

## The Order 10291

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He stood up and extended his hand to Chen Wanqing:

“Miss Chen, it’s a pleasure to cooperate.”

Chen Wanqing looked at his hand, paused, then smiled and shook his hand.

“A pleasure to cooperate.”

Chen Ping withdrew his hand, then suddenly remembered something and asked, “By the way, Miss Chen, since we are now in a cooperative relationship, may I make a request?”

Chen Wanqing nodded, “Please speak, Mr. Chen.”

Chen Ping looked at her and said seriously, “Since we are partners, shouldn’t we get on with our dual cultivation?”

Chen Wanqing’s smile froze.

“You...what did you say?”

Chen Ping shrugged. “Didn’t you say it yourself? I’m your cultivation partner. The test is over, now it’s time for cultivation. Why not tonight?”

Chen Wanqing’s cheeks flushed red. She glared at him fiercely. “Young Master Chen, please have some self-respect!”

Chen Ping looked innocent. "How am I not self-respecting? You said I'm your cultivation partner. What kind of cultivation partner is it if we don't cultivate together?"

Chen Wanqing was speechless with anger.

She took a deep breath, suppressing the urge to kick Chen Ping out, and said, word by word:

"Young Master Chen, I'll say it again. The cultivation partner is only in name, to allow you to stay in the Chen family legitimately. Except...except for that, you can have anything you want."

Chen Ping raised an eyebrow. "Anything?"

Chen Wanqing nodded. "Anything."

Chen Ping thought for a moment, then said seriously, "Then I want one million bottles of immortal liquid."

Chen Wanqing almost lost her balance.

"One...one million?!"

Her eyes widened, staring at Chen Ping in disbelief.

Chen Ping nodded, his expression matter-of-fact: "Yes, one million. Didn't Miss Chen say she'd do anything except that? One million bottles of immortal liquid shouldn't be difficult for the Chen family, right?"

Chen Wanqing took a deep breath, then another, barely managing to suppress the urge to slap him.

“Young Master Chen,”

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she gritted her teeth, enunciating each word clearly, “one million bottles of immortal liquid...even if you sold the Chen family, you couldn’t come up with that.”

Chen Ping looked at her clenched teeth and suddenly laughed.

“Miss Chen, I was just joking.”

Chen Wanqing was taken aback.

Chen Ping’s smile vanished, replaced by a serious expression. “Miss Chen,” he said, “since we’re partners, I have only one request: I need 360 bottles of Immortal Elixir to take the teleportation array to the Holy Land of Light. Once the Dragon Pool matter is resolved, you must help me leave Cloud Immortal City.”

Chen Wanqing stared at him blankly, only reacting after a long while.

“You...you were just teasing me?”

Chen Ping shrugged. “Otherwise? I can’t really cultivate with you, can I? I have partners, dozens of them, after all.”

Chen Wanqing’s cheeks flushed again, this time with anger.

She glared at Chen Ping fiercely, then turned and walked towards the door.

At the door, she suddenly stopped, turning back to look at Chen Ping:

“Young Master Chen, since you have dozens of partners, why did you participate in the martial arts contest for a husband?”

Chen Ping leaned back in his chair, saying calmly, “I said, it’s for the Immortal Elixir, to find a backer.”

Chen Wanqing was silent for a moment, then suddenly smiled.

In that smile, there was relief, appreciation, and a hint of something indescribable...loss.

“Young Master Chen seems like an honest man, but I never expected him to be so dissolute, with dozens of companions.”

She pushed open the door and said softly, “I’ll have someone arrange accommodations for you. Tomorrow morning, I’ll take you to Dragon Pool.”

With that, she turned and left.

Chen Ping watched her retreating figure, a slight smile playing on his lips.

This woman is quite interesting.

...

After leaving the room, Chen Wanqing didn’t return to her own chambers but headed straight for the depths of the Chen residence.

Passing through several courtyards, she arrived before a magnificent hall. Above the hall’s entrance hung a plaque with three large characters: “Hall of Council Affairs.”

Eight guards stood on either side of the entrance, all possessing the cultivation of a sixth-grade Upper Immortal.

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Seeing Chen Wanqing approach, they all bowed respectfully.

“Miss.”

Chen Wanqing nodded slightly and entered through the door.

The main hall was brightly lit. In the center, seated in the main seat, sat an elderly man with graying temples.

The old man had a dignified face, his eyes flashing with a sharp light, his aura as deep as the sea—clearly a True Immortal Realm expert.

This man was none other than Chen Tiangang, the head of the Chen family and Chen Wanqing’s father.

On either side, in sandalwood chairs, sat six elderly men, all elders of the Chen family, each possessing a powerful aura; the lowest cultivation level was at least ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm.

Seeing Chen Wanqing enter, all eyes turned to her.

Chen Tiangang nodded slightly: “Wanqing, how did the marriage proposal go?”

Chen Wanqing walked into the hall, bowed to her father and the elders, and slowly said:

“Father, the marriage proposal has been decided.”

The elders’ spirits lifted.

“Who is it?”

A red-faced elder asked impatiently, “Is it Wu Lingyun of the Wu family?”

Chen Wanqing shook her head: “No.”

“No?”

The red-faced elder was taken aback. “Wu Lingyun is a ninth-grade Upper Immortal, and possesses the Crimson Gold Bloodline. No one among the younger generation of Yunxian City can match him. Besides him, who else could pass the Four Pillars Test?”

Chen Wanqing took a deep breath and said, word by word:

“That person is called Chen Ping.”

“Chen Ping?”

Another white-haired elder frowned. “This name... I feel like I’ve heard it somewhere before.”

Chen Wanqing nodded: “Elder, you have a good memory. This person is the wanted criminal by the Divine Temple, the one who destroyed the Heavenly Road, killed the Great Venerable, and caused chaos on the Holy Mountain—Chen Ping.”

Upon hearing this, the entire hall was shocked.

“What?!”

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“It’s him?!”

“The Chen Ping with the bounty of fifty thousand bottles of immortal liquid?!”

The elders exchanged bewildered glances, their eyes filled with shock.

The red-faced elder abruptly stood up, urgently saying, “Wanqing, you’re foolish! This man is wanted by the Temple! Bringing him into the Chen family is like inviting trouble!”

Chen Wanqing, however, remained calm and slowly replied:

“Elder, don’t be hasty. Precisely because he’s a wanted criminal, he’s the person our Chen family needs most.”

The elders were stunned.

Chen Wanqing continued, “Do you all remember who we’re looking for?”

The white-haired elder pondered, “A person with dragon blood...”

He suddenly widened his eyes: “You mean...”

Chen Wanqing nodded, enunciating each word clearly:

“Chen Ping possesses the bloodline of the Golden Dragon, the bloodline of the emperors of the dragon race.”

The hall instantly fell silent.

You could hear a pin drop.

After a long silence, Chen Tiangang slowly spoke:

“Wanqing, are you sure?”

Chen Wanqing nodded solemnly: “I saw it with my own eyes. When he was testing his bloodline, a five-clawed golden dragon phantom appeared behind him, its roar shaking the heavens and shattering the testing stone pillars.”

She paused, then added, “Moreover, he passed the Four Pillars Test and the Test of Self-Control, his results far surpassing Wu Lingyun’s.”

The elders exchanged bewildered glances, their eyes filled with disbelief.

The red-faced elder murmured, “Golden Dragon Bloodline...that’s a legendary supreme bloodline...”

The white-haired elder also became excited: “If he can truly enter the Dragon Pool, then my Chen family’s plans...”

Chen Tiangang raised his hand, stopping the murmurs.

He looked at Chen Wanqing and said in a deep voice, “Wanqing, is he willing to cooperate with us?”

Chen Wanqing nodded: "I've already reached an agreement with him. He's willing to help us enter Dragon Pool on the condition that we protect him and help him fend off the Temple's pursuit. After it's done, we also need to send him away from Yunxian City to the Holy Domain of Light."

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Chen Tiangang was silent for a moment, then slowly nodded:

"The conditions are reasonable. As long as he can enter Dragon Pool, none of this will be a problem."

He looked at the elders: "What do you all think?"

The red-faced elder pondered: "Patriarch, protecting Chen Ping is tantamount to making enemies of the Temple. Although our Chen family has some influence in Yunxian City..." "But if the Temple launches a large-scale attack..."

Chen Tiangang said calmly, "Although the Temple is powerful, it must also consider the constraints imposed by the Divine Hall and Divine Palace. Moreover, the Temple no longer has much control over Yun City; if they want to launch a large-scale attack, they will have no legitimate reason."

The white-haired elder nodded, "The Patriarch is absolutely right. The Temple's current focus is on repairing the destroyed Holy Mountain Altar; they may not have the resources to launch a major attack on Yunxian City."

Another elder added, "If we can enter the Dragon Pool and obtain the Dragon Clan's treasures, the Chen family's strength will greatly increase. At that time, even if the Temple comes looking for trouble, we might still have a fighting chance."

The elders all nodded.

Chen Tiangang looked at Chen Wanqing, his eyes filled with approval:

"Wanqing, you handled this matter well. Where is Chen Ping now?"

Chen Wanqing replied, "I've settled him in the guest courtyard. I'll take him to Dragon Pool first thing tomorrow morning."

Chen Tiangang nodded: "Good. Tomorrow, I will personally lead men to escort you there."

He paused, his gaze sweeping over the elders:

"Pass down the order: From today onwards, the Chen residence is on high alert. Everyone must increase patrols and be vigilant against spies from the Divine Temple infiltrating. If any suspicious persons are found, arrest them immediately!"

"Yes!"

The elders responded in unison.

Chen Wanqing bowed slightly: "Father, if there's nothing else, I'll take my leave."

Chen Tiangang nodded: "Go. Get some rest; tomorrow's matters are of utmost importance."

Chen Wanqing turned and walked out of the hall.

Reaching the doorway, she suddenly stopped and turned to Chen Tiangang:

"Father, that Chen Ping... he's very interesting."

Chen Tiangang raised an eyebrow: "Oh?"

Chen Wanqing's lips curled slightly: "I just said I was willing to protect him, on the condition that he help me enter the Dragon Pool. He agreed, and then asked if we could settle our dual cultivation tonight, since we're now partners."

Chen Tiangang was stunned.

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The elders were also stunned.

The red-faced elder almost choked on his saliva.

Chen Wanqing smiled, her eyes crinkling: "Of course I refused. Then he said he wanted a million bottles of immortal liquid."

"A million?!" the red-faced elder exclaimed.

Chen Wanqing nodded: "It startled me. Then he said he was joking."

She paused, her smile deepening: "This man... he's incredibly shameless, but surprisingly... not unpleasant."

With that, she turned and left, leaving the crowd in the hall exchanging bewildered glances.

Chen Tiangang stared blankly at his daughter's departing figure for a long while, then suddenly smiled.

"That lad...is interesting."

The next morning, Chen Ping was awakened by a knock on the door.

"Young Master Chen, it's time to set off."

Chen Wanqing's clear, cool voice came from outside.

Chen Ping got up and opened the door, where he saw Chen Wanqing standing gracefully in a white dress.

The morning light bathed her in a soft golden glow, making her look like a fairy from a painting.

"Good morning, Miss Chen."

Chen Ping yawned. "Going to Dragon Pool so early?"

"The entrance to Dragon Pool is only open for two hours each day, from Chen Shi (7-9 AM) to Si Shi (9-11 AM). If you miss it, you'll have to wait until tomorrow."

Chen Wanqing explained, "Father and the elders are already waiting outside the mansion. Please follow me, Young Master Chen."

Chen Ping nodded and followed Chen Wanqing out of the mansion.

Along the way, the Chen mansion was heavily guarded, with patrolling guards everywhere. Chen Ping noticed the guards' gazes towards him were quite complex, containing curiosity, wariness, and a hint of awe.

Outside the manor gate, eight beast-drawn carriages were ready to depart.

Chen Tiangang stood with his hands behind his back, behind him stood six elders, all possessing imposing auras.

Further behind were thirty elite guards of the Chen family, each with a cultivation level of at least the seventh rank of the Upper Immortal Realm.

Seeing Chen Ping emerge, Chen Tiangang sized him up and nodded slightly: “Young Master Chen, did you rest well last night?”

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“Thank you for your concern, Patriarch Chen, it was quite good.”

Chen Ping smiled, “The beds in the Chen family manor are much more comfortable than the stone caves I slept in in the wild.”

Chen Tiangang’s lips curled slightly upon hearing this.

This young man is quite interesting.

“In that case, let’s set off.”

Chen Tiangang waved his hand and boarded the first beast-drawn carriage first.

Chen Ping was about to follow when Chen Wanqing stopped him. “Young Master Chen, please follow me to the third carriage.”

Chen Ping raised an eyebrow and followed Chen Wanqing into the third beast-drawn carriage.

The interior was spacious, covered with soft animal hides, and tea and snacks were laid out on a table.

Chen Wanqing sat down opposite Chen Ping but didn’t speak, simply watching him quietly.

Chen Ping felt a little uneasy under her gaze: “Miss Chen, is there something on my face?”

Chen Wanqing shook her head, suddenly taking out an exquisite jade box from her sleeve. Opening the lid, she revealed a silver collar lying quietly inside.

The collar was entirely silver-white, densely engraved with runes, faintly shimmering with light.

Chen Ping's gaze sharpened.

These runes... are restrictive runes.

Chen Wanqing handed the jade box to Chen Ping, her expression calm: "Young Master Chen, please wear this before entering the Dragon Pool."

Chen Ping didn't take it, only looking at her indifferently: "What is this?"

"A protective item."

Chen Wanqing's tone was calm. "The Dragon Pool is heavily fortified; a slight mistake could trigger a killing formation. This bracelet bears protective runes left by my Chen family ancestors, capable of protecting you in times of crisis."

Chen Ping smiled.

A protective item?

Although he wasn't a formation master, he had seen quite a few restrictions.

The runes on this bracelet were clearly a combination of spirit-locking and tracking restrictions.

After wearing it, not only would his spiritual power be restricted, but his every move would also be sensed by the caster.

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This is for self-defense?

This is for protecting him, isn't it?

Chen Ping looked at Chen Wanqing, a half-smile playing on his lips. "Miss Chen, are you sure this is for self-defense?"

Chen Wanqing's expression remained unchanged. "Young Master Chen doesn't believe me?"

Chen Ping shook his head. "It's not that I don't believe you, it's that I believe you too much."

He reached into the jade box and picked up the necklace, weighing it in his hand.

The silver necklace was icy cold, and the runes on it flickered slightly, sensing the presence of a living person.

Chen Ping looked into Chen Wanqing's eyes, enunciating each word clearly:

"Miss Chen, only if I wear this will your Chen family feel comfortable letting me enter the Dragon's Den, right?"

Chen Wanqing was silent for a moment, then slowly nodded. "Young Master Chen is indeed clever."

She didn't deny it, nor did she make excuses; she simply admitted it frankly.

A hint of admiration flashed in Chen Ping's eyes.

This woman is indeed frank.

"Miss Chen, you really don't need to do this."

Chen Ping toyed with the collar, saying calmly, "Since I promised to help you enter the Dragon Pool, I won't go back on my word. Wearing this only makes it seem like we don't trust each other."

Chen Wanqing pursed her lips: "Young Master Chen, I trust you. But the Chen family isn't just me."

She paused, looking directly at Chen Ping: "Of the six elders, three have doubts about you. They believe you're wanted by the Temple and might betray us at any time. If they discover..." "The treasure is very likely to be kept for themselves. They insisted you wear this necklace."

Chen Ping raised an eyebrow: "So, you're here as a persuader?"

Chen Wanqing shook her head: "No, I'm here to apologize."

She stood up and bowed deeply to Chen Ping: "Young Master Chen, I'm sorry. I know this isn't fair to you, but for the Chen family's sake, and for the success of our trip to Dragon Pool, please bear with it. Once we're out of Dragon Pool, I'll personally remove the necklace for you and apologize."

Chen Ping looked at her, silent for a long time.

After a while, he suddenly smiled.

"Miss Chen, your apology is so sincere, I can't even be angry."

He fastened the necklace around his neck with a “click,” and it closed.

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Instantly, a strange power surged from the necklace, spreading throughout his body along his meridians.

Chen Ping felt his spiritual energy circulation become sluggish, as if suppressed by something.

At the same time, a faint, persistent thought locked onto him, following him wherever he went.

Chen Wanqing watched him put on the collar without hesitation, a complex emotion flashing in her eyes.

“Young Master Chen, you...you’re not angry?”

Chen Ping leaned against the carriage wall, lazily replying, “What good would anger do? Your Chen family has six elders, one True Immortal patriarch, and thirty Upper Immortal guards. If I made a scene, would I even leave Yunxian City alive?”

He looked at Chen Wanqing, a playful smile playing on his lips. “Besides, Miss Chen has personally apologized. I, a grown man, can’t possibly hold a grudge against a woman, can I?”

Chen Wanqing stared at him blankly for a long while, then softly said, “Young Master Chen, you are much more magnanimous than I imagined....”

Chen Ping waved his hand. “Don’t flatter me. I’m easily flattered. Flattery makes me arrogant, and arrogance makes me prone to doing foolish things.”

Chen Wanqing couldn’t help but laugh.

This smile was more genuine than ever before.

“Young Master Chen, don’t worry. Once the Dragon Pool matter is resolved, I will definitely...”

“Alright, alright,”

Chen Ping interrupted her, “You already said that. Let’s talk about the Dragon Pool. What’s the situation inside? Your Chen family has been exploring for three months; surely you’ve gained something?”

Chen Wanqing’s smile faded, and she said seriously, “In the past three months, my Chen family has sent seventeen groups of people into the outer perimeter of the Dragon Pool, but they were all blocked by the dragon clan’s restriction. We don’t know what’s behind the restriction.”

She took out a map made of animal hide from her sleeve and spread it out on the table.

The map marked the terrain of the mountains north of the city, with one area circled in red.

“This is the entrance to Dragon Pool, located in a secluded valley. The valley is surrounded by ancient restrictions, and it took my Chen family two months to find a safe path.”

Chen Wanqing pointed to a red circle on the map. “After entering the valley, you’ll see a stone gate. Beyond the stone gate lies the outer edge of Dragon Pool. That’s where we encountered the dragon clan’s restrictions.”

Chen Ping looked at the map and suddenly asked, “Did you try to force your way through?”

Chen Wanqing shook her head: “We did. Three elders at the ninth rank of the Upper Immortal Realm joined forces to attack that barrier, but they were severely injured by the backlash. One of them is still recovering.”

She looked at Chen Ping, her eyes filled with expectation: “That barrier doesn’t react to those with dragon blood, but those without dragon blood will be struck by lightning upon approaching. Young Master Chen, you possess the Golden Dragon bloodline; you should be able to pass safely.”

Chen Ping nodded, asking no further questions.

The beast-drawn carriage traveled north, leaving Yunxian City and entering the rolling mountains.

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An hour later, the caravan stopped before a valley.

Chen Ping alighted from the carriage. At the valley entrance stood a massive stone tablet, inscribed with four ancient characters:

“Dragon Forbidden Land”

The characters were weathered and worn, bearing the marks of time.

Chen Tiangang walked to Chen Ping’s side and said in a deep voice, “Young Master Chen, I entrust the rest to you.”

Chen Ping nodded and followed Chen Wanqing deeper into the valley.

Six elders followed closely behind, while thirty guards remained at the valley entrance on watch.

After passing through a narrow canyon, the view suddenly opened up before them.

This was an open space, about a hundred feet in diameter, at the end of which stood a massive stone gate.

The gate was about ten feet high, constructed entirely of colossal blue stones.

Embroidered on the gate were lifelike reliefs of five-clawed golden dragons, each with two fist-sized luminous pearls embedded in its eyes, glowing softly.

Before the gate was a pale golden light barrier, faintly crackling with lightning.

Chen Wanqing stopped and looked at Chen Ping: "Young Master Chen, that is the Dragon Clan's restriction. You..."

Before she could finish speaking, Chen Ping strode towards the light barrier.

"Young Master Chen!" Chen Wanqing exclaimed.

Chen Ping didn't turn back, stepping directly into the light barrier.

The pale golden light barrier rippled, but didn't trigger any attack.

Chen Ping's figure vanished behind the light barrier.

Chen Wanqing stared blankly at this scene, her heart filled with mixed emotions.

He... he really went in.

Without any hesitation, without any second thought.

It was as if he wasn't worried at all about the dangers behind the light barrier.

...

Behind the light barrier lay another world.