

The Order 10481

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Chen Ping looked in the direction she pointed and saw the mountain peak soaring into the clouds, its summit shrouded in mist, with palaces and pavilions vaguely visible.

“Let’s go,” he said calmly.

Yun Yao nodded and followed behind him.

The two transformed into streaks of light and sped towards Holy Light Peak.

On the way, Yun Yao couldn’t help but ask, “Young Master, what are you going to the Divine Hall for?”

Chen Ping was silent for a moment, then said calmly, “To find someone to help me.”

Yun Yao was taken aback, then nodded, not asking any further questions.

She could sense that Chen Ping harbored many secrets. But she also knew that those secrets were not for her to ask.

Chen Ping suddenly spoke again: “How much do you know about the Divine Hall?”

Yun Yao thought for a moment, then said, “The Divine Hall is one of the oldest forces in the Holy Domain of Light, said to be tens of thousands of years old. They take it upon themselves to protect the light and have always been revered by righteous cultivators.

It is said that the Divine Hall possesses a secret method capable of awakening souls, and many cultivators flock there seeking their help.”

Chen Ping nodded, remaining silent.

Yun Yao hesitated for a moment, then said, “However... the Divine Hall always acts mysteriously and rarely contacts the outside world. If you, Young Master, were to seek their help, it probably wouldn’t be so easy.”

Chen Ping said calmly, “I know.”

Yun Yao bit her lip and whispered, “Young Master, if I may be so bold as to ask... who are you trying to save?”

Chen Ping was silent for a moment, then said softly, “Two friends.”

Yun Yao looked at him, a complex emotion welling up within her.

This incredibly powerful man would actually travel thousands of miles to the Holy Domain of Light to seek the Divine Hall’s help for the sake of his friends.

She suddenly realized that Chen Ping’s coldness and aloofness weren’t his true nature. It was merely a protective shell.

The real him was loyal and righteous.

“Young Master, although Yun Yao’s strength is weak, if there’s anything I can do to help, please don’t hesitate to ask,” Yun Yao said earnestly.

Chen Ping glanced at her and nodded.

“Thank you.”

Yun Yao felt a surge of emotion.

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To hear Chen Ping say “thank you” made her feel that this trip had been worthwhile.

...

The two traveled swiftly and soon arrived at the foot of Holy Light Peak.

This mountain peak was majestic and towering, piercing the clouds.

The mountain was covered in lush vegetation, rich in spiritual energy, and filled with a faint fragrance.

Chen Ping stopped and looked up at the summit.

There, a massive palace could be vaguely seen, appearing and disappearing in the mist.

“A divine hall...” he murmured.

Yun Yao stood beside him and said softly, “Young Master, there are restrictions on Holy Light Peak. You can’t fly up directly; you can only climb on foot. This is the rule of the Divine Hall, to show respect.”

Chen Ping nodded and began walking up the mountain.

Yun Yao quickly followed.

The two climbed the stone steps step by step.

Along the way, Chen Ping remained silent, only moving forward in stillness.

The images of the monsters in the dense forest kept flashing through his mind.

Monsters formed from the fusion of divine and demonic bloodlines.

Trapped in the dense forest, unable to leave, they could only kill and devour each other's flesh and blood.

What secrets are hidden behind this?

And what role does the Divine Hall, this ancient force revered by countless righteous cultivators, play in all of this?

He raised his head, looking towards the palace at the summit, a complex expression flashing in his eyes.

The Holy Light Domain, a gathering place for righteous cultivators.

But along the way, he hadn't witnessed only light.

The forced marriages of the Holy Purity Cult, the hellish forests...

Was the so-called righteous path truly so upright and honorable?

For the first time, Chen Ping felt a pang of doubt about the Divine Hall.

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He suddenly stopped.

Yun Yao was startled and quickly asked, "Young Master, what's wrong?"

Chen Ping looked towards the mountaintop, remained silent for a moment, and said calmly, "Nothing. Let's go."

He continued walking towards the summit.

Yun Yao watched his retreating figure, a strange feeling welling up inside her.

She felt that Chen Ping had hesitated for a moment.

But she didn't ask.

She knew Chen Ping had his reasons.

The two continued upwards, soon reaching the mountainside.

Just then, a white streak of light descended from the sky, landing before them.

The man was a young man, dressed in a long white robe, with handsome features and an ethereal air. He emanated a faint light, as if bathed in holy radiance.

He glanced at Chen Ping and Yun Yao, nodded slightly, and spoke in a gentle yet distant tone: "Fellow Daoists, this is a sacred place of the Divine Hall. May I ask what brings you here?"

Chen Ping looked at him and said calmly, "We request an audience with the Lord of the Divine Hall."

The young man smiled slightly and said, "The Lord is currently in seclusion and does not receive guests. If you have anything to say, please inform me, and I will relay your message."

Chen Ping frowned slightly.

Seclusion?

He looked at the young man and suddenly asked, "Does the Divine Hall harbor demons?"

The young man's smile froze instantly.

After a moment, his expression returned to normal, and he said calmly, "Fellow Daoist, you jest. The Divine Hall is a sacred ground of the righteous path; how could it harbor demons?"

Chen Ping looked at him without speaking.

The young man, feeling slightly uncomfortable under his gaze, coughed lightly and said, "If you two have nothing else to say, please return. During the God Lord's seclusion, the Divine Hall does not receive outsiders."

Chen Ping was silent for a moment, then nodded.

"Alright."

He turned and walked down the mountain.

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Yun Yao was startled and quickly followed.

“Young Master, are we just leaving like this?” she asked softly.

Chen Ping didn't answer, but simply walked quickly down the mountain.

Although Yun Yao was full of questions, she didn't ask further, but silently followed behind him.

On the way down the mountain, Chen Ping suddenly stopped.

Yun Yao was taken aback, about to ask, when she saw Chen Ping turn around, his gaze fixed on the mountaintop, a cold glint in his eyes.

“Young Master?”

Chen Ping said calmly, “That young man...there's something wrong with him.”

Yun Yao was taken aback. “What's wrong with him?”

Chen Ping said, “His expression changed when he heard the word ‘Demon Clan.’”

Yun Yao recalled that scene and nodded. “Indeed, he seemed...a little nervous.”

Chen Ping was silent for a moment, then said, “The Divine Hall is probably not as simple as it seems on the surface.”

Yun Yao's heart skipped a beat, and she whispered, “Young Master, you mean...”

Chen Ping didn't answer.

He turned around and continued down the mountain.

Yun Yao followed behind him, a sense of unease rising within her.

She suddenly remembered the monsters in the dense forest, those twisted beings that possessed the aura of both gods and demons.

If those monsters were truly related to the Divine Hall...

She shuddered, unable to think any further.

The two descended the mountain and soon returned to the foot of Holy Light Peak.

Chen Ping stopped and glanced back at the majestic peak.

The palace atop the mountain, shrouded in mist, appeared and disappeared, sacred and inviolable.

But now, in Chen Ping's eyes, the palace's light seemed veiled in shadow.

"Let's go," he said calmly.

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Yun Yao nodded.

The two transformed into streaks of light, speeding away into the distance.

Behind them, Holy Light Peak still stood, shrouded in mist, as if nothing had happened.

But Chen Ping knew that beneath this seemingly sacred mountain, there must be untold secrets.

Those secrets might be even more terrifying than he imagined.

But he would not back down.

To bring Mu Sha and his wife back to life, no matter what lay ahead, he would forge ahead without hesitation.

The Holy Domain of Light, at the foot of Holy Light Peak.

Chen Ping, with Yun Yao in tow, stood in a secluded mountain hollow, gazing up at the mountain shrouded in divine light.

The mountain wind howled, stirring up wisps of spiritual mist, yet it couldn't dispel the heavy atmosphere in their hearts.

"Young Master, shall we... still go up?"

Yun Yao asked softly, her voice tinged with barely concealed worry.

She gently reached out and took Chen Ping's arm. The instant her fingertips touched his sleeve, she sensed something amiss in him.

Although Chen Ping's expression remained unchanged, his eyes even sharper than before, she could sense a faint chill emanating from him.

It was a chill that seemed to emanate from the deepest hell, clashing in stark contrast to the omnipresent sacred aura of this Holy Domain of Light, even showing signs of mutual repulsion.

In the distance, Holy Light Peak soared into the clouds, its palace atop the peak appearing and disappearing in the mist, like a celestial palace.

Golden light shone through the clouds, sacred and solemn, illuminating every inch of the land.

But at this moment, the light seemed exceptionally blinding to Chen Ping, as if countless golden needles were piercing his retina, causing him a strange sense of irritation.

Chen Ping remained silent for a moment, his gaze fixed on the faintly visible palace complex atop the mountain, as if trying to see the truth within through the layers of restrictions.

“Go up.”

His voice was calm and even, yet it carried an undeniable firmness, like metal striking the ground.

Yun Yao was startled, her brows furrowing, and she said urgently, “But that young man said the God Lord is in seclusion, and no one is allowed to disturb him, not even approach him.

If we force our way up, we might be killed. The Divine Hall’s protective array is renowned throughout the Fourteenth Heaven; it’s no joke.”

“Seclusion?”

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Chen Ping’s lips curled into a slight, faint smile.

The smile held no warmth, only a hint of mockery. “He says he’s in seclusion, and we believe him? He says we can’t use the main gate, and we’re really just going to sigh in despair?”

He turned to Yun Yao, a flicker of playfulness and resolve in his eyes: “I said we’ll go up, but not through the main gate.”

Yun Yao froze, her beautiful eyes filled with confusion.

Not through the main gate?

Then how will we get up?

The Holy Light Peak was surrounded by the “Nine Heavens and Ten Earths God-Slaying Array,” said to be impenetrable even to True Immortals.

Back then, the infamous “Blood-Handed Butcher” of the Demon Clan attempted to infiltrate from the side, only to be shredded into mincemeat by the array, leaving not even a soul behind.

Chen Ping offered no explanation; he simply raised his right hand slowly.

Golden light shimmered faintly in his palm.

The light wasn’t the pure golden hue of Holy Light Peak, but rather a deep, dark gold, as if flowing with ancient dragon blood, mysterious and ancient.

He closed his eyes, his divine sense, like invisible tentacles, instantly spreading out and enveloping Holy Light Peak.

At that moment, his world changed. The once impenetrable barrier revealed a different face to him.

To ordinary people, Holy Light Peak was as solid as a fortress, heavily fortified, like an iron barrel.

Anyone attempting to force their way in would be reduced to ashes in the terrifying storm of spiritual energy.

But in Chen Ping's perception, the so-called "Nine Heavens and Ten Earths God-Slaying Array" was merely a net woven from countless lines of spiritual energy.

These lines appeared seamless, but in reality, they contained countless nodes and connections.

And at each node, with each flow of spiritual energy, a tiny fluctuation would occur.

For ordinary cultivators, these fluctuations were negligible, utterly imperceptible.

"Too crude," Chen Ping muttered to himself, a hint of disdain in his voice.

His divine sense followed the lines of spiritual energy, moving like a fish in water, quickly discovering several extremely subtle flaws.

These flaws weren't inherent design defects in the formation itself, but rather extremely subtle imperfections left by the person who set it up when connecting two points of spiritual energy with different attributes.

It was like a perfect painting with a single, wet ink stain in the corner—inconspicuous, yet disrupting the overall harmony.

For ordinary cultivators, this imperfection would be completely negligible, even undetectable.

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But in Chen Ping's eyes, it was like a drop of ink on a blank sheet of paper, crystal clear.

"I see."

He opened his eyes, a glint of light flashing within them, as if he had seen through the century-long scheme. "The foundation of this formation actually borrows the power of a fallen light-elemental demon beast.

Unfortunately, that beast's power wasn't pure; it was mixed with a trace of yin energy, causing the entire formation to momentarily freeze every three hours, during the transition between yin and yang."

This momentary freeze is the location of the Gate of Life.

He calculated the time precisely and looked up at the sky.

It was currently the third quarter of the Si hour, half an incense stick's time before the transition between yin and yang.

Time was of the essence; there was no time to waste.

"Follow me."

He moved, transforming into a faint golden stream of light, and sped towards the side of Holy Light Peak.

That direction led directly to a sheer cliff, where the wind howled, making it difficult for ordinary people to even stand, let alone climb.

Yun Yao quickly followed, her heart filled with turbulent emotions.

Watching Chen Ping's effortless movements, she felt her understanding of the world being repeatedly overturned.

The two followed the mountain's contours, ascending upwards.

Chen Ping chose extremely cunning routes, deliberately traversing the weakest points in the invisible defenses.

Sometimes, he would squeeze sideways between two massive boulders, a gap that appeared barely an inch wide, yet perfectly avoided two intersecting killing formations;

Other times, he would pause briefly beside a withered tree, waiting for a gentle breeze to blow, the leaves obscuring the array's detection, before swiftly passing through.

The protective formations set up by the shrines were as useless to him, like paths in his own backyard.

He was like a master strolling in his own garden, intimately familiar with every path and every trap, effortlessly defusing countless dangers.

Yun Yao followed behind him, her heart growing increasingly awestruck, even experiencing a sense of unreality.

She discovered that Chen Ping's understanding of the defenses was simply unbelievable. Those seemingly impenetrable restrictions always revealed a flaw in his defenses.

And he always managed to seize that flaw, easily bypassing it, as if those lightning beams, powerful enough to slay even a Celestial Realm expert, were nothing more than a gentle breeze.

Even when he occasionally touched the edge of the formation, he merely flicked his finger, and the originally raging lightning beam, like a tamed snake, obediently bypassed them, instead striking the distant open ground, kicking up a cloud of dust.

"Young Master, how...how do you know the Divine Hall's restrictions so well?"

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She finally couldn't help but ask, her voice trembling with tension and shock. "This Nine Heavens and Ten Earths God-Slaying Array is a century-long effort by the Divine Hall, jointly set up by three True Immortal Realm elders.

Even disciples within the Divine Hall, without a specially made pass token, could never pass so easily. Even an elder would have to be extremely cautious.”

Chen Ping didn't turn around, his steps still light, as if he were walking on a flat road, not a bottomless cliff.

“Not familiar. These restrictions are just too crude,” Chen Ping said dismissively.

Yun Yao's lips twitched, almost choking on her own saliva.

Too crude?

This is the mountain-protecting array that the entire Holy Domain of Light is so proud of!

Throughout the Fourteenth Heaven, countless forces have tried to imitate it but failed.

Countless powerful figures have tried to infiltrate but have all returned empty-handed, some even perishing within, their bodies never to be found.

But in Chen Ping's words, it became “too rough”?

She suddenly realized how little she knew about Chen Ping.

How many secrets did this seemingly young man hide?

Who exactly was he?

Why did he treat even the highest secrets of the Divine Hall like child's play?

Could he have been a reclusive master of formations?

“Young Master,”

Yun Yao took a deep breath, trying to calm herself, but her doubts only deepened, “Since you could break the restriction so easily, why did you go up and ask earlier? Wouldn’t it have been better to just come up like this? Why go through all that trouble and arouse his suspicion?”

Chen Ping paused slightly, turning his head to glance at her.

A deep meaning flashed in his profound eyes, as if concealing endless calculations.

“That was a test. I wanted to see if the temple was as good as the rumors suggested.”

He paused, then continued, “If I could simply walk in from the front, it would mean there’s a serious problem inside, or they’re deliberately luring me in, waiting for me to walk right into their trap.

But now it seems they’re very vigilant, with tight defenses on the front, but this lateral breach exposes their arrogance. They think no one can break through their defenses, hence this single blind spot.”

Yun Yao felt a chill run down her spine upon hearing this.

So, that was a test.

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The young master’s cunning is truly unfathomable.

“Arrogance?”

Yun Yao repeated, still somewhat confused.

“Yes, arrogance.”

Chen Ping sneered, his voice exceptionally clear in the mountain wind. “They think their array formations are unparalleled, yet they don’t understand the cycle of nature, the reversal of extremes.

The more they pursue perfection, the easier it is to leave flaws in the details. Only those who truly understand the essence of array formations can discover these flaws. In their eyes, everyone else is foolish, only they are supreme—this is their path to death.”

As they spoke, the two had reached the edge of the mountaintop.

Chen Ping stopped, hiding behind a huge bluish-gray rock, his gaze peering through the cracks in the rock towards the palace complex atop the mountain.

The sight before him made Yun Yao gasp.

The architecture of the shrine was even more magnificent and imposing than what she had seen from below, exuding extravagance and power in every detail.

At the center was a massive temple, entirely constructed of an unknown white jade.

The jade emitted a soft, milky-white halo in the sunlight, seemingly possessing an inherent sacredness that made it impossible to look directly at.

The temple ceiling was inlaid with countless luminous pearls, not ordinary gemstones, but specially refined “Spirit Gathering Pearls.”

Arranged in a specific star chart pattern, they refracted the sunlight, illuminating the entire temple like a celestial palace, radiating auspicious energy.

Around the temple were dozens of side halls of varying sizes, each exquisitely carved and painted, exuding grandeur.

The eaves and brackets were carved with various mythical beasts: phoenixes poised for flight, majestic unicorns, and ferocious dragons.

These statues were so lifelike, as if they might come to life at any moment, guarding this sacred temple.

And in the plaza before the temple, hundreds of cultivators had gathered.

These people were dressed in various styles. Some wore fine robes, clearly from prominent families, exuding an air of distinction;

others were ragged, their faces sallow, resembling down-on-their-luck rogue cultivators, their eyes filled with weariness.

But they all shared one thing in common: their eyes were filled with longing and tension, as if facing imminent judgment.

They formed a long queue, proceeding one by one to a massive stone tablet in the center of the plaza.

The tablet stood three zhang tall, entirely black, covered in intricate runes, faintly radiating a chilling aura.

Whenever someone approached the tablet, two disciples of the shrine in white robes stood by, their expressions indifferent, like high-ranking gods scrutinizing the ants below.

The test was simple: place your hand on the tablet.

The runes on the tablet would then flicker, displaying different lights.

Some rays were cyan, representing inferior bloodlines; some purple, representing middle-class bloodlines; and some gold, representing superior bloodlines.

The color of the light determined their fate.

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The atmosphere in the square was oppressive and tense; every flash of light tugged at the heartstrings of the crowd.

Whenever someone tested their bloodline level, a disciple of the Divine Hall would step forward and lead them to different side halls.

Those who tested with a cyan light were led to the most secluded small halls; their expressions were dejected, their steps heavy, as if they had lost all hope.

Those who tested with a purple light were led to medium-sized side halls; their faces lit up with joy, as if they had grasped a lifeline.

And the occasional appearance of a golden light would cause a stir.

The elders of the Divine Hall would even personally appear, treating them as honored guests, leading them to the core area, basking in the envy and jealousy of the crowd.

Chen Ping's gaze sharpened, his pupils slightly contracting.

Another bloodline test?

This Divine Hall, how is it so similar to the Holy Purity Sect?

He recalled his previous experience in the Holy Purity Sect.

There, bloodlines were paramount. Those with special bloodlines were considered geniuses and enjoyed endless resources;

those without special bloodlines, no matter how talented, were relegated to the bottom rungs, even becoming stepping stones for others, at the mercy of their captors.

“Young Master, is the Divine Hall also testing bloodlines? What...what are they doing?”

Yun Yao also saw the scene in the plaza and whispered, her eyes full of doubt. “It’s rumored that the Divine Hall is a righteous holy land, advocating equality for all beings and universal salvation.

But this practice seems more like...more like selecting some special ‘materials,’ rather than recruiting disciples.”

Chen Ping remained silent, simply watching.

His gaze swept over the cultivators who failed the test, seeing the despair and resentment in their eyes;

Then it swept over the cultivators who succeeded, seeing the fanaticism and bewilderment in their eyes.

“Equality for all beings?”

Chen Ping sneered inwardly, a mocking smile playing on his lips. “It’s nothing but a deceptive lie. In this dog-eat-dog world, where is true equality?”

The so-called righteous holy lands, in the end, are nothing more than valuing bloodlines.

With bloodlines, you’re a genius, you’re the future; without bloodlines, you’re an ant, a blade of grass. Is this their so-called ‘Dao’?”

After a moment, he suddenly spoke, his voice low and firm, interrupting Yun Yao's thoughts: "Yun Yao, wait for me here."

Yun Yao was startled, quickly grabbing his sleeve, anxiously saying, "Young Master, what are you doing? This is the core area of the Divine Hall!" "This realm is teeming with experts.