icy blue light surrounding her.

She stood there, like a white lotus atop a snow-capped mountain, pure and noble.

Jin Huan's eyes narrowed.

"A human cultivator?" He sized Chen Ping up and down, sneering, "What are you? You dare ask me to put you down?"

Chen Ping didn't answer. He walked down from the edge of the pit, step by step, unhurriedly.

His footsteps echoed in the silent Heavenly Fire Pit, each step feeling like a blow to the heart.

The cultivators at the bottom of the pit automatically parted to make way.

They didn't recognize this young man, but they could sense an unsettling aura emanating from him.

It wasn't a suppression of cultivation level, but something more fundamental.

Like a natural enemy, like destiny, like some existence they couldn't comprehend.

Chen Ping stopped in front of Jin Huan.

The distance between them was no more than three feet.

Chen Ping was half a head shorter than Jin Huan, and his cultivation was a whole realm lower.

Standing there, he seemed like a god looking down upon all living beings, while Jin Huan appeared as insignificant as an ant before him.

"I said, put it down." Chen Ping's voice remained calm, but each word struck Jin Huan's heart like a hammer blow.

Jin Huan's expression changed.

He sensed it.

This human cultivator, who appeared to be only at the peak of the eighth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, possessed a power that terrified him.

It wasn't a suppression of cultivation level, but something more fundamental; his holy light trembled before this man.

Like a mouse before a cat, like darkness encountering light.

"You...who are you?" His voice trembled slightly.

Chen Ping didn't answer.

He raised his right hand, a ball of flame condensing in his palm.

The flame's color constantly changed: crimson, orange-yellow, golden-white, dark blue, transparent—each color representing a source of fire power.

They intertwined, merged, and swirled in Chen Ping's palm, finally transforming into a new flame interwoven with purple and gold.

The Chaos Fire.

The moment the flame appeared, the temperature of the entire Heavenly Fire Pit suddenly increased several times over.

The scattered Heavenly Fire Crystals on the ground began to resonate, emitting a low buzzing sound, their surface glowing even brighter.

The cultivators at the bottom of the pit instinctively took a few steps back.

The temperature of the flames was too high, so high that even their protective spiritual energy was groaning.

Jin Huan's pupils suddenly contracted.

"Heavenly Fire...you absorbed the essence of the Heavenly Fire from the Heavenly Fire Pit?" His voice trembled, "You are...you are the one who destroyed the Heavenly Fire Pit?"

Chen Ping did not answer.

He gently pushed the Chaos Fire in his hand, and the flames transformed into a slender fire serpent, silently shooting towards Jin Huan.

The fire serpent was not fast, it could even be said to be very slow.

It was like a real snake, slithering through the air, slowly moving towards Jin Huan.

But Jin Huan found that he could not dodge.

It was not a matter of speed, but that the fire serpent had locked onto him.

No matter which direction he dodged, the fire serpent would follow him. It was a lock on the level of the soul, a lock on the level of the Heavenly Dao Laws.

Jin Huan's face turned deathly pale.

He strained to unleash his holy light, golden rays surging from his body and coalescing into a thick shield of light before him.

The shield had seven layers, each imbued with his life's cultivation, enough to withstand a full-force attack from a fifth-grade True Immortal.

The fire serpent struck the shield.

There was no explosion, no loud bang, only a soft hiss.

The first layer shattered. The

second layer shattered.

The third, the fourth, the fifth…

The fire serpent, like a red-hot iron rod piercing through butter, silently pierced all seven layers of the shield.

Then, it coiled around Jin Huan's right arm.

"Ah!"

Jin Huan let out a piercing scream.

The scream didn't sound like that of a True Immortal, but more like that of a wild beast whose tail had been stepped on.

The sound was filled with pain, fear, and despair.

His right arm rapidly carbonized, shattered, and turned to ashes under the scorching heat of the chaotic fire.

The fire serpent spread upwards along his arm, burning towards his shoulder, chest, and neck. With each inch the fire spread, his flesh was charred, his bones incinerated.

The air was thick with the stench of burning flesh.

"No! No! Spare me! Spare me!"

Jin Huan knelt on the ground, desperately begging for mercy.

Tears and snot streamed down his face, his expression one of utter terror.

At this moment, he was no longer an elder of the Divine Race's Judgment Hall, nor a fourth-grade True Immortal Realm expert; he was merely an ordinary person cowardly of death.

Chen Ping looked down at him, his eyes devoid of pity, pleasure, or any semblance of satisfaction, only a calm indifference.

“I just gave you a chance,” Chen Ping said softly, “but you didn’t take it.”

He raised his hand, ready to end Jin Huan’s life.

“Stop!”

A loud shout suddenly came from the edge of the pit. A golden light descended from the sky, landing beside Jin Huan.

It was a cultivator from the Divine Race, a second-grade True Immortal, Jin Huan’s deputy.

He held a golden token in his hand, engraved with the mark of the Judgment Hall.

“Chen Ping!” The cultivator’s voice trembled, but he still forced himself to speak, “If you kill Elder Jin Huan, the Judgment Hall will not let you off! The Hall Master is an eighth-grade True Immortal, you can’t afford to offend him!”

Chen Ping glanced at him.

Then, he smiled.

The smile was faint, almost imperceptible.

But at that moment, everyone felt a chill, a chill that shot from the soles of their feet to the top of their heads.

“Eighth-grade True Immortal?” Chen Ping’s voice was calm, “I can’t afford to offend him?”

He raised his hand and struck out with a palm.

The cultivator's body was sent flying as if struck by a mountain, tumbling through the air a dozen times before crashing heavily into the pit wall.

A large crater was smashed into the wall, the cultivator's body embedded within, blood gushing from his mouth, he instantly lost consciousness.

"Who else?" Chen Ping looked around.

No one spoke.

All the divine race cultivators lowered their heads, not daring to meet his gaze.

Jin Huan knelt on the ground, trembling uncontrollably.

His right arm was completely gone, the wound on his shoulder charred black, the air thick with the stench of burning flesh.

His face was deathly pale, his forehead covered in cold sweat. "Get out!" Chen Ping roared.

Jin Huan scrambled to his feet, leading the Divine Race cultivators in a chaotic retreat.

He didn't even have the courage to look back.

The Heavenly Fire Pit fell silent.

Deathly silence.

Everyone stared at Chen Ping, their eyes filled with shock and fear.

A Divine Race elder at the fourth level of the True Immortal Realm couldn't even withstand a single move from him.

A Divine Race cultivator at the second level of the True Immortal Realm couldn't even block a single palm strike from him.

Just what kind of monster was this person?

The elder of the Loose Cultivator Alliance—Feng Qingzi—was the first to react.

He took a deep breath, trying to make his trembling voice sound steady.

He had lived for thousands of years and seen countless storms, but this scene still made his heart pound.

“Fellow Daoist,” he stepped forward, bowing respectfully, his voice tinged with flattery, “thank you for driving away the Divine Race people for us. I am Feng Qingzi, an elder of the Loose Cultivator Alliance. May I ask your esteemed name, Fellow Daoist?”

Chen Ping glanced at him: “Chen Ping.”

Feng Qingzi was stunned, then his expression changed drastically.

“Chen Ping? The Chen Ping who destroyed the Divine Hall and the Divine Palace in the Fourteenth Heaven?”

Chen Ping neither answered nor denied.

He hadn’t expected that news of his exploits in the Fourteenth Heaven had reached the Fifteenth Heaven.

Feng Qingzi’s expression changed several times before finally settling into a radiant smile.

The smile was almost excessively sincere, wrinkles forming at the corners of his eyes.

“So it’s Fellow Daoist Chen Ping! I’ve heard so much about you! Fellow Daoist, you’re so young yet possess such cultivation; your future is limitless! The Loose Cultivator Alliance welcomes you to visit anytime!”

“Fellow Daoist Chen Ping!”

A burly beastman stepped forward, clasping his hands in a salute.

He was tall and muscular, with three bloody marks painted on his face; he was Wolf Fang, a warrior general of the Heavenly Wolf Tribe.

His voice boomed like thunder, making everyone's ears ring. "I am Wolf Fang, Elder of the Wolf Clan's Heavenly Wolf Tribe. Thank you for your help! That Jin Huan was too arrogant. If it weren't for your intervention, my brothers in the Heavenly Wolf Tribe would have suffered a great loss today! If you need anything in the future, please come to the Heavenly Wolf Tribe to find me!"

"Fellow Daoist Chen Ping!" A demon cultivator also approached.

He was shrouded in black demonic energy, his face blurred, only his blood-red eyes flashing.

His voice was low and cold, but he also managed to squeeze out a trace of goodwill. "I am Shadow Killer, Deacon of the Shadow Hall of the Demon Clan. I have long admired your name! Your chaotic power is indeed well-deserved!"

In an instant, various forces showed goodwill to Chen Ping.

One after another, cultivators stepped forward, introduced themselves, handed over their name cards, and invited Chen Ping to visit their territories.

"Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, I am Qingyunzi, Elder of the Qingyun Sect of the Human Race. This is my Qingyun Sect's calling card. If you ever pass through the Qingyun Sect, please be sure to come in and have a chat!"

"Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, I am Bai Mei, Chieftain of the White Fox Tribe of the Beast Race. This is a token of my White Fox Tribe. If you ever need anything, the White Fox Tribe is willing to serve you faithfully!"

"Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, I am from the Demon Race..."

Chen Ping waved his hand, stopping their flattery.

“You may take the crystals.” His voice wasn’t loud, but everyone heard him clearly. “But there are two things.”

Everyone pricked up their ears, holding their breath.

“First, I want the largest crystal.”

No one objected, nor dared to.

“Second, the Netherworld Mountains are the hiding place of the Ghost Race. From now on, no one is allowed to search, dig, or harass the Netherworld Mountains. Otherwise…”

He didn’t finish his sentence, but everyone understood.

Otherwise, Jin Huan’s fate would be an example.

“Understood, understood!”

Feng Qingzi was the first to speak, patting his chest and guaranteeing, “The Loose Cultivator Alliance will absolutely not cause trouble in the Netherworld Mountains! Anyone who dares to act recklessly in the Netherworld Mountains, the Loose Cultivator Alliance will be the first to object!”

“The Sky Wolf Tribe too!” Wolf Fang shouted, “Anyone who dares to harass the Ghost Clan is going against the Sky Wolf Tribe!”

“The Shadow Palace too!” Shadow Kill quickly chimed in.

Other forces echoed his sentiments.

Chen Ping nodded, turned and walked to the largest crystal, storing it in his storage ring.

Then, he prepared to leave.

Just as he turned, his gaze swept across the crowd and suddenly stopped.

Several cultivators in the crowd caught his attention.

Not because of their strength—their cultivation levels were not high, the highest being only the second rank of True Immortal.

Nor because of their clothing—their clothes were very ordinary, inconspicuous in the crowd.

What caught his attention was their aura.

It was an extremely faint, deeply hidden aura.

If he hadn't fused with the Ice God bloodline within him, he would have been completely unable to detect it.

The aura was icy, pure, and ancient, exactly the same as Jiang Xuelan's.

The Ice God

's bloodline. Chen Ping paused.

Jiang Xuelan sensed it too.

Her gaze swept across the crowd, landing on those few cultivators, a barely concealed glint in her eyes—an excitement suppressed for millennia.

But she didn't move.

Chen Ping didn't move either.

He merely glanced at those few people in the crowd a few more times, memorizing their faces and auras.

Then, he led Jiang Xuelan away from the Heavenly Fire Pit.

Behind them, the cultivators from various forces exchanged glances, remaining silent for a long time.

“This person…” Feng Qingzi murmured, “…cannot be provoked.”

No one objected.

“Pass down the order,” Wolf Fang said to the beastmen warrior beside him, “From today onwards, no one is allowed to cause trouble in the Netherworld Mountains. Anyone who dares to act recklessly, I will personally twist off their head.”

“Yes!”

Shadow Kill also whispered a few instructions to his subordinates, and the demon cultivators nodded in agreement.

Inside the Heavenly Fire Pit, the various forces began collecting crystals in an orderly fashion. No one fought or scrambled anymore—Chen Ping’s intimidation was more effective than any rules.

Among the crowd, the few cultivators Chen Ping had noticed silently packed their belongings and quietly left the Heavenly Fire Pit.

Their faces showed no change, but they were both thinking the same thing.

Why did that person glance at me just now?

Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan walked back to Youyue Kingdom.

They remained silent for a long time.

“You sensed it?” Jiang Xuelan finally spoke.

“I sensed it.” Chen Ping nodded. “Five people. Two True Immortal Realm Second Grade, three True Immortal Realm First Grade.”

In the Fourteenth Heaven, this level of strength would definitely be considered high-level, but in the Fifteenth Heaven, they would only be considered ordinary cultivators.

Jiang Xuelan was silent for a moment: “Their bloodline concentration… is higher than I expected.”

Chen Ping turned to look at her: “Aren’t you planning to go find them now?”

Jiang Xuelan shook her head: “No rush. Going to them now would attract too much attention. We’ll find a way to contact them after things calm down.”

Chen Ping nodded and didn’t ask any more questions.

He knew Jiang Xuelan had her own plan.

The reconstruction of the Ice God lineage was not something that could be done overnight.

It required patience, strategy, and waiting for the right opportunity.

The two continued walking.

The crater of heavenly fire behind them lay silent in the twilight, a warm breeze rising from its depths.

Chen Ping suddenly remembered the old man, the fire spirits, and the child with the greatest talent.

“Flame isn’t power, it’s life,”

he murmured.

Jiang Xuelan glanced at him. “What did you say?”

“Nothing,” Chen Ping smiled. “Let’s go, Xiao You is waiting for me to tell her a story.”

Jiang Xuelan’s lips curled slightly, but she didn’t speak.

The two quickened their pace, heading towards the Youyue Kingdom. When Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan returned to Youyue Kingdom, it was already late at night.

Moonlight streamed through the gaps in the black mist, turning the ruins of the ancient city silvery-gray.

At the city gate, Yun Quan and Yun Xi were still waiting.

Yun Xi wore a thick coat, her face still pale, but her eyes were bright.

The moment she saw Chen Ping, she relaxed completely.

“You’re back,” she said.

Her voice was soft, but Chen Ping could hear the concern in it.

“I’m back,” Chen Ping nodded.

Yun Quan came forward, looked Chen Ping up and down, and only breathed a sigh of relief after confirming that he was not injured.

He hesitated, wanting to ask but not daring to. What was going on at the Heavenly Fire Pit?

Had there been any clashes between the various forces?

Had the gods made things difficult for him?

Chen Ping saw his thoughts and smiled: “We’ll talk about it when we get back.”

Inside the council hall, the lights were bright.

You Ying had embedded pieces of moonstone into the walls, illuminating the entire stone hall as if it were daytime.

Yun Quan sat in the main seat, Yun Xi beside him, and Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan opposite him.

You Ying stood in the corner, hands clasped in front of him, listening quietly.

Chen Ping recounted the situation at the Heavenly Fire Pit in detail.

When he heard that more than thirty forces and thousands of cultivators had gathered at the Heavenly Fire Pit, Yun Quan's expression changed.

When he heard that the various forces were fighting bloody and dead over the crystals, his brows furrowed.

When he heard that Elder Jin Huan of the Divine Clan's Judgment Hall had driven everyone away and monopolized the crystals, his fists clenched so tightly they cracked.

Then, he heard about Chen Ping's actions.

One punch severely injured Jin Huan, one palm sent the Divine Clan's deputy flying, and a single sentence sent all the Divine Clan cultivators fleeing in disarray.

In front of thousands of cultivators, he declared that the Netherworld Mountains were the hiding place of the Ghost Clan, and no one was allowed to disturb them.

Yun Quan's mouth gaped open, unable to close.

"You...what did you say?" His voice trembled. "You struck an elder of the Divine Clan's Judgment Hall in front of everyone?"

Chen Ping nodded.

“And in front of everyone, you declared the Netherworld Mountains to be the Ghost Clan’s territory?” Chen Ping nodded

again.

“And you made everyone promise not to cause trouble in the Netherworld Mountains?”

Chen Ping nodded once more.

Yun Quan’s tears welled up instantly.

Not because of sadness, but because he had waited for this day for far too long.

So many years.

The Ghost Clan was hunted, slaughtered, and driven away by the Divine Clan, hiding in the darkness like rats, afraid to speak, afraid to show their faces, afraid to let anyone know they were still alive.

Their children knew fear from birth, their elders spent their lives on the run.

They thought their lives were over, that the Ghost Clan would perish in their generation.

But now, an outsider, a human cultivator, stood up for them in front of thousands of cultivators.

“From this day forward, no one is permitted to search, excavate, or harass the Netherworld Mountains. Otherwise, Jin Huan’s fate will serve as an example.”

Yun Quan had waited thousands of years for these words.

“Mr. Chen,”

he stood up, bowed deeply, his voice hoarse and almost inaudible, “Your great kindness needs no words of thanks. The entire Netherworld Kingdom will never forget it.”

Chen Ping helped him up: “Your Majesty, please don’t do this. I said, with me here, no one can harm you.”

Yun Quan wiped away his tears and sat down again.

His emotions had calmed somewhat, but tears still glistened in his eyes.

“By the way, Mr. Chen,” he suddenly remembered something, “you said that various forces are trying to win you over?”

Chen Ping nodded: “The Loose Cultivator Alliance, the Heavenly Wolf Tribe, the Shadow Palace, and dozens of smaller forces have all sent their invitations.”

Yun Quan’s eyes lit up.

“Mr. Chen, I have an idea.”

His voice carried a hint of barely suppressed excitement. “Since they’re all trying to win you over, could you take this opportunity to retrieve the Core of Reincarnation and the Soul-Guiding Flame?”

Chen Ping was taken aback. “Retrieve them?”

“Yes.” Yun Quan stood up and walked to the map of the Fifteen Heavens hanging on the wall, pointing to the locations of the Demon Clan’s Shadow Palace and the Beast Clan’s Sky Wolf Tribe. “The Core of Reincarnation is in the hands of the Demon Clan’s Shadow Palace, and the Soul-Guiding Flame is in the hands of the Beast Clan’s Sky Wolf Tribe.

These two treasures are the key to opening the Path of Reincarnation. If we can get them, and then find a way to get the Netherworld Lamp from

the God Clan's Judgment Hall, we can go to the Reincarnation Division to guide the trapped ghost clan souls."

His voice grew increasingly excited, and his fingers trembled slightly on the map.

"The souls of tens of thousands of ghost clan cultivators... If we can guide them out, the ghost clan will have hope. Not just a hope of clinging to life, but a real, honorable hope to live."

Chen Ping was silent for a moment, looking at the two marks on the map.

"Alright. I'll go ask for it." Chen Ping nodded.

Yun Quan's eyes reddened again.

"Mr. Chen, you must be careful. Neither the Demon Clan nor the Beast Clan are benevolent. They are currently courting you because you have demonstrated your strength. But if you ask for their treasure..."

"I know." Chen Ping interrupted him, "I know what I'm doing."

He stood up and looked at Jiang Xuelan.

"We'll set off first thing tomorrow morning."

Jiang Xuelan nodded.

Yun Xi opened her mouth, wanting to say "I'll go too," but swallowed the words back.

She knew her injuries hadn't healed yet, and going would only be a burden.

"Be careful." She only said these three words in the end.

Chen Ping smiled, turned and walked out of the council hall.

Jiang Xuelan followed behind him.

Moonlight shone on the streets of the ancient city, casting long shadows of the two.

“Where do you plan to go first?” Jiang Xuelan asked.

“The Demon Clan’s Shadow Palace,” Chen Ping said. “The Core of Reincarnation is in Ying Wuji’s hands. That old fox is even more difficult to deal with than the Beast Clan. It’ll be tough at first, then easier.”

Jiang Xuelan nodded: “I’ll go with you.”

Chen Ping glanced at her: “Of course you have to go. Aren’t you still looking for people with the Ice God’s bloodline?”

Jiang Xuelan’s lips curled up slightly, but she didn’t say anything.

The two walked side by side under the moonlight, heading towards the stone palace.

Behind them, the lights in the council hall gradually went out.

The ancient city lay silent in the night, like a sleeping giant. The

ancient city of Youyue Kingdom was immersed in the intertwining of black mist and moonlight, utterly still.

Chen Ping was not asleep. He sat cross-legged on the bed in the stone palace, purple chaotic power slowly flowing around him, illuminating the entire stone palace as if in a dream.

Since absorbing the essence of heavenly fire in the Heavenly Fire Pit, his cultivation had broken through to the peak of the eighth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, only one step away from the ninth rank.

But he knew that this step could not be crossed by absorbing external forces; it required a profound understanding and perfect control of his own power.

He closed his eyes and sank his consciousness into his body.

In his dantian, chaotic power swirled slowly like a purple vortex.

At the center of the vortex, a flame interwoven with gold and purple burned quietly.

That was the Chaotic Fire, a new flame that had fused the essence of heavenly fire, the origin of supreme fire, and the power of chaos. Its temperature was high enough to melt the protective spiritual power of a True Immortal Realm expert, yet it remained quiet and still within his dantian, like a sleeping phoenix.

Chen Ping withdrew his divine sense from his dantian and turned his attention to his meridians.

Chaotic power flowed through his meridians like purple rivers, repairing the minute cracks in the meridian walls wherever it passed.

Nourished by the chaotic power, his body grew increasingly resilient, the power within his flesh enough to tear apart a True Immortal Realm fifth-grade enemy with his bare hands.

Then, his attention fell upon the Dragon-Slaying Sword.

The sword lay beside him, its scabbard ancient, with several fine cracks on its blade.

These were scars left by the spatial storm.

Chen Ping reached out and grasped the hilt, channeling a wisp of chaotic power into the blade.

Purple light flowed from the hilt into the blade, lingering at the cracks.

Nourished by the chaotic power, those cracks began to slowly heal, so slowly as to be almost imperceptible, but they were indeed healing.

A thought stirred within Chen Ping.

The Dragon-Slaying Sword had been with him for many years, from the mortal realm to the celestial realm, enduring countless battles, its surface bearing countless scars.

He had always believed these scars were permanent, never expecting that the power of chaos could repair them.

He increased the amount of chaotic power he poured into it.

Purple light enveloped the entire sword, and the cracks on its surface began to heal at a visible speed.

One, two, three... In less than the time it takes to brew a cup of tea, most of the smaller cracks had disappeared.

The larger cracks were also slowly shrinking; although not completely healed, they were much better than before.

The sword emitted a deep hum, as if responding to its master's power.

Chen Ping opened his eyes, looking at the Dragon-Slaying Sword in his hand, a slight smile playing on his lips.

As Chen Ping continued to pour his power into the Dragon-Slaying Sword, a flash of light appeared, and the sword spirit Zhongli emerged from within the sword.

"Master..." Zhongli called out happily, looking at Chen Ping before her.

Seeing Zhongli's delicate appearance, Chen Ping was also overjoyed.

"Zhongli, how are you feeling?" Chen Ping quickly asked.

“Although I’m not completely healed, I can serve Master now.” Zhongli blushed.

Chen Ping, of course, understood what Zhongli meant. He pulled her close and pinned her beneath him.

Zhongli hadn’t felt this way in a long time.

However, Chen Ping was too vigorous, and Zhongli’s body was still injured. When it was over, Zhongli’s face was somewhat pale.

Chen Ping tenderly stroked Zhongli’s face: “Don’t leave the Dragon-Slaying Sword so easily

again.” “After things are finished, I’ll let you heal properly. It’s not too late for you to serve me again once you’re fully recovered.”

Zhongli nodded: “I just couldn’t bear to see Master lonely. I know Master can’t be without a woman to serve him, otherwise Master will go crazy.”

Chen Ping blushed upon hearing this: “It’s not as serious as you say. It’s only been a few days since we last did it. I won’t go crazy…”

Zhongli smiled and returned to the Dragon-Slaying Sword.

Chen Ping placed the sword on his lap and continued to circulate the power of chaos.

Purple light flowed in the stone hall, making the ghost runes on the walls flicker.

In the adjacent stone hall, Jiang Xuelan was also awake.

She leaned against the window, looking towards Chen Ping’s room, feeling the dense chaotic energy, a complex expression flashing in her eyes.

She had heard a powerful voice, a voice she'd never heard before, but it was incredibly beautiful, stirring her blood.

It was the voice of a man and a woman, captivating and alluring!

The next morning, Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan arrived at the council hall.

Yun Quan had already prepared a map and various elixirs, and Yun Xi was already waiting there.

Her complexion was better than yesterday, but still pale, and she needed to lean against the wall to walk.

"Mr. Chen, there are two routes to Shadow Abyss," Yun Quan said, spreading out the map and pointing to two marked lines.

"The first route is a shortcut, passing through the 'Bone-Eating Mist Forest.' The forest is filled with demonic energy that corrodes a cultivator's soul; anyone below the True Immortal realm who enters will surely die. Even True Immortal realm experts will suffer soul damage if they stay there too long. But this route saves half the time; it only takes two days to reach Shadow Abyss."

He pointed to another route: "The second route is a detour, passing through Blackrock City. Blackrock City is a neutral stronghold, safe but time-consuming, requiring four days."

Chen Ping looked at the map and remained silent for a moment.

"Take the Bone-Eating Mist Forest," Chen Ping said.

Yun Quan's expression changed: "Mr. Chen, the demonic energy in that mist forest..."

"I know," Chen Ping interrupted him, "My Chaos Power counters all demonic energy. This is a good opportunity to hone my ability to control demonic energy."

Yun Quan opened his mouth, wanting to persuade him further, but meeting Chen Ping's calm eyes, he swallowed his words.

"Then please be careful," he finally said, only those four words.

Yun Xi walked over and handed a bundle to Chen Ping.

"This is dry rations and some pills. Use them on the road."

Chen Ping took the bundle, looking into her eyes. "Take good care of your injuries. Wait for me to come back."

Yun Xi nodded without speaking.

Chen Ping turned and walked out of the council hall, Jiang Xuelan following behind him.

The two transformed into streaks of light, flying towards the Bone-Eating Mist Forest.

Along the way, Jiang Xuelan kept looking at Chen Ping with strange eyes.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" Chen Ping asked, puzzled.

"I thought you were quite refined, but I didn't expect you to be a beast..." Jiang Xuelan cursed.

This sentence completely stunned Chen Ping.

"Explain yourself, how am I a beast?" Chen Ping stopped and asked Jiang Xuelan.

"Yun Xi is so badly injured, and you still tormented her last night. I think she looks even worse this morning." Jiang Xuelan thought it was Chen Ping and Yun Xi last night.

Chen Ping paused for a moment, but quickly recovered, suddenly laughing, "You were eavesdropping on me last night?"

“Who was eavesdropping? We were so close, and you were so loud, I couldn’t help but hear,”

Jiang Xuelan rolled her eyes.

“You’ve misunderstood me. I wasn’t with Yunxi at all. Yunxi and I are innocent. We never did anything like that.”

“Actually, last night was…”

Chen Ping explained the situation with the sword spirit Zhongli, then said in a helpless tone, “Sigh, because my cultivation speed is too fast, the internal fire is too intense. There’s really no way around it. If I let the fire burn, it’s easy to suffer a qi deviation.”

“Although Zhongli was injured, seeing my discomfort, he still insisted on staying with me last night…”

Hearing this, Jiang Xuelan realized she had misunderstood Chen Ping and said somewhat embarrassedly, “I’m sorry, I didn’t know your body was like this…”

“It’s alright, the misunderstanding is cleared up. Although I need a woman, I won’t force any woman. I helped Yunxi not to… you know… with her.”

“Of course, I helped you not to… you know… with you either. I’m just simply being kind…”

Chen Ping said! Upon hearing this, Jiang Xuelan bit her lip lightly: “I said, if you help me restore the glory of the Ice God lineage, I can do anything for you. If you need it, I can… you know.”

“Besides, I have ice-type techniques within me, my body is cool, perfect for extinguishing your ‘Burning Flame’…”

Chen Ping looked at Jiang Xuelan and smiled slightly: “Alright, let’s talk about it when my ‘Burning Flame’ takes effect…”

“Shameless…” At this moment, a sentence suddenly popped up in Chen Ping’s sea of consciousness!

Chen Ping was startled, but he knew that it was Bei Mingyuan speaking. This guy seemed to be doing well in his sea of consciousness, as he could still speak.

However, Chen Ping ignored him and flew towards the Bone-Eating Mist Forest with Jiang Xuelan.

The Bone-Eating Mist Forest is located in the southwest of the Netherworld Mountains, a forest shrouded in black mist.

The trees here are tall and twisted, their trunks covered with bumps and cracks, like countless painful faces.

A thick layer of fallen leaves covered the ground, beneath which lay a muddy swamp, occasionally revealing the half-buried skeletons of unknown creatures.

Black demonic energy permeated the forest, so dense it seemed almost tangible.

It flowed silently, withering leaves, weathering rocks, and even making the air heavy and oppressive in its wake.

Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan landed at the edge of the misty forest.

“Such dense demonic energy,” Jiang Xuelan murmured,

her brow furrowing slightly. An icy blue light emanated from her, shielding her from the demonic energy.

However, the energy was extremely corrosive, and fine cracks quickly appeared on the icy blue shield, like marks from insect bites.

Chen Ping glanced at her: “Can you hold on?”

Jiang Xuelan didn't answer, increasing her spiritual energy output, and the shield stabilized again.

But her face was paler than usual; maintaining the shield amidst this demonic energy was taking a heavy toll on her.

"Let's go," she said.

The two stepped into the misty forest.

Demonic energy surged in from all directions, like countless invisible venomous snakes, attempting to burrow into their bodies and corrode their souls.

Chen Ping's chaotic power activated automatically, forming a thin layer of purple light on his body, isolating the demonic energy.

The demonic energy, upon encountering the chaotic power, evaporated instantly, like ice meeting the scorching sun.

Jiang Xuelan, however, was not so fortunate. Although her Ice God Power was strong, its effectiveness against demonic energy was far less than that of the chaotic power.

The demonic energy continuously eroded her shield, and cracks multiplied on the icy blue light barrier, forcing her to continuously inject spiritual energy to maintain it.

After walking for about half an hour, Chen Ping stopped.

"Your shield is about to give way,"

Jiang Xuelan didn't deny it.

Fine beads of sweat had appeared on her forehead, and her breathing was more rapid than usual.

Chen Ping raised his hand and channeled a stream of chaotic power into Jiang Xuelan's body.

Purple light flowed across her body, merging with her icy blue divine light to form a purple-blue interwoven shield.

The shield was several times stronger than before. The demonic energy sizzled against it, but couldn't penetrate it even slightly.

"That's much better," Chen Ping said.

Jiang Xuelan looked at him, a complex emotion flashing in her eyes.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome." Chen Ping withdrew his hand and continued walking forward. "Let's go, don't waste time."

The two walked through the misty forest for about an hour, the concentration of demonic energy increasing.

The surrounding trees were completely withered, leaving only bare black trunks, like skeletons pointing to the sky.

Countless skeletons were scattered on the ground—human, beast, demon, and some whose races were unrecognizable.

They were all cultivators who had mistakenly entered the misty forest and couldn't find their way out.

Chen Ping suddenly stopped.

"Something."

As soon as he finished speaking, the surrounding demonic energy began to surge violently.

Pairs of blood-red eyes lit up in the darkness, densely packed, at least fifty pairs.

They surrounded Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan from all directions.

Mist Shadow Beasts.

These were native demonic creatures of the Bone-Eating Mist Forest, their bodies formed from demonic energy, resembling black cheetahs but larger, about the size of a calf.

Their eyes were blood-red, devoid of any emotion, only pure bloodlust.

Their cultivation levels ranged from the second to the fourth rank of the True Immortal Realm, and they excelled at stealth and soul attacks.

The leader, a Mist Shadow Beast, was the largest, its cultivation reaching the peak of the fourth rank of the True Immortal Realm.

It stood atop a black rock, looking down at Chen Ping, emitting a low roar.

Chen Ping looked around and counted fifty-three.

“I’ll handle it,” Chen Ping said. “You take charge of defense.”

Jiang Xuelan nodded, and an ice-blue light shield unfolded around them, forming a hemispherical protective barrier.

Chen Ping stepped out of the barrier to face the Mist Shadow Beasts.

He raised his right hand, a ball of chaotic fire condensing in his palm.

Purple light intertwined with golden flames, dazzlingly bright in the darkness of the mist forest.

The moment the Chaos Flame appeared, the surrounding demonic energy began to fluctuate violently, as if it had encountered a natural enemy.

The Mist Shadow Beasts let out uneasy growls. They sensed that the flame had a fatal restraint on them.

The lead Mist Shadow Beast roared, and all the Mist Shadow Beasts pounced on Chen Ping at the same time.

More than fifty demonic creatures of the second to fourth rank of True Immortal Realm rushed in from all directions, moving with lightning speed.

Their claws were covered with dense demonic energy, enough to tear apart the protective spiritual power of a True Immortal Realm expert.

Chen Ping did not retreat.

He gently pushed the Chaos Flame in his hand.

The flame transformed into more than fifty slender fire snakes, silently shooting towards each Mist Shadow Beast.

The fire snakes were not fast, but each Mist Shadow Beast was locked on, and no matter how they dodged, the fire snakes would follow them.

The moment the fire snakes hit the Mist Shadow Beasts, there was no explosion, no loud noise, only a soft “hiss”.

The first Mist Shadow Beast’s body was pierced by the fire serpent. Its demonic energy-condensed form crumbled like paper before the chaotic fire, instantly dissipating into black mist.

The second, the third, the fourth…

In less than three breaths, all fifty-odd Mist Shadow Beasts were killed by the fire serpent, turning into black mist and dissipating into the air.

The leading Mist Shadow Beast, a peak fourth-grade True Immortal, let out a shrill cry just before the fire serpent struck it.

That cry contained a soul attack, transforming into invisible ripples that surged towards Chen Ping's sea of consciousness.

Within Chen Ping's sea of consciousness, the Great Luo Golden Scripture trembled slightly, its golden light completely shattering the soul attack.

The fire serpent struck the head of the Mist Shadow Beast. Its body crumbled, turning into a sky full of black mist, which completely dissipated under the scorching heat of the Chaos Fire. It

was all over.

From the moment Chen Ping made his move to the end, less than five breaths had passed. Jiang Xuelan stood inside the protective shield, watching everything in silence for a long time.

She knew Chen Ping was strong, but every time she saw him fight, she was still shocked.

More than fifty True Immortal Realm second to fourth grade Mist Shadow Beasts couldn't even withstand five breaths against him.

Just how strong was this man?

If this power were on her, could she bear it?

Jiang Xuelan was a little scared!

Chen Ping withdrew his flames and turned back to Jiang Xuelan's side.

"Let's go."

Jiang Xuelan didn't move.

"What's wrong?" Chen Ping asked.

Jiang Xuelan looked at him, her face pale: “I can’t hold on anymore.”

Chen Ping was stunned for a moment before noticing her condition.

Although her shield was still intact, her face was as white as paper, her forehead was covered in cold sweat, and her breathing was rapid and disordered.

Although Chen Ping had blocked the soul attacks of those Mist Shadow Beasts, the aftershocks still affected her.

Her Ice God Power wasn’t very resistant to demonic energy to begin with, and coupled with walking in demonic energy for a long time, her soul had been eroded.

“Your soul…”

“It can hold on for a while longer,” Jiang Xuelan interrupted him, “but if we go any further, I might not make it to Yingyuan.”

Chen Ping was silent for a moment.

“Then let’s go back. Let’s go to Blackrock City.”

“But time…”

“There’s enough time,” Chen Ping said, “Your life is more important than time.”

He reached out and channeled a stream of chaotic power into Jiang Xuelan’s body to stabilize her soul.

Then, he turned and walked out of the misty forest.

Jiang Xuelan followed behind him, watching his back, a strange emotion welling up inside her.

This man always valued other people’s lives more than his own.

The two left the Bone-Eating Mist Forest and flew towards Blackrock City.

Blackrock City was a small city built on a black rock mountain. The city walls were not high, but they were very thick, covered with defensive runes.

Most of the buildings in the city were made of stone, gray and inconspicuous.

This was one of the few neutral strongholds in the Fifteenth Heaven, not affiliated with any major clan, surviving in the cracks by relying on its own strength and flexible diplomacy.

When Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan arrived at Blackrock City, it was already evening.

The setting sun dyed the black rocky mountains a dark red, and the guards at the city gate immediately became alert upon seeing two strangers approaching.

“Halt. Who goes there?”

Chen Ping stopped. “A passing rogue cultivator. I’d like to rest in the city for the night.”

The guard sized him up, then glanced at Jiang Xuelan behind him, hesitated for a moment, and then stepped aside.

“Go in. Fighting and causing trouble are not allowed in the city. Violators will be expelled.”

Chen Ping nodded and walked through the city gate.

The streets inside the city were narrow, with shops on both sides selling various goods—elixirs, magical artifacts, materials, and intelligence.

There weren't many people on the streets, mostly rogue cultivators, but also some merchants from the beast and demon races. They glanced at Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan, then looked away.

Just as Chen Ping was about to find an inn to stay in, he suddenly heard a commotion ahead.

"Let me go! What right do you have to arrest me!"

"Enough nonsense! Shadow Abyss is handling matters; bystanders must stay away!"

Chen Ping looked in the direction of the voice and saw several demonic cultivators in black armor surrounding a group of rogue cultivators not far from the city gate.

There were seven or eight rogue cultivators, led by a middle-aged man at the third level of the True Immortal Realm, dressed in a gray Daoist robe with a resolute face.

Behind him were several young cultivators, some injured, some being held to the ground by the demonic cultivators.

There were more than a dozen demonic cultivators, led by a captain at the third level of the True Immortal Realm.

His armor bore the mark of the Shadow Palace, and he held a black longsword, the blade swirling with faint demonic energy.

"Your Shadow Palace is too domineering!" the middle-aged man roared. "This is Blackrock City, not your Shadow Palace's territory! What right do you have to arrest our people?"

"What right?" the demon captain sneered. "Because you've been colluding with the gods, intending to harm the Shadow Palace."

"We didn't..."

“Enough nonsense. Take them away!”

The demon cultivators escorted the young rogue cultivators away.

Chen Ping watched this scene, his brows furrowing slightly.

He didn’t want to meddle.

But he needed to obtain the Core of Reincarnation from Ying Wuji. If the Shadow Palace of the demons acted arrogantly in Blackrock City, his subsequent actions might be affected.

Moreover, those rogue cultivators reminded him of himself, an ordinary person oppressed by power, powerless to resist.

“Wait a moment,”

Chen Ping spoke.

His voice wasn’t loud, but it clearly reached everyone’s ears.

All eyes turned to him simultaneously.

The demon captain narrowed his eyes, sizing up Chen Ping.

A peak eighth-grade Upper Immortal Realm cultivator, a human rogue cultivator—in his eyes, such cultivation wasn’t even worthy of carrying his shoes.

“Who do you think you are? Daring to interfere in the affairs of the Shadow Palace?”

Chen Ping didn’t answer. He walked over and stood in front of the demon captain.

“Release them.”

The demon captain’s face darkened: “Are you courting death?”

He swung his sword at Chen Ping.

The black blade light, wrapped in dense demonic energy, was enough to kill a True Immortal Realm Second Grade cultivator in one strike.

Chen Ping raised two fingers and caught the blade.

The blade light dissipated at his fingertips, and the demonic energy vanished without a trace, like a mud ox sinking into the sea.

The demon captain felt as if his sword was being pressed down by a mountain, completely immobile.

His expression changed.

“You…”

Chen Ping flicked the blade lightly, and it shattered, fragments scattering everywhere.

The demon captain was knocked back several steps, his hand split open, blood flowing freely.

“I said, release them.”

The demon captain’s face was deathly pale.

He finally realized that this human cultivator, who appeared to be only at the peak of the Upper Immortal Realm Eighth Grade, was far stronger than he had imagined.

“You…who are you?”

“Chen Ping.”

The demon captain’s pupils suddenly contracted.

Of course, he had heard of this name.

A punch that severely injured Jin Huan in the Heavenly Fire Pit, a palm strike that sent the divine race's deputy flying, a single sentence that terrified all the divine race cultivators into a chaotic retreat.

For the past two days, this name had been the talk of the entire Fifteenth Heaven.

"Fellow Daoist Chen…Chen Ping." His voice trembled, "We are from the Shadow Palace. If you…"

"I'll say it again. Release them."

The demon captain gritted his teeth and waved his hand: "Release them."

The demon cultivators released the few rogue cultivators and stepped aside.

Chen Ping looked at the demon captain: "Get lost."

The demon captain scrambled away with his men.

The city gate fell silent.

The middle-aged man stepped forward and bowed deeply: "I am Zhao Kang, the branch leader of the Blackrock City Loose Cultivator Alliance. Thank you, Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, for saving my life."

Chen Ping helped him up: "No need for such formalities. Why did they capture you?"

Zhao Kang sighed: "Recently, the Shadow Palace has increased its patrols and is particularly wary of outsiders heading to the Shadow Abyss.

We were just passing through the territory of the Divine Race once, and they spotted us, accusing us of colluding with the Divine Race. Actually… they just want to find an excuse to capture us and force us into hard labor in the Shadow Abyss."

Chen Ping frowned slightly: “Forced labor?” “Yes,”

Zhao Kang said in a low voice, “Recently, the Shadow Palace has been expanding its underground palace and needs a lot of manpower. They don’t dare to arrest people from major forces, so they specifically target us rogue cultivators. Very few rogue cultivators who are captured ever return.”

Chen Ping was silent for a moment.

“Does Ying Wuji know about this?”

Zhao Kang smiled bitterly, “The Shadow Palace Master… he may not know, or he may know but not care. He is the absolute authority in the Shadow Palace, and no one dares to disobey his orders. But he rarely interferes with these trivial matters; it’s all done by his subordinates.”

“What kind of person is Ying Wuji?” Chen Ping asked.

Zhao Kang thought for a moment, “The Shadow Palace Master… he’s not a native member of the Demon Clan.”

Chen Ping was taken aback, “Not a Demon?”

“That’s right.” Zhao Kang nodded, “He came to Shadow Abyss five thousand years ago. At that time, the Shadow Palace Master was Lei Zhentian. Ying Wuji defeated Lei Zhentian single-handedly and seized the position of Palace Master.

He was ruthless, but during his rule, the Shadow Palace’s power increased significantly, from a small force to one of the top three forces in the Fifteenth Heaven.”

“Lei Zhentian?” Chen Ping repeated the name.

“Yes. After being defeated by Ying Wuji, Lei Zhentian fled and later joined the Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall, where he is now the Vice Palace Master.”

“Aren’t the Divine Clan arrogant? Why would they take in a Demon?” Chen Ping asked curiously.

Zhao Kang laughed, a laugh full of mockery: “The Divine Race appears arrogant and looks down on everything, but in reality, they’re all despicable.

They took in Lei Zhentian not out of pity, but because Lei Zhentian possesses an ancient thunder technique, said to be comparable to a peak True Immortal when mastered. The Judgment Hall wants that technique, so they took him in.”

“For this, Ying Wuji harbors a deep grudge against the Divine Race’s Judgment Hall. For five thousand years, there have been constant conflicts, large and small, resulting in countless deaths.

Ying Wuji has been searching for an opportunity to retaliate against Lei Zhentian, but has never made a move. Some say Ying Wuji fears the Judgment Venerable behind Lei Zhentian; the Judgment Venerable is the number one person in the Fifteenth Heaven, an eighth-grade True Immortal, and Ying Wuji is no match for him.”

Chen Ping nodded, understanding.

“Thank you for informing me, Chief Zhao,” Chen Ping said, clasping his hands in a fist salute.

Zhao Kang quickly returned the salute: “Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, you’re too kind. You saved us; this little bit of information is nothing. By the way, are you going to Shadow Abyss from Black Rock City?”

Chen Ping nodded.

Zhao Kang’s expression turned serious: “Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, I advise you to be careful. Shadow Abyss is heavily guarded lately, and they are especially wary of outsiders. You just attacked someone from the Shadow Palace, and the news may have already reached Shadow Abyss. If you go there again…”

“I know,” Chen Ping interrupted him, “I know what I’m doing.”

Zhao Kang sighed, took out a token from his robes, and handed it to Chen Ping.

“This is a token of my Loose Cultivator Alliance. If Fellow Daoist Chen Ping encounters trouble in Shadow Abyss, you can take it to the Loose Cultivator Alliance branch in Black Rock City, and we will do our best to help.”

Chen Ping took the token and thanked him.

Then, he left Black Rock City with Jiang Xuelan.

The entrance to Shadow Abyss was a huge stone gate, with two teams of demon cultivators standing on either side, all between the first and second ranks of the True Immortal Realm.

They wore black armor, held spears, and had cold, stern faces.

As soon as Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan arrived at the stone gate, they were surrounded.

“Halt!”

“Who goes there?”

“Those who trespass into Shadow Abyss will be killed without mercy!”

More than twenty demon cultivators surrounded the two, their spears pointed at their throats.

Chen Ping didn’t move or speak. He stood there, calmly looking at these people as if they were ants.

The leading captain recognized him; he was the demon captain Chen Ping had driven away in Black Rock City earlier.

His face was ashen, his eyes filled with hatred.

He was a captain, after all, yet Chen Ping showed him no respect.

He had tolerated it in Black Rock City, but now that he was on his own territory, he wouldn't stand for it.

"Chen Ping, you injured someone from our Shadow Palace, and you still dare to come to Shadow Abyss? You're courting death!"

He waved his hand: "Take them down!"

More than twenty demon cultivators attacked simultaneously, black demonic energy transforming into countless chains that bound towards Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan.

Chen Ping raised his right hand, a ball of chaotic fire condensing in his palm.

The moment the flame appeared, the demonic energy chains evaporated and dissipated instantly, like ice and snow meeting the blazing sun.

More than twenty demon cultivators were blasted away by the aftershocks of the flames, crashing heavily against the stone gate, spitting out blood.

The leader, the captain, was also thrown back; he struggled to his feet, his eyes filled with terror.

"You…you…"

"Stop!"

A loud shout came from behind the stone gate.

A demon cultivator in a black robe stepped out.

His cultivation was at the third rank of True Immortal Realm, his face sinister, with a scar near his eye—it was Shadow Killer, whom Chen Ping had seen in the Heavenly Fire Pit.

Shadow Killer's expression changed upon seeing Chen Ping, and he quickly stepped forward to bow.

"Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, my men were ignorant and have offended us greatly. The Palace Master has been waiting for a long time; please follow me."

Chen Ping glanced at him and withdrew the flames.

"Let's go."

Shadow Killer led Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan through the stone gate and into Shadow Abyss.

Behind them, the demon cultivators struggled to their feet, exchanging bewildered glances, their eyes filled with the relief of surviving a calamity.

Beyond the stone gate lay a deep, dark tunnel, its walls inlaid with luminous minerals that illuminated the entire passage.

The tunnel was long and winding, seemingly endless.

Every so often, a patrol of demonic cultivators would stop and bow upon seeing Chen Ping.

Chen Ping remained calm, his gaze unwavering.

Jiang Xuelan followed behind him, her white robes as white as snow, strikingly visible in the darkness.

After about the time it takes for an incense stick to burn, the tunnel finally came to an end. A vast

, open space opened up before them.

This was a colossal underground palace.

The palace's dome soared hundreds of feet high, inlaid with countless luminous minerals, resembling an inverted starry sky.

The floor was made of black jade, smooth as a mirror, reflecting images perfectly.

Dozens of enormous stone pillars stood on either side of the palace, their surfaces carved with the history of the demonic race's conquests, from ancient times to the present, each relief lifelike.

At the far end of the palace stood a high platform.

On the platform sat a black throne, upon which sat a man:

Ying Wuji.

He appeared to be in his thirties, his features almost demonically handsome, his skin as white as snow, and his lips as red as blood.

His eyes were deep purple, their pupils seemingly swirling with vortexes capable of sucking in one's soul.

A faint black demonic aura swirled around him, not violent, but tranquil, like a sleeping black dragon.

His cultivation level was—Seventh Grade True Immortal.

Chen Ping's heart stirred slightly.

Seventh Grade True Immortal was a minor realm lower than the Arbiter Venerable of the Divine Clan's Arbitration Hall, but still a top-tier existence within the Fifteenth Heaven.

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Ying Wuji looked at Chen Ping, a slight smile playing on his lips.

“Chen Ping,” his voice was deep and languid, like a lion dozing in the afternoon sun, “I’ve long admired your name.”

Chen Ping walked to the platform, stopped, and looked up at Ying Wuji.

“Palace Master Ying, I’ve come to retrieve the Core of Reincarnation.” He went straight to

the point, without any pleasantries or formalities.

Ying Wuji’s smile froze; he hadn’t expected Chen Ping to be so direct.

The demon cultivators in the palace were also stunned.

They had seen countless people come to Shadow Abyss to see their Palace Master—some begging for mercy, some paying respects, some offering gifts, some seeking alliances—but none dared to speak like this.

To say directly, “I’ve come to retrieve the Core of Reincarnation,” as if it weren’t the treasure of the Demon Clan’s Shadow Palace, but merely a stone in his backyard.

Ying Wuji was silent for a moment, then smiled.

The smile was faint, almost imperceptible, but a hint of amusement flashed in his eyes.

“The Core of Reincarnation is the treasure of my Demon Clan’s Shadow Palace. You think you can just take it as you please?”

Chen Ping looked at him, saying nothing.

Ying Wuji stood up and descended from the high platform.

His gait was elegant, as if he were strolling leisurely, yet each step contained terrifying power.

When he reached Chen Ping, Chen Ping felt the surrounding air freeze.

The pressure of a seventh-grade True Immortal pressed down like a mountain.

Chen Ping did not retreat.

His chaotic power circulated within his body, purple light flowing across his skin, dissolving the pressure into nothingness.

His expression was calm, his eyes clear, as if Ying Wuji's pressure was merely a gentle breeze.

Ying Wuji's eyes narrowed slightly.

"Interesting," he murmured.

He raised his hand, a ball of black light condensing in his palm.

That light was not demonic energy, but a more ancient and purer power—chaotic demonic energy.

Legend has it that the progenitor of the demon race cultivated this power; it could devour everything, corrode everything, and destroy everything.

"Let me see just how capable you are,"

Ying Wuji said, striking out with his palm.

The strike was slow, so slow that Chen Ping could see every line on his palm.

But the power contained in that palm strike was enough to level a mountain.

Chen Ping didn't dodge.

He raised his right hand and met the attack head-on.

Purple chaotic power collided with black chaotic demonic energy.

There was no explosion, no loud noise, only a low hum.

The two forces intertwined, devoured, and merged between their palms.

Purple light and black light intertwined, like two giant dragons fighting. The surrounding space began to distort, and the air emitted a piercing shriek.

The demon cultivators in the palace changed their expressions drastically and retreated one after another.

A full-force attack from a seventh-grade True Immortal was enough to level this palace.

But Chen Ping actually blocked it. With his peak eighth-grade Upper Immortal cultivation, he actually blocked a full-force attack from a seventh-grade True Immortal.

Ying Wuji's eyes lit up.

"Good!" he shouted and withdrew his palm.

Chen Ping also withdrew his palm, his expression still calm.

But his right hand was trembling slightly. Ying Wuji's power was indeed very strong. If it weren't for the chaotic power restraining all other powers, he might not have been able to withstand this palm strike.

Ying Wuji looked at him, silent for a long time.

Then, he smiled.

This time, the smile was no longer amusement, but genuine admiration.

“Chen Ping, you are stronger than the rumors say.” He turned and walked back to the platform, sitting down on the throne again. “The Core of Reincarnation, I can give it to you.”

Chen Ping didn’t speak, waiting for him to continue.

Ying Wuji leaned back on the throne, his fingers lightly tapping the armrest, making a rhythmic sound.

“However, I have one condition.”

Chen Ping looked at him: “Speak.”

Ying Wuji’s fingers stopped.

He looked at Chen Ping, a very subtle glint in his eyes.

“I want you to help me kill someone.”

Chen Ping’s brows furrowed slightly: “Who?”

At this moment, Chen Ping seemed to have the answer in his heart.

Ying Wuji didn’t answer immediately.

He stood up, walked to the edge of the platform, turned his back to Chen Ping, and looked at the inverted starry sky above.

“A cultivator at the sixth rank of the True Immortal Realm.”

His voice was soft. “He is my enemy. Five thousand years ago, he killed my wife. For five thousand years, I have been looking for an opportunity to take revenge. Although our cultivation levels are higher than his, he has the Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall behind him.”

He turned to look at Chen Ping.

“But you are different. Your Chaos Power restrains all power, including his. Killing him is as easy as turning your hand.”

Chen Ping was silent for a moment. “You mean Lei Zhentian?”

Ying Wuji was stunned. He didn’t expect Chen Ping to know Lei Zhentian.

“That’s right, he is the current Vice Hall Master of the Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall—Lei Zhentian.” Ying Wuji nodded!

Chen Ping’s eyes narrowed slightly.

Vice Hall Master of the Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall, seventh rank of the True Immortal Realm.

The number one person below the Judgment Venerable, he cultivates lightning-based techniques and has extremely powerful combat strength. He is infamous in the Fifteenth Heaven.

“Kill him, and the Core of Reincarnation will be yours.” Ying Wuji said. “Not only that, the Shadow Hall will be allied with you from now on. Your affairs are my affairs.”

Chen Ping remained silent for a long time.

He didn’t want to be someone else’s weapon.

But he needed the Core of Reincarnation.

The Ghost Clan’s hope lay in these three treasures.

“Alright,” Chen Ping nodded. “I agree.”

Ying Wuji smiled.

He took out a black token from his sleeve and handed it to Chen Ping.

“This is Lei Zhentian’s whereabouts. He goes to Thunder Mountain to cultivate thunder magic every month on the fifteenth. Today is the thirteenth, and the fifteenth will be in two days. You can wait for him at Thunder Mountain.”

Chen Ping took the token and glanced at it.

“After I kill him, how will I find you?”

“Don’t bother looking for me,” Ying Wuji said. “You killed Lei Zhentian, and the news will naturally reach my ears. Then, I will personally deliver the Core of Reincarnation to you.”

Chen Ping nodded and turned to leave.

“Wait a minute,” Ying Wuji called after him.

Chen Ping stopped.

“Aren’t you afraid I’ll go back on my word?” Ying Wuji asked.

Chen Ping didn’t turn around. “You can try.”

Then he left.

Jiang Xuelan followed behind him.

Ying Wuji stood on the high platform, watching their figures disappear into the tunnel, remaining silent for a long time.

“Interesting,” he murmured. “Truly interesting.” After leaving Yingyuan

, Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan didn’t return to Youyue Kingdom, but instead flew directly towards Tianlei Mountain.

Tianlei Mountain is located southeast of the Youming Mountain Range, about a day’s journey from Yingyuan.

Chen Ping calculated the time; today was the thirteenth, and Lei Zhentian wouldn't go to Tianlei Mountain until the fifteenth.

They had two days to make preparations in advance.

"How do you plan to kill him?" Jiang Xuelan asked.

Chen Ping thought for a moment: "Ying Wuji said that Lei Zhentian cultivates lightning-based techniques and goes to Tianlei Mountain every fifteenth of the month to absorb the power of heavenly lightning."

"You plan to use lightning techniques against him?" Jiang Xuelan was taken aback.

Chen Ping nodded.

Jiang Xuelan glanced at him, somewhat surprised: "You know lightning techniques?"

"A little."

Chen Ping smiled, "Back in the Celestial Realm, I ate the Heavenly Thunder Fruit, so I have the essence of lightning within me. I also know a set of Thunderclap Palms, but I haven't used it in a long time."

Jiang Xuelan was silent for a moment, the corners of her mouth slightly upturned.

"Just how many things do you know?"

Chen Ping smiled but didn't speak.

The two quickened their pace, flying towards Thunder Mountain.

Thunder Mountain was a solitary peak, towering into the clouds, perpetually shrouded in lightning.

Legend has it that in ancient times, a powerful figure of the lightning element perished here.

His remaining lightning power lingered on the mountain for tens of thousands of years, never dissipating.

Above the summit, dark clouds clung, and purple lightning, like countless giant dragons, danced wildly within the clouds, striking down every moment, scorching and shattering the rocks.

Ordinary cultivators could feel the terrifying pressure of the lightning even from a hundred miles away, let alone approach it.

Cultivators below the True Immortal Realm, struck by a single bolt of heavenly lightning, would suffer severe injuries at best, and complete annihilation at worst.

Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan landed on a small hill a hundred miles away from Thunder Mountain.

“Wait for me here,” Chen Ping said.

Jiang Xuelan frowned: “You’re going up alone?”

“The lightning on Thunder Mountain will harm you,” Chen Ping said, looking at her. “Your Ice God Power doesn’t counter lightning; going up would be dangerous. I can go alone.”

Jiang Xuelan was silent for a moment, then nodded.

“Be careful.”

Chen Ping smiled, turned, and flew towards Thunder Mountain.

The closer they got to Thunder Mountain, the denser the lightning became.

Purple lightning bolts cleaved down from the clouds, tearing the air

apart with deafening roars. Chen Ping's chaotic power flowed around his body, the purple light shielding

him from the lightning. Those lightning bolts, powerful enough to reduce True Immortal Realm cultivators to ashes, couldn't even touch the hem of his clothes.

He landed halfway up Thunder Mountain, found a secluded cave, and sat cross-legged.

There were still two days until the fifteenth.

He wanted to use these two days to thoroughly review the Thunder Palm technique and reactivate the lightning source within his body.

He closed his eyes and immersed his consciousness into his body.

Within his dantian, a vortex of chaotic power slowly rotated.

At the edge of the vortex, a purple light shone, and then Chen Ping's divine sense entered a cosmic galaxy.

Some stars there were dim, some bright; these were all Chen Ping's primordial stars.

Among them, one star shimmered with light—that was Chen Ping's lightning primordial star, dormant for a long time, unused by Chen Ping!

Chen Ping probed a wisp of his divine sense into the lightning primordial star.

In that instant, he felt as if he were in an ocean of lightning.

Countless purple lightning bolts danced wildly around him, each containing the power to destroy everything.

But he felt no fear; instead, he felt a sense of familiarity. The lightning primordial star and the chaotic power within his body shared the same origin, both yearning to merge.

He began to guide the lightning primordial star, drawing it from his dantian and circulating it along his meridians.

Wherever the lightning primordial star passed, fine purple patterns appeared on the meridian walls, as if branded by lightning.

The patterns within the lightning contained the power of thunder, making his meridians more resilient and expansive.

Once, twice, three times...

the essence of thunder circulated within him eighty-one times, finally achieving a balance with the chaotic power within him.

He opened his eyes, raised his right hand, and a ball of purple lightning condensed in his palm.

This lightning was no longer ordinary heavenly thunder, but chaotic thunder fused with the power of chaos.

Its color was deeper than ordinary heavenly thunder, almost black, with purple light flowing across its surface, crackling loudly.

Chen Ping clenched his fist, drawing the lightning back into his body.

Indeed, the power of chaos encompassed all laws; it could merge and contain all power.

Then, he began to recall the Thunderclap Palm technique. He had learned

the Thunderclap Palm from an ancient book in the library of the Imperial City of Yihe when he was still in the Celestial Realm.

At that time, his cultivation was still weak, and the Thunderclap Palm was his strongest killing move.

Now, his strength was vastly different, and the power of the Thunderclap Palm had increased along with his cultivation.

He stood up and walked out of the cave.

Thunder roared across Thunder Mountain .

Chen Ping stood atop the mountain, facing the raging lightning, and began practicing the Thunderclap Palm.

First move, Thunderous Might.

He struck out with his palm, and lightning surged from his palm, transforming into a thick, purple pillar of lightning that shot towards the sky.

The pillar of lightning collided with the lightning in the sky, unleashing a deafening roar that shook the entire Thunder Mountain.

Second move, Thunder Shakes the

Nine Heavens. He struck out with both palms simultaneously, and lightning power condensed into countless lightning spears before him, shooting out in all directions.

Wherever the lightning spears passed, the air was torn apart, rocks were shattered, and the lightning in the sky was scattered.

Third move, Heavenly Thunder Annihilates the World.

He clasped his hands together, gathering all the lightning essence and chaotic power within his body into his palms.

Then, he slowly separated his hands, and a purple sphere of light appeared between his palms. Lightning flickered within the sphere, containing power sufficient to destroy a city.

He pushed the sphere of light into the sky.

The ball of light flew into the clouds and exploded with a bang.

The lightning across the entire sky was swallowed by it, transforming into a massive purple vortex that spun for several breaths before gradually dissipating.

Chen Ping withdrew his hand and exhaled a long breath.

Not a drop of sweat was on his body, but the lightning essence within him had been completely activated.

He could feel that his control over lightning had reached a completely new level.

“Almost there,” he murmured.

Then, he returned to the cave and continued to wait.

On Thunder Mountain, the lightning was more concentrated than usual.

Every month on the fifteenth, the power of thunder on Thunder Mountain would reach its peak, the best time to cultivate thunder techniques.

Lei Zhentian would come to Thunder Mountain every month on this day to absorb the power of thunder and refine his thunder techniques.

Chen Ping stood atop the mountain, looking at the distant sky.

He was waiting.

After about an hour, a dozen golden points of light appeared in the distance.

The points of light grew closer and larger, transforming into a dozen divine cultivators dressed in golden robes.

Their cultivation levels were all between the second and fourth ranks of the True Immortal Realm, with tokens of the Judgment Hall hanging at their waists, exuding a menacing aura.

At the very front stood a tall, middle-aged man, broad-shouldered and burly, with a resolute face, thick eyebrows, and large eyes.

His short hair stood on end like steel needles. Golden lightning crackled around him, and the air was filled with the smell of burning.

His cultivation level was True Immortal Realm, Rank Seven.

Lei Zhentian. A seventh-grade True Immortal, a minor realm higher than the sixth-grade True Immortal that Ying Wuji had told him.

That old fox Ying Wuji really didn't tell the truth.

Or perhaps Lei Zhentian's strength had increased.

But regardless, now that he was here, Chen Ping wouldn't back down!

Chen Ping's eyes narrowed slightly.

He stood atop the mountain, watching Lei Zhentian land on Thunder Mountain with a dozen or so Divine Race cultivators.

Lei Zhentian was very cautious. He came to Thunder Mountain every fifteenth of the month, but each time he would bring a dozen or so subordinates to search the area within a hundred miles of Thunder Mountain to confirm there were no ambushes before beginning his cultivation. This

had remained unchanged for five thousand years.

“Scatter, search!”

“Yes!”

The dozen or so Divine Race cultivators scattered, searching Thunder Mountain.

Soon, a Divine Race cultivator spotted Chen Ping.

“My lord! There’s someone here!”

Lei Zhentian frowned and strode over.

He saw a young man in a blue robe standing atop the mountain, his face calm, his eyes clear, his cultivation only at the peak of the eighth grade of the Upper Immortal Realm.

A sword hung at his waist, its blade cracked, making him appear like an ordinary rogue cultivator.

Lei Zhentian’s vigilance relaxed slightly.

A rogue cultivator at the peak of the eighth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm was less than an ant to him.

“Who are you? How dare you trespass on Thunder Mountain?” His voice boomed like thunder, shaking the very rocks.

Chen Ping turned to face him.

“Chen Ping.”

Lei Zhentian’s eyes narrowed.

He had heard of this name.

A punch that severely injured Jin Huan in the Heavenly Fire Pit, a palm strike that sent the Divine Clan's deputy flying, a single sentence that terrified all the Divine Clan cultivators into a chaotic retreat—this name had been the talk of the entire Fifteenth Heaven for the past two days.

But he hadn't expected Chen Ping to be merely a rogue cultivator at the peak of the eighth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm.

"Chen Ping." Lei Zhentian's voice was low. "I have no grudge against you, why are you blocking my way?"

Chen Ping looked at him, his voice calm.

"Killing you is a deal."

Lei Zhentian's expression changed.

"A deal? Who sent you? Ying Wuji?"

Chen Ping neither answered nor denied.

A flash of killing intent crossed Lei Zhentian's eyes.

"That piece of trash Ying Wuji doesn't dare come himself, so he sends a junior at the Upper Immortal Realm to his death?" He sneered. "You think you can kill me?"

He raised his right hand, and a ball of golden lightning condensed in his palm.

The lightning was extremely hot, and its light was dazzling, illuminating the entire Thunder Mountain.

The surrounding air began to distort, and the rocks shattered under the pressure of the lightning.

"Since you're here, don't leave."

Lei Zhentian struck out with his palm.

The golden lightning transformed into a thunder dragon, roaring as it charged towards Chen Ping.

The thunder dragon was tens of feet long, entirely golden, tearing apart the air and shattering rocks wherever it passed, even devouring the heavenly lightning on Thunder Mountain.

Chen Ping did not dodge.

He raised his right hand and met the attack with a palm strike.

Purple lightning surged from his palm, transforming into a purple thunder dragon, which collided with the golden thunder dragon.

Boom!

The two forces of lightning collided, unleashing a deafening roar.

The entire Thunder Mountain trembled, rocks tumbled, and dust billowed.

The shockwave tore a huge hole in the dark clouds in the sky, allowing sunlight to stream through and illuminate the mountaintop.

Lei Zhentian's pupils suddenly contracted.

"You also know thunder magic?"

Chen Ping didn't speak.

He withdrew his palm, and the thunder source within his body erupted completely.

Purple lightning coiled around him, like countless purple snakes, crackling loudly.

His eyes turned purple, and lightning seemed to flicker in his pupils.

Lei Zhentian's expression became solemn.

He could sense that this young man, at the peak of the eighth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, possessed thunder power far stronger than he had imagined.

It wasn't ordinary thunder magic, but chaotic thunder fused with some higher-level power.

"Interesting," Lei Zhentian murmured, "Five thousand years, finally met someone who can fight."

He raised his hands, and golden lightning condensed in his palms, transforming into two thunder spears.

The spears crackled with electricity, emitting a piercing buzzing sound.

"Then let me see just how capable you really are."

Lei Zhentian moved.

His speed was extreme, leaving a long afterimage in his wake.

He instantly appeared in front of Chen Ping, his right hand wielding a lightning spear aimed at Chen Ping's chest.

Chen Ping did not retreat.

He dodged the spear and struck Lei Zhentian's shoulder with a palm.

Thunderous Palm, with the force of a thousand thunderbolts.

Purple lightning erupted from his palm, slamming towards Lei Zhentian's shoulder.

Lei Zhentian held his left-hand lightning spear horizontally in front of him, blocking the strike.

Boom!

The two forces of lightning collided again, and both were simultaneously forced back.

Lei Zhentian retreated five steps, while Chen Ping retreated seven.

A seventh-grade True Immortal against a peak eighth-grade Immortal, in a head-on clash, Chen Ping was slightly inferior.

However, his Chaotic Lightning countered all lightning forces, and a portion of Lei Zhentian's golden lightning was absorbed during the collision, so the actual difference wasn't as great as it appeared.

Lei Zhentian's expression grew even more solemn.

"Your lightning magic... can devour my lightning?"

Chen Ping didn't answer.

He took a deep breath, simultaneously circulating the lightning essence and chaotic power within his body. Purple light and black chaotic power intertwined, forming a layer of purplish-black armor on his body.

He took the initiative to attack.

Thunderclap Palm, thunder shaking the nine heavens.

He struck out with his palm, the power of lightning transforming into countless lightning spears, shooting towards Lei Zhentian.

Each lightning spear contained the power of chaotic lightning, enough to penetrate the protective spiritual power of a True Immortal Realm expert.

Lei Zhentian snorted coldly, his palms striking out simultaneously, golden lightning condensing into a lightning shield before him.

The shield had five layers, each containing terrifying lightning power.

The lightning spears struck the shield.

The first layer shattered.

The second layer shattered.

The third, fourth, and fifth layers

of lightning spears pierced through all five layers of the shield, but their power was also exhausted, dissipating before Lei Zhentian.

Lei Zhentian's expression changed.

His lightning shield was enough to withstand a full-force attack from an eighth-grade True Immortal Realm expert.

But against this young man at the peak of the eighth grade Upper Immortal Realm, it only lasted for less than three breaths.

"Who exactly are you?"

Chen Ping still did not answer.

He clasped his hands together, condensing all the lightning essence and chaotic power within his body into his palms.

Thunderclap Palm, Heavenly Thunder Annihilation.

He slowly separated his hands, and a ball of purplish-black light appeared between his palms.

Lightning crackled within the sphere of light, containing enough power to destroy a city.

The surrounding air began to distort, and the heavenly lightning from Thunder Mountain was drawn to the sphere, surging towards it and merging into it.

The sphere grew larger and brighter.

Lei Zhentian's face turned deathly pale.

He felt it; the power contained within the sphere was enough to obliterate him. "No!" he roared, channeling all his inner lightning power.

Golden lightning erupted from his body, coalescing into a hundred-zhang-long golden lightning dragon before him.

The dragon roared and charged towards Chen Ping.

Chen Ping pushed out the ball of light in his hand.

The ball of light collided with the golden lightning dragon.

There was no explosion, no loud noise.

The ball of light, like a black hole, devoured, absorbed, and transformed the golden lightning dragon bit by bit.

The lightning dragon struggled before the ball of light for less than three breaths before being completely swallowed up.

Then, the ball of light continued forward, crashing into Lei Zhentian's chest.

"Ah!"

Lei Zhentian let out a shrill scream.

Dark purple lightning raged within him, destroying his meridians, bones, and flesh inch by inch.

His protective spiritual power was like paper before the chaotic lightning, instantly torn to shreds. His body began to crumble, cracks spreading from his chest to his limbs.

“No…impossible…” His eyes widened in disbelief, even in death. “Immortal Realm…Eighth Grade…how is this possible…”

Chen Ping stood before him, looking into his eyes, his voice calm.

“I told you, killing you was a deal.”

Lei Zhentian’s body shattered with a deafening roar, transforming into countless golden specks of light that dissipated into the air.

His body and soul were annihilated.

Thunder Mountain fell silent.

The lightning still roared, but seemed much weaker than before.

Perhaps it was because Lei Zhentian was dead, or perhaps it was because Chen Ping’s Chaos Lightning was too terrifying, causing even the heavens and earth to tremble.

Chen Ping withdrew his hand and exhaled a long breath.

His face was somewhat pale, and most of the lightning essence and chaotic power within his body had been consumed.

His right hand trembled slightly, the tiger’s mouth split open, and blood dripped from his fingertips.

His chest had also been struck by Lei Zhentian’s lightning, leaving a charred wound that throbbed faintly.

He was injured.

A full-force attack from a Seventh Grade True Immortal Realm cultivator was not so easy to withstand.

If it weren't for the Chaos Lightning's ability to counteract all lightning power, he might already be dead.

He turned around and looked at the divine cultivators.

A dozen or so divine cultivators stood rooted to the spot, staring at him in disbelief.

Their Vice Hall Master, Lei Zhentian, a seventh-grade True Immortal, had been killed in a single move by a human cultivator at the peak of the eighth-grade Upper Immortal.

"Avenge…avenge our Vice Hall Master!"

A fourth-grade True Immortal divine cultivator was the first to react, roaring as he charged towards Chen Ping.

The others also joined in, golden holy light transforming into countless attacks, blasting towards Chen Ping.

Chen Ping wanted to fight back, but his body was no longer under his control.

His lightning essence and chaotic power were almost exhausted; he could barely stand.

Just then, an icy blue light descended from the sky.

Jiang Xuelan.

She had been watching the battle on Thunder Mountain from a hundred miles away.

Seeing Chen Ping injured and the divine cultivators about to attack him, she immediately intervened.

She landed in front of Chen Ping, her hands forming a seal. Ice-blue divine light surged from her body, transforming into a massive ice wall that blocked all the attacks from the divine cultivators.

Then, she raised her right hand and struck out with her palm.

“Thousand Miles of Ice Seal!”

The ice-blue divine light surged forth like a tide, freezing the air, the rocks, and even the lightning in the sky.

Before the divine cultivators could react, they were frozen within the blue ice crystals, turning into ice sculptures.

More than a dozen people were completely frozen.

Jiang Xuelan withdrew her hand, turned, and helped Chen Ping.

“Let’s go, these people won’t be frozen for long…”

She carried Chen Ping, transforming into an ice-blue streak of light, and disappeared into the horizon.

Behind them, on Thunder Mountain, thunder roared, and ice crystals reflected blinding light in the sunlight.

More than a dozen ice sculptures stood atop the mountain, like tombstones.

Jiang Xuelan flew with Chen Ping for about an hour, landing in a secluded valley.

The valley wasn’t large, surrounded by mountains on three sides, with only a narrow entrance.

A stream flowed through the valley, its water crystal clear, and beside it lay a meadow covered in unidentified wildflowers.

Jiang Xuelan laid Chen Ping on the meadow and examined his injuries.

There was a charred wound on his chest, inflicted by Lei Zhentian's lightning.

The wound wasn't deep, but golden lightning energy lingered, eroding his flesh.

"Don't move," Jiang Xuelan said.

She raised her right hand, a ball of icy blue light coalescing in her palm, and gently pressed it against Chen Ping's chest.

The icy blue light gradually froze and dissipated the golden lightning energy.

Chen Ping felt the burning pain in his chest gradually disappear, replaced by a cool sensation.

"Thank you," Chen Ping said.

Jiang Xuelan didn't speak.

She withdrew her hand, took a pill from her sleeve, and handed it to him.

"Eat it,"

Chen Ping said, taking the pill and putting it in his mouth.

The pill melted instantly upon entering his mouth, a warm power flowing into his body, nourishing his damaged meridians and flesh.

"Your injuries aren't serious; you'll recover in a day or two," Jiang Xuelan said. "But you took too much risk. A seventh-grade True Immortal, and you dared to fight him head-on."

Chen Ping smiled: "It wasn't a head-on fight. My Chaos Lightning restrains his lightning power, otherwise I wouldn't have dared to fight."

Jiang Xuelan looked at him, silent for a moment.

“Next time, don’t carry the burden alone.”

Chen Ping hesitated for a moment, then nodded.

“Okay.”

The two sat on the grass, watching the clouds in the sky.

The setting sun dyed the entire sky golden-red.

The stream shimmered in the sunset, like flowing gold.“Ying Wuji lied to you,” Jiang Xuelan suddenly said. “He said Lei Zhentian was a sixth-grade True Immortal, but he was actually a seventh-grade.”

“I know,” Chen Ping nodded. “That old fox never had good intentions from the start. He wanted me to kill Lei Zhentian not just for revenge, but also to test my strength.”

“Then why did you agree?”

“Because I need the Core of Reincarnation,” Chen Ping said. “No matter what he’s planning, as long as I kill Lei Zhentian, he has no reason to back out. If he does back out…” Chen Ping smiled, “I don’t mind killing one more.”

Jiang Xuelan didn’t speak, just looked at him.

This man, sometimes, is truly terrifying.

He usually seems gentle, loyal to his friends, and compassionate towards the weak.

But once he’s determined to do something, he becomes ruthless, decisive, and unscrupulous.

Perhaps that’s why he’s gotten this far.

“Let’s go. I’ll take you back to Youyue Kingdom first. Once you’ve recovered, we’ll go get the Soul-Guiding Flame,” Jiang Xuelan said.

Chen Ping nodded and followed Jiang Xuelan back to Youyue Kingdom!

The news of Chen Ping killing Lei Zhentian spread throughout the entire Fifteenth Heaven that very day.

Everyone was shocked.

Lei Zhentian, the deputy hall master of the Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall, a seventh-grade True Immortal, had reigned supreme in the Fifteenth Heaven for five thousand years, and no one had ever dared to challenge him.

Now, he was dead.

Killed in one move by a human cultivator at the peak of the eighth-grade Upper Immortal.

In the Loose Cultivator Alliance, Feng Qingzi was drinking tea when he received the news.

His teacup fell to the ground and shattered.

“What did you say? Chen Ping killed Lei Zhentian?”

“Absolutely true. More than a dozen people witnessed it on Thunder Mountain.”

Feng Qingzi remained silent for a long time, then sighed deeply.

“This person is not to be trifled with.”

In the Beast Clan’s Heavenly Wolf Tribe, Langya was training his subordinates when he received the news.

He put down his battle axe, remained silent for a moment, then smiled.

“Well done, Chen Ping. I’ve had my eye on that old bastard Lei Zhentian for a long time. Good riddance!”

In the Shadow Palace of the Demon Clan, Ying Wuji was sitting on his throne, eyes closed, resting when he received the news.

He opened his eyes, a complex light flashing within them.

“Lei Zhentian… is dead?”

“Dead. Killed by Chen Ping in one move.”

Ying Wuji remained silent for a long time, then smiled.

His smile contained pleasure, admiration, and a hint of apprehension.

“Well done, Chen Ping,” he murmured, “Even stronger than I imagined.”

He stood up and walked into the deepest part of the Shadow Abyss.

There was a secret chamber there, housing the supreme treasure of the Shadow Palace of the Demon Clan, the Core of Reincarnation.

It was a fist-sized bead, entirely black, with silver patterns flowing across its surface, like winding rivers.

The bead contained the power of reincarnation, the key to opening the path of reincarnation.

Ying Wuji took the Core of Reincarnation from the secret chamber and held it in his palm.

“Chen Ping, I hope we won’t become enemies in the future,”

he murmured, then walked out of the secret chamber.

The next day, Ying Wuji personally delivered the Core of Reincarnation to the Youyue Kingdom.

He stood at the city gate, looking at the dilapidated underground ancient city, a complex emotion flashing in his eyes.

The Ghost Clan, this once glorious race, now only has so few people left.

Chen Ping walked out of the ancient city and took the Core of Reincarnation.

His face was still a little pale, but his injuries had mostly healed.

“Thank you.”

Ying Wuji shook his head: “No need to thank me. This is what you deserve.”

He paused, then said, “Lei Zhentian is dead, but the Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall will not let this go. The Judgment Venerable is vengeful. You must be careful.”

Chen Ping nodded: “I know.”

Ying Wuji turned to leave, then stopped.

“Chen Ping, if you need help in the future, you can come to Yingyuan to find me. The gates of the Shadow Hall are always open for you.”

Then he left.

Chen Ping stood at the city gate, watching his back disappear into the black mist, and remained silent for a long time.

“What does he mean?” Jiang Xuelan walked to his side.

“To win me over,” Chen Ping said. “He saw my strength and wants to pull me to his side.”

“Will you go?”

Chen Ping shook his head: “No. I’m not anyone’s weapon.”

He turned and walked back to the ancient city.

Behind him, Yun Quan and Yun Xi stood at the entrance of the council hall, looking at the Core of Reincarnation in his hand, their eyes filled with tears of excitement.

One more.

Two more.

The Soul-Guiding Flame, in the Beast Clan’s Sky Wolf Tribe.

The Netherworld Lamp, in the God Clan’s Judgment Hall.

Chen Ping looked up at the black mist and moonlight above.

“Tomorrow, go to the Sky Wolf Tribe.”

Jiang Xuelan nodded.

Yun Xi opened her mouth, wanting to say something, but in the end only said, “Be careful.”

Chen Ping smiled, turned and walked into the stone hall.

Xiao You ran out of the stone hall and jumped into his arms.

“Uncle Chen! You’re back! Did you bring me anything delicious?”

Chen Ping took out a Heavenly Fire Crystal from his storage ring. It was about the size of a fist, polished by his Chaos Fire, its surface smooth as a mirror, radiating a warm glow.

“Here, take this. Play with it.”

Xiao You took the crystal, her eyes shining like stars.

“So beautiful! Thank you, Uncle Chen!”

Chen Ping patted her head and carried her into the stone hall.

Behind them, moonlight shone on the ruins of the ancient city, turning everything silvery-gray. The Hall of Judgment of the Divine Race, main hall.

The Judgment Venerable sat on his high golden throne, his face as grim as the sky before a storm.

He released no pressure, yet the air in the entire hall seemed to solidify, making even breathing difficult.

In the center of the hall knelt a dozen or so Divine Race cultivators.

Their clothes were tattered, their bodies covered in wounds; they were the ones who had escaped from Thunder Mountain.

Jiang Xuelan’s Thousand-Mile Ice Seal had only trapped them for less than an hour before the ice crystals shattered.

But Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan had already left, and they could only slink back to the Hall of Judgment.

“Lei Zhentian…is dead?” The Judgment Venerable’s voice was calm, a calmness that sent chills down one’s spine.

The True Immortal Realm fourth-grade cultivator kneeling at the front trembled, his forehead pressed to the ground, afraid to raise his head.

“Yes…yes, Hall Master. Killed in one move by that Chen Ping…”

The hall was deathly silent.

Lei Zhentian, a seventh-grade True Immortal, the Vice Hall Master of the Judgment Hall, had reigned supreme in the Fifteenth Heaven for five thousand years, with no one daring to challenge him.

Now, he was dead. Killed in a single move by a human cultivator at the peak of the eighth grade Upper Immortal.

The Judgment Venerable remained silent for a long time.

Then, he smiled.

The smile was faint, almost imperceptible, but everyone felt a chill, a chill that shot from the soles of their feet to the top of their heads .

“Well done, Chen Ping.” His voice remained calm. “Well done, Ying Wuji.”

He stood up and stepped down from his throne. His golden robe trailed on the ground, making a rustling sound.

He walked to the dozen or so cultivators and looked down at them.

“You saw him kill, but didn’t intervene?”

“Hall Master, we intervened! But Chen Ping’s accomplice, a woman in white, froze us all with ice-type techniques, we…”

Before he could finish speaking, the Judgment Venerable raised his hand and gently waved it.

The cultivator’s body was crushed as if by an invisible giant hand, instantly turning into a cloud of blood mist.

Blood mist filled the air, settling on the cultivators beside him and staining them red.

No one dared to move, no one dared to utter a sound.

“Lei Zhentian is dead, and you are still alive.”

The Judgment Venerable’s voice remained calm. “This is your honor. But I don’t like seeing trash.”

He turned and walked back to his throne.

“Issue the order. From today onwards, any force in the Fifteen Heavens that dares to cooperate with Chen Ping is an enemy of my Judgment Hall. Kill without mercy.”

“If you see Chen Ping, kill him without exception.”

“His head is worth a divine artifact.”

“Yes!” The divine cultivators in the hall responded in unison.

The Judgment Venerable closed his eyes and leaned back on his throne.

“Ying Wuji… do you think I can’t do anything to you just because you used someone else to kill you?” he murmured. “After dealing with Chen Ping, you’ll be next.”

The Judgment Hall’s decree spread throughout the entire Fifteen Heavens that very day.

In the Loose Cultivator Alliance, Feng Qingzi remained silent for a long time after receiving the news.

Then, he burned the contents of the decree and said to his disciples, “We know nothing about Chen Ping’s affairs. No one has asked us.”

Wolf Fang of the Beast Clan’s Sky Wolf Tribe, upon receiving the news, sneered, “What is the Judgment Hall? It dares to interfere in the affairs of my Sky Wolf Tribe?”

He tore the decree to shreds.

Shadow Wuji of the Demon Clan’s Shadow Hall, upon receiving the news, simply smiled.

He said to Shadow Killer, “The Judgment Venerable is anxious. When he’s anxious, he makes mistakes.”

The smaller forces, however, were caught in a dilemma.

They dared not offend the Judgment Hall, nor did they dare offend Chen Ping, the monster who had killed a seventh-grade True Immortal in one move.

For a moment, the undercurrents of the Fifteenth Heaven surged, more intense than the flames of the Heavenly Fire Pit.

In the council hall of the Youyue Kingdom,

Yun Quan's expression was even more grave than before.

He placed the Judgment Hall's decree on the table and looked at Chen Ping.

"Mr. Chen, the Judgment Hall has issued a kill order against you. Moreover, they have warned all forces not to cooperate with you."

Chen Ping picked up the decree, glanced at it, and remained silent.

"The Sirius Tribe..."

Yun Quan hesitated for a moment, "Although they haven't outwardly ignored the Judgment Hall's decree, the Soul-Guiding Flame is their most precious treasure. In this situation, they might not be willing to lend it."

Chen Ping placed the decree back on the table and stood up.

"I'll go check on them."

Yun Xi walked over and tugged at his sleeve, "Your injuries haven't fully healed yet."

Chen Ping smiled, "I'm almost healed. Besides, this isn't a fight, it's a negotiation. There won't be any danger."

Yun Xi bit her lip, not letting go.

“You always say that.”

Chen Ping looked into her eyes and said earnestly, “I promise you, I’ll definitely come back.”

Yun Xi was silent for a moment, then finally let go.

“Then be careful.”

Chen Ping nodded, turned, and walked out of the council hall.

Jiang Xuelan followed behind him.

The two transformed into two streaks of light and flew towards the Sirius Tribe of the Beast Clan. The Sirius Tribe is located in the northern part of the Netherworld Mountains, on a vast, desolate plain.

There are no city walls, no palaces, only countless tents and houses built of animal hides, scattered across the wasteland like a cluster of white mushrooms.

The beastmen dislike extravagance; their architecture is simple and practical.

But simplicity does not equate to weakness. The Sirius Tribe has stood for tens of thousands of years in the Fifteenth Heaven not because of city walls, but because of its strength.

Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan landed in front of the Sirius Tribe’s camp.

Several beastmen warriors approached, bone axes and spears in hand, watching them warily.

“Who goes there?”

“Chen Ping. I’ve come to see your leader.”

The beastmen warriors' expressions changed simultaneously.

The name Chen Ping had been spreading like wildfire throughout the Fifteenth Heaven for the past two days.

His feats—severing Jin Huan with a single punch in the Heavenly Fire Pit and killing Lei Zhentian with a single move on Heavenly Thunder Mountain—had already reached the Sirius Tribe.

"You…you wait a moment." A beastman turned and ran into the camp.

A moment later, a burly beastman emerged from the camp.

He wore a wolf-skin cloak and had three bloody scars on his face; he was Wolf Fang, a renowned warrior of the Sky Wolf Tribe.

"Fellow Daoist Chen Ping!" Wolf Fang strode over, clasping his hands in a salute. "Long time no see! The chief heard you were here and specially sent me to fetch you."

Chen Ping returned the salute: "Thank you for your trouble."

Wolf Fang led Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan through the camp, heading towards the largest tent in the center.

Along the way, the beastmen warriors stopped, looking at Chen Ping with complex emotions—awe, curiosity, and a hint of eager anticipation.

"Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, you killed Lei Zhentian?" Wolf Fang suddenly asked.

"Yes."

Wolf Fang's eyes lit up: "Good! That old bastard, I've had my eye on him for a long time! Relying on the Judgment Venerable's backing, he swaggered around on Sky Wolf Tribe territory. If the chief hadn't stopped me, I would have fought him long ago!"

Chen Ping smiled but remained silent.

With Wolf Fang's strength, Lei Zhentian would probably have killed him in a single move.

The central tent was large enough to hold a hundred people.

The tent flap was made of animal hide, embroidered with a huge golden wolf's head—the totem of the Heavenly Wolf Tribe.

Wolf Fang lifted the flap: "Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, please."

Chen Ping entered the tent.

The tent was simply furnished. A thick animal hide carpet covered the floor, and in the center sat a huge brazier, its flames roaring.

Behind the brazier sat an old man.

His hair was white, his face aged, but his physique remained robust.

His eyes were dark brown, his pupils seemingly burning with fire.

A faint aura of bloodline power swirled around him; though restrained, it still exerted a powerful pressure.

His cultivation was at the eighth rank of the True Immortal Realm.

The Heavenly Wolf Tribe leader—Wolf Hao.

Chen Ping walked to the brazier, stopped, and clasped his hands in a salute.

"Leader Wolf Hao, I've long admired you."

Wolf Hao looked at him, remaining silent for a moment.

Then, he smiled.

The smile was hearty, like a wind across the wasteland.

“Chen Ping, you’re younger than I expected.”

He stood up, walked to Chen Ping, and sized him up.

“Peak of the eighth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, and you killed Lei Zhentian, a seventh-rank True Immortal Realm cultivator, in one move. Good lad, you’ve got skill.”

Chen Ping smiled: “Just lucky.”

Lang Hao laughed loudly: “Lucky? Lei Zhentian cultivated thunder techniques for thousands of years, and you think luck alone is enough to kill him? Don’t be modest.”

He turned and walked back to his seat, gesturing for Chen Ping to sit down.

“Speak, what brings you here?”

Chen Ping didn’t sit.

He stood there, looking at Lang Hao, “I’ve come to retrieve the Soul-Guiding Fire.”

The tent fell silent.

Lang Ya’s expression changed.

Lang Hao’s smile froze.

“The Soul-Guiding Fire is the most precious treasure of my Heavenly Wolf Tribe.” Lang Hao’s voice was deep, “You think you can just take it like that?”

Chen Ping looked at him, his voice calm.

“I know. That’s why I’m willing to exchange something for it.”

“What thing?”

“What do you want?”

Lang Hao was silent for a moment, then sighed.

“Chen Ping, it’s not that I don’t want to give it to you. The Soul-Guiding Flame… can’t be used now.”

Chen Ping’s brows furrowed slightly. “Why?”

Lang Hao stood up, walked to the back of the tent, and lifted a curtain.

“Come with me.”

Behind the curtain was a small tent, much smaller than the main tent, but more exquisitely furnished.

In the center of the tent was a stone bed, and on the stone bed lay an old man.

The old man was even older than Lang Hao, his hair completely white, his face covered with wrinkles, like a crumpled piece of paper.

His eyes were closed, and his breathing was so weak it was almost imperceptible.

A faint golden flame swirled around him—the Soul-Guiding Flame.

The flame was small, only the size of a fist, hovering above the old man’s chest, slowly rotating.

Its color was golden, but not a dazzling golden, but a warm, soft golden, like the afterglow of the setting sun.

“This is my father,”

Lang Hao's voice was low, tinged with a sob. "The previous leader of the Tianlang tribe. Three hundred years ago, he was severely injured in a battle against the Divine Clan's Judgment Hall, his soul damaged, and he has been unconscious ever since. The Soul-Guiding Fire can nourish the soul; for three hundred years, it has kept my father alive."

He looked at Chen Ping, his eyes full of pleading.

"Chen Ping, if I take the Soul-Guiding Fire, my father will immediately be annihilated. It's not that I don't want to give it to you, it's… I can't give it to you."

Chen Ping was silent for a moment, then walked to the stone bed and looked down at the old man.

He could feel that the old man's soul was indeed very weak, so weak that it could dissipate at any moment.

The golden light of the Soul-Guiding Fire enveloped his soul, like a thin protective film, fixing his soul within his body.

"Is there any other way?" Chen Ping asked.

Lang Hao's eyes lit up.

"Yes. Ancient texts record a kind of immortal herb called 'Soul Gathering Grass,' which can be refined into 'Soul Gathering Pill.' If my father could take the Soul Gathering Pill, his soul would be repaired, and he would no longer need the nourishment of the Soul-Guiding Fire."

"Where is the Soul Gathering Grass?" Chen Ping asked.

Lang Hao's expression became serious.

"On the territory of the Divine Clan's Judgment Hall. There is a canyon called Soul Abyss, which is full of various spiritual herbs.

The Soul Gathering Grass grows in the deepest part of Soul Abyss. It is heavily guarded by the Divine Clan, and cultivators below the fourth rank of True Immortal cannot enter.

Even if they do enter, it is very difficult to collect the Soul Gathering Grass, as there are restrictions set up by the Divine Clan and guardian spirit beasts."

"Moreover..." He paused, "Even if we collect the Soul Gathering Grass, no one in our Heavenly Wolf Tribe can refine the Soul Gathering Pill. Refining pills requires extremely high skill, and we beast races... are not good at this."

Chen Ping was silent for a moment.

"I'll go gather it."

Lang Hao was taken aback: "What?"

"I'll go gather Soul-Gathering Grass," Chen Ping said, "and then refine it into Soul-Gathering Pills. I can refine pills."

Chen Ping possessed the Shennong Cauldron, which could be used to refine pills, and besides, Chen Ping's pill-refining skills were quite high.

Lang Hao's eyes widened: "Chen Ping, that's the territory of the Divine Clan's Judgment Hall! You killed Lei Zhentian, and the Judgment Hall would love to tear you to pieces. If you go to their territory now, aren't you just walking into a trap?"

Chen Ping smiled: "That's precisely why they didn't expect me to go."

He turned to look at the old man on the stone bed.

"The Soul-Guiding Fire is related to the life and death of tens of thousands of ghost clan souls. I can't not go just because I'm afraid of death."

Lang Hao looked at him and remained silent for a long time.

Then, he bowed deeply.

“Chen Ping, if you can revive my father, I will personally hand over the Soul-Guiding Flame to you. Not only that, the Heavenly Wolf Clan owes you a life. From now on, your affairs are the affairs of the Heavenly Wolf Clan.”

Chen Ping helped him up: “No need for formalities. Tell me the location of the Soul Abyss.”

Lang Hao nodded and told Chen Ping the location of the Soul Abyss! The Soul Abyss is located southeast of the Netherworld Mountains, within the sphere of influence of the Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall.

It is a long, narrow canyon with towering cliffs on both sides, its bottom shrouded in thick fog year-round, preventing sunlight from penetrating.

It is a treasure trove of spiritual herbs, a rare gem among the fifteen heavens of the Celestial Realm.

The Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall has heavily fortified this area, effectively surrounding the Soul Abyss; only core members of the Judgment Hall are allowed entry.

Chen Ping and Jiang Xuelan landed a hundred miles away from the Soul Abyss.

“Wait for me here,” Chen Ping said.

Jiang Xuelan frowned: “You want me to wait alone again?”

“The Soul Abyss has divine restrictions. Your Ice God Power is too conspicuous and easily detected. My Chaos Power can conceal my aura, making it ideal for this kind of thing.”

Jiang Xuelan was silent for a moment, then nodded.

“Be careful,”

Chen Ping smiled, turning and flying towards the Soul Abyss.

Two teams of divine cultivators guarded the entrance to the Soul Abyss, their cultivation levels ranging from the second to third rank of True Immortal.

They stood ramrod straight, clad in golden armor and wielding spears.

A golden light barrier stood at the entrance, a sacred barrier of the Judgment Hall, which would trigger an alarm for any unauthorized entry.

Chen Ping did not enter through the entrance.

He circled around to the other side of the canyon and climbed down the cliff.

The cliff here was steep and precipitous, covered with moss and vines, making it slippery and difficult to traverse.

But Chen Ping’s chaotic power flowed across his body, completely concealing his aura.

Like a gecko, he silently slid down the cliff face.

The fog thickened, and visibility decreased.

Chen Ping extended his divine sense, perceiving everything around him.

He could sense that numerous restrictions were set up in the canyon—some offensive, some trapping, and some alarming.

Each restriction was enough to cause a True Immortal cultivator considerable suffering.

But Chen Ping’s chaotic power countered all forces.

He concentrated his chaotic power at his fingertips, gently touching the edges of the restrictions, dismantling them bit by bit.

Without sound or light, the restrictions crumbled silently before him like sandcastles.

The first layer of restrictions was an alarm barrier.

Once triggered, all the guards of the Soul Abyss would know of an intrusion.

Chen Ping's chaotic power acted like an invisible pair of scissors, severing the spiritual threads of the restrictions one by one.

The light of the restrictions flickered a few times, then dimmed, completely failing.

The second layer of restrictions was a trapping barrier.

Once triggered, the trapped person would be confined by a golden light prison, unable to move an inch.

Chen Ping did not trigger it, but instead used his chaotic power to open a small opening in the restrictions, and like threading a needle, silently slipped through.

The third layer, the fourth layer, the fifth layer...

It took him about an hour to finally pass through all the restrictions and reach the bottom of the valley.

The thick fog at the bottom of the valley was actually thinner than above.

He could see that the ground was covered with various spiritual herbs: red Crimson Flame Grass, blue Ice Heart Lotus, purple Purple Cloud Fungus, and golden Golden Dragon Beard, all emitting a faint glow in the thick fog.

Every spiritual herb was priceless; even a single one could fetch an astronomical price outside.

But Chen Ping ignored the ordinary spiritual herbs.

He headed straight for the deepest part of the valley.

The Soul-Gathering Grass grew at the very bottom of the Soul Abyss, near a massive rock wall.

It was quite unique, entirely silvery-white, with slender leaves resembling tiny silver swords, their blades covered in fine lines like veins or meridians.

There were seven leaves in total, arranged in a spiral, extending from the root to the tip.

At the tip bloomed a small flower, pale blue in color, with petals as thin as cicada wings and a golden stamen that emitted a faint, eerie glow.

The glow flickered, as if it were breathing.

Chen Ping crouched down to observe it closely.

The roots of the Soul-Gathering Grass were embedded in a crack in the rock wall, from which seeped a silvery-white liquid—the Soul Abyss's unique "Soul Liquid," the nutrients the Soul-Gathering Grass needed to grow.

Soul Liquid was extremely precious, a single drop worth tens of thousands of immortal stones, but Chen Ping didn't care about that now.

He reached out to collect it.

Just then, a terrifying aura surged forth from behind the rock wall.

It was like a mountain pressing down, like the gaze of an abyss.

Chen Ping's pupils contracted sharply, his chaotic power automatically activated, purple light flowing across his body, isolating him from the aura.

A gigantic spirit beast emerged from behind the rock wall.

Its body was the size of a small mountain, covered entirely in black scales, each scale the size of a palm, its edges sharp as knives, reflecting a cold light in the dark valley.

It had two curved horns on its head, the tips sharp as needles, still bearing traces of dried blood.

Its eyes were blood-red, with vertical pupils, like those of a snake or a dragon.

Its limbs were as thick as pillars, its claws bearing five sharp, blade-like nails, each a foot long, enough to tear through the protective spiritual power of a True Immortal Realm expert.

Its cultivation was at the sixth rank of the True Immortal Realm.

The guardian spirit beast of the Soul Abyss, the Black-Scaled Beast.

It looked down at Chen Ping, its blood-red eyes devoid of emotion, filled only with pure bloodlust.

Two plumes of white steam billowed from its nostrils, carrying a pungent, bloody stench.

It opened its maw, revealing a dense array of sharp teeth, each like a dagger.

Then, it unleashed a deafening roar.

The roar was like a thunderclap, shaking the entire canyon.

Rock fragments were shaken from the cliffs, the thick fog was torn apart by the sound waves, and the spiritual herbs on the ground were blown about wildly.

The roar contained a divine soul attack, transforming into invisible ripples that surged towards Chen Ping's sea of consciousness.

Wherever the ripples passed, the air distorted, even light was refracted.

Within Chen Ping's sea of consciousness, the Great Luo Golden Scripture trembled slightly.

Golden light surged forth from the Great Luo Golden Scripture, sweeping across the entire sea of consciousness like a tidal wave.

The invisible divine soul ripples collided with the golden light, evaporating and dissipating instantly, like ice and snow meeting the blazing sun.

Chen Ping didn't even blink.

A flicker of unease flashed in the black-scaled beast's eyes.

It sensed something terrifying within this human's consciousness.

Its soul attack was enough to instantly render a fifth-grade True Immortal unconscious, yet this human hadn't even flinched.

But it didn't retreat.

It was the guardian of the Soul Abyss, its mission to kill all intruders.

For thousands of years, it had slain countless cultivators who had ventured into the Soul Abyss—humans, demons, beastmen, and monsters.

No one had ever escaped its claws alive.

It pounced on Chen Ping,

its speed as swift as lightning.

Though its body was enormous, its movements were terrifyingly agile.

In a single stride, it covered ten feet and arrived before Chen Ping.

Its right claw was raised high, its five sharp, blade-like toenails slicing through the darkness with a chilling light, before slamming down towards Chen Ping's head.

The force of that claw strike was enough to shatter a small mountain.Chen Ping didn't dodge.

He raised his right hand, a ball of chaotic fire condensing in his palm.

Purple light intertwined with golden flames, dazzlingly bright in the dark valley.

The moment the chaotic fire appeared, the surrounding fog began to fluctuate violently, as if it had encountered a natural enemy.

The fog sizzled under the burning chaotic fire, rapidly evaporating and dissipating.

A flicker of fear flashed in the black-scaled beast's eyes.

It sensed that the flame could kill it.

For thousands of years, it had never felt fear.

It had killed experts at the fifth rank of True Immortal Realm, experts at the sixth rank of True Immortal Realm, and even fought against experts at the seventh rank of True Immortal Realm. Although it couldn't win, it hadn't been in mortal danger.

But now, it felt the threat of death.

But it was too late to retreat.

Its claws had already struck.

Chen Ping pushed out the chaotic fire in his hand.

The flames didn't transform into fire snakes, but directly into a fire dragon.

The fire dragon was tens of meters long, its body a tapestry of purple and gold, its scales, horns, whiskers, and claws incredibly lifelike.

It opened its massive maw, letting out a silent roar, and charged towards the black-scaled beast. The fire

dragon's claws clashed with the black-scaled beast's.

There was no explosion, no loud bang.

The black-scaled beast's claws were like paper before the chaotic fire.

Its five sharp toenails were instantly burned to ashes, followed by its claws, forearms, and shoulders.

The fire dragon burrowed into its body, rampaging through its flesh and blood.

Black scales peeled off piece by piece, each piece burning in the air and turning to ash.

Flesh and blood charred in the flames, bones crackling and popping like firecrackers.

The black-scaled beast's blood wasn't red, but black, like ink.

The black blood evaporated instantly in the chaotic fire, filling the air with a pungent, acrid smell.

The black-scaled beast let out a mournful cry.

The howl was filled with pain, fear, and despair.

Its body began to crumble, starting with its right claw, cracks spreading throughout its entire body.

Purple flames burned within each crack, incinerating its flesh inch by inch.

It tried to escape, but its body was no longer under its control.

Its limbs were burned by the chaotic fire, its torso was pierced by the chaotic fire, and its head was swallowed by the chaotic fire.

In less than three breaths, this guardian spirit beast of the sixth rank of True Immortal Realm had turned into a pile of ashes.

The ashes fell to the ground, mingling with the scorched earth, indistinguishable from each other.

Chen Ping withdrew the flames, squatted down, and carefully picked the Soul Gathering Grass.

He dared not use force, afraid of damaging the roots.

He enveloped his fingers with chaotic power, gently pinched the roots, and slowly pulled upwards.

The roots of the Soul Gathering Grass were very deep, a foot long, with dense, intricate rootlets like a ball of silvery-white threads.

He uprooted the entire grass and stored it in his storage ring.

Then, he stood up, preparing to leave.

Just then, he heard footsteps.

“Someone has broken into the Soul Abyss!”

“Quick! Notify the elders!”

“Seal the exit! Don’t let him escape!”

Chen Ping looked up and saw dozens of golden points of light appear above the canyon.

Those were the holy light of the divine race cultivators, particularly dazzling in the thick fog.

They discovered the barrier had been broken and followed the trail to the bottom of the valley.

Chen Ping didn’t panic.

He stood at the bottom of the valley, waiting for those people to come down.

The first group to rush down were ten divine race cultivators at the second level of the True Immortal Realm.

They wore golden armor and held long swords. Seeing Chen Ping, they charged forward without saying a word.

“Kill!”

The ten people attacked simultaneously, their golden holy light transforming into ten sword beams, slashing towards Chen Ping.

Chen Ping raised his right hand and struck out with his palm.

Purple chaotic power transformed into a pillar of light, engulfing all ten sword beams.

The pillar of light continued forward, colliding with the ten divine race cultivators.

Their bodies were sent flying as if struck by a mountain, crashing into the rock face, blood gushing from their mouths.

Two fainted instantly, while the remaining eight struggled to their feet, their eyes filled with terror.

The second wave of attackers consisted of twenty True Immortal Realm, third-grade Divine Race cultivators.

They were stronger and more coordinated than the first wave.

Instead of charging directly at him, they split into four groups, attacking simultaneously from four directions.

Golden holy light transformed into countless blades of light, raining down on Chen Ping like a storm.

Chen Ping raised his hands, Chaos Fire condensing in his palms.

He pushed the flames outward, and a purple fire ring spread outward from him.

Wherever the fire ring passed, the golden blades of light evaporated instantly, like snow meeting the blazing sun.

The fire ring continued forward, striking the twenty Divine Race cultivators.

“Ah—”

Screams echoed one after another.

Some were severed at the waist by the fire ring, their upper and lower bodies separated, the wounds charred black by the flames, yet not a drop of blood flowed.

Some were struck in the chest by rings of fire, leaving fist-sized holes with burning edges.

Others had their arms instantly reduced to ashes by the fiery rings.

Of the twenty people, twelve were dead and eight were seriously injured.

The eight seriously injured lay on the ground, howling and writhing, their wounds scorched by the chaotic fire, unable to heal, the pain like a persistent, incurable affliction.

The third group to rush down were five True Immortal Realm, fourth-grade Divine Race cultivators.

They were core members of the Judgment Hall, each wearing a more magnificent golden robe than ordinary cultivators, embroidered with the Judgment Hall's emblem—a golden scale symbolizing "justice."

Their faces paled at the sight of the carnage at the bottom of the valley.

"Chen Ping!" the leader recognized him. "You're Chen Ping!"

Chen Ping remained silent.

"You killed Vice Hall Master Lei Zhentian, and you still dare to come to the Soul Abyss?" The man's voice trembled. "You…aren't you afraid of the Hall Master…"

Before he could finish speaking, Chen Ping moved.

He took a step forward and appeared in front of the man.

Before the man could react, Chen Ping's palm was already pressed against his chest.

Chaotic fire surged from his palm, burning a large hole through his chest.

The man looked down at the hole in his chest, his eyes filled with disbelief, and then slowly collapsed.

The remaining four people turned and ran.

Chen Ping did not chase. He raised his right hand, and four streams of chaotic fire condensed in his palm, transforming into four fire spears, which shot towards the four men.

The fire spears were as fast as lightning, instantly catching up with the four men, entering from their backs and exiting from their chests.

The four men fell simultaneously.

The valley floor fell silent.

The air was filled with the stench of burning and blood.

The ground was stained red with blood, and the scorched earth turned dark red.

Chen Ping stood among the corpses, not a drop of blood staining his blue robe.

His face was calm, his eyes clear, as if he had just killed not dozens of people, but a swarm of ants.

He raised his head and looked up at the canyon.

There were still more divine cultivators rushing over there.

Countless golden specks of light, at least a hundred.

Their holy light dyed the entire sky gold, as if it were daytime.

Chen Ping did not retreat.

He stood there, waiting for them to come down.

Hundreds of divine cultivators rushed down to the bottom of the valley. Among them were ordinary cultivators at the second level of the True Immortal Realm, squad leaders at the third level, deputy elders at the fourth level, and even two elders at the fifth level.

They surrounded Chen Ping, and golden holy light surged towards him like a tide.

“Chen Ping! Surrender! The Palace Master might spare your life!” shouted an elder at the fifth level of the True Immortal Realm.

Chen Ping glanced at him.

Then, he smiled.

The smile was faint, almost imperceptible.

But at that moment, everyone felt a chill, a chill that shot from the soles of their feet to the top of their heads.

“Spare my life?” Chen Ping’s voice was calm. “You dare to?”

He moved.

This time, he didn’t stand still and wait for them to rush at him.

He charged into the crowd.

Chaotic fire burned around him, purple light intertwined with golden flames, devouring all the surrounding holy light.

He was like a purple meteor, crashing through a golden sea.

With one punch, a second-grade True Immortal cultivator was blasted away, his chest caved in, blood gushing from his mouth, already lifeless when he landed.

With one palm, a third-grade True Immortal squad leader had his protective holy light shattered, his body exploding in mid-air, turning into a cloud of blood mist.

With one finger, a beam of chaotic fire pierced the head of a fourth-grade True Immortal elder; his eyes widened in disbelief until his death.

With one sword—he didn't use a sword, his Dragon-Slaying Sword was still healing from injury.

But his finger was the sword; the chaotic fire condensed into a sword beam, and wherever it passed, the divine cultivators fell like wheat being harvested.

One, two, three… ten, twenty, thirty…

in less than the time it takes for an incense stick to burn, more than half of the hundreds of divine cultivators had fallen.

The remaining ones finally collapsed.

"Run! Run!"

"He's not human! He's a demon!"

"Help! Help!"

They turned and ran, scrambling to escape towards the top of the canyon.

Some fell to the ground, trampled by those behind them, letting out a scream before falling silent.

Others were pushed behind their companions as shields, desperately climbing upwards.

Chen Ping didn't chase after them.

He stood amidst the corpses, watching the fleeing figures in a sorry state, his eyes showing no pity, no pleasure, only a calm indifference.

He turned and walked towards the edge of the canyon.

News of the Soul Abyss reached the Judgment Hall that very day.

The Judgment Venerable sat on his throne, listening to his subordinates' reports, his face growing increasingly grim.

"What did you say? Chen Ping broke into the Soul Abyss? Killed the guardian spirit beast? Killed over a hundred of our cultivators?"

"Yes…yes, Hall Master." The cultivator kneeling on the ground trembled, his forehead pressed to the ground, not daring to raise his head.

"Why did he go to the Soul Abyss?"

"He…he took the Soul Gathering Grass."

The Judgment Venerable's eyes narrowed.

Soul Gathering Grass.

That was the main ingredient for refining the Soul Gathering Pill.

The old leader of the Heavenly Wolf Tribe had been in a coma for three hundred years, surviving only on the Soul-Guiding Fire.

Chen Ping took the Soul-Gathering Grass, refined it into the Soul-Gathering Pill, revived the old leader, and then took the Soul-Guiding Flame.

He instantly understood everything.

"What a Chen Ping." His voice was calm, so calm it sent chills down one's spine. "What a Ying Wuji. What a Lang Hao."

He stood up and stepped down from the throne.

His golden robe trailed on the ground, making a rustling sound.

He walked to the kneeling cultivator and looked down at him.

“Where are the restrictions of the Soul Abyss? Those restrictions are ancient inheritances, even a True Immortal Realm Seventh Grade expert can’t get through them. How did he, a Upper Immortal Realm Eighth Grade Peak, manage to get through them?”

“This subordinate… this subordinate doesn’t know.”

The Judgment Venerable was silent for a moment.

“The power of chaos.” He murmured, “His power of chaos can restrain all power.”

He turned around and walked back to the throne.

“Pass down the order. From today onwards, all cultivators patrolling outside are forbidden to engage Chen Ping upon sight; report immediately. I need to keep track of his movements at all times.”

“Yes!”

“Also, notify the Shadow Palace and the Heavenly Wolf Tribe. Tell Ying Wuji and Lang Hao that I’ve taken note of their cooperation with Chen Ping. I’ll settle accounts with them after we deal with Chen Ping.”

“Yes!”

The Judgment Venerable closed his eyes and leaned back on his throne.

His fingers tapped lightly on the armrest, producing a rhythmic sound.

The sound echoed in the empty hall like the tolling of a death knell.

“Chen Ping… you’ve caused me to lose a deputy palace master, a spirit beast from the Soul Abyss, over a hundred cultivators, and a Soul Gathering Grass.” His voice was soft, as if he were talking to himself, “You will pay the price.”

…

When Chen Ping returned to Youyue Kingdom, it was already dark.

Yun Quan and Yun Xi were waiting at the city gate, and they both breathed a sigh of relief when they saw him return.

“Mr. Chen, did you get it?” Yun Quan asked.

Chen Ping took out the Soul Gathering Grass from his storage ring and handed it to him.

Then he repeated Lang Hao’s request.

Yun Quan took the Soul Gathering Grass, his hands trembling.

The silvery-white grass trembled slightly in his palm, and the pale blue flowers swayed gently in the night breeze, emitting a faint glow.

“This…this is the Soul Gathering Grass?”

Chen Ping nodded.

“But…” Yun Quan’s expression became serious again, “Who will refine the pill? The Soul Gathering Pill is a sixth-grade pill, which requires a master alchemist to refine. Our Youyue Kingdom…has no such person.”

Chen Ping was silent for a moment.

“I will.”

Everyone looked at him.

“You can refine pills?” Yun Xi’s eyes widened.

“A little.” Chen Ping said, “I learned it when I was in the Celestial Realm. Although I haven’t practiced for a long time, I should still remember it.”

What he didn’t say was that he not only knew alchemy, but he also had an ancient divine cauldron in his possession—the Shennong Cauldron.

The Shennong Cauldron was not large, and its entire body was bronze, covered with ancient runes.

The runes weren't any known script, but a far more ancient and primitive language—ancient divine script.

Legend has it that the Shennong Cauldron could refine all things under heaven, not only elixirs, but also weapons, medicines, and even souls.

Yun Quan opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but ultimately said nothing.

He turned and walked into the council hall, placing the Soul-Gathering Grass on the table.

"Mr. Chen, what auxiliary materials do you need? I'll go prepare them."

Chen Ping thought for a moment and recited a list of spiritual herbs: "Three Crimson Flame Grasses, two Ice Heart Lotuses, one Purple Cloud Mushroom, one Golden Dragon Beard, and one drop of Ten-Thousand-Year Spiritual Milk."

Yun Quan noted them down and went to prepare them.

Chen Ping found a corner in the council hall and sat down cross-legged.

He took out a pill furnace from his storage ring and placed it in front of him.

The Shennong Cauldron.

Chen Ping looked at the cauldron, a complex emotion welling up in his heart.

This cauldron had been with him for many years, from the mortal realm to the celestial realm, from the celestial realm to the celestial realm, and from the celestial realm to the celestial realm.

He had always carried it with him, yet he had never used it in the celestial realm.

He placed the Shennong Cauldron in front of him and put the Soul Gathering Grass and auxiliary materials into the furnace one by one.

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The moment the Soul-Gathering Grass was placed into the furnace, the runes on the Shennong Cauldron suddenly lit up, illuminating the entire council hall with golden light.

The runes seemed to come alive, peeling off the cauldron and swirling and dancing in the void before merging into the spiritual herbs within.

Chen Ping closed his eyes and channeled his chaotic power into the Shennong Cauldron.

The chaotic power transformed into purple flames, burning within the cauldron. The

runes on the Shennong Cauldron amplified, purified, and condensed the power of the chaotic fire, precisely controlling its temperature and intensity within the optimal range. Chen Ping

probed the cauldron with his divine sense, sensing the changes in each spiritual herb.

The Soul-Gathering Grass slowly melted in the flames, its silvery-white sap flowing within the cauldron like a silver stream.

The red sap of the Crimson Flame Grass, the blue sap of the Ice Heart Lotus, the purple sap of the Purple Cloud Mushroom, the golden sap of the Golden Dragon Beard, and the milky-white sap of the Ten-Thousand-Year Spiritual Milk converged, fused, repelled, and attracted each other within the cauldron.

Chen Ping carefully controlled the temperature and intensity of the flames, meticulously removing impurities from the medicinal herbs and gradually fusing their properties.

Alchemy is a delicate art, allowing no room for error. Too high a temperature, and the herbs would burn;

too low, and their properties wouldn't fuse.

Different herbs require different temperatures to fuse: Crimson Flame Grass needs high heat to melt, Ice Heart Lotus needs low heat to preserve its medicinal properties, Purple Cloud Mushroom needs a gentle simmer, and Golden Dragon Beard needs a powerful heat.

Chen Ping's divine sense perceived all these changes, and his Chaos Fire fulfilled all these requirements.

He was like a conductor, directing the herbs in the cauldron to fuse step by step according to a predetermined rhythm and melody.

One hour passed.

Two hours passed.

Three hours later, the Shennong Cauldron suddenly emitted a clear, resonant sound.

The sound, like a bell or a dragon's roar, echoed in the council hall, lingering for a long time.

Nine golden rays of light simultaneously shot from the nine holes on the furnace lid, intertwining and swirling in the void before finally transforming into a golden lotus flower.

The lotus slowly bloomed, its petals unfolding one by one.

Within the flower's center, a silver-white pill floated in the air, slowly rotating.

A Soul-Gathering Pill.

The pill was entirely silver-white, its surface shimmering with faint golden patterns, like the veins of the earth or the trajectories of the stars.

It emitted a faint medicinal fragrance, a fragrance soothing and refreshing that one inhalation brought a sense of clarity, two inhalations a feeling of complete liberation, and three inhalations a feeling of spiritual energy rejoicing within.

Chen Ping reached out and caught the pill, letting out a long breath.

“It’s done.”

Yun Quan and Yun Xi stood to the side, dumbfounded.

They didn’t understand alchemy, but they could sense that the power contained within the pill was enough to bring a near-death person back to life.

“Mr. Chen…” Yun Quan’s voice trembled, “You really succeeded.”

Chen Ping smiled and placed the pill into a jade bottle.

“Tomorrow, go to the Sirius Tribe.”

The next day, Chen Ping, carrying the Soul Gathering Pill, arrived at the Sirius Tribe again.

Lang Hao personally greeted him at the camp entrance.

His eyes were full of anticipation, and a hint of nervousness.

He hadn’t slept a wink the night before, waiting for news from Chen Ping.

“Chen Ping, did you really succeed?”

Chen Ping handed him the jade bottle.

Lang Hao took the bottle, his hands trembling.

He took a deep breath, turned, and went into the tent.

Chen Ping followed behind him.

On the stone bed, the old chieftain remained unconscious.

The Soul-Guiding Flame slowly rotated above his chest, its golden light warm and gentle.

The old chieftain's face was as pale as paper, his breathing so weak it was almost imperceptible, his chest barely rising and falling.

His hands were clasped over his abdomen, his fingers withered and his nails blackened.

Three hundred years of coma had deteriorated his body to the extreme.

If it weren't for the Soul-Guiding Flame nourishing his soul, he would have long since perished.

Lang Hao took the Soul Gathering Pill from the jade bottle and placed it in the old chieftain's mouth.

The pill melted instantly upon entering his mouth.

The silvery-white medicine flowed down the old chieftain's throat and into his stomach.

A moment later, the old chieftain's brow twitched slightly.

Then, his eyelids began to tremble, his eyelashes fluttering like butterfly wings.

Lang Hao's tears welled up instantly.

“Father…”

The old chieftain’s fingers twitched.

Then, his eyelids slowly opened.

They were aged eyes, cloudy and weary, the whites yellowish, the pupils dim.

But in those eyes, there was a light suppressed for three hundred years—the flame of life, the desire to live, the attachment to this world.

His gaze wandered in the tent, finally landing on Lang Hao’s face.

“Hao’er…” His voice was hoarse, almost inaudible, like sandpaper rubbing together.

“Father!” Lang Hao rushed to the stone bed, grasped his father’s hand, and sobbed uncontrollably.

His tears dripped onto the back of his father’s hand, hot and scalding.

The old chieftain looked at his son, a slight smile playing on his lips.

His lips were dry and cracked, and the smile accentuated the wrinkles on his face, like a crumpled piece of paper.

“Why are you crying… I’m… awake now…”

His voice was soft, almost inaudible, but every word struck Lang Hao’s heart like a hammer blow.

Chen Ping stood to the side, watching this scene, a warmth welling up inside him.

He turned and walked out of the tent.

Lang Hao followed, wiping away his tears, and bowed deeply before Chen Ping.

“Chen Ping, I can’t thank you enough. From now on, the Tianlang tribe owes you a life. Not just me, the entire Tianlang tribe owes you a life.”

Chen Ping helped him up: “Don’t be like that. The Soul-Guiding Flame…”

Lang Hao nodded, turned, and went back into the tent.

A moment later, he came out holding the golden flame.

The Soul-Guiding Flame slowly rotated in his palm, warm and gentle.

Its color was golden, but not a dazzling gold; rather, it was a warm, soft gold, like the afterglow of the setting sun, like a mother’s gaze.

“Take it,” Lang Hao said. “My father’s soul has been repaired; he no longer needs it.”

Chen Ping took the Soul-Guiding Flame, its warmth like holding a ray of sunshine.

He could feel the powerful force of reincarnation within the flame, the key to opening the path of reincarnation.

“Thanks,”

Lang Hao shook his head. “We should be thanking you.”

He paused, then added, “You don’t need to worry about the Judgment Hall’s decree. The Heavenly Wolf Tribe isn’t afraid of them. From now on, your affairs are the affairs of my Heavenly Wolf Tribe. Anyone who dares to touch you is touching my Heavenly Wolf Tribe.”

Chen Ping smiled and turned to leave.

Behind him, Lang Hao stood at the camp entrance, watching his retreating figure, motionless for a long time.

“This man will surely achieve great things,” he murmured.

Then, he turned and went into the tent to see his father.

Inside the tent, the old chieftain was already able to sit up.

He leaned against the headboard, looking at Lang Hao who entered, his eyes filled with loving affection.

“Hao’er, who was that person just now?”

Lang Hao sat down by the bed and took his father’s hand.

“His name is Chen Ping. He saved you.”

The old chieftain was silent for a moment, then nodded.

“Thank him for me.”

“I will.”

The old chieftain looked at the tent entrance, as if he could still see the young man in the blue robe.

“This person… is not simple.” He murmured.

Lang Hao didn’t speak, but simply tightened his grip on his father’s hand.

Outside the tent, the setting sun dyed the entire wasteland golden red.

The Tianlang tribe’s camp stood silent in the sunset, like a sleeping giant beast.

But everyone knew that this giant beast had awakened.

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When Kai returned to Youyue Kingdom with the Soul-Guiding Flame, Yun Quan and Yun Xi had been waiting at the city gate for a whole day.

When the golden flame lit up in the twilight, Yun Quan's tears welled up again.

"The Soul-Guiding Flame...it really is the Soul-Guiding Flame..."

His voice trembled. "The Core of Reincarnation, the Soul-Guiding Flame, two pieces...only one more..."

He carefully held the Soul-Guiding Flame in his hands, turned, and walked into the council hall, placing it alongside the Core of Reincarnation.

The two treasures shone brightly under the moonstone's light; the Core of Reincarnation was as black as night, while the Soul-Guiding Flame was as brilliant as day, one black, one gold, like the convergence of yin and yang.

Yun Xi stood beside Kai, looking at his slightly tired face, and softly asked, "Are you injured?"

"No," Kai smiled, "Just a little tired."

He wasn't lying.

In the battle of the Soul Abyss, he had killed the guardian spirit beast and over a hundred divine cultivators. Although the power of chaos restrained everything, the consumption was still considerable.

Moreover, he had sat before the Shennong Cauldron for three hours, using his divine sense to manipulate the flames, remove impurities, and fuse the medicinal properties.

That kind of meticulous work was far more tiring than fighting.

“Then go and rest.” Yunxi tugged at his sleeve. “Xiaoyou has been waiting for you, saying she wants to hear your story.”

Kai thought of the little girl holding the rag doll, and a warm feeling welled up in his heart.

He nodded and followed Yunxi out of the council hall.

Behind him, Yunquan was still standing in front of the two supreme treasures, muttering to himself, “One more… one more…”

The next day, in the council hall.

Yunquan spread the map of the Fifteen Heavens on the table, pointing to the location of the Divine Clan’s Judgment Hall.

“Mr. Chen, the Netherworld Lamp is in the Judgment Hall’s treasury. The Judgment Hall’s treasury is heavily guarded, and there are ancient restrictions. The Judgment Venerable himself is a True Immortal of the Eighth Rank, the number one person in the Fifteen Heavens. If you force your way in…”

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

Kai looked at the red mark on the map that read “Judgment Hall” and remained silent for a moment.

“Don’t force your way in.”

Yun Quan was taken aback. “Then what do we do?”

“Let’s put that aside for now.”

Kai stood up, walked to the door, and looked at the moonlight shining through the black mist outside. “My strength isn’t enough. I can’t beat an

eighth-grade True Immortal right now. Forcing my way in will only lead to my death."

Yun Quan opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but ultimately said nothing.

He knew Kai was telling the truth.

"Then Mr. Chen plans to..."

"Do something else first." Kai turned his head and looked at Jiang Xuelan sitting in the corner. "Help Jiang Xuelan find people from the Ice God lineage."

Jiang Xuelan's fingers twitched slightly. She didn't speak, but a hint of expectation flashed in her eyes.

Yun Quan nodded: "What kind of help do you need? Although Youyue Kingdom is poor, it still has manpower."

"No need." Kai shook his head, "This matter shouldn't be publicized. Too many people will only cause trouble. Jiang Xuelan and I are enough."

Yun Xi stood up: "I'll go too."

Kai looked at her: "Your injury hasn't fully healed yet."

"It's almost healed."

Yun Xi raised her arm, black ghostly energy flowing in her palm, "Besides, I'm a princess of the Ghost Clan, and I know more people in the Fifteenth Heaven than you. I can help with finding people."

Kai was silent for a moment, then nodded.

"Okay. You go too."

Yun Xi's lips curled up slightly.

Kai, Jiang Xuelan, and Yun Xi left Youyue Kingdom and flew southwest towards the Youming Mountains.

Their first target was the five Ice God bloodline practitioners that Kai had sensed in the Heavenly Fire Pit.

Kai only found out the general location of these five people, all of them in the gathering places of rogue cultivators around the Youming Mountains.

“How do you plan to persuade them?” Yun Xi asked.

Kai thought for a moment: “Let’s see how things go. If they’re willing to join the Ice God Palace, we’ll take them. If not…”

“We won’t force them,” Jiang Xuelan interjected. “The Ice God lineage never forces anyone. But I’ll let them know they’re not alone.”

Yun Xi glanced at Jiang Xuelan but said nothing.

The three flew for about two days before landing on a desolate plain.

There was a small town on the plain called “Frostwind Town.”

The town was small, with only a few hundred households, mostly independent cultivators.

The buildings in the town were made of stone, low and simple, swaying precariously in the wind.

Based on the information in the jade slip, Kai found a stone house on the east side of the town.

The door of the stone house was ajar, and coughing could be heard from inside. Kai knocked on the door.

“Who is it?”

an old voice came from inside.

“A passing independent cultivator. I’d like to ask for a drink of water.”

The door opened.

An old man stood at the door. His hair was gray, his face was aged, and his back was somewhat hunched.

His cultivation was only at the first level of the True Immortal Realm, which was at the lowest level of the fifteenth Heaven.

His eyes were cloudy and weary, but the moment he saw Kai, his pupils contracted slightly.

He sensed something.

That feeling… was subtle.

It was as if something deep within his bloodline had been touched, as if dormant memories had been awakened.

“You are…” The old man’s voice trembled slightly.

Kai looked at him, his voice calm: “My name is Kai. This is Jiang Xuelan, a descendant of the Ice God lineage.”

The old man’s body trembled violently.

“Ice… the Ice God lineage?”

His eyes widened. “Impossible… the Ice God lineage has long since…”

“No.” Jiang Xuelan stepped forward and stood before the old man. “The Ice God lineage has not perished. I am proof that it is alive.”

She raised her right hand, and a ball of icy blue light condensed in her palm.

The light was pure and cold, radiating an ancient and noble aura.

That aura resonated with the old man's bloodline, causing his body to tremble involuntarily.

"You… you really are…" Tears welled up in the old man's eyes. "My grandfather said… our ancestors were of the Ice God lineage… I thought it was just a legend…"

"It's not a legend. I am from the Ice God lineage, the Palace Master of the Divine Palace."

Jiang Xuelan withdrew her light. "You possess the Ice God bloodline within you. Though weak, it truly exists. If you wish, I can help you awaken it."

The old man remained silent for a long time.

Then, he knelt down.

His voice was hoarse yet firm, "This old servant…is willing."

The old man was named Hanshan, and he was three thousand seven hundred years old.

His ancestors were indeed cultivators of the Ice God lineage, but the bloodline had been diluted over generations, and by his generation, only a faint trace remained.

He thought his life would end like this, never expecting to encounter a descendant of the Ice God lineage in

his lifetime. Jiang Xuelan had him sit cross-legged and placed her hands on his back.

Icy blue divine light surged from her palms, flowing into Hanshan's body through his meridians.

Kai stood to the side, channeling a stream of chaotic power into Hanshan's dantian.

Chaotic power is an all-powerful catalyst.

It can activate dormant bloodlines, repair damaged meridians, and temper flesh… It was a wondrous feeling.

Han Shan felt his blood boiling, his bones trembling, and his meridians expanding.

An unprecedented power surged from the depths of his bloodline, like a sleeping dragon opening its eyes.

His cultivation began to break through—the peak of the first rank of True Immortal Realm, the second rank of True Immortal Realm.

He opened his eyes, his eyes filled with tears.

“Palace Master… Mr. Chen… Your great kindness is beyond repayment.”

Jiang Xuelan shook her head: “No need for repayment. The Ice God lineage is one family.”

Han Shan stood up and bowed respectfully.

Then, he asked: “Palace Master, how many people are left in our Ice God lineage?”

Jiang Xuelan was silent for a moment: “Currently, there are only you, me, and Kai. But Kai is not a member of the Ice God lineage; he merely… possesses the Ice God bloodline.”

She glanced at Kai, a complex emotion flashing in her eyes.

“But we are searching.”

She continued, “There are other Ice God bloodline holders in the Fifteenth Heaven. We will find them one by one, awaken them, and allow the Ice God lineage to rise again.”

Han Shan's eyes lit up.

"Palace Master, I know someone," he said. "There's a young man living on the west side of town named Han Shuang. He's my grand-nephew. His bloodline concentration is higher than mine, and his cultivation is also stronger. But he doesn't know his origins and always thinks he's just an ordinary human rogue cultivator."

Jiang Xuelan's eyes lit up.

"Take us there."

Han Shuang lived on the west side of Frostwind Town, in a stone house even smaller than Han Shan's.

He was a young man, looking to be in his twenties, but actually over five hundred years old.

His cultivation was at the third rank of True Immortal Realm, which was quite good among rogue cultivators.

He had a cold face, didn't like to talk, and usually made a living by hunting monsters in the wilderness.

When Han Shan led Kai and the other two to Han Shuang's residence, Han Shuang was sharpening a bone knife in the courtyard.

Seeing Han Shan, he put down the knife and stood up.

"Uncle, what brings you here?"

"Han Shuang, I've brought you guests."

Han Shan's face was full of smiles. "This is Jiang Xuelan, the Palace Master of the Ice God lineage. This is Kai."

Han Shuang's pupils contracted slightly.

He had certainly heard of Kai's name.

The Heavenly Fire Pit, Heavenly Thunder Mountain, Soul Abyss—the entire Fifteenth Heaven had been buzzing with this name these past few days.

But he never expected this legendary figure to appear before him.

"Greetings, Mr. Chen, greetings, Palace Master Jiang." He clasped his hands in a respectful bow, his tone neither humble nor arrogant. Jiang Xuelan

looked at him, a hint of admiration flashing in her eyes.

"You possess the bloodline of the Ice God. Its concentration is far higher than your uncle's. If you awaken it, your cultivation will at least reach the fourth rank of the True Immortal Realm." Han Shuang remained silent for a moment. "And then?" Jiang Xuelan was taken aback. "And then?" "After awakening, what do I need to do?" Han Shuang's voice was calm. "Serve you? Serve the Ice God lineage?" Jiang Xuelan looked at him, silent for a moment. "No." Jiang Xuelan shook her head. "After awakening, you can do what you want. The Ice God lineage doesn't force anyone. I just want you to know that you are not alone. The bloodline flowing within you has a name, a history, a past you can be proud of." Han Shuang remained silent for a long time. Then, he smiled. The smile was faint, but a glimmer of light shone in his eyes. "Alright. I'll awaken." Jiang Xuelan and Kai used the same method to help Han Shuang awaken the Ice God bloodline. Han Shuang's bloodline concentration was indeed much higher than Han Shan's. During the awakening process, his body was enveloped in icy blue light, the surrounding temperature plummeted by dozens of degrees, and a thin layer of ice formed on the ground in the courtyard. His cultivation level broke through from the third rank of True Immortal Realm to the peak of the fourth rank, only one step away from the fifth rank. He opened his eyes, looked at his hands, and remained silent for a long time. "So... this is the Ice God bloodline." His voice was somewhat hoarse. "I always felt that there was something inexplicable about the spiritual power in my body... like something was missing. Now I know, what I lacked was awakening." He looked at Jiang Xuelan, a hint of respect in his eyes. "Palace Master, from now on, the

affairs of the Ice God lineage are my affairs, Han Shuang's affairs." Jiang Xuelan shook her head: "I said I wouldn't force you. You can do what you want to do." Han Shuang smiled: "This is what I want to do." After awakening, Han Shuang was like a completely different person. It wasn't a change in appearance, but in temperament. He used to be aloof and taciturn, like an unsheathed sword, sharp yet restrained. Now he remained aloof, but a glimmer of light shone in his eyes—the light of someone who had found belonging. He walked up to Jiang Xuelan, clasped his hands in a respectful bow, and said, "Palace Master, I know a place." Jiang Xuelan looked at him. "What place?" "A town." Han Shuang's voice was calm, but a complex emotion flashed in his eyes. "It's in the northeast, called Falling Snow Town. I've been there a few times. Each time, I have a special feeling in my body, like something is calling to me from the depths of my blood." Kai's eyes narrowed slightly. "A feeling? What kind of feeling?" Han Shuang thought for a moment. "I can't quite explain it. It's like my heart is racing, like my blood is boiling, like something is about to burst out of my body. I didn't know why before, but now I know—it's the resonance of the Ice God's bloodline. There should be quite a few descendants of the Ice God's lineage in that town." Jiang Xuelan turned to look at Kai. Kai nodded. "Let's go take a look." Falling Snow Town was in the northeast, nestled between two snow-capped mountains. The town's buildings were constructed of wood and stone, their roofs covered with thick snow, and wisps of smoke rose from their chimneys. From a distance, it resembled a tranquil ink painting. Kai, Jiang Xuelan, Yun Xi, Han Shan, and Han Shuang landed outside the town and walked in.The moment Kai stepped into the town, the Ice God bloodline within him surged violently.

The feeling… was as if someone had ignited a flame within him, scorching and restless.

His chaotic power automatically circulated, suppressing the restlessness.

He glanced at Jiang Xuelan.

Jiang Xuelan's expression also changed slightly.

Her Ice God power surged within her, an icy blue light flickering on her skin.

She took a deep breath, suppressing the power.

“You felt it?” Kai asked in a low voice.

Jiang Xuelan nodded, her voice slightly strained: “At least several dozen people.”

Yun Xi glanced at her… The town’s streets were narrow, lined with shops selling various ironware and medicinal herbs.

Few pedestrians were on the road, mostly ordinary people dressed in coarse cloth, with a few rogue cultivators, none of whom possessed high cultivation levels, at most only at the second rank of True Immortal Realm.

They looked at Kai and his group with wary eyes.

In this desolate place, strangers always attracted attention.

Kai approached an old woman selling vegetables, clasped his hands in a respectful greeting, and said, “Grandma, we are rogue cultivators passing through, looking for a place to rest. Is there an inn in town?”

The old woman glanced at him, then at Jiang Xuelan and Yun Xi behind him, and shook her head.

“No. The town is small; we don’t accommodate outsiders.”

Her tone was cold, carrying a sense of aloofness that kept them at arm’s length.

Kai didn’t mind, thanked her again, and turned to leave.

They asked several more people, receiving the same answer each time: no inns, no outsiders, please leave.

Every person’s eyes held wariness, even a hint of fear.

Kai stopped and looked at Jiang Xuelan. “They know their bloodline.”

Jiang Xuelan nodded.

Her face was pale, not from exhaustion, but because she could sense that these people all possessed the bloodline of the Ice God.

Though weak and deeply hidden, it was undeniable.

They were descendants of the Ice God’s lineage, but they dared not admit it.

“Why?” Jiang Xuelan’s voice was soft, as if asking Kai, yet also as if asking herself.

Kai didn’t speak. He turned and looked towards the end of the street.

There, a group of people were walking towards them.

Leading them was an elderly man with gray hair, a burly build, and a dignified face.

His cultivation was at the fourth rank of True Immortal Realm, the highest in the town.

Behind him followed more than twenty townspeople, men and women, young and old, each with a face full of vigilance and hostility.

They surrounded Kai and his group of five.

“Who are you? What are you doing in Falling Snow Town?” The old man’s voice was deep, like muffled thunder in winter.

Kai clasped his hands in a salute: “I am Kai, passing through your esteemed place, and wish to ask for lodging for the night.”

The old man’s pupils contracted slightly.

Kai.

Of course, he had heard of this name.

Heavenly Fire Pit, Heavenly Thunder Mountain, Soul Abyss—these past few days, the entire Fifteenth Heaven had been buzzing with this name.

But he did not lower his guard; instead, he became even more tense.

“Falling Snow Town does not keep outsiders. Please leave.”

His tone left no room for argument.

Han Shuang stepped forward, clasped his hands in a salute: “Mayor, I am Han Shuang from Frostwind Town. This is Jiang Xuelan, the Palace Master of the Ice God lineage. We are not bad people, we just want to…”

“Shut up!”

The old man interrupted him, a flash of anger in his eyes, “What Ice God lineage? I don’t know what you’re talking about. There are no people from the Ice God lineage in Falling Snow Town. If you don’t leave, don’t blame us for being impolite!”

The townspeople behind him gripped their weapons tightly, some whispering in agreement: “That’s right! Go! Leave quickly!”

“We don’t have the person you’re looking for here!”

“Leave!”

Kai remained silent.

His gaze swept over everyone present—the old people, the townspeople, and even the women and children peeking from the street corner.

They all carried the aura of the Ice God’s bloodline.

Some were faint, some strong, but none were willing to admit it.

He understood their fear.

A group forced to hide in a remote town, a group that dared not even acknowledge their own bloodline—their fear couldn't be dispelled with a few words.

Han Shuang cried out anxiously, "Mayor, I'm telling the truth! This Kai is the most famous Kai in the Fifteenth Heaven! He's not a bad person; he's here to help us!"

The old man's expression changed.

He had certainly heard of Kai's deeds.

But he hadn't seen him in person, and he couldn't believe it.

"You say you're Kai, so you are?"

The old man's voice remained cold. "I could also say I'm the Judgment Venerable."

Han Shuang opened her mouth, wanting to refute, but didn't know what to say.

Just then, someone suddenly stepped forward from the crowd.

It was a middle-aged man, thin, with an ordinary face, wearing a gray coarse cloth robe.

His cultivation was only at the first level of the True Immortal Realm, inconspicuous in the town.

But his eyes were bright, shining like stars in the night.

He looked at Kai, his voice trembling slightly: "You…you really are Kai?"

Kai looked at him and nodded.

Tears welled up in the middle-aged man's eyes.

"The Heavenly Fire Pit…in the Heavenly Fire Pit…you glanced at me."

Kai's pupils contracted slightly.

He recognized this person; one of the five Ice God bloodline users he sensed in the Heavenly Fire Pit.

At that time, he had only glanced at those people in the crowd, but he hadn't expected this person to remember him.

"My name is Bingyan." The middle-aged man's voice trembled. "In the Heavenly Fire Pit, you glanced at me. I know you recognized me. I've always wanted to find you, but I didn't dare."

He turned around, looking at the town mayor, his voice becoming firm.

"Mayor, he really is Kai. I saw him punch Jin Huan and slap away the God Clan's deputy in the Heavenly Fire Pit with one palm. He came to help us, not to harm us."

Four more people stepped forward from the crowd.

Two men and two women, all with cultivation levels between the first and second rank of True Immortal Realm.

Their clothes and faces were ordinary, easily blending into the crowd.

But when they stepped forward, Kai recognized them—the other four Ice God bloodline practitioners he had sensed in the Heavenly Fire Pit.

"Mayor, I can testify."

"Me too." "

Kai isn't a member of the God Clan; he's a rogue cultivator from the Human Race. He has a grudge against the God Clan and wouldn't harm us."

The mayor remained silent for a long time.

He looked at the five people, then at Kai, and finally sighed.

"Please follow me."

Kai and his group followed the town mayor toward a mansion.

The mayor's mansion, a two-story wooden and stone building in the center of town, was slightly larger than the surrounding houses, but not by much.

The living room was small, containing a long table, a few wooden chairs, and a landscape painting of snow-capped mountains and pine forests hanging on the wall.

The mayor invited Kai and his companions to sit down and had tea served.

The tea was ordinary coarse tea, but in this place, it was the highest form of hospitality.

"Mr. Kai, I apologize for my earlier rudeness," the mayor's voice was much gentler than before. "My name is Bingfeng, and I am the mayor of Luoxue Town."

Kai returned the greeting with clasped hands: "Mayor Bing, you are too kind. We were presumptuous."

Bingfeng sighed, looking at Jiang Xuelan, a complex emotion flashing in his eyes.

"The Ice God lineage... the Palace Master of the Divine Palace... I thought I would never meet people like you in my life."

Jiang Xuelan… Jiang Xuelan's pupils contracted slightly.

"The entire Snowfall Town, with over three hundred households and more than a thousand people, are all descendants of the Ice God lineage."

Bingfeng's voice was low, as if recounting a long-buried secret. "Ten thousand years ago, the Ice God lineage suffered suppression from other branches of the Divine Race. Many cultivators of the Ice God lineage fled the center of the Divine Race and escaped to this desolate place in the Fifteenth Heaven.

They built Snowfall Town here, hiding their identities, pretending to be ordinary human cultivators, and living ordinary lives."

"For ten thousand years, it has been passed down generation after generation. Although the bloodline has diluted, the roots remain. It's just… no one dares to admit it."

Jiang Xuelan clenched her fists.

"Why don't you dare to admit it?"

Bingfeng looked at her, his eyes filled with bitterness.

"Palace Master, don't you know? The Judgment Hall has a rule: any cultivator who exposes the aura of the Ice God's bloodline is arrested and sent to the mines as slaves.

The men mine, the women do laundry and cook, and the children do chores. They don't treat the Ice God's lineage as human beings, only as cattle and horses."

His voice trembled.

"Three hundred years ago, there was a young man in the town named Bingfeng. His bloodline concentration was very high, and he awakened

the power of the Ice God. He thought he was very powerful and went to the Judgment Hall to demand an explanation.

As a result… he was arrested. He was sent to the mines and became a slave. His parents went to find him, and they were also arrested. The three of them never returned."

The living room fell silent.

Jiang Xuelan's face was as pale as paper, her fingers trembling, and an icy blue light flickered in her palms.

"The Judgment Hall… why?"

Her voice was very soft, almost inaudible, but every word seemed to be squeezed out from between her teeth, "The Ice God's lineage is also a member of the divine race. Why treat us like this?"

Bingfeng smiled bitterly.

"Palace Master, you're right. The Ice God lineage is indeed a member of the God Clan. But the God Clan has dozens of branches, some high, some low, some noble, some lowly. The Ice God lineage… is the lowest, the most lowly.

The other members of the God Clan acknowledge us as Gods, but they only treat us as servants. In their eyes, we are not worthy of being called Gods, only worthy of being called 'Ice Slaves.'" "

Ice Slaves." Jiang Xuelan repeated these two words, her voice as cold as the winter wind.

"Yes, Ice Slaves."

The frozen voice was very low, "In the mines of the Judgment Hall, there are still quite a few cultivators of the Ice God lineage. They exposed their bloodline aura and were captured to be slaves.

Some have been there for thousands of years, some were captured not long ago. Their souls are locked by the Spirit Locking Chains, unable to escape, unable to resist, they can only mine, work, and wait to die day after day."

Jiang Xuelan stood up.

"Where are they?"

Bingfeng looked at her. "Palace Master, what are you going to do?"

"Save them." Jiang Xuelan's voice was calm, so calm it was frightening. "My people cannot be treated like cattle."

Just then, Kai's sea of consciousness suddenly surged.

Bei Mingyuan's remnant soul awoke.

"Beasts! Beasts!"

His voice was like thunder, exploding in Kai's sea of consciousness. "The descendants of my Ice God lineage are actually being treated like cattle? The Judgment Hall? The God Clan?

A bunch of ungrateful bastards! If it weren't for my Ice God lineage guarding the seal back then, the God Clan Alliance would have collapsed long ago! What right do they have..."

His voice grew louder and louder, and icy blue light flashed wildly in Kai's sea of consciousness, making the entire sea of consciousness tremble.

Kai felt like his head was about to explode.

Just then, the Great Luo Golden Scripture lit up.

Golden light surged out from the Great Luo Golden Scripture, sweeping across the entire sea of consciousness like a tide.

The light was warm and gentle, yet it carried an irresistible power.

The icy blue light melted, contracted, and retreated rapidly before the golden light, like snow meeting the blazing sun.

Bei Mingyuan's remnant soul was enveloped in the golden light, compressed into a fist-sized sphere of light, hovering above his sea of consciousness.

His voice became weak and indistinct, like a distant shout, or perhaps underwater speech.

"Let me go... I want to get out... I want to kill those..."

The voice grew fainter and fainter, finally disappearing completely.

The light of the Great Luo Golden Scripture slowly receded, and the sea of consciousness returned to calm.

Kai opened his eyes, his forehead covered in cold sweat.

"What's wrong?" Yun Xi asked anxiously.

"Nothing." Kai shook his head, taking a deep breath. "Bei Mingyuan just woke up. He was furious to hear that the descendants of the Ice God lineage were being treated as slaves."

Jiang Xuelan looked at him, a complex expression flashing in her eyes.

"Bei Mingyuan... is still in your sea of consciousness?"

"Yes." Kai smiled bitterly. "If I don't keep him, his remnant soul will surely perish."

"Thank you..." Jiang Xuelan said!

She knew that Kai had taken in Bei Mingyuan's remnant soul entirely because of her.

“No need to thank me, you understand our relationship…” Kai smiled slightly.

Jiang Xuelan fell silent, remaining so for a moment. Of course, she understood Kai’s meaning!

Moreover, she herself had said that as long as Kai helped her revitalize the Ice God lineage, she would do anything!

Even cultivate with Kai…

This was her own promise, and now that Kai was helping her, she had to keep her promise.

Jiang Xuelan then looked at Bingfeng.

“Mayor Bing, tell me, where is the mine?”

Bingfeng looked at her, remaining silent for a long time.

Then, he stood up, walked to the wall, and unfolded a map.

“Here.”

He pointed to a location on the map, “The North Mine of the Judgment Hall, at the northernmost point of the Fifteenth Heaven. It’s heavily guarded by the divine race, surrounded by ancient restrictions and spirit-locking chains—magical artifacts specifically designed to suppress the soul. Once locked, spiritual power cannot circulate, leaving one completely vulnerable.”

Jiang Xuelan looked at the mark on the map, a cold glint flashing in her eyes.

“Palace Master,”

the frozen voice was low, “I know you want to save people. But there are thousands of divine cultivators in the mine, the mine’s commander is a

sixth-grade True Immortal, and the elders of the Judgment Hall patrol regularly. Going alone will only…”

“Not alone.” Jiang Xuelan interrupted him, turning to Kai.

Kai smiled, “I’ll go with you.”

Yunxi stood up as well: “I’ll go too.”

Hanshuang stood up: “Palace Master, I’ll go too. You saved my life, you awakened my bloodline. If you’re going to save people, I’ll go with you.”

Hanshan also stood up, his body still trembling, but his eyes were firm: “Palace Master, although this old servant is useless, one more person means one more force.”

Bingfeng looked at them, his eyes filled with complex emotions.

“You…really?” After leaving Snowfall Town, Kai and his group didn’t head directly to the North Mine. Instead, they stopped in a secluded valley along the way.

The valley wasn’t large, surrounded by mountains on three sides, with only a narrow entrance.

A stream flowed through the valley, its water crystal clear, and a meadow stretched along its banks.

The setting sun cast its golden-red glow upon the valley.

Kai spread a map on a flat rock, pointing to the location of the North Mine.

“The mine has over a thousand Divine Race cultivators, the guard commander is a True Immortal Realm Sixth Grade, and elders from the Judgment Hall patrol regularly. Even if I’m incredibly strong, I can’t kill that many by myself. And…”

He paused, “We’re not going to kill people, we’re going to rescue them. Once we rescue them, we have to take them away safely.”

Yun Xi squatted in front of the map, her brows furrowed.

Her fingers lightly traced lines on the map, as if calculating distance and time.

“Thousands of Divine Clan cultivators, and we only have a few people? Even including the people from Snowfall Town, there are only a few dozen. We have no chance of winning in a head-on fight.”

Her voice was soft, but everyone could hear the worry in her tone.

Han Shuang stood to the side, his fists clenched so tightly they cracked.

He had only recently awakened his Ice God bloodline, and the power within him was still surging, like a flame that had been suppressed for too long and had finally found an outlet.

“Then what do we do? Are we just going to give up?”

His voice was a little tense. “Those people are my people. They’re working like slaves in the mines, and we’re just going to watch from the outside?”

“Save them.” Kai’s finger moved across the map, drawing a line to the left from the location of the North Mine. “Look here.”

The others followed his finger.

On the map, about three thousand miles west of the North Mine, there was a marked area—the Sirius Tribe.

That area was marked with beastman runes, surrounded by a red boundary line; that was the territory of the Sirius Tribe.

Jiang Xuelan's eyes narrowed slightly. Her Ice God power flowed slowly within her body, dispelling some of the surrounding chill.

"The Sirius Tribe? You want Wolf Hao's help?"

Kai nodded.

"The North Mine is very close to the Sirius Tribe. The Judgment Hall has been mining there for thousands of years, and the Sirius Tribe has long disliked them. They just haven't had a reason to act, nor dared to. The Judgment Venerable is an eighth-grade True Immortal; Wolf Hao can't defeat him."

"And now?" Yun Xi looked up at him.

Kai smiled.

The smile was faint, but a glint of light shone in his eyes.

"Now it's different. The Sirius Tribe owes me a favor. I saved the old chief's life; if I ask, Wolf Hao won't refuse."

He put away the map and stood up.

His cyan robe fluttered slightly in the evening breeze, and the Dragon-Slaying Sword hanging at his waist reflected a faint light in the setting sun.

"To the Sirius Tribe."

The Sirius Tribe's camp was on the wasteland, tents stretching out, smoke curling from chimneys.

At dusk, the camp was filled with the aroma of roasted meat and herbs.

The orc warriors sat around the campfire, some sharpening their weapons, some whispering, and some tending to the wounded.

Children chased and played among the tents, their laughter ringing out.

When Kai and his companions arrived, Lang Hao was practicing with his axe on the training ground.

His battle axe was a massive double-edged axe, its handle as thick as an arm, its blade as large as a millstone, entirely black, and engraved with orc bloodline runes.

Each swing tore through the air, producing a piercing shriek.

Deep furrows were cleaved into the rocks of the ground, sending fragments flying.

Seeing Kai, he put down his battle axe and strode over.

He wore a wolf-skin cloak, three bloody gashes etched on his face, his muscles bulging, and each step made the ground tremble slightly.

“Kai! What brings you here?” His voice boomed like thunder, making everyone’s ears ring.

Kai clasped his hands in a fist salute: “Chief Lang Hao, I have a request.”

Lang Hao looked at him, then at Jiang Xuelan, Yun Xi, Han Shuang, and Han Shan behind him, his brows furrowing slightly.

His gaze lingered on Han Shuang and Han Shan for a moment longer; he could sense that the aura emanating from these two was extraordinary.

“What is it?”

Kai recounted the events at the North Mine in detail.

Lang Hao’s expression changed.

His brows furrowed into a knot, his fingers tapping rhythmically on the handle of his axe.

After a long silence, he finally spoke.

“You want me to attack the North Mine?”

His voice deepened, like distant rumbling thunder. “Kai, do you know what that means? That’s the Judgment Hall’s mine. While my Heavenly Wolf Tribe isn’t afraid of trouble, we don’t want to provoke it. Taking action would be tantamount to declaring war on the Judgment Hall.”

“I know.” Kai looked at him, his gaze calm and resolute. “That’s why I won’t let you help for nothing.”

He paused, his voice calm and firm, each word seeming etched into stone.

“It won’t be long before I destroy the Judgment Hall. I’ll free the Fifteenth Heaven from the Judgment Hall’s oppression.”

Lang Hao’s pupils contracted slightly.

“Destroy the Judgment Hall? The Judgment Venerable is a True Immortal of the Eighth Rank, you…”

“I can’t beat him now,” Kai interrupted him, “but it won’t be long. You’ve seen how fast my strength is increasing.”

Lang Hao fell silent.

He had seen Kai severely injure Jin Huan with a single punch in the Heavenly Fire Pit, kill Lei Zhentian with a single move on Thunder Mountain, and kill over a hundred Divine Race cultivators in the Soul Abyss.

This young man’s strength was indeed increasing at an incredible speed.

From the Heavenly Fire Pit to Thunder Mountain, only a few days had passed.

From the Soul Abyss to the North Mine, only a few days had passed as well.

Every time they met, Kai was stronger than the last.

Perhaps he was telling the truth.

Perhaps he really could destroy the Judgment Hall.

Lang Hao turned around, looking at the beastmen warriors training on the training ground.

Their faces were covered in sweat, their eyes filled with fighting spirit.

They were the warriors of the Heavenly Wolf Tribe, the backbone of the Heavenly Wolf Tribe.

“Alright.” Lang Hao nodded, his voice deep and firm. “I’ll help you.”

He turned around and shouted to the orc warriors behind him, “Pass down the order! Gather five hundred warriors, bring the best weapons, and come with me to the North Mine!”

“Yes!” the orc warriors roared in response, their voices echoing through the valley.

Lang Hao then looked at Kai: “Kai, I have a condition.”

“Speak.”

“My men will draw the gods’ attention, but they won’t fight to the death. Once you rescue them, we’ll retreat. I can’t let my warriors die in vain.

” The Northern Mine, located at the northernmost edge of the Fifteenth Heaven, is a desolate valley.

The pre-dawn darkness shrouded the entire valley; the starlight was dim, and the moon was obscured by clouds.

A cold, damp atmosphere permeated the air, and the frost on the ground shimmered with a silvery-white light in the dim light.

Towering cliffs rose on both sides of the valley, barren and devoid of any vegetation.

A massive pit, hundreds of feet wide and deep, had been carved into the valley floor, like a gaping maw pointing towards the sky.

The pit walls were riddled with mine shafts, pitch black and bottomless, occasionally escaping with a stench of decay and dust. A

golden light barrier surrounded the mine—the holy light barrier of the Judgment Hall.

The runes on the barrier were densely packed, like countless eyes, gleaming warily in the darkness.

Outside the barrier, divine cultivators patrolled, a team of ten men every hundred feet, their armor gleaming, their spears sharp.

Their footsteps were perfectly synchronized, exceptionally clear in the silent night.

In the center of the mine stood a stone hall, the residence of the guard commander.

The hall was built of black stone, square and windowless, with only an iron door.

Two True Immortal Realm fourth-grade divine cultivators stood at the entrance, one on the left and one on the right, like two stone statues.

They wore golden armor, long swords hung at their waists, and their gazes swept across the surroundings like hawks.

Inside the mine, hundreds of ragged cultivators were working.

Some of them had worked all night, their eyes bloodshot and their faces as pale as paper.

They were all bound by black chains—Spirit-Locking Chains.

These chains were forged from ancient cold iron, engraved with sealing runes, magical artifacts specifically designed to suppress the soul.

Once bound, spiritual power could not circulate, leaving them completely vulnerable.

One end of the chains was fastened to their wrists and ankles, the other to iron stakes at the mine entrance, restricting their movement to a fixed area.

Their clothes were tattered, revealing their emaciated bodies.

Some were digging with pickaxes, the hammer blows striking the rock with dull thuds; others were pushing heavy mine carts, their shoulders marked with deep, bloody welts; still others were sifting ore, their hands mangled and bleeding from the sharp stones.

No one spoke.

Only the sounds of pickaxes striking rock, the creaking of mine carts, and the occasional cough and groan could be heard.

The air was thick with the stench of dust, blood, and sweat, a mixture that made one want to vomit.

A young monk collapsed to the ground.

His eyes were closed, his face deathly pale, his lips cracked and bleeding.

He hadn’t rested for three days, the chains binding him making it hard to breathe.

“Get up!” A divine cultivator walked over and kicked him in the waist. “Stop pretending to be dead!”

The young cultivator groaned, struggling to get up, but his body wouldn’t obey him.

He fell back down, his forehead hitting the rock, blood streaming down his face.

“Useless!” The divine cultivator drew a whip from his waist and lashed it across the young cultivator’s back.

The whip was barbed, and with one lash, the skin was torn open.

The young cultivator gritted his teeth, not uttering a sound.

He was used to it.

Here, making a sound would only invite more whippings.

There were no tears in his eyes, only numbness.

The kind of numbness that comes after being tortured to the extreme, where even the pain is no longer felt.

Lang Hao led five hundred beastmen warriors, lying in ambush behind the hills outside the mine.

The darkness before dawn was the best cover.

The beastmen warriors lay prone on the ground, covered with animal hides, becoming one with the earth.

Their breathing was very light, almost inaudible.

Their eyes were bright, as bright as a pack of wolves in the night.

Wolf Hao lay prone at the front, peering through the gaps in the grass at the light screen in the mine and the patrolling divine cultivators.

His fingers traced lines on the ground, calculating the intervals between each patrol.

“One incense stick’s time,” he whispered. “Every incense stick’s time, the shift changes. The light screen will weaken for a moment during the shift change. That’s when we attack.”

He turned to the beastmen warriors behind him.

“Brothers, today we’re not going to our deaths. We’re going to rescue people. Fight our way in, draw the divine race’s attention, then retreat. Don’t linger, don’t be greedy for glory. Come back alive.”

The beastmen warriors didn’t speak, only gripped their weapons tightly.

Wolf Hao took a deep breath.

“Kill!”

Five hundred beastmen warriors charged down the hill simultaneously.

They surged towards the mine like a tidal wave, their footsteps shaking the earth.

Their battle cries ripped through the pre-dawn silence, like thunder, like a landslide.

“The Heavenly Wolf Tribe!”

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

The divine cultivators were terrified.

“Enemy attack! Enemy attack!”

“It’s the Sirius Tribe! The Beastmen are attacking!”

“Quick! Report to the commander!”

The patrolling Divine Clan cultivators hastily formed ranks, golden holy light shining in the darkness like dozens of suns.

They raised their spears and charged towards the Beastmen warriors.

The two torrents collided.

The sounds of clashing metal, roars, screams, and the cracking of bones mingled together, echoing throughout the valley.

Lang Hao charged at the forefront. His battle axe spun in his hand, each swing taking a life.

With one axe, a True Immortal Realm Second Grade Divine Clan cultivator was cleaved in two, blood gushing out and splattering all over him.

With the second axe, three Divine Clan cultivators were cut in half at the waist, their upper and lower bodies separated, their internal organs spilling onto the ground.

With the third axe, the first batch of reinforcements sent by the guard commander were struck by his axe blade; seven or eight men were sent flying, spitting blood.

His body was covered in blood—his own and that of his enemies.

His eyes were filled with fighting spirit, like a volcano that had been ignited and could not be extinguished.

“Come on! Come on!” he roared, and his battle axe cleaved a divine cultivator in front of him, shield and all, in two.

The beastmen warriors followed behind Lang Hao like a pack of wolves, fierce and frenzied.

A young beastman warrior, a True Immortal of the first rank, was on the battlefield for the first time.

His hands trembled, but his eyes shone brightly. He followed Lang Hao, hacking down enemy after enemy with his bone axe.

He was slashed three times, blood flowing freely, but he did not retreat.

He could not retreat.

Behind him were his brothers.

An old beastman warrior, a True Immortal of the third rank, had a scar running from his forehead to his chin.

He had fought on the battlefield for thousands of years, his body bearing more scars than his clothes.

He was calm and composed, each axe blow precise and deadly.

His eyes were cold, as cold as winter ice.

Although the divine cultivators outnumbered them, they were caught off guard by the beastmen's surprise attack.

Their formation was disrupted, and they fought individually, unable to form an effective defense.

Golden holy light and blood-red axe blades collided in the air, erupting with a deafening roar.

The ground was blasted into large craters, debris flew everywhere, and smoke and dust filled the air. [

The area outside the mine is off-limits.] Inside the stone hall, the guard commander, a sixth-grade True Immortal cultivator from the Divine Race, rushed out.

He was tall and imposing, with a resolute face, wearing golden armor engraved with the emblem of the Judgment Hall.

In his hand, he held a golden longsword, its blade shimmering with holy light, so dazzling it was blinding.

Seeing the beastmen warriors swarming across the mountains, his expression changed drastically.

“The Heavenly Wolf Tribe? Wolf Hao? Are you insane? You dare touch the Judgment Hall’s mines?”

Wolf Hao stood at the forefront of the beastmen warriors, his battle axe pointed at the guard commander, his voice like thunder.

“Insane? I’ve had my eye on you for a long time! You’ve been mining on my territory for thousands of years without even a word! Today I’ll demolish this mine!”

“You dare!” the guard commander roared, “The Hall Master won’t let you get away with this!”

“Then let him come!”

Wolf Hao swung his axe.

A blood-red axe beam transformed into a hundred-foot-long blade of light, slashing towards the guard commander.

Where the light blade passed, the air was torn apart, a deep trench was plowed into the ground, and rubble flew everywhere.

The guard commander gritted his teeth and took the hit. Golden holy light surged from his body, condensing into a huge golden lightsaber in front of him. The lightsaber collided with the axe blade.

Boom!

The two forces collided, unleashing a deafening roar.

The entire valley trembled, and rubble from the cliff was shaken off, crashing to the ground and kicking up clouds of dust.

The guard commander was knocked back several steps, his hand split open, blood flowing down the hilt of the sword.

His face turned deathly pale, his eyes filled with shock.

“You…you really want to go against the Judgment Hall?”

Lang Hao did not answer, his second axe already striking.

While the battle raged outside the mine, Kai, along with Jiang Xuelan, Yun Xi, Han Shuang, and Han Shan, sneaked into the mine from the other side.

They didn’t go through the main entrance, but instead circled around to the northernmost end of the valley and climbed down the cliff.

The cliffs here were steeper than elsewhere, the rock walls covered in moss and frost, slippery and difficult to traverse.

But Kai’s chaotic power flowed around his body, completely concealing their auras; the divine restrictions were useless against them.

They landed silently deep within the mine. Chaos reigned

in the mine.

The divine cultivators, caught off guard by the beastmen's surprise attack, had mostly been redeployed to the front lines, leaving very few guards at the rear.

The enslaved Ice God bloodline cultivators huddled in the mine shafts, watching outside in terror, bewildered by what had happened.

Kai walked to the nearest mine shaft.

The entrance was sealed with an iron fence, a large padlock hanging on it.

Kai reached out and grasped the padlock; chaotic fire surged from his palm, instantly melting the padlock, molten iron dripping onto the ground.

He pushed open the iron fence and entered the mine.

The mine was dark, with only a few oil lamps casting a faint glow on the walls.

The air was damp and foul, thick with the stench of sweat, mildew, and blood.

A dozen or so ragged cultivators huddled in a corner, their bodies bound by black chains, their faces pale, their eyes sunken, filled with terror.

Some hugged their knees, burying their heads between their legs, trembling uncontrollably.

Others leaned against the cave wall, eyes closed, their lips moving silently as if chanting something. Still

others curled up on the ground, covered by a tattered animal hide, coughing intermittently.

Kai crouched down, his voice soft.

“Don’t be afraid. I’m here to save you.”

The men looked up at him.

Their eyes were cloudy and weary, as if they had been tormented for too long and could no longer trust anyone.

“Save us? Who are you?”

“Kai.”

The name Kai was like a pebble thrown into stagnant water, creating ripples.

Heavenly Fire Pit, Heavenly Thunder Mountain, Soul Abyss—these days, the entire Fifteenth Heaven had been buzzing with this name.

Although the mine was remote, news didn’t stay out of reach.

They had heard of Kai’s exploits: the one who severely injured a Divine Clan elder with a single punch, the one who killed the Vice Hall Master of the Judgment Hall with a single move, and the one who single-handedly killed a human cultivator from the Soul Abyss.

But they couldn’t believe that this legendary figure would come to their rescue.

“The Soul-Locking Chains…you can’t open them…”

an old man said in a trembling voice.

His voice was hoarse, like sandpaper being rubbed together. “Only the elders of the Judgment Hall have the keys…we’ve tried…smashing with stones, prying with iron bars…but nothing works…”

Kai didn’t speak.

He raised his right hand, and a ball of chaotic fire condensed in his palm.

Purple light intertwined with golden flames, dazzlingly bright in the dark mine.

The temperature of the flames was so high that the surrounding air began to distort, but the cultivators felt no heat; the chaotic fire only burned what it wanted to burn.

He gently pressed the chaotic fire onto the Soul-Locking Chains.

The Soul-Locking Chains were like paper before the chaotic fire.

The black chain melted instantly, molten iron dripping onto the ground with a sizzling sound.

The sealing runes flickered a few times in the flames, then dimmed, completely failing.

The old man's eyes widened.

"This…how is this possible…" His voice trembled, "The Spirit-Locking Chains…ancient cold iron…even a seventh-grade True Immortal couldn't break them…"

Kai didn't explain. He stood up and walked towards the next cultivator.

One after another, the chains melted.

With each chain melted, the cultivator's body shuddered violently, as if the spiritual power that had been suppressed for too long had finally found an outlet, surging and roaring in their meridians.

Some people's legs went weak the moment they stood up, and they almost fell.

Han Shuang reacted quickly and caught them.

The person looked up at Han Shuang, their eyes filled with tears.

“Thank you…thank you…”

“Don’t thank me.” Han Shuang’s voice was a little tight, “Go quickly. There are people waiting outside.”

Jiang Xuelan stood at the mine entrance, comforting the rescued cultivators.

Her voice was very soft and gentle, like a spring breeze.

“The Ice God lineage has not perished. You are not alone. From now on, you no longer need to hide, no longer need to be afraid.”

Some knelt down and kowtowed, some wept uncontrollably, some stood frozen in place, unable to believe it was true.

Kai did not linger. He turned and walked towards the next mine.

One mine, two mines, three mines…

Kai, along with Jiang Xuelan and the others, traversed all the mines in the mine.

The mine was vast, with numerous mines, some at the bottom, some on the walls, some unfathomably deep, some only a few feet deep.

At each mine, he used Chaos Fire to melt the Spirit-Locking Chains.

Jiang Xuelan comforted the rescued cultivators, telling them that the Ice God lineage had not perished, that they were not alone.

Han Shuang and Han Shan were responsible for counting the number of people, while Yun Xi was in charge of guarding.

More and more cultivators were rescued.

The first mine, thirteen people.

The second mine, nine people. The third mine, twenty-one people.

The fourth mine, seven people…

Soon there were more than a hundred people.

Some of them had been working here for over a thousand years, their skin stained grayish-black by the minerals, their fingers large and deformed, their nails missing, their hands covered in calluses and scars.

Others had only recently been captured, their bodies… Kai helped them up one by one.

“Don’t kneel. Let’s go. There are people waiting outside.”

His voice was calm, but his hands were trembling slightly, not from exhaustion, but from anger.

He looked at the wounds on their bodies, the numbness in their eyes, their emaciated forms, and his anger burned within him.

But he didn’t show it.

Now was not the time for anger.

He turned to Jiang Xuelan: “Is everyone here?”

Jiang Xuelan shook her head.

Her face was pale; she could sense that there was another mine shaft deep within the mine.

The aura of the Ice God’s bloodline in that mine shaft was so intense it startled her.

“There’s still one mine shaft missing. In the deepest part.”

Kai frowned: “The deepest mine shaft? What’s there?”

Jiang Xuelan's voice was strained: "I don't know. But I can sense the aura of the Ice God's bloodline there. It's very strong."

Kai glanced at the depths of the mine. It was pitch black there; nothing could be seen.

"Let's go."

Kai led the group to the deepest mine shaft.

This mine was larger and deeper than the others.

The entrance was sealed by a massive stone door, covered in densely packed runes of the Judgment Hall's restrictions, like countless eyes gleaming with golden light in the darkness.

Kai placed his hand on the stone door, and chaotic fire surged from his palm.

The restrictive runes were like paper before the chaotic fire, dimming, shattering, and disappearing one after another.

The stone door slowly opened.

Inside the mine, crystals were piled high. These

weren't ordinary crystals, but high-quality cultivation crystals.

Each one was the size of a fist, crystal clear, radiating a rich spiritual energy.

They were piled up in the mine like a small mountain, numbering at least hundreds of thousands.

The light from the crystals illuminated the entire mine, as bright as day.

Jiang Xuelan's pupils contracted slightly.

“These crystals… are enough for a True Immortal cultivator to cultivate for hundreds of years. The Judgment Hall has been digging here for thousands of years, hiding the best crystals here, preparing to transport them away.”

Kai remained silent. He walked to the pile of crystals and placed his hand on it.

“Take them away.”

He opened his storage ring and put the crystals in one by one.

The storage ring had limited space, but these crystals were too precious to leave to the Judgment Hall.

One, two, ten, a hundred…

He moved quickly, but there were too many crystals, and it would take time to collect them all.

Just then, footsteps came from outside.

“Someone’s coming!” Yun Xi whispered. Chen

Ping turned his head and saw several golden points of light appear at the mine entrance.

Those were the holy light of the divine cultivators, rapidly approaching.

More and more points of light appeared, growing brighter and brighter, at least a dozen in total.

“It’s the people from the Judgment Hall! They’ve discovered us!” Han Shuang gripped her bone knife tightly, blocking the mine entrance.

Kai glanced at the pile of crystals; most of them were still uncollected.

“You all go out first, I’ll cover the rear.”

“But…” Jiang Xuelan wanted to say something.

“Go!” Kai’s voice left no room for doubt.

Jiang Xuelan gritted her teeth and led the rescued cultivators away from the other side of the mine.

Yunxi, Hanshuang, and Hanshan followed behind, protecting the weaker ones.

Their footsteps were quick but light, making no sound.

Only Kai remained in the mine.

He continued collecting crystals.

One, two, ten, a hundred…

The footsteps outside grew closer.

“Here!”

“Quick! Notify the commander!”

“Don’t let him escape!”

A dozen or so divine cultivators rushed into the mine, golden holy light illuminating the dark cavern.

They saw Kai, their expressions changing drastically.

“Kai! It’s Kai!”

Some turned and ran, but many more rushed forward.

Golden sword beams, light blades, and lightning spears rained down on Kai like a storm.

Kai didn’t move.

His hands were still collecting crystals, unable to free up any.

Just then, he suddenly remembered something.

In his storage ring, there was a little creature.

He probed his storage ring with his divine sense, awakening a long-dormant life.

A Fire Qilin.

A crimson light flew out of the storage ring, landed on the ground, and transformed into a small beast.

It wasn’t large, only the size of a calf, its entire body covered in crimson scales, each scale the size of a palm, its edges sharp as knives, reflecting a fiery luster in the crystalline light.

Golden flames flowed from the gaps in the scales, like magma flowing through cracks in rock.

It had two curved horns on its head, burning with raging flames that constantly shifted in color from crimson to golden-white.

Its eyes were golden, and its pupils seemed to hold flowing magma, sparks flying out with every blink.

A Fire Qilin.

It had slept for a long time in Kai’s storage ring.

Now, it was finally released.

It stretched and yawned.

Its body crackled as it stretched, as if its bones were rearranging.

Its tail flicked, the flame at the tip drawing an arc in the air.

Then, it looked around.

Upon seeing the divine cultivators, its eyes lit up.

“Roar!”

The fire qilin let out a deafening roar.

The roar was like a volcanic eruption, like a thunderclap.

The sound waves transformed into tangible fire shockwaves, sweeping towards the divine cultivators.

Where the shockwave passed, the air ignited, the ground scorched, and rocks melted.

The divine cultivators had no time to react before being struck by the fiery shockwave.

“Ah!”

Cries of agony echoed.

Some were burned to ashes, not even having time to scream.

Others rolled on the ground, their bodies engulfed in flames, the flames burning through their armor and charring their flesh, filling the air with the stench of burning flesh.

Some turned to run, but the fire qilin was far faster.

The fire qilin darted through the mine.

Its speed was too fast for the naked eye to follow; only a crimson streak could be seen flashing through the mine.

Wherever it passed, flames raged, the rocks on the mine walls glowed red-hot and began to melt, lava flowing down the walls.

The air ignited, making breathing difficult. Blackened trenches were scorched into the ground, and within these trenches… The mine fell silent.

Only the crackling of the flames and the hissing of the flowing lava could be heard.

The fire qilin returned to Kai's side, nuzzling his leg, its eyes full of pride, like a child waiting to be praised for a good deed.

Kai smiled and patted its head.

His fingers touched the fire qilin's scales, feeling the scorching heat, but the chaotic power kept the heat at bay, his hand only slightly burning.

"Well done."

Then, he continued collecting the crystals.

The fire qilin crouched to the side, warily watching the mine entrance, ready to strike again at any moment.

Its tail swayed gently, the flames at the tip drawing arcs on the ground.

Several more groups of divine cultivators rushed in.

The first group, twenty people. The fire qilin breathed out a mouthful of fire, and the twenty people instantly turned to ashes.

The second group, thirty people. The fire qilin charged into the crowd, charging left and right, leaving corpses strewn in its wake.

The third group, fifty people. They had learned their lesson and dared not approach, attacking from a distance with holy light.

The fire qilin's scales blocked most of the attacks, but a sword beam struck its hind leg, leaving a shallow wound.

Enraged, the fire qilin roared, flames erupting from its body and turning the entire mine into a sea of fire.

Of the fifty people, not a single one escaped.

Kai finally stored all the crystals in his storage ring.

He stood up, clapped his hands, and glanced at the wound on the fire qilin's hind leg.

The wound wasn't deep and was already slowly healing; the fire qilin's self-healing ability was strong, and such a minor injury didn't need attention.

During its period of slumber, the fire qilin had been continuously absorbing the various resources Kai had collected in the storage ring, and its strength had increased significantly!

Before, with that Devouring Beast, a few resources wouldn't even be enough for it to devour in one gulp. Now that the little Devouring Beast had left with the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord, all the resources had gone to the fire qilin.

The little fire qilin's growth rate had also begun to increase exponentially!

He patted the fire qilin's head.

"Let's go."

The Fire Qilin nodded, transforming into a crimson streak of light and flying back into Kai's storage ring.

Kai walked out of the mine.

Outside the mine, the battle had reached its climax.

Lang Hao led the beastmen warriors in a desperate retreat.

Their bodies were covered in wounds; some had lost arms, some were blind, and some lay on the ground, never to rise again.

Of the five hundred warriors, less than three hundred remained.

A young beastman warrior lay in a pool of blood, his eyes still open, staring at the sky.

He still gripped his bone axe, stained with the blood of his enemies.

He had killed seven divine cultivators before being pierced through the chest by a True Immortal Realm fourth-grade elder.

As he fell, a smile remained on his lips; he had protected his brothers behind him.

The old beastman warrior also fell.

Dozens of wounds covered his body, each bleeding profusely.

His battle axe lay embedded in the ground beside him, its blade chipped and nicked.

He leaned against the axe handle and closed his eyes.

He had lived for three thousand years, fought for three thousand years, and finally, he could rest.

Lang Hao was also covered in wounds.

His left arm had been slashed so deep that bone was visible, blood streaming down and dripping onto the ground, forming a small pool.

A charred mark from the holy light burned his chest, the flesh torn open, revealing the bone beneath.

His face was covered in blood, indistinguishable between his own and the enemy's.

But his battle axe was still in his hand. His eyes were still bright.

The guard commander, his right arm severed by Lang Hao, fled in disarray.

His severed arm, charred by Lang Hao's axe blade, wasn't bleeding, but the pain nearly made him faint.

He hid behind a group of divine cultivators, directing their continued attack.

Although the divine cultivators outnumbered them, they were terrified by the beastmen's frenzied fighting style.

They dared not approach, only attacking from a distance with holy light.

Lang Hao saw Kai emerge from the depths of the mine, followed by a group of ragged cultivators.

He knew the mission was complete.

"Retreat! Retreat quickly!"

he commanded, and the beastmen warriors began their orderly retreat.

They covered Kai and the rescued cultivators, fighting and retreating.

The divine cultivators pursued for a while, then dared not continue, fearing an ambush.

The mine was a scene of devastation.

The protective barrier was destroyed, the light curtain shattered, and golden fragments scattered everywhere, gradually dimming in the morning light.

The stone hall collapsed, and black rock fragments piled up into a small mountain.

The mine shafts were charred black by flames, with smoke still billowing from the entrances.

The corpses of the divine cultivators were scattered everywhere, some cleaved in two, some burned to ashes, and some frozen into ice sculptures.

The air was thick with the stench of burnt flesh, blood, and smoke.

In the open space in the center of the mine lay the corpses of dozens of beastmen warriors.

They were covered with animal hides, hastily placed there by their surviving brothers.

Their faces were obscured, their expressions hidden.

But their hands still gripped their weapons, their fingers stiff and impossible to pry open.

Lang Hao knelt before the corpse of a young warrior, remaining silent for a long time.

That was his son.

A True Immortal Realm Second Rank cultivator, this was his first and last time on the battlefield.

A fist-sized hole pierced his chest by the holy light sword’s edge.

His eyes were closed, his face expressionless, peaceful, as if asleep.

Lang Hao reached out and gently touched his son's face.

His hand trembled, but no tears streamed down his face.

The beastmen warriors did not weep.

"Take him away," he said, his voice hoarse and almost inaudible.

Two beastmen warriors approached and carried Lang Hao's body away.

Lang Hao stood up, looking towards the mine, a cold glint in his eyes.

"The Judgment Hall, I will remember this debt."

The atmosphere in the Sirius tribe's camp was heavy.

The groans of the wounded echoed from the tents.

The beastmen's healers were constantly on the move, using herbs and bloodline power to stop bleeding, set bones, and heal the wounded.

Some injuries were too severe for the healers to save; they could only watch helplessly as the wounded breathed their last.

Wolf Hao sat silently in the main tent.

His left arm was bandaged, and his chest wound had been treated, but his face remained pale, his eyes filled with exhaustion.

Kai entered the main tent and sat down opposite him.

"Chief Wolf Hao, how many losses did the Sirius tribe suffer this time?"

Wolf Hao was silent for a moment.

"Seventy-three dead, one hundred and twenty seriously wounded, and countless others lightly wounded."

His voice was calm, but Kai could hear the grief beneath. “Five hundred went out, and less than three hundred returned. My son… is dead too.”

Kai fell silent.

He knew that feeling, the feeling of losing a loved one.

He had lost one himself. He knew that pain, which words could not comfort.

He took out a pile of crystals from his storage ring and placed them on the table.

The crystals emitted a crystal-clear light in the tent.

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“These are crystals stolen from the mine. Thirteen thousand in total.”

Kai pushed the crystals towards Lang Hao. “These are for the Sky Wolf Tribe. Consider it a small token of my appreciation.”

Lang Hao looked at the crystals, remaining silent for a long time.

Thirteen thousand high-quality cultivation crystals were enough for all the warriors of the Sky Wolf Tribe to cultivate for decades.

With these crystals, the Sky Wolf Tribe’s strength would increase by a level.

“Kai, you risked your life to steal these crystals. I…”

“Without the brothers of the Sky Wolf Tribe risking their lives to hold back the Divine Race, I wouldn’t have been able to seize these crystals.” Kai interrupted him. “These crystals were bought with the lives of those brothers who died in battle. If you don’t accept them, their blood will have been shed in vain.”

Lang Hao's eyes reddened.

He reached out and collected the crystals one by one.

His hands trembled, but his movements were steady.

"Kai, from now on, the Sky Wolf Tribe will live and die with you."

Kai shook his head.

"No need. I only hope that from now on, there will be no more oppression or enslavement in the Fifteenth Heaven. May all races live equally."

Lang Hao looked at him, silent for a long time. "You are a bigger person than I imagined."

Kai smiled and stood up.

"Take good care of your injuries. The Judgment Hall will not let this go. There are still tough battles to fight."

He turned and walked out of the main tent.

Behind him, Lang Hao watched his back, motionless for a long time.

Kai led the rescued cultivators back to Snowfall Town.

Bingfeng and the townspeople stood at the town gate, waiting from dawn to dusk.

Their faces were filled with anxiety and expectation. Some were praying with their hands clasped together, some were pacing back and forth, and some were standing on tiptoe, peering into the distance.

When the more than one hundred ragged, wounded cultivators appeared on the mountain path, Bingfeng's tears welled up instantly.

“Father! Father!” A young man rushed up and hugged an old man.

That was his father, who had been captured three years ago.

Three years had passed, and he thought he would never see his father again.

“Son…son…” The old man stroked his son’s head, tears streaming down his face.

“Brother! You’re still alive!” A young girl threw herself into the arms of a middle-aged man.

That was her brother, who had been abducted five years ago.

She thought he was dead.

“Sister…you’ve grown up…” The middle-aged man stroked his sister’s head, his voice hoarse.

An old woman stood outside the crowd, her eyes blinded from crying.

Her husband and son had both been taken away, and she had lived alone for ten years, making a living by washing clothes for others.

“My son…has my son come back?” she asked, her voice trembling.

No one answered.

Her son hadn’t come back.

He had died in the mine, beaten to death by the divine cultivators.

His body was left on the wasteland outside the mine, gnawed to pieces by wild dogs, leaving only a pile of bones.

The old woman stood there, waiting for a long time.

No one came to hug her.

She finally understood.

She knelt on the ground and cried loudly.

Her cries echoed through the town, lingering for a long time.

Jiang Xuelan stood aside, watching this scene, her eyes slightly red.

Kai walked to her side. “The people have been rescued. What’s next?”

Jiang Xuelan was silent for a moment. “Help them awaken their bloodlines. Let them know they are not slaves, they are descendants of the Ice God lineage.”

Kai nodded. “I’ll help you.”

Jiang Xuelan looked at him, a complex emotion flashing in her eyes.

“Thank you.”

Kai smiled. “No need to thank me. Have you forgotten? We’re in the same boat.”

Jiang Xuelan didn’t speak, only looking at the sunset on the distant snow-capped mountains.

Golden light spilled onto the snow-capped mountains, dyeing the entire world a warm orange-red.

Jiang Xuelan knew that with these descendants of the Ice God lineage, after helping them awaken their bloodlines, the Ice God lineage would have a foundation for development.

She also believed that the Ice God lineage was not so easily wiped out; in higher planes, there must still be descendants of the Ice God lineage surviving!

…

The Hall of Judgment!

When the Venerable Judgment received the news, he was resting with his eyes closed in the main hall of the Hall of Judgment.

“Hall Master! Something terrible has happened!” A divine cultivator stumbled in, knelt on the ground, and trembled all over.

The Arbiter Venerable opened his eyes.

“Speak.”

“The North Mine…the North Mine was attacked by the Sirius Tribe! The mine’s restrictions were destroyed, the crystals were stolen, and those ice slaves…those servants of the Ice God lineage…all were rescued!”

The Arbiter Venerable’s pupils suddenly contracted.

“The Sirius Tribe? Lang Hao? Has he gone mad?”

“No…not just the Sirius Tribe…”

the cultivator’s voice trembled, “and Kai…Kai was there too. He infiltrated the mine, used Chaos Fire to melt the Spirit-Locking Chains, and rescued those ice slaves. He also…he also stole all the crystals from the mine…”

The Arbiter Venerable remained silent for a long time.

Then, he smiled.

That smile was cold, so cold that it lowered the temperature of the entire hall.

“Well done, Kai. Well done, Lang Hao.”

He stood up, his golden robe trailing on the ground, making a rustling sound.

“Pass down the order. Gather all forces, and in three days, raze the Sirius Tribe to the ground.”

“And…” he paused, “notify the Shadow Palace, tell them, if Ying Wuji still wants to…”

In the early morning of Snowfall Town, the snow-capped mountains shimmered with a faint golden hue in the morning light.

The ice had cleared the central square of the town, which was covered with thick animal-hide carpets, and braziers were lit around it.

The flames in the braziers flickered, illuminating the square and dispelling the chill from the depths of the snow-capped mountains.

One hundred and thirty-seven rescued cultivators stood in the square.

They were still wearing the tattered clothes they had worn in the mine, some even barefoot, their feet treading on the cold ground.

Their bodies were emaciated, their faces as pale as paper, their eyes sunken, and their cheekbones high.

But their eyes were no longer numb. From the moment they were rescued from the mine, the numbness in their eyes began to gradually fade, replaced by something indescribable.

It was like hope, like expectation, like a tree that had been bent for too long finally having the chance to straighten its back.

Jiang Xuelan stood at the front of the square, dressed in white as snow, her long hair as black as ink.

Behind her stood a statue of Bei Mingyuan, the progenitor of the Ice God lineage, carved from celestial fire crystal, its entire body crimson, radiating a warm glow in the morning light.

Bei Mingyuan on the statue held an ice sword, his gaze piercing, overlooking the 137 people in the plaza.

“The blood of the Ice God lineage flows in your veins,”

Jiang Xuelan’s voice wasn’t loud, but it reached everyone’s ears clearly. “Your ancestors were once among the most powerful beings in the Heavenly Realm. They fought against the heavens, against the earth, against other branches of the divine race, never bowing their heads.”

Her gaze swept over each face.

“You are not slaves, not ice slaves, not cattle or horses. You are the descendants of the Ice God lineage.”

The plaza fell silent.

The 137 people stood there, some weeping, some trembling, some clenching their fists.

They had never heard these words spoken before.

From childhood, they knew they were different from others, from childhood they knew they had to hide their bloodline, from childhood they knew that once exposed, they would be captured, enslaved, and tortured.

They thought this was their fate, that this was how the Ice God lineage was—lowly, trampled underfoot, forever unable to hold their heads high.

Now, someone was telling them it wasn’t.

“Today, I will help you awaken your bloodlines.”

Jiang Xuelan raised her right hand, a ball of icy blue light condensing in her palm. “After awakening, you will know what true power is. After awakening, you will no longer need to hide, no longer need to be afraid.”

She turned to look at Kai.

Kai nodded and walked to the center of the plaza.

He sat cross-legged, closed his eyes, and drew chaotic power from within his body.

Purple light surged from his body, spreading outwards like a tide, enveloping the entire plaza.

The 137 people on the plaza simultaneously felt a warm power flow into their bodies, power flowing through their meridians, like spring sunshine melting winter ice and snow.

Jiang Xuelan also moved.

Her icy blue divine light intertwined with Kai’s chaotic power, purple and blue mingling, forming a magnificent light curtain above the plaza.

The light screen slowly rotated, enveloping the 137 people.

Bloodline awakening had begun.

The bodies of all 137 people simultaneously lit up.

Icy blue light surged from their bodies, resonating with Jiang Xuelan’s divine light and chaotic power.

Some shone brightly, others dimly; the intensity of awakening varied depending on the concentration of their bloodlines.

One young man had the highest bloodline concentration.

His body was enveloped in icy blue light, so intense it almost seemed to condense into liquid.

His cultivation began to break through: True Immortal Realm, Second Grade; True Immortal Realm, Third Grade; Peak of the Third Grade.

His hair turned from black to silver-white, his eyes from brown to icy blue, a faint chill emanating from him, and a thin layer of ice forming beneath his feet.

An old man had the lowest bloodline concentration. His light was weak, and his cultivation only increased by half a minor realm.

But tears streamed down his face. He had lived for so many years, never knowing he possessed such power within him.

He had always thought of himself as an ordinary rogue cultivator, a despised descendant of an ice slave.

Now he knew that his ancestors had once been among the most powerful beings in the Heavenly Realm.

All 137 people had awakened.

The icy blue light in the plaza gradually dissipated.

The 137 people standing there seemed like completely different people.

Not in appearance—their clothes were still tattered, their bodies still thin, their faces still pale.

But their eyes had changed; they were no longer numb, empty, and lifeless, but bright, warm, and hopeful.

Some knelt down and kowtowed to Jiang Xuelan.

“Palace Master!”

“Palace Master!”

Jiang Xuelan shook her head: “Rise. The Ice God lineage does not need to kneel.”

She turned and looked at the statue of Bei Mingyuan.

“From today onwards, the Ice God Palace will be rebuilt. You are the first batch of disciples of the Ice God Palace.”

The 137 people stood up in unison, looking at Jiang Xuelan’s back, their eyes filled with respect and expectation.

Kai stayed in Luoxue Town for three days, helping Jiang Xuelan arrange matters concerning the Ice God Palace.

Jiang Xuelan divided the 137 disciples into three groups.

The first group, with the highest bloodline concentration, was personally taught by her;

the second group, with medium bloodline concentration, was led by Han Shuang and Han Shan;

the third group, with lower bloodline concentration, would first cultivate basic techniques, and further arrangements would be made after their strength improved.

She also transferred a batch of cultivation resources from Youyue Kingdom and took some from the crystals given by Kai, distributing them to the disciples for cultivation.

Although the Ice God Palace was simple, it finally felt like a home.

On the third night, Kai found Jiang Xuelan.

“I need to go into seclusion.”

Jiang Xuelan looked at him: “Seclusion?”

“Yes.” Kai nodded, “This trip to the North Mine, although I managed to seize some crystals, also made me realize one thing: my strength is not enough.

The Judgment Venerable is a True Immortal Realm Eighth Grade, and I can’t defeat him now. If the Judgment Hall really comes out in full force, I’m not confident.”

He paused, his voice calm and firm.

“I need to break through.”

Jiang Xuelan was silent for a moment: “Where are you going to cultivate in seclusion?”

“The Demon Suppression Tower.”

Kai took out a small black tower from his storage ring and held it in his palm.

“Time moves slower inside the Demon Suppression Tower than outside. A hundred days of cultivation inside is only one day outside. I plan to break through in a month.”

Jiang Xuelan looked at him, a complex emotion flashing in her eyes.

“Be careful.”

Kai smiled: “Don’t worry.”

He turned and walked towards the edge of Falling Snow Town.

After a few steps, he stopped, without looking back.

“Take care of Yunxi and Lang Hao for me. The Judgment Hall won’t let this go easily. Take good care of them while I’m gone.”

Jiang Xuelan nodded.

Kai's figure disappeared into the night.

Kai found a secluded valley a hundred miles north of Falling Snow Town, dug a cave at the bottom of the valley, and placed the Demon Suppression Tower inside.

He sat down cross-legged . ...

Just as Kai was cultivating inside the Demon Suppression Tower, the army of the Judgment Hall arrived at the Sirius Tribe.

It was a sunless morning.

The sky was overcast, the clouds hanging low as if about to press down on the ground.

The wind was strong on the wasteland, making the tents flutter and the orc banners sway wildly.

Lang Hao was practicing axe in the training ground.

His injuries hadn't fully healed; in the battle at the North Mine, his left arm had been slashed with a deep gash that exposed bone, and the holy light burn on his chest hadn't completely healed either.

But he was the leader of the Sirius Tribe; he couldn't fall.

Every morning he would practice axe in the training ground, using sweat to numb the pain, using his battle axe to tell his people: I'm still here, the Sirius Tribe is still here.

The first to spot the enemy was a sentry.

A young orc warrior slid down from the watchtower, fell to the ground, got up, and stumbled into the training ground.

His face was deathly pale, his eyes wide, and his lips trembled.

“Chief! Enemy attack! The gods… the gods are here!”

Lang Hao’s axe stopped in mid-air.

He raised his head and looked into the distance.

At the edge of the wasteland, golden light was shining.

It wasn’t the sun’s light; the sun was obscured by clouds.

It was holy light, the holy light of the god-race cultivators.

Thousands upon thousands of beams of holy light converged, dyeing the entire sky a dazzling gold.

Lang Hao’s pupils contracted slightly.

He had seen the god-race army before. In his three thousand years of life, he had seen the god-race besiege the ghost race, the demon race, and rogue cultivators.

But he had never seen so many god-race cultivators gathered together.

“How many?” His voice was calm, but his hand holding the axe trembled slightly.

The sentry swallowed hard: “At least… at least three thousand.”

Three thousand.

The Sky Wolf Tribe had less than five hundred warriors capable of fighting.

In the battle at the North Mine, seventy-three died and one hundred and twenty were seriously wounded.

Now, less than three hundred could wield weapons.

Three hundred against three thousand.

Wolf Hao remained silent for a moment, then turned and shouted to the orc warriors on the training ground, “Sound the horn! Assemble!”

The horn sounded across the wasteland, low and desolate, like the mournful cry of a dying beast.

Within an hour, the Wolf Tribe’s camp had transformed into a military fortress.

The elderly, women, and children were gathered in several large tents at the very center of the camp.

The children, unaware of what was happening, continued to play and frolic.

The women, clutching their children, their eyes filled with fear.

The elderly sat silently at the tent entrances, their hands gripping rusty swords. They were old and could no longer fight, but if the enemy broke in, they would fight to the death.

Wolf Hao stood on the high platform in the center of the camp, watching all this.

His left arm was still in a sling, and the wound in his chest still throbbed.

But his back was straight, and his eyes shone brightly.

His son was dead.

More than half of his warriors had been killed or wounded.

His camp was about to be surrounded by three thousand divine cultivators.

But he could not fall.

He was the leader of the Wolf Tribe.

The Wolf Tribe could be destroyed, but he could not surrender.

“Immediately send people to various forces to request aid, saying that my Sirius Tribe is willing to offer most of its resources.”

“Also, go find Mr. Chen and tell him that my Sirius Tribe is in trouble.”

Wolf Hao loudly ordered!

Taking advantage of the fact that the Judgment Hall cultivators hadn’t yet attacked, Wolf Hao decided to send people out to seek help!

At the same time, Wolf Hao was also counting on Kai. A few days ago, he had completely broken ties with the Judgment Hall for Kai’s sake, and now that the Judgment Hall was attacking, Kai couldn’t stand idly by!

Soon, more than a dozen extremely fast beastmen cultivators disappeared instantly, heading in various directions of the Fifteenth Heaven!

The Judgment Hall cultivators stopped several hundred miles away from the Sirius Tribe!

They didn’t attack directly!

A Sirius Tribe cultivator found Snowfall Town and explained the situation to Jiang Xuelan!

However, listening to the other party’s explanation, Jiang Xuelan frowned, because she couldn’t leave at the moment. After all, the Ice God Palace had just been established, and these cultivators had only just awakened the bloodline of the Ice God lineage and were not yet suitable for combat!

Kai was still in seclusion and couldn't provide any support at all!

At this moment, Jiang Xuelan thought of Yunxi. If Youyue Kingdom could help, it would alleviate some of the pressure on the Tianlang Tribe and allow them more time to resist, enabling Kai to successfully break through and emerge from seclusion!

"Go to Youyue Kingdom with my jade slip. Youyue Kingdom can provide assistance."

Jiang Xuelan entered the information into the jade slip and handed it to the Tianlang Tribe cultivator!

Upon seeing this, the Tianlang Tribe cultivator could only nod and leave with the jade slip!

...

Tianlang Tribe.

Lang Hao looked at the divine race cultivators of the Judgment Hall, who were setting up camp far away without attacking, and was somewhat puzzled.

At this moment, a beastman warrior ran over!

"Chief! The person sent out to request reinforcements has returned."

Lang Hao's eyes lit up: "Are there reinforcements?"

The young warrior lowered his head, not daring to look at him.

"The Shadow Palace Master said... the Shadow Palace has no dealings with the Tianlang Tribe and it is inconvenient for them to interfere."

"Elder Feng Qingzi said... the Loose Cultivator Alliance is too weak to help." The warrior said.

Hearing this, Lang Hao clenched his fists tighter, his knuckles turning white, and his nails digging into his palms.

“What about the other forces?” Lang Hao asked.

“No one has agreed to help us. They’re all watching from the sidelines. No one dares to offend the Hall of Judgment,”

the young warrior said, his eyes red and his voice choked with emotion.

Despair filled Lang Hao’s eyes. Without help, they had no chance against the Hall of Judgment.

“What about Mr. Chen? Has anyone sent word to the people who went to find him?” Lang Hao pinned his hopes on Kai.

The young warrior shook his head: “Not yet…”

Lang Hao fell silent, gazing at the Hall of Judgment’s large tent in the distance, lost in thought.

“Chief! The Youyue Kingdom… the Youyue Kingdom has sent people!” A sudden voice startled Lang Hao from his reverie.

Lang Hao’s eyes lit up.

He struggled to his feet and walked to the camp entrance.

In the distance, a group of people clad in black armor were approaching.

Their armor was tattered, covered in knife marks and bloodstains.

Their weapons were varied; some carried knives, some swords, and some spears.

Their numbers were small, less than three hundred.

Leading them was a young woman, dressed in a black, close-fitting outfit, her long hair tied high, a ghostly blade hanging at her waist.

Her face was pale, her eyes filled with exhaustion, but her steps were steady.

Yun Xi.

Lang Hao looked at Yun Xi, silent for a long time.

“How many people?”

“Two hundred and seventy-three.” Yun Xi stopped in front of him. “All the capable fighters from the Youyue Kingdom have come.”

Lang Hao’s lips trembled. “Why are they helping us?”

Lang Hao knew that the Ghost Clan had a difficult time on their own, having eked out a living for so many years, constantly on the run.

When the Ghost Clan was in dire straits, no one helped them.

Yun Xi looked at him and slowly spoke, “The Sky Wolf Tribe helped Kai. Kai’s affairs are my affairs.”

Lang Hao’s eyes reddened.

He turned around and looked at the Ghost Clan warriors walking towards the camp.

Their armor was worn, their weapons were shabby, and their numbers were small.

But they came.

In the Sky Wolf Tribe’s most desperate moment, after the Shadow Palace refused, after the Loose Cultivator Alliance refused, the Nether Moon Kingdom came.

A Ghost Clan that had been hunted by the Gods for thousands of years, hiding in the darkness and barely surviving, had come to save the Sky Wolf Tribe.

“Thank you.” Lang Hao’s voice was soft, but heavy.

Yun Xi shook her head: “No need to thank me. The Sky Wolf Tribe helped Kai, we will not forget.”

She turned and shouted to the Ghost Clan warriors behind her: “Form up defenses! The Divine Tribunal had not attacked.

The golden camp stood silently on the wasteland, like a sleeping behemoth.

The light curtain shimmered blindingly in the sunlight, obscuring the view inside.

Lang Hao stood on the high platform in the center of the camp, gazing into the distance.

Yun Xi stood beside him.

“Ying Wuji won’t come,” Yun Xi said.

“I know.”

“Feng Qingzi won’t come either.”

“I know.”

“Only us.”

Lang Hao was silent for a moment, then smiled.

“Even if only we are, we will fight.”

Yun Xi glanced at him but didn’t speak.

“When will Kai emerge from seclusion?” Lang Hao asked.

“I don’t know.” Yun Xi shook her head, “Perhaps these people from the Tribunal are also waiting for Kai…”

Lang Hao nodded.

…

Meanwhile, inside the Demon Suppression Tower, Kai

placed his hands on a pile of crystals and began absorbing the spiritual energy within.

The power of chaos circulated within his body, drawing the spiritual energy from the crystals into his dantian bit by bit.

Purple light flowed around him, growing thicker and brighter.

The spiritual energy within the crystals flowed into his body like rivers flowing into the sea.

His meridians expanded and strengthened under the impact of this energy, and the vortex of chaotic energy in his dantian spun faster and larger.

One crystal was absorbed, turning into grayish-white powder. Another crystal was absorbed, turning into powder as well.

Kai’s eyes were closed, his breathing steady, his entire body like a statue, motionless.

But within his body, a cataclysmic change was taking place.

Chaotic energy condensed, compressed, and purified in his dantian.

The spiritual energy absorbed from the crystals was devoured, transformed, and fused by the chaotic energy, becoming his own power.

Time flowed silently within the Demon-Suppressing Tower. On

the first day, he absorbed three hundred crystals, breaking through from the peak of the eighth rank of the True Immortal Realm to the peak of the eighth rank of the True Immortal Realm.

On the second day, he absorbed another five hundred crystals, breaking through to the peak of the eighth rank of the True Immortal Realm.

The third day, the fourth day, the fifth day...

crystals were absorbed one after another, turning into grayish-white powder.

Before Kai, the powder had piled up into a small mountain.

On the tenth day, he absorbed three thousand crystals, breaking through to the ninth rank of the True Immortal Realm.

On the fiftieth day, he absorbed another five thousand crystals,

breaking through to the peak of the ninth rank of the True Immortal Realm. On the hundredth day, he absorbed the last two thousand crystals, breaking through to the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm.

Kai opened his eyes.

His eyes had changed; they were no longer ordinary black, but a deep purple, with stars seemingly spinning in his pupils.

Purple light surrounded him, not violent, but quiet, like a sleeping dragon.

He could feel that the chaotic power within his body was several times stronger than before, his meridians several times wider, and his physical body several times more resilient.

He stood up and clenched his fist. He

threw a punch.

The purple fist energy transformed into a pillar of light, slamming into the wall of the Demon Suppression Tower.

The tower wall trembled violently, emitting a muffled roar, and cracks spread outwards like a spider web.

Kai was startled. The Demon-Suppressing Tower was an ancient treasure, one he couldn't break even with all his strength, but the power of this punch was enough to level a mountain.

He withdrew his fist and took a deep breath.

"Peak of the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm. Only one step away from the True Immortal Realm."

He closed his eyes, sensing the power within his body.

The power of chaos slowly spun in his dantian, like a purple galaxy.

The fire of chaos burned at the center of the vortex, purple and gold intertwined, the temperature high enough to melt everything.

The source of lightning weaved through the power of chaos, crackling like lightning in the galaxy.

He opened his eyes, a slight smile playing on his lips.

"Judgment Venerable, wait for me."

He leaped out of the Demon-Suppressing Tower.

When Kai emerged from seclusion, it was dusk in Falling Snow Town.

He walked out of the cave and saw the setting sun dyeing the entire world golden and red on the distant snow-capped mountains.

He took a deep breath; the air was crisp and sweet, carrying the unique scent of the snow-capped mountains.

Then, he saw Jiang Xuelan.

Jiang Xuelan stood at the cave entrance, her white robes as white as snow, her long hair as black as ink.

Her expression was calm, but a hint of anxiety Kai had never seen before flickered in her eyes.

“Something happened?” Kai asked.

Jiang Xuelan nodded. “The Judgment Hall has dispatched a large army and is besieging the Heavenly Wolf Tribe. Lang Hao just sent someone to find you, but unfortunately you were in seclusion, so I sent him to find Yun Xi.”

Kai frowned. “When did this happen?”

“It’s been a day. I don’t know if the Heavenly Wolf Tribe can hold out.”

“The Heavenly Wolf Tribe has appealed to the Shadow Hall and the Loose Cultivator Alliance for help, but Ying Wuji and Feng Qingzi are both observing; no one dares to intervene,” Jiang Xuelan said. Chen

Ping was silent for a moment.

“Lang Hao should be able to hold out for a day. I’ll go to the Shadow Hall and the Loose Cultivator Alliance now. If they don’t help, they’ll be my enemies.”

A cold glint flashed in Kai’s eyes. Now, at the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, he had the strength to fight alongside the Judgment Venerable!

Jiang Xuelan looked at him: “You’re going to the Shadow Palace alone? Ying Wuji isn’t someone you can easily persuade.”

Kai smiled: “Even if he’s not easy to persuade, I have to. The Heavenly Wolf Tribe offended the Judgment Hall to help us; we can’t just watch them be wiped out.”

He turned and walked towards the Shadow Palace, leaping into the air and transforming into a purple streak of light, disappearing into the horizon.

Jiang Xuelan watched his retreating figure, her expression heavy. Shadow Abyss.

Kai landed before the entrance to Shadow Abyss, gazing at the massive black stone gate.

The demon cultivators on either side of the gate recognized him, their expressions changing drastically.

“Chen…Kai…”

“I want to see Ying Wuji.” Kai’s voice was calm.

“The Palace Master…the Palace Master is…”

“I said, I want to see Ying Wuji.”

The demon cultivators exchanged glances, no longer daring to obstruct him.

They parted to make way, watching Kai enter through the stone gate.

The underground palace of Shadow Abyss was as eerie and magnificent as ever.

The minerals inlaid in the dome emitted a faint glow, like an inverted starry sky.

The demon cultivators stood on either side, watching Kai pass by, their eyes filled with apprehension.

Ying Wuji sat on the black throne, his fingers lightly tapping the armrests, producing a rhythmic sound.

He watched Kai approach, a slight smile playing on his lips.

“Kai, you’ve come.”

Kai walked to the high platform, stopped, and looked up at Ying Wuji.

“Lord Shadow, you should know about the siege of the Heavenly Wolf Tribe.”

Shadow Wuji’s smile froze for a moment.

“I know.”

“Then why didn’t you send troops?”

Shadow Wuji was silent for a moment.

“Kai, you should know why. The Judgment Venerable is the number one person in the Fifteenth Heaven, an eighth-grade True Immortal. I can’t defeat him, and the disciples of the Shadow Palace can’t die in vain.”

Kai looked at him, his gaze calm and firm. “What if I said I could defeat the Judgment Venerable?”

Shadow Wuji’s pupils contracted slightly.

“What is your cultivation level now?”

“Peak ninth-grade Upper Immortal.”

Shadow Wuji was silent for a long time.

“Peak ninth-grade Upper Immortal versus eighth-grade True Immortal. Kai, do you know how big the gap is?”

“I know.” Kai’s voice was calm, “But when I killed Lei Zhentian, I killed someone of a higher level. When I fought Jin Huan, I fought someone of a higher level. What I’ve done, wasn’t it all beyond my level?”

Shadow Wuji didn’t speak.

Kai continued, “Lord Shadow, your feud with the Judgment Hall isn’t new. You ordered me to kill Lei Zhentian, and the Judgment Venerable will find out sooner or later that you were behind it. Do you think he’ll let you off the hook if you don’t send troops?” Ying

Wuji’s expression changed.

“You…”

“He’s already preparing to deal with you,”

Kai interrupted him. “I received news that the Judgment Venerable sent someone to inform you not to interfere in the affairs of the Heavenly Wolf Tribe. Why did he say that? Because he wants to destroy the Heavenly Wolf Tribe first, and then deal with you.”

Ying Wuji’s fists clenched.

Kai looked at him, his voice softening slightly.

“Lord Shadow, I’m not here to beg you. I’m here to tell you that this is your only chance. The Heavenly Wolf Tribe, the Nether Moon Kingdom, and the Shadow Hall—if we join forces, we might not be unable to defeat the Judgment Hall. If you continue to wait and see, once the Heavenly Wolf Tribe is destroyed, you’ll be next.”

Ying Wuji remained silent for a long time.

Then, he stood up. “What do you want me to do?”

Kai took out a map from his storage ring and spread it out in front of Ying Wuji.

“The Sirius Tribe is surrounded, and Lang Hao is injured; he won’t last long. I need you to send troops to attack the Judgment Hall’s encirclement from the flank and disrupt their formation.”

“And then?”

“Then, I’ll launch a frontal attack. Lang Hao and I will join forces to hold off those three True Immortal Realm Seventh Grade elders. You, with the Shadow Hall disciples, will deal with the remaining Divine Race cultivators.”

Ying Wuji looked at the map, remaining silent for a long time.

“Kai, are you sure you can hold off three True Immortal Realm Seventh Grade elders?”

“Yes.”

Ying Wuji looked up, meeting his eyes.

“Good. I’ll send troops.”

He turned around and shouted to the demon cultivators behind him, “Pass down the order! Gather all the capable disciples and come with me to the Sirius Tribe!”

“Yes!” The demon cultivators responded in unison.

Having persuaded Ying Wuji, Kai immediately headed to the Loose Cultivator Alliance!

The headquarters of the Loose Cultivator Alliance was in Cloud City, a city floating in the air.

When Kai arrived, Feng Qingzi was drinking tea in the council hall.

He held his teacup in his hand, but didn't bring it to his lips, his brows furrowed, as if deep in thought.

"Elder Feng Qingzi." Kai entered the council hall.

Feng Qingzi looked up, nearly dropping his teacup upon seeing Kai.

"Chen… Fellow Daoist Kai! What brings you here?"

Kai sat down opposite him, getting straight to the point.

"The Heavenly Wolf Tribe is besieged, you should know that."

Feng Qingzi's expression changed.

"I know, but…"

"But what?"

Feng Qingzi put down his teacup and sighed.

"Fellow Daoist Kai, it's not that I don't want to help, but you know the strength of the Loose Cultivator Alliance. We can't defeat the Judgment Hall. The Judgment Venerable is an eighth-grade True Immortal, while the strongest cultivator in our alliance is only a sixth-grade True Immortal. Sending troops would be suicide."

Kai looked at him.

"What if I told you that the Shadow Hall has already sent troops?"

Feng Qingzi was stunned: "What? Ying Wuji agreed?"

"Agreed."

Feng Qingzi remained silent for a long time.

"Fellow Daoist Kai, what exactly do you want?"

Kai stood up, walked to the window of the council hall, and looked at the sea of clouds outside.

“I want to change the格局 (geju, a concept encompassing power, structure, and overall situation) of the Fifteenth Heaven.”

His voice was calm, but every word seemed etched into stone.

“The Judgment Hall has been domineering in the Fifteenth Heaven for too long. They oppress the Ghost Clan, enslave the Ice God lineage, and oppress rogue cultivators. Even the Heavenly Wolf Tribe and the Shadow Hall dare not offend them. Why? Because they are the strongest, because they have a Hall Master at the eighth rank of True Immortal Realm.”

“But what if someone could defeat the Judgment Venerable?”

Feng Qingzi’s pupils contracted slightly.

“You can defeat the Judgment Venerable?”

“Not now. But soon.”

Kai turned to look at him. “Elder Feng Qingzi, how many years has the Loose Cultivator Alliance been oppressed by the Judgment Hall? How many of your disciples have been captured by the Judgment Hall and forced into hard labor? How many loose cultivators have been driven to desperation by the Judgment Hall? You know the answer.”

Feng Qingzi fell silent.

Of course he knew.

Most of the disciples of the Loose Cultivator Alliance were destitute loose cultivators.

They had offended the Judgment Hall, were hunted down, wanted, and had nowhere else to go, which is why they joined the Loose Cultivator Alliance.

Feng Qingzi himself had been hunted down for hundreds of years simply because he had offended an elder of the Judgment Hall.

“Fellow Daoist Kai, you’re right,” Feng Qingzi’s voice was low. “But the Loose Cultivator Alliance is too weak. We can’t defeat them.”

“You don’t need to fight,” Kai said. “What I need you to do is create chaos.”

“Creation?”

“Yes. The Shadow Palace will attack from the flanks, the Sirius Tribe will resist from the front, and the Ice God Palace and the Nether Moon Kingdom will handle the outer perimeter. The Loose Cultivator Alliance doesn’t need to engage in direct combat; they only need to create chaos behind the Judgment Hall, cut off their supply lines, and disrupt their deployment.”

Kai paused.

“Once we win, the Loose Cultivator Alliance’s position in the Fifteenth Heaven will be completely changed.”

Feng Qingzi remained silent for a long time.

Then he stood up. “Alright. I’ll send troops.”

Feng Qingzi nodded. As Kai led the Loose Cultivator Alliance towards the Sirius Tribe, the Judgment Hall had already launched its attack!

In just one round, the Sirius Tribe’s camp was reduced to ruins.

Tents were burned, wooden fences were toppled, and the ground was littered with blood and corpses.

The air was thick with the stench of burning and blood, and thick smoke rose from the ruins, turning the sky gray-black.

The three thousand-strong army of the Divine Race surrounded the camp, and golden holy light surged in wave after wave, tearing apart the defenses of the Beast Race and the Ghost Race layer by layer.

Lang Hao stood in the center of the camp, his battle axe planted in the ground in front of him, supporting his swaying body.

His left arm was broken, hanging around his neck with a strip of cloth.

A deep, bone-revealing wound was on his chest, still oozing blood.

His face was covered in blood, his left eye was swollen shut, and his lips were cracked and bleeding.

But his right eye was still bright, as bright as a lone wolf in the wilderness.

Behind him stood fewer than two hundred warriors.

The beastmen and ghosts were all wounded, some with severed arms, some blind, some barely able to stand.

Yet not one retreated.

Yunxi stood beside him, the black light on her ghost blade dimming considerably.

Her left shoulder was pierced by holy light, blood trickling down her arm, dripping onto the ground and forming a small pool.

Her face was ashen, but her eyes remained sharp, like a drawn sword.

“How much longer can you hold out?” Lang Hao’s voice was hoarse.

Yunxi was silent for a moment: “One incense stick’s time. At most, one incense stick’s time.”

Lang Hao smiled.

The smile was bitter, but stubborn.

“One incense stick’s time it is. If we can hold out for one incense stick’s time, we can hold out for an hour. If we can hold out for an hour, we can hold out for a day.”

Yunxi glanced at him, but didn’t speak.

She knew they couldn’t hold out that long.

The three thousand-strong army of the gods had already assembled outside the camp.

Three elders at the seventh rank of True Immortal Realm stood at the forefront, their golden armor gleaming in the sunlight, their longswords radiating blinding holy light.

Behind them, a dense mass of Divine Clan cultivators converged, their golden holy light forming a golden ocean.

“Lang Hao,” the middle elder spoke, his voice filled with arrogance, “surrender. You didn’t even last a single round. Surrender, and I might spare your life.”

Lang Hao gripped his battle axe tightly, his voice hoarse yet resolute: “I’ve never learned those two words in my entire life.”

“What kind of skill is it to gang up on us? If you’re so capable, let’s fight one-on-one…”

Lang Hao was furious. Although his cultivation level was higher than the elders of the Judgment Hall, he was no match for the three of them attacking together!

In a one-on-one fight, Lang Hao feared no one except the Judgment Venerable!

“We’re not stupid, why would we fight you one-on-one? But now that you’re in this state, I can grant your wish!”

The elder’s face darkened. “Die.”

He raised his hand, golden holy light condensing in his palm, transforming into a gigantic lightsaber.

The lightsaber was a hundred feet long, its blade covered in dense runes, each rune containing destructive power.

He swung the sword down, the lightsaber cleaving towards the center of the camp, tearing the air apart and carving a deep trench in the ground.

Lang Hao gritted his teeth and met the attack. The battle axe collided with the lightsaber, unleashing a deafening roar.

He was knocked back dozens of steps, his hand split open, blood staining the axe handle.

A sharp pain shot through his chest, and he spat out a mouthful of blood. But he had blocked it.

The lightsaber shattered, golden fragments scattering everywhere.

The elder’s expression changed.

He hadn’t expected that a heavily injured Lang Hao could withstand his full-force attack.

“You…”

“Come on!” Lang Hao roared, pointing his battle axe at the elder. “Come on again!”

The elder’s eyes narrowed. “Since you’re courting death, then so be it.”

He raised his hand again.

This time, all three elders attacked simultaneously.

Three golden light swords converged in the air, transforming into an even larger light sword, slashing down towards the center of the camp.

Lang Hao gritted his teeth and raised his battle axe.

But he knew he couldn't block this strike.

His body was at its limit; his left arm was broken, his chest wound was still bleeding, and his spiritual power was almost exhausted.

He couldn't withstand this strike.

Just then, a black figure blocked his way.

Yun Xi.

A blinding black light erupted from her ghost blade, and black ghost energy surged out like a tide, condensing into a huge ghost shield in front of her.

The light sword struck the ghost shield, unleashing a deafening roar.

The ghost shield shattered. Yun Xi was blasted away, crashing heavily to the ground, spitting out blood.

The Ghost Blade lay embedded in the ground beside him, its light dimmed to a near-obvious level.

"Yunxi!" Lang Hao rushed over and helped her up.

Yunxi struggled to her feet, wiping the blood from her lips, her voice weak yet resolute: "I'm not dead yet."

Lang Hao's eyes reddened.

He turned to face the divine cultivators, gripping his battle axe tightly.

“Brothers!” His voice boomed like thunder, “Today, I might die here. But I have no regrets! In my life, I’ve killed the gods, saved my people, and made friends! It was worth it!”

The beastmen roared in unison. The ghost warriors also gripped their weapons.

“Kill!”

Lang Hao was the first to charge forward.

His battle axe spun in his hand, slashing towards the three elders.

He knew he couldn’t win, but he wasn’t afraid.

He would die on the charge.

The three elders sneered and attacked simultaneously.

Golden holy light transformed into three sword beams, slashing towards Lang Hao.

Lang Hao exerted all his strength, his battle axe cleaving through the first sword beam, but the second beam struck him in the chest, sending him flying backward.

The third sword beam followed closely, aiming for his throat.

Just then, a purple light flew in from the horizon.

The purple light, swift as lightning, appeared instantly before Lang Hao, blocking the third sword beam.

There was no explosion, no loud bang; the sword beam was like paper before the purple light, instantly swallowed and dissipated.

Everyone was stunned.

The pupils of the three elders contracted sharply.

They felt the power contained within the purple light, a power that instilled fear in them to the core.

The purple light slowly dissipated, revealing a figure.

A long cyan robe, a sword hanging at his waist, a calm face, and clear eyes.

He was surrounded by a purple light, not a violent one, but a quiet one, like a sleeping dragon.

Kai.

Lang Hao looked at his back, tears welling up instantly. “You’ve finally come.”

Kai turned around, looked at his wounds, and remained silent for a moment. “You’ve worked hard. Leave the rest to me.”

He turned to face the three True Immortal Realm seventh-grade elders.

Purple chaotic power? The three elders turned deathly pale. “Kai…you’re Kai?”

“Yes.”

“You killed Lei Zhentian, and you still dare to come here to die?”

Kai didn’t answer.

He raised his right hand, and a ball of chaotic fire condensed in his palm.

The flames, interwoven with purple and gold, were particularly dazzling in the twilight.

The moment the flames appeared, the temperature of the entire world rose.

The holy light of those divine cultivators began to tremble, as if in fear.

“To die?” Kai’s voice was calm. “Try it.”

The three elders exchanged glances and attacked simultaneously.

The golden holy light transformed into three sword beams, slashing towards Kai.

Each sword beam contained the full power of a seventh-grade True Immortal, enough to level a mountain.

Kai didn’t dodge. He pushed out the chaotic fire.

The flames transformed into a purple fire dragon, roaring as it charged towards the three sword beams.

The fire dragon collided with the sword beams, but there was no explosion, no loud noise. The sword beams were like paper before the chaotic fire, instantly swallowed, melted, and dissipated.

The fire dragon continued forward, charging towards the three elders.

The three elders were terrified, frantically channeling their holy light to create a golden shield before them.

The shield had five layers, each containing the culmination of their life’s cultivation.

The fire dragon crashed into the shield.

The first layer shattered.

The second layer shattered.

The third, fourth, and fifth layers.

The fire dragon, like a red-hot iron rod piercing through butter, silently pierced all five layers of the shield.

The three elders were thrown back dozens of steps, coughing up blood.

Their faces were deathly pale, their eyes filled with terror.

“You…you…” the middle elder’s voice trembled, “What is your cultivation level?”

“Peak of the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm,” Kai’s voice was calm.

The pupils of the three elders contracted to their limit.

Peak of the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, defeating three seventh-rank True Immortal Realm cultivators with a single strike.

This person was not human, but a monster.

“Shadow Palace! Kill!”

“Rogue Cultivator Alliance! Kill!”

The situation on the battlefield completely reversed at this moment.

Ying Wuji led the demonic cultivators of the Shadow Palace out from the flank, black demonic energy surging like a tide into the divine race’s encirclement.

Feng Qingzi led the cultivators of the Loose Cultivator Alliance from the rear, multicolored spiritual energy exploding in golden holy light.

The ghost warriors of the Youyue Kingdom followed behind Yun Xi, black ghostly energy intertwining with purple chaotic power.

The divine race cultivators were stunned.

They hadn't expected the Shadow Palace or the Loose Cultivator Alliance to come.

They thought it was only the Tianlang Tribe and the Youyue Kingdom, that this would be a one-sided massacre.

But now, they were surrounded, surrounded in return.

"Kill!"

Lang Hao roared, his battle axe cleaving a divine race cultivator in two.

Blood still flowed from his body, his left arm was still broken, but his eyes shone brightly.

Behind him were his people, his brothers, those who had come to his aid in his most desperate moment. He could not fall.

Yun Xi followed behind him, her ghostly blade flashing in the black light.

Blood still flowed from her left shoulder, her face was still pale, but her sword was swift.

One strike, and a divine cultivator fell.

Two strikes, two more.

Three strikes, three more.

Her swordsmanship was cunning and ruthless, each strike hitting a vital point, none superfluous.

Ying Wuji charged at the forefront, black chaotic demonic energy surging around him.

He struck out with his palm, the black palm print sending a group of divine cultivators flying.

His face was expressionless, but his eyes held a hint of suppressed pleasure.

Five thousand years of hatred, five thousand years of grudge, today he could finally avenge them.

Feng Qingzi led the cultivators of the Loose Cultivator Alliance, circling the perimeter, holding back the divine reinforcements.

His swordsmanship was elegant and agile, each strike perfectly timed.

He didn't seek to kill the enemy, only to delay them, giving Kai and the others time to deal with the three elders.

The battle cries shook the heavens and earth.

Kai stood in the center of the battlefield, facing the three elders.

Purple chaotic power swirled around him, and chaotic fire burned in his palms.

His eyes were calm, a calmness that was frightening.

"All three of you, come at me together." His voice was soft, but every word struck the hearts of the three elders like a hammer blow.

The three elders' faces turned ashen.

They knew that in a one-on-one fight, none of them could defeat Kai.

But the three of them working together might not be without a chance.

"Kill!"

the middle elder roared, and the three attacked simultaneously.

Golden holy light transformed into three sword beams, slashing at Kai from three directions at the same time.

The sword beams intertwined, forming a golden net of light that enveloped him.

Kai did not dodge.

He unleashed his chaotic fire, and a fire dragon roared as it charged towards the net of light.

The net of light was like paper before the chaotic fire, instantly torn apart.

The fire dragon continued forward, charging towards the middle elder.

The middle elder was shocked and desperately activated his holy light, condensing a golden shield of light in front of him.

The fire dragon crashed into the shield, shattering it.

He was blasted away, crashing heavily to the ground, blood gushing from his mouth.

The two elders on his left and right seized the opportunity to attack from both sides.

Golden sword light slashed towards Kai's left and right ribs.

Kai didn't turn around; instead, he struck out with both hands simultaneously, two purple palm prints shattering the sword light.

The two elders were forced back several steps, their tiger's mouths split open, blood flowing freely.

A trace of blood trickled from the corner of Kai's mouth.

Fighting three against one, even though the power of chaos counters all other powers, a full-force attack from a seventh-grade True Immortal was not so easy to withstand.

His chaotic power was rapidly depleting, and his wounds were throbbing with pain.

But he did not retreat. He could not retreat.

Behind him were Lang Hao, Yun Xi, and those who were fighting to the death.

“Again!” he roared, charging forward.

Lang Hao cut down a Divine Race cultivator in front of him and turned to look at Kai.

He saw Kai surrounded by three elders, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth, and his heart tightened.

He knew that although Kai was strong, fighting three against one was too much for him.

“Yun Xi!” he shouted, “Go help Kai!”

Yun Xi pierced the throat of a Divine Race cultivator with her sword and turned to look at Kai.

Her pupils contracted slightly; Kai was injured.

She had never seen Kai injured before.

In her memory, Kai was always so strong, so steady, so invincible.

But now, he was injured.

“Go!” Yun Xi leaped into the air, rushing towards Kai.

Lang Hao followed behind her, his battle axe spinning in his hand.

The three elders were besieging Kai.

Although their holy light was fragile before the power of chaos, the three of them worked together seamlessly, and for the time being, Kai could not kill them all.

The elder in the middle thrust his sword towards Kai's chest.

Kai dodged to the side and struck the elder's shoulder with a palm

. The sword's edge struck his back and left rib, leaving two deep wounds.

Golden blood gushed from the wounds, dripping onto the ground.

Kai groaned, his body swaying. But he didn't fall.

He turned around and sent the elder on his left flying with a palm strike.

Just then, Lang Hao rushed forward.

His battle axe cleaved towards the head of the elder in the middle.

The elder was shocked and hurriedly raised his sword to block.

The battle axe and the sword collided, bursting into dazzling sparks.

Lang Hao was knocked back several steps, but a smile played on his lips.

"Old man, your opponent is me!"

Yun Xi also rushed forward.

Her ghostly blade stabbed towards the throat of the elder on the right.

The elder hurriedly retreated, but Yun Xi pursued relentlessly, her ghostly blade flashing in the black light, each strike faster than the last.

The elder was forced to retreat repeatedly, his eyes filled with terror.

Kai's pressure eased dramatically.

He looked at the backs of Lang Hao and Yun Xi, a warm feeling welling up in his heart.

He wasn't fighting alone.

"Kill!" he roared, charging towards the elder on the left.

The elder on the left was the weakest of the three, a mere early-stage seventh-rank True Immortal.

He had been sent flying by Kai's palm strike, suffering a serious injury, and before he could recover, Kai was already in front of him.

Purple chaotic fire condensed in Kai's palm, transforming into a purple fire sword.

Golden patterns flowed across the fire sword, its temperature so high that the surrounding air began to distort.

The elder's face turned deathly pale, and he desperately channeled his holy light, conjuring a light shield in front of him.

Kai slashed down with his sword. The fire sword struck the light shield, shattering it.

The fire sword continued downwards, striking the elder's shoulder.

The elder let out a shrill scream as his left arm was severed at the shoulder, blood gushing out.

The wound was scorched black by the chaotic fire, but not a drop of blood flowed, as it evaporated before it could even be drawn.

The elder turned and fled. Kai did not pursue. He raised his left hand, and a purple lightning spear materialized in his palm.

The essence of lightning surged within him, and purple lightning crackled on the spear.

He hurled the spear, which moved with lightning speed, instantly catching up to the elder, piercing through his back and exiting through his chest.

The elder's body froze in mid-air for a moment, then exploded into countless golden specks of light, dissipating into the air. His body and

soul were annihilated.

Kai turned to look at Lang Hao.

Lang Hao was locked in a fierce battle with the elder in the middle.

He had already sustained seven or eight new wounds, each bleeding.

But his battle axe was still in his hand, and his eyes were still bright.

He swung his axe down, and the elder raised his sword to parry. The battle axe and sword collided, unleashing dazzling sparks.

Lang Hao was knocked back, and so was the elder.

"Old man, you're not so good either!" Lang Hao wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth and laughed.

The elder's face was ashen.

He hadn't expected that even a severely injured Lang Hao would be so troublesome; he was truly monstrous.

Just then, Kai appeared behind him.

The elder felt a chill down his spine, turned around, and saw Kai's Chaos Fire already upon him.

"No..."

Before he could finish speaking, the Chaos Fire engulfed him.

His body burned in the flames, his holy light as fragile as paper before the Chaos Fire, instantly swallowed up. His

screams lasted only a breath before vanishing completely.

Kai withdrew the flames and looked towards Yun Xi.

Yun Xi was locked in combat with the elder on the right.

The elder's strength was a realm higher than Yun Xi's, but Yun Xi's ghost blade was imbued with the cursed power of the ghost race, each strike capable of corroding holy light.

The elder was forced to retreat repeatedly, his body bearing several wounds, his holy light dimmed considerably.

Yun Xi thrust her sword towards his throat.

The elder dodged to the side, then swung her sword back at Yun Xi's shoulder.

Yun Xi had no time to dodge and could only take the blow head-on.

The sword's edge struck her left shoulder, leaving a deep wound.

Her body swayed, but she didn't retreat.

She gritted her teeth, and the ghost blade pierced the elder's chest.

The elder's eyes widened in disbelief, even in death.

Yun Xi pulled out the ghost blade, and the elder's body slowly collapsed.

All three elders were slain.

The divine cultivators on the battlefield, seeing the three elders dead, completely collapsed.

They threw down their weapons and turned to flee.

Golden holy light scattered across the wasteland like disturbed fireflies.

"Chase them! Don't let them escape!" Lang Hao roared, leading the beastmen warriors in pursuit.

"Kill!" Ying Wuji led the demon cultivators of the Shadow Palace to flank them.

"Intercept them!" Feng Qingzi led the cultivators of the Loose Cultivator Alliance to block them from the rear.

The divine cultivators were surrounded on all sides, with nowhere to escape.

Some knelt and begged for mercy, some fought desperately, and some committed suicide.

Golden blood stained the wasteland, turning the gray-black earth a dark gold.

The battle lasted a full hour.

When the last divine cultivator fell, the battlefield finally fell silent.

Lang Hao knelt on the ground, panting heavily.

His battle axe was stuck in the ground beside him, its blade riddled with nicks.

He had dozens of wounds on his body, each bleeding.

But he was still alive.

He was still alive.

Yun Xi leaned against a rock, her ghost blade stuck in the ground in front of her.

Blood was still flowing from her left shoulder, her face as white as paper.

But she was still alive.

Ying Wuji stood to the side, his black robe stained with golden blood.

His face was expressionless, but a trace of weariness was in his eyes.

In this battle, the Shadow Palace also suffered heavy losses of disciples.

Feng Qingzi sat on a rock, his sword broken.

He was also wounded, but none seriously.

He looked at the corpses on the battlefield, silent for a long time.

Kai stood in the center of the battlefield, watching everything.

He was also wounded, his back and left rib struck by sword light, leaving two deep wounds.

Golden blood was still seeping out.

But his back was straight, and his eyes were bright.

“Take a headcount.” His voice was calm.

Lang Hao struggled to his feet and began to count the number of people.

Of the three hundred beastmen warriors, only one hundred and twenty remained.

Of the two hundred and seventy-three ghost warriors, only one hundred and fifty remained.

The Shadow Palace and the Loose Cultivator Alliance also suffered heavy casualties.

But the Judgment Hall's three thousand troops were completely wiped out.

"We won." Lang Hao's voice trembled, "We won."

The beastmen warriors cheered.

The ghost warriors cheered as well.

The cultivators of the Shadow Palace and the Loose Cultivator Alliance cheered as well.

Chen... The Hall of Judgment!

When the Venerable Judgment received the news, he was resting with his eyes closed in the main hall of the Hall of Judgment.

"Hall Master! Something terrible has happened!" A divine cultivator stumbled in, knelt on the ground, and trembled all over.

The Venerable Judgment opened his eyes. "Speak."

"Our men sent to attack the Sirius Tribe have all been wiped out, and three elders at the seventh rank of True Immortal Realm are also dead."

The cultivator said!

"What?" The Venerable Judgment's face was full of disbelief.

Even he might not be a match for three elders working together, how could they be dead?

“It was Kai, who led the Shadow Hall, the Loose Cultivator Alliance, and the people of the Nether Moon Kingdom to help, and our men were all wiped out.”

The cultivator explained! The

Venerable Judgment remained silent for a long time.

His fingers tapped lightly on the armrest, making a rhythmic sound.

The sound echoed in the empty hall, like the tolling of a death knell.

“Kai…you’ve cost me a deputy hall master, a spirit beast from the Soul Abyss, over a hundred cultivators, a Soul Gathering Grass, three elders, and three thousand soldiers.”

His voice was soft, as if he were talking to himself. “You will pay the price.”

“And those who opposed me, I’ll make them all pay the price…”

He stood up and walked out of the hall. His

golden robes fluttered in the wind.

In his hand, he held a golden longsword, its blade shimmering with dazzling holy light.

Behind him followed a thousand elite members of the Divine Race.

Each one was a True Immortal Realm expert of at least the fourth rank.

“Go to the Heavenly Wolf Tribe.”

…

Kai was recuperating in the Heavenly Wolf Tribe's camp.

The wounds on his back and left rib had scabbed over, but were not yet fully healed.

His Chaos Power was mostly depleted and needed time to recover.

But he had no time.

"Kai!" Lang Hao rushed into the tent, his face ashen. "The Judgment Venerable is here!"

Kai stood up and walked out of the tent.

On the distant horizon, golden light was beginning to shine.

That wasn't sunlight, it was holy light, the holy light of the Arbiter Venerable.

The light was so dazzling it was blinding, dyeing the entire sky gold.

Kai's eyes narrowed slightly.

Eighth Rank True Immortal.

The number one person in the Fifteenth Heaven.

He's here.

"Everyone, step back." Kai's voice was calm. "This is between him and me."

Lang Hao wanted to say something, but meeting Kai's calm eyes, he swallowed his words. "Be careful."

Kai smiled, leaped into the air, transforming into a purple streak of light, and flew towards the Arbiter Venerable.

The Arbiter Venerable stood in the void, his golden robes fluttering in the wind.

In his hand he held a golden longsword, its blade shimmering with dazzling holy light.

Behind him stood a thousand elite members of the Divine Race.

He watched Kai fly towards him, a slight smile playing on his lips. “Kai, you’ve finally come.”

Kai stopped a hundred feet away from him, purple chaotic power flowing around him.

“Arbiter Venerable, you’ve finally decided to show yourself.” Kai sneered!

The Arbiter’s eyes narrowed. “You killed my Vice Hall Master, destroyed my Soul Abyss, stole my crystals, killed my elders, and annihilated my army. Kai, do you think you can leave alive?”

Kai laughed.

“Do you think you can kill me?” Kai’s tone was utterly disdainful.

The Arbiter remained silent.

He raised his golden longsword and slashed down.

The golden sword light transformed into a hundred-foot-long blade of light, slashing towards Kai.

Wherever the blade passed, space was torn apart, revealing a pitch-black rift.

The power of this sword strike was stronger than the combined attack of the three elders.

Kai did not dodge.

He raised his right hand, and chaotic fire condensed in his palm, transforming into a purple fire sword.

The fire sword collided with the golden blade of light.

Boom!

The two forces collided, unleashing a deafening roar.

The entire world trembled; rocks on the ground shattered, air was torn apart, and space was distorted and deformed.

In the distant Sirius tribe camp, everyone felt that terrifying pressure.

Some collapsed to the ground, their legs giving way; others turned and ran; still others trembled violently, their hands gripping their weapons.

Kai was thrown back dozens of feet, his tiger's mouth split open, blood trickling down his sword hilt.

A trace of blood trickled from the corner of his mouth.

The Judgment Venerable's power was stronger than he had imagined.

An eighth-grade True Immortal was not someone he could easily contend with.

But he did not retreat.

He wiped the blood from his mouth and gripped his fire sword tightly.

"Again."

The Judgment Venerable's eyes brightened.

"Interesting." He swung his sword again, golden sword light pouring down like a torrential rain, each strike enough to kill a seventh-grade True Immortal.

Kai gritted his teeth and met the attack.

The purple fire sword clashed with the golden sword light, each impact producing a deafening roar.

New wounds appeared on his body, golden blood splattering in the air.

But he did not retreat. His fire sword grew faster and fiercer.

The two fought from the sky to the ground, and from the ground to the sky.

Within a hundred miles, no one dared to approach.

The elite warriors of the Divine Race and the warriors of the Sirius Tribe stood at a distance, watching the two beams of light collide in the sky, their eyes filled with shock.

Golden sword beams poured down like a torrential downpour, each one accompanied by a sharp whistling sound that tore through space, densely enveloping Kai.

The purple fire sword in his hand danced into an impenetrable wall of light, each collision unleashing a dazzling halo of interwoven gold and purple light.

The deafening roar shook the heavens and earth, even scattering the distant clouds to reveal a sky stained a dark purple by the flames of war.

Kai’s toes touched the air, his figure weaving through the sword beams like a ghost.

Chaotic fire spread along the fiery sword, scorching and melting away the golden sword beams in its path, turning them into countless tiny specks of light.

But the Judgment Venerable's attacks were too swift; the spiritual power of an eighth-grade True Immortal was like a surging river, continuously pouring into the longsword.

The power of the sword beams grew stronger and stronger, each one carving a trench several feet deep into the ground.

Debris flew, dust billowed into the sky, and the already dilapidated Heavenly Wolf Tribe camp was razed to the ground.

"Hah!"

the Judgment Venerable roared, raising his longsword high above his head, his holy light suddenly surging.

Golden light coalesced into a colossal lightsaber a thousand feet long, its blade inscribed with the supreme runes of the divine race. As the runes flowed, they emanated a world-destroying pressure.

"Sword of Judgment, slay all heretics!"

The thousand-foot-long lightsaber, carrying the force of Mount Tai, crashed down upon Kai.

The air along its path was completely sucked away, forming a pitch-black vacuum where even light was distorted and swallowed.

Kai's expression was solemn. The chaotic power within his body surged wildly, and purple light erupted from his body.

Chaotic fire and the essence of lightning intertwined, transforming into a ten-thousand-foot-long purple-gold fire dragon.

The fire dragon bared its fangs..."Boom!"

The moment the fire dragon collided with the lightsaber, the world seemed to freeze for a split second.

Immediately afterward, a devastating shockwave swept across the area. Centered on the point of impact, the ground within a hundred miles instantly collapsed, forming a massive crater.

Within the crater, magma churned, and black smoke billowed into the sky, dyeing half the sky a dark red.

A howling wind whipped up countless fragments of rock, raining them down like a meteor shower.

Lang Hao, Yun Xi, and the others hurriedly activated their spiritual power to form shields.

Even so, they were forced back by the shockwave, blood trickling from their lips, their eyes filled with disbelief and shock.

“This…is this the power of an eighth-grade True Immortal? It’s terrifying…”

The cultivators of the Loose Cultivator Alliance were pale, their legs weak, some even collapsing to the ground.

Looking at the two intertwined figures in the sky, their eyes were filled with awe and fear.

Ying Wuji clenched his fists, black demonic energy surging around him, yet he dared not advance.

He knew that in a battle of this level, even being caught in the aftershocks would result in instant annihilation.

Feng Qingzi frowned, his broken sword trembling slightly, thinking to himself: Kai’s strength already far surpasses that of cultivators at the same level, but the power of the Judgment Venerable still exceeded everyone’s expectations.

In the sky, Kai was thrown backward by the shockwave, spitting out a mouthful of golden blood.

The wound on his back reopened, blood staining his cyan robe, and the chaotic power around him dimmed slightly.

But he did not fall, his figure stabilizing in the void, gripping his fire sword tightly, the light in his eyes growing sharper, like burning flames.

“Judgment Venerable, is this all you’ve got?” Kai sneered.

The Judgment Venerable was also not in good shape; his giant light sword was shattered by the fire dragon, and he was thrown back dozens of feet.

A tear appeared on his golden robe, and a trace of golden blood spilled from the corner of his mouth.

A flicker of surprise crossed his eyes: “I didn’t expect that someone at the peak of the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm could withstand my full-force attack. Kai, you are indeed extraordinary.”

Before he finished speaking, the Judgment Venerable’s figure flashed, instantly appearing before Kai.

His longsword, carrying a sharp holy light, pierced straight for Kai’s heart, its speed reaching its limit, leaving only a golden afterimage. Kai’s pupils contracted sharply. He dodged to the side, while simultaneously sweeping his fire sword, the purple-gold flames slashing

towards the Judgment Venerable’s waist. The Judgment Venerable flipped his wrist, his longsword parrying, the golden and purple lights colliding again. The two were locked in combat, their figures rapidly intertwining in the void, too fast to see clearly, only streaks of interwoven golden and purple light and the deafening sounds of their collisions could be seen. Kai’s chaotic power countered all attributes; each collision corroded the Judgment Venerable’s holy light, causing his spiritual power to be consumed even faster. However, the Judgment Venerable’s realm was ultimately a notch higher, his spiritual power profound, and his swordsmanship exquisite. Every strike aimed directly at Kai’s vitals, each move potentially fatal . Kai, relying on his agile movements and the

unpredictable nature of the chaotic power, constantly dodged and counterattacked. Each time the fire sword struck the Judgment Venerable, it left a burning wound, while Kai was also constantly struck by the holy light, his wounds multiplying. Golden blood flowed down his body, dripping into the void, transforming into streaks of golden light that dissipated in the wind. On the first day, the two fought from dawn till dusk. The golden-purple light in the sky never ceased, the roaring sounds shaking heaven and earth. Within a radius of a hundred miles, life was ravaged, vegetation withered, leaving only a scorched ruin. Lang Hao, Yun Xi, and the others remained at a distance, not daring to relax their vigilance in the slightest. They watched Kai, covered in wounds, yet still refusing to retreat, feeling both heartache and admiration. Yun Xi gripped her ghost blade tightly, wanting to rush forward to help several times, but was stopped by Lang Hao each time. “Don’t go! We’ll only hinder Kai. Trust him!” In the dead of night, high in the sky, two figures continued their fierce battle. The Arbiter’s holy light had dimmed considerably, his breathing had become rapid, and his wounds were multiplying, golden blood staining most of his robes. But his eyes remained sharp, and his sword still wielded with incredible speed. Kai’s chaotic power was greatly depleted; his face was as pale as paper, the wounds on his back and left rib were mangled and bloody, and even his sword-wielding hand trembled slightly. But his eyes remained resolute, the purple-gold flames stubbornly burning on his fire sword, showing no sign of extinguishing. “Kai, you can’t hold on any longer. Surrender, and I can give you a quick death!” The Arbiter’s voice carried a hint of weariness, yet remained full of arrogance. Kai sneered, wiping the blood from the corner of his mouth, and charged forward again. “If you want me to surrender, you’ll have to die!” The next day, the battle intensified. The Arbiter no longer held back, activating a forbidden secret technique of the gods. His body radiated holy light, his hair turned golden, his eyes also turned golden, and his aura surged once more, reaching the peak of the eighth rank of the True Immortal Realm. The longsword in his hand transformed into a golden stream of light, each strike containing forbidden power. Space was torn apart, revealing numerous dark cracks from which terrifying spatial turbulence emanated. Seeing this, Kai no longer held back. Chaotic power transformed into a purplish-gray longsword, upon which flowed a strange and powerful spatial aura. The purplish-gray longsword, imbued with spatial power, slashed towards the Judgment Venerable, distorting space and slowing time wherever it

passed. The Judgment Venerable's expression changed drastically, and he hurriedly swung his sword to block. The three beams of light—gold, purple, and gray—collided, unleashing a shockwave even more powerful than before. The crater, spanning a hundred miles in radius, expanded again, spewing forth magma and forming small volcanoes, billowing black smoke that blotted out the sky. The spectators in the distance were terrified by this terrifying battle. Many cultivators had collapsed, their bodies ice-cold, unable to hold on any longer. Lang Hao sustained several new wounds, caught in the aftershocks of the battle. He stared intently at the sky, his eyes filled with worry. "It's been two days. Kai's chaotic power is almost exhausted. The Judgment Venerable isn't doing well either, but at this rate, Kai will eventually succumb." Yun Xi remained silent, a tear welling in her eyes, yet she did not back down. She knew Kai was fighting for everyone. All she could do was guard this place, preventing anyone from interfering with this epic duel.The battle between the two continued late the following night.

However, their movements had slowed considerably, and their breaths grew increasingly weak.

Kai's chaotic power was almost exhausted, and his wounds were numerous and numerous.

Golden blood dripped continuously from his body, and he swayed precariously in the void, yet he still gripped his purplish-gray longsword tightly, refusing to fall.

The Judgment Venerable was in no better shape.

The side effects of the forbidden secret technique were beginning to manifest, and his...