

The Order 10611

Chapter: 10611

If he acted impulsively, everyone would die here today.

Shen Tong took a deep breath, suppressing his surging blood and fury, and bowed again, his voice low and hoarse, yet still maintaining utmost respect.

“The Master is right. I was arrogant and ignorant back then, and my current predicament is entirely my own fault.”

“I have come today to apologize to the Divine Hall and to plead for its assistance.”

He slowly raised his head, his gaze sincere and pleading as he looked at Yao Chen.

“Recently, the demon race has suddenly risen to power, and the demonic dragon lineage has rampaged across the land, ruthless and cruel, leaving devastation and barrenness in its wake. Especially within the demonic dragon lineage, there is a young man named Ning Zhi, whose strength is terrifyingly high, far beyond imagination, and utterly insurmountable for ordinary cultivators.”

“Unable to bear witnessing the slaughter of the divine beings by the demons, I led all the elite forces of the divine temple on a campaign, intending to rid the divine race of this scourge and protect the peace of this land. But alas... the disparity in strength was too great, and we suffered a crushing defeat. Thousands of disciples perished, the foundation of the divine temple was destroyed, and I myself was severely injured, my cultivation greatly diminished.”

His voice grew even lower at this point, filled with boundless sorrow and helplessness.

“Now, the temple is destroyed, our home is gone, and various forces in the Fourteenth Heaven are eyeing us covetously. Some want to take advantage of our misfortune, others want to seize the opportunity to annex us. We, the surviving disciples, have nowhere to go, nowhere to escape.”

“With no other choice, we have come to the Divine Hall to seek refuge. We implore the Hall Master, for the sake of our shared divine bloodline and common origin, to take us in and give us a way to survive.”

“I am willing to offer all the remaining troops, secret realm resources, treasures, and all the secrets, defenses, and hidden features of the Divine Hall’s sacred mountain to the Divine Hall as a token of our sincerity, without the slightest falsehood.”

Having said this, he no longer hesitated, bowing deeply once more, his posture utterly humbled.

Behind him, more than two hundred disciples of the Divine Hall, seeing their Hall Master so humble, were filled with grief, yet they too knelt down, heads bowed, not daring to raise their heads.

Silence fell once more in the main hall.

The earlier laughter and mockery vanished without a trace.

Yao Chen silently gazed at the kneeling Shen Tong, his gaze deep and unfathomable, a complex and inscrutable light flashing in his eyes. There was scrutiny, amusement, indifference, and a hint of barely perceptible calculation.

After a moment, he spoke slowly, his voice still gentle, yet tinged with amusement.

“Palace Master Shentong, you say you’re willing to offer up all the resources of the temple’s secret realm and the secrets of the Holy Mountain?”

Shentong immediately raised his head, not daring to conceal anything, and nodded hastily, his tone firm: “Yes! I have not lied; every word I have spoken is true!

Although the temple was destroyed, the secret realm still contains a vast amount of cultivation resources, divine crystals, immortal herbs, and fragments of divine artifacts—the foundation accumulated by the temple over tens of thousands of years.”

“Moreover, deep within the Holy Mountain lies the physical body of a Ghost Clan Venerable, sealed away with great effort by our temple’s ancestors. It is a supreme treasure, its value immeasurable.

As long as the Palace Master is willing to take us in and forgive past grievances, all these things will belong to the temple; I will not keep any for myself!"

Yao Chen nodded slightly, a satisfied look on his face, clearly very tempted by Shentong's offer.

The temple's tens of thousands of years of accumulated wealth, the resources of its secret realm, the secrets of the sacred mountain, and even the physical body of a Ghost Clan Venerable...

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These were all things the temple had always desired but had been unable to obtain.

But just then, a white-haired guardian elder standing to Yao Chen's left suddenly sneered, took a step forward, and broke the silence.

"Divine Power, your words are more eloquent than your singing. You've spun tales and sounded so sincere, but who knows if you're telling the truth? Who knows if you're deceiving us?"

"What if you're just using the Temple as a refuge, biding your time, and then, once the storm has passed and you've recovered from your injuries and gained strength, turn your back on us and turn against the Temple? Wouldn't we be letting a wolf into our house, raising a tiger to threaten us?"

Another dark-faced elder immediately chimed in, his tone icy and full of distrust: "That's right! The people of your Temple have always been treacherous and cunning, extremely scheming. Back then, in the struggle for the rightful place of the gods, you secretly used countless underhanded methods, employing endless conspiracies and tricks."

"Now you suddenly come to pledge allegiance, speaking so humbly. Who knows what your intentions are? Who knows if there's something you're up to?" "A conspiracy you can't even tell about?"

Another gaunt elder spoke even more sarcastically, his tone cutting: "Besides, your temple values the Holy Mountain more than your own lives. The secrets and shady dealings hidden within are probably not so simple, are they?"

“I’ve long heard that over the years, your temple, under the guise of worship and prayer at the Holy Mountain, has secretly abducted and extracted the souls and essence of countless rogue cultivators and cultivators from small clans. Your methods are cruel and utterly depraved, your aim being to resurrect some forbidden being—a heinous act against the will of Heaven!”

“Such despicable deeds, such shameful secrets, if they were to get out, would be enough to bring your temple to its doom! If our temple were to take you in, wouldn’t we also have to share the blame, be condemned by the world, and become the target of everyone’s scorn?”

Upon hearing this,

the faces of everyone in the temple changed drastically, turning ashen and trembling.

Extracting the soul essence of cultivators in an attempt to resurrect a forbidden being.

This was the temple’s greatest secret, its most shameful secret, its most incriminating weapon, a dark past capable of leading to the temple’s annihilation by all races.

This matter was deeply hidden; aside from the temple’s highest echelons, almost no one knew of it.

Unexpectedly, the temple already knew!

Shen Tong was shocked, his face turning deathly pale. He hurriedly tried to explain, “Elders, you misunderstand! You mustn’t believe these rumors! They are malicious rumors spread by those with ill intentions, fabricated by enemies who want to frame our temple!”

“Rumors?”

The white-haired elder sneered again, his eyes sharp as knives, directly interrupting Shen Tong.

“Lord of the Divine Power Hall, do you think we’re all three-year-olds, so easily fooled? Do you think our Divine Hall hasn’t investigated those missing cultivators, those rogue cultivators whose souls mysteriously vanished without even a chance to reincarnate?”

“Do you think you can really hide your despicable deeds forever?”

Shen Tong opened his mouth, wanting to continue his defense, but the words caught in his throat, and he found himself utterly unable to refute them.

Those things were indeed done by the Divine Hall back then for power and ambition.

The evidence was irrefutable; he couldn’t deny it.

For a moment, Shen Tong’s face turned ashen. He stood there, helpless, caught in extreme embarrassment and panic.

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At this moment of unbearable pressure,

an elder of the Divine Hall standing behind Shen Tong finally lost his temper.

He was by nature a man of fiery temperament. During his escape, witnessing the Temple Master suffer humiliation and his fellow disciples being mocked and trampled upon, his heart had long been filled with boundless anger and resentment.

Now, having his sore spot so bluntly exposed and subjected to such humiliation by the Temple Elder, he could no longer suppress his rage.

“Enough!”

A furious shout suddenly rang out.

It was a middle-aged Temple Elder, covered in blood, severely injured, his breath weak and faltering, even his stance unsteady.

But now, he abruptly stood up, his face flushed, his eyes bloodshot, burning with the flames of anger and humiliation.

“Our temple has indeed been defeated! We have indeed fallen on hard times! We have indeed reached a dead end! But we came with sincerity, seeking aid and an alliance with the divine race!”

“If you are unwilling to take us in, fine, but why the cold mockery, the endless humiliation, and the relentless pressure?!”

“Our temple and the divine hall share the same roots and origins, are of the same divine bloodline, and should help each other, fighting together against external enemies! Today, we are in dire straits, and you not only fail to offer assistance, showing no regard for our kinship, but you even add insult to injury, resorting to the most blatant mockery!”

“With such a narrow mind and such a face, do you deserve to be called the legitimate successors of the divine race? Do you deserve to occupy Holy Light Peak? Do you deserve the respect of all cultivators in the world?”

He became increasingly agitated, his voice rising higher and higher, almost a roar.

“Don’t forget! The Demon Dragon lineage is unstoppable, and that Ning Zhi is terrifying beyond compare! Their next target is very likely your Divine Hall, this Holy Light Peak!”

“You have no idea how terrifying Ning Zhi’s strength is! You have no idea what despair is! Today you laugh at us, humiliate us, but tomorrow, when you are slaughtered by the Demon Dragon and crushed by Ning Zhi, let’s see if you can still laugh!!”

“Insolence!”

A sharp shout interrupted him.

A golden-robed elder of the Divine Hall flew into a rage, his holy light surging violently, and a terrifying True Immortal Realm pressure instantly swept through the entire hall, pressing down on the elder like a mountain.

“How dare you roar in the Divine Hall’s main hall and insult a Divine Hall elder! You’re courting death!”

The golden-robed elder’s eyes turned icy, and he was about to strike.

But before he could act,

on the throne, Yao Chen, who had always worn a gentle smile, gently raised his right hand. A simple movement.

No aura was released, no sound was made.

Yet, the golden-robed elder, who had been so imposing just moments before, froze instantly. The surging holy light around him vanished in an instant, and he dared not utter another word. He obediently retreated, head bowed, utterly respectful.

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The entire hall fell silent instantly.

Yao Chen remained seated on his throne, his face still bearing that gentle smile, but that smile no longer evoked warmth; instead, it sent a chill down one’s spine.

His gaze was calm as it fell upon the agitated and roaring temple elder. He spoke softly, his voice gentle, yet carrying an absolute, unquestionable, and unyielding authority.

“Finished?”

The temple elder’s heart tightened. Looking into Yao Chen’s eyes, he instinctively wanted to say something more, to continue arguing for himself and for the temple.

But the moment he opened his mouth...

Yao Chen gently raised his right hand and casually pointed a finger at him.

There were no earth-shattering phenomena, no terrifying pressure.

A slender, soft, and not dazzling golden light slowly shot out from Yao Chen's fingertip.

The light was slow, even deceptively slow, appearing harmless, like an ordinary ray of holy light.

Yet this seemingly harmless light seemed to traverse space, ignoring distance, all defenses, and the protective divine light and magical artifacts on the temple elder.

Instantly, it precisely pierced the temple elder's brow.

There was no explosion, no scream, no splatter of blood.

The temple elder's body suddenly froze.

His eyes widened, pupils contracted, and his face still held an expression of anger and excitement, but he remained completely still, as if frozen in time.

He opened his mouth, wanting to say something, wanting to make a sound, but not a trace of breath could be released, not a single movement could be made.

The next moment.

A bizarre scene unfolded.

His body, starting from the spot where the light pierced his brow, gradually transformed into countless tiny, golden specks of light, like sand sculptures scattered by the wind, slowly disintegrating, melting, and vanishing.

From head to torso to limbs.

In just a few breaths.

A temple elder who had lived for thousands of years, right before everyone's eyes, completely turned into countless specks of light, disappearing into the air without a trace.

Not even a scream could be uttered.

Not a drop of blood, not a piece of bone remained.

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His soul was scattered.

Complete annihilation.

Even the chance for reincarnation was erased.

The hall was deathly silent.

A deathly silence.

Everyone was stunned.

The elders of the Divine Hall were slightly startled, but quickly regained their composure, their gazes towards Shen Tong and the others growing even colder and more disdainful.

The members of the Divine Hall, however, were filled with terror, their bodies trembling violently, their faces ashen, their eyes filled with fear and disbelief.

They stared intently at the spot where the elder had vanished, their hearts pounding wildly, as if they would leap out of their throats.

One move.

Just a casual flick of the finger.

Not even a single superfluous movement.

An elder was completely obliterated, leaving no chance for reincarnation.

Is this the power of Yao Chen, the Hall Master of the Divine Hall?

Is this the terror of the orthodox divine race?

Shen Tong also froze on the spot, his mind blank, his body ice-cold.

That elder was one of his most loyal and closest subordinates, who had followed him for thousands of years, through countless life-and-death battles, never wavering in his loyalty, never betraying the temple. He was the person he trusted most.

But now.

He died right before his eyes.

So easily, so decisively, so thoroughly.

Without even a sliver of a chance to resist.

The anger, grief, and hatred in Shen Tong's heart surged to their peak.

How he longed to rush forward immediately, to fight Yao Chen to the death, to avenge that elder at all costs.

How he longed to draw his divine weapon, detonate his entire cultivation, and perish together with everyone in the temple.

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But he couldn't.

He couldn't act impulsively.

Behind him were over two hundred disciples.

Those were the last embers of the temple, vibrant lives.

Their lives all rested in his hands.

If he acted impulsively, if he resisted, Yao Chen would show no mercy. The two hundred-plus disciples behind him would be slaughtered instantly, not a single one surviving.

Then, the temple would be truly destroyed, its millennia-old foundation utterly reduced to nothing, leaving not a sliver of hope for a comeback.

Shen Tong gritted his teeth, his gums bleeding, his mouth filled with the strong taste of blood.

His hands were clenched into fists, his nails digging deep into his palms, drops of blood falling and splattering onto the ground.

Did it hurt?

Yes.

But even that pain was nothing compared to the pain in his heart.

Yet he endured it.

He forcibly suppressed all impulses, all anger, all grief.

He slowly lowered his head, not letting anyone see the bloodshot eyes and hatred in them. His voice was hoarse and trembling, yet he forced himself to remain respectful and humble.

“Thank you for your guidance, High Priest. It was my negligence in disciplining him and in failing to restrain him, allowing that madman to offend the High Priest and violate the dignity of the temple. He deserves to die; he brought it upon himself.”

Upon hearing these words,

the last vestige of stubbornness and hope in the hearts of the temple’s members was utterly shattered.

They looked at the hunched, lonely figure of the Divine Power, their eyes filled with complex emotions.

There was disappointment, anger, resentment, and humiliation.

But above all, there was a touch of heartache, a touch of understanding.

They all understood.

The High Priest wasn't unwilling to seek revenge, wasn't without anger, wasn't without humiliation.

But for their sake, to preserve the last embers of the temple, the High Priest was enduring.

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Enduring what ordinary people could not endure.

Suffering humiliation that ordinary people could not suffer.

On his throne, Yao Chen looked at Shen Tong's obsequious, humiliated, and resentful demeanor, a barely perceptible hint of satisfaction flashing in his eyes.

He slowly withdrew his hand, his face regaining its gentle, harmless smile, as if he hadn't just casually killed an elder.

"Palace Master Shen Tong is indeed a reasonable man, understanding the bigger picture and prioritizing the overall situation. In my entire life, what I admire most is a wise and pragmatic person like you."

He paused, his tone casual and indifferent, as if arranging a trivial matter.

"In that case, I will accept your sincerity and take in all of you from the Divine Hall."

“However, the Divine Hall has strict rules; it doesn’t tolerate idlers or useless people. Now that you’ve come to the Divine Hall, to Holy Light Peak, you should do something for me, for the Divine Hall, and contribute your strength.”

He looked at Shen Tong, a meaningful, mocking smile playing on his lips.

“Alright then.”

“From this day forward, all the remaining members of your temple will be responsible for patrolling and guarding the foot of Holy Light Peak.”

“Temple Master, what do you say?”

Patrol?

Guard?

The foot of the mountain?

These words exploded like thunder in the hearts of everyone in the temple.

This kind of work, this kind of assignment, was the kind of arduous task assigned to the lowest-ranking disciples of the temple—those without talent, without background, the very bottom of the hierarchy.

Hard work, dangerous, low status, looked down upon.

They were once high and mighty disciples of the temple, elites who traversed the fourteenth heaven, revered beings.

Now, they were to do this lowest-level menial work?

This wasn't an assignment; it was blatant humiliation!

It was trampling their dignity underfoot, grinding it repeatedly!

The temple disciples behind Shen Tong felt their eyes blaze with renewed anger and humiliation, almost spitting fire. Their bodies trembled violently, and they longed to rush forward and fight to the death.

But looking at their temple master's back, they ultimately dared not move.

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Shen Tong, however, kept his head bowed, seemingly oblivious to the humiliation in his voice.

His voice was calm and respectful, without a trace of emotion.

"Thank you, Hall Master, for taking us in and giving us a way out. I... am willing to accept this fate without a single complaint."

As he spoke, he bowed deeply again, prostrating himself to the ground in gratitude.

"That's good."

Yao Chen nodded in satisfaction, waved his hand lightly, and spoke indifferently.

"Step back. I will have the elders arrange your lodgings, food, and duties. From now on, behave yourself, fulfill your responsibilities, and do not cause trouble."

"Thank you, Hall Master."

Shen Tong bowed again, then slowly retreated, step by step, respectfully exiting the hall.

Behind him, over two hundred temple disciples also bowed their heads, filled with humiliation and sorrow, silently following Shen Tong, step by step, out of this hall that had brought them such humiliation, a place they would never forget.

The moment he stepped out of the temple hall.

Shen Tong slowly raised his head and looked up at the sky.

The sky of the Holy Land of Light was azure and pure, surrounded by holy light, holy and dazzling, breathtakingly beautiful.

But his heart was darker, colder, and heavier than ever before.

It felt as if a mountain was pressing down on his heart.

Humiliation, grief, anger, hatred...

A torrent of emotions intertwined, threatening to consume him.

He didn't speak, didn't turn back, but walked silently ahead, step by step, towards the most remote, lowest point of Holy Light Peak.

Behind him, the temple disciples followed closely, equally silent.

No sound, no weeping, no complaints.

Only the heavy sound of footsteps echoed on the mountain path.

Finally, when the group reached a secluded, deserted section of the path.

A young temple disciple could no longer contain the resentment and anger within him.

He rushed forward, knelt before Shen Tong with a thud, tears instantly streaming down his face, his voice choked with sobs and grief.

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“Palace Master! Why?! Why must we suffer such humiliation?! We, the disciples of the Temple, have always been unyielding to the death! We would rather die on the battlefield than be humiliated like this, our dignity trampled upon!”

The other disciples also gathered around, their faces filled with grief and indignation, their eyes red, their voices trembling.

“Yes, Palace Master! That temple doesn’t treat us like human beings at all! They killed Elder Zhang, and then mocked us relentlessly. Now they want us to do menial labor and patrol at the foot of the mountain! This isn’t taking us in; it’s treating us like slaves!”

“Palace Master, let’s rebel! Let’s fight them! Rather than live like this, enduring humiliation, let’s fight a glorious battle. Even if we die, we’ll die with dignity!”

“Palace Master! Just give the order! We are willing to follow you and fight to the death!”

Shen Tong stopped.

He slowly turned around.

Looking at these young faces, at the grief, resentment, grievance, and anger in their eyes, an endless sorrow and heartache welled up within him.

These disciples were the future of the temple.

They should have been full of vigor, should have been revered, should have had bright futures.

But because of a defeat, because of his incompetence as the temple master, they had fallen to this state.

Shen Tong remained silent for a long, long time.

Finally, he spoke slowly, his voice hoarse and low, yet carrying an undeniable and irrefutable authority.

“Do you think I don’t want to resist?”

He slowly raised his hand, opening his palm.

In his palm, bloodstains were visible—the wounds from when he had been pierced by fingernails, wounds that had not yet healed.

“Just now, when that elder died before my eyes, the anger in my heart was stronger than any of yours. I wanted nothing more than to rush forward and fight Yao Chen to the death, to avenge him at all costs!”

“But I cannot.”

He raised his head, his gaze sweeping across the faces of every disciple present, each word heavy and unyielding.

“Behind me are you. More than two hundred of the temple’s last embers, its last hope. If I act impulsively, if I act rashly, if I rebel, if I rage, if I strike... all of you will die.”

“Not a single one will survive.”

“At that time, the temple will truly be destroyed. Ten thousand years of foundation, the blood and sweat of countless ancestors, will be utterly reduced to nothing, leaving not even a sliver of chance for a comeback, a sliver of chance for revenge.”

“I can die, I am not afraid to die. I have lived for ten thousand years, that is enough. But I cannot take you all with me to die, I cannot personally bury the temple’s last hope.”

His voice grew louder, heavier, and more resolute.

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“I will remember this humiliation.”

“Yao Chen’s mockery, the humiliation of the Divine Hall, Elder Zhang’s tragic death—I will remember them all, etched in my heart, etched into my soul!”

He clenched his fist tightly, blood dripping from his palm again, a chilling ruthlessness flashing in his eyes.

“But we must endure now.”

“When you’re under someone’s roof, you have to bow your head. As long as the green hills remain, there’s always firewood. Only by surviving, only by enduring, only by preserving our strength, can we have a chance to turn the tide, only then can we have hope for revenge!”

“One day.”

“One day, I will lead you back to your peak!”

“I will make the Divine Hall, Yao Chen, and all those who humiliated us and trampled on our dignity today pay the most terrible price for what they have done!”

“Blood debts must be repaid in blood!”

“The grudge of the Divine Hall must be washed away with blood!”

His voice, powerful and resounding, echoed for a long time on the silent mountain path.

Hearing his words, the anger, resentment, and unwillingness in the hearts of the Divine Hall disciples gradually subsided.

In their place was a profound determination, a belief that was patiently waiting to be unleashed.

Looking at Shen Tong, hope and loyalty rekindled in their eyes.

They all knelt down, kowtowing heavily to Shen Tong, their voices unified and resolute.

“We swear to follow our Lord to the death! We will endure humiliation and await our opportunity! One day, we will avenge ourselves, paying for our debts in blood!”

Shen Tong nodded, saying nothing more.

He slowly turned around and walked back towards the foot of the mountain.

His back, illuminated by the holy light of Holy Light Peak, appeared exceptionally lonely and desolate.

Yet within that lonely figure shone an extraordinary, unwavering strength.

Enduring this humiliation for a future opportunity.

This hatred is irreconcilable.

Meanwhile.

Atop Holy Light Peak, in the main hall of the Divine Hall.