

The Order 10661

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“No need.” Ning Zhi raised his hand to stop him. “This time, I’ll go alone.”

The reason Ning Zhi didn’t want Su Yuqi to come was because Su Yuqi’s state of mind had been unstable recently. If she encountered Chen Ping again and her memories returned, it would be troublesome.

Long Yuan was stunned: “Senior, alone? The Divine Hall’s protective formation is no simple matter, and their Hall Master, Yao Chen, is also a True Immortal Realm expert...”

Ning Zhi glanced at him, his gaze calm, yet it instantly silenced Long Yuan.

“A formation?” Ning Zhi’s lips curled into a disdainful smile. “That thing, can it stop me?”

Long Yuan opened his mouth, but ultimately dared not say anything more.

Ning Zhi turned and walked towards the secret chamber.

Reaching the doorway, he suddenly stopped, turning back to look at Long Yuan: “While I’m gone, keep a close eye on my senior sister. If she loses even a single hair, you know the consequences.”

Long Yuan trembled, quickly replying, “Don’t worry, Senior! I will definitely protect Miss Su!”

Ning Zhi said nothing more, turning and leaving.

His figure quickly disappeared into the dark red light outside the Demon Dragon Palace.

Long Yuan stood there, watching Ning Zhi’s departing back, his heart filled with mixed emotions.

He knew that the Holy Domain of Light was about to change.

Meanwhile, at this moment, atop Holy Light Peak in the Holy Domain of Light.

Yao Chen stood by the window of the main hall, gazing at the golden protective array below, his brow furrowed.

For some reason, he had a premonition of something terrible these past few days, as if something horrific was about to happen.

“Hall Master.”

An elder guardian strode in, bowing, and said, “The news of the destruction of the Holy Pure Sect has spread throughout the entire Holy Domain of Light, causing panic among all forces, large and small. Several small sects have already closed their doors and fled.”

Yao Chen snorted coldly, “They can run away, but they can’t hide. Let them run; they’ll naturally return once the storm passes.”

The elder guardian hesitated for a moment, then added, “There’s one more thing. Chen Ping, with the Golden Dragon bloodline, seems to have appeared near Holy Light Peak.”

Yao Chen frowned, “Chen Ping? What is he doing near Holy Light Peak?”

“This subordinate doesn’t know. However, this person’s strength is indeed terrifying; a fourth-grade Upper Immortal Realm cultivator could kill the Pure Profound Sect Master, a second-grade True Immortal Realm cultivator, with a single palm strike. If he comes looking for us...” “Trouble at the Divine Hall...”

Yao Chen raised his hand to interrupt him: “Just a junior, no need to make a fuss. If he dares to come, I’ll naturally let him know that the Divine Hall is not comparable to the likes of the Holy Pure Sect.”

The Guardian Elder nodded, about to leave, when Yao Chen suddenly spoke: “How’s the experiment going?”

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The Guardian Elder was taken aback, then whispered: “Everything’s going smoothly. The first finished product has stabilized, and its strength is extremely high. According to our estimates, once it fully matures, its strength will at least reach the third rank of the True Immortal Realm, or even...”

“Even what?”

“It might even break through the third rank of the True Immortal Realm and reach an even higher level.”

A hint of excitement flashed in Yao Chen’s eyes, then he suppressed it.

“Continue to observe, don’t make any mistakes. This is our Divine Hall’s biggest trump card for turning the tide.”

“Yes!”

After the Guardian Elder left, Yao Chen stood alone by the window, gazing at the golden light barrier below the mountain, a complex expression flashing in his eyes.

He knew, of course, what he was doing.

The capture of demonic cultivators and rogue cultivators of the divine race for bloodline fusion experiments—if word got out, the reputation of the Divine Hall would be utterly ruined.

Those so-called righteous forces would rise up against it, regarding the Divine Hall as an enemy even more terrifying than the demons.

Moreover, his actions were forbidden by the divine race and violated the laws of heaven.

But he had no other choice; His Majesty of the Divine Hall wanted to control the entire Fourteenth Heaven.

Furthermore, the destruction of the Divine Temple had shown him the impending crisis.

The rise of the Demonic Dragon lineage and Ning Zhi's terrifying strength were all reminders that if he didn't become stronger quickly, the Divine Hall would eventually follow in the footsteps of the Divine Temple.

For the future of the Divine Hall, for its glory, he was willing to do anything.

Even if it meant making a deal with the devil.

Yao Chen took a deep breath, suppressing his unease, and turned to walk back to his throne.

Meanwhile, in a small town a hundred miles away from Holy Light Peak, Chen Ping stood by the window, gazing in the direction of Holy Light Peak in the distance. "A storm is coming," he said softly.

Yun Xi stood behind him, saying calmly, "You sensed it?"

Chen Ping nodded. "The shady dealings of the Divine Hall will be discovered sooner or later. And those demonic cultivators they captured will eventually be held accountable."

He paused, a faint smile playing on his lips.

"I just didn't expect it to come so quickly."

Yun Xi was taken aback. "What do you mean?"

Chen Ping didn't speak, only gazing at the distant horizon.

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There, a black figure was flying towards the Holy Domain of Light at an astonishing speed, its demonic energy almost tangible, causing even the sky to change color in its wake.

Ning Zhi had arrived.

Even from a thousand miles away, Chen Ping could sense Ning Zhi's aura.

This aura was all too familiar to him.

Below Holy Light Peak, the wind and clouds changed color.

A golden protective array completely enveloped the entire mountain peak. The protective barrier, blessed by countless ancestors of the divine temples over tens of thousands of years, was now operating frantically, golden runes flowing across its surface like living things, emitting a low, buzzing sound.

But before the black figure, this seemingly indestructible barrier was as fragile as paper, sending chills down one's spine.

Ning Zhi stood with his hands behind his back, his feet treading on empty air, his black robes fluttering in the wind.

He didn't deliberately release any pressure, yet the invisible oppressive aura solidified the air within a hundred miles.

The ground beneath his feet cracked silently, fine fissures spreading outwards from him. Unseen forces lifted pebbles, suspending them in mid-air before instantly turning them to dust.

On Holy Light Peak, the alarm bells rang loudly.

The ancient bell, passed down for tens of thousands of years, struck by its own power the instant the great formation was suppressed. Its toll was rapid and mournful, each note more urgent than the last, like a death knell.

The disciples of the Divine Hall were deathly pale, trembling all over. Some collapsed to the ground, their legs giving way; others turned to run but were held back by their companions; still others' hands, gripping their weapons, shook so badly they could barely hold their swords.

"That...who is that?"

"Demonic energy...such terrifying demonic energy! This is not an aura that ordinary demonic cultivators could possess!"

"Quick! Quickly report to the Hall Master! Activate all the restrictions!"

Ning Zhi, at the foot of the mountain, seemed oblivious to all of this.

He raised his head, his gaze calmly sweeping over the majestic Holy Light Peak, as if examining an insignificant toy.

The palace atop the peak, shrouded in golden light, loomed in the shadows. Its soaring eaves, intricate carvings, and painted beams—once a sacred place for countless cultivators—now appeared to him nothing more than crumbling ruins.

Yao Chen was meditating in the rear hall when he received the message.

He abruptly opened his eyes, his expression changing drastically, and vanished in a flash.

The next instant, he appeared on the stargazing platform at the highest point of the peak.

When he saw the black-clad figure below, his pupils contracted sharply.

Too young.

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The face looked to be no more than twenty years old, with fair skin and handsome features. If it weren't for the almost tangible demonic energy surrounding him, one could easily mistake him for a direct disciple of a prestigious sect.

But those eyes... those eyes, as deep as an ancient, icy pool, held no youthful passion or impulsiveness, only a chilling indifference and a faint, almost imperceptible weariness, as if nothing in the world was worth a second glance. "This is... Ning Zhi?"

Yao Chen murmured to himself, a tremor in his voice he himself didn't even realize.

He instinctively clenched his fists, his nails digging into his palms, using pain to suppress the fear within him.

He had heard of Ning Zhi's terror.

From the battle at Yunxian City to his divine power being reduced to ashes in a single fire, everything told him that this young man was not someone he could afford to provoke.

But hearing about him was one thing, seeing him in person was another.

That aura, that oppressive feeling that even the protective mountain array couldn't block, reminded him of the legendary powerful beings of ancient times.

That was a power that transcended everything, a despair that left no room for even the thought of resistance.

He had lived for tens of thousands of years, believing he had seen all the strong in the world, but now he realized that before true power, everything he had been so proud of was nothing but the arrogance of a frog in a well.

“Master, what do we do?”

An elder guardian approached, his voice trembling, cold sweat beading on his forehead.

Yao Chen took a deep breath, forcibly suppressing his fear, and said in a deep voice, “Stay calm, don’t act rashly. Activate the mountain-protecting formation at full power. All elders, take your positions and channel your spiritual energy into the formation’s core. No one is allowed to leave the mountain gate even a step.”

“But...but if he attacks...” The elder’s voice trembled.

“No.”

Yao Chen stared at the figure below the mountain, his tone barely maintaining composure. “If he wanted to attack, he would have already done so. What is he waiting for?”

What was he waiting for?

Yao Chen didn’t know, and dared not guess.

But he knew that the young man standing here was like a sword hanging over his head, ready to fall at any moment.

And all he could do was pray that the sword wouldn’t fall on him.

At the foot of the mountain, Ning Zhi stood quietly, his gaze sweeping across Holy Light Peak without lingering.

Those trembling disciples of the Divine Hall, those elders and protectors on high alert, were like ants in his eyes, not worth a second glance.

His gaze passed over Holy Light Peak, over layer upon layer of mountains, landing on a small town a hundred miles away.

There, he sensed a familiar aura.

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“Chen Ping...”

Ning Zhi’s lips curled slightly, a faint smile appearing.

The smile was faint, almost imperceptible, yet something flickered subtly deep within his eyes.

There was expectation, fighting spirit, and a complex emotion he himself didn’t even realize.

In the small town, Chen Ping stood by the window, his gaze also fixed on the direction of Holy Light Peak.

He sensed that aura, that familiar, hateful demonic energy.

That aura was like a flame in the darkness, clearly perceptible no matter the distance.

“Ning Zhi.”

He spoke softly, his tone calm, but his clenched fist betrayed the turmoil within him.

His knuckles were white, veins bulged, and even his breathing became heavy.

Yun Xi stood behind him, her expression grave. "Is it that Ning Zhi?"

Chen Ping nodded, loosened his fist, took a deep breath, and suppressed his surging emotions.

"He's here. Perfect."

He turned to the group, a cold glint in his eyes. "Let's go, let's meet him."

Yun Yao was somewhat frightened, instinctively hiding behind Liu Qianqian, only half her face showing as she timidly looked at Chen Ping.

Ming Li gripped his ghost blade tightly, a fighting spirit flashing in his eyes, a slight smile even playing on his lips.

Liu Qianqian didn't speak, only gently taking Ming Li's hand. They exchanged a glance, everything understood without words.

The group left the town, transforming into streaks of light, speeding towards Holy Light Peak.

Beneath Holy Light Peak, Ning Zhi stood with his hands behind his back, as if waiting for something.

He didn't wait long.

A moment later, several streaks of light flew from the horizon, piercing the sky and landing at the foot of the other side of Holy Light Peak.

The golden light dissipated, revealing Chen Ping's figure.

The two faced each other, hundreds of feet apart.

One was enveloped in golden light, exuding a powerful dragon's might, with the faint phantom of a five-clawed golden dragon coiled behind him. His dragon roar was deep and heavy, shaking the very air.

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The other's demonic energy surged, his murderous aura soaring to the sky. The ground beneath his feet was corroded by demonic energy, cracking inch by inch, dark red fissures spreading outwards like a spiderweb.

The two completely different auras collided in mid-air, sparking invisible flames.

There was no sound, no light, yet the aftershocks of the collision slightly distorted the space within a radius of several miles, creating visible ripples in the air, like crumpled silk.

On Holy Light Peak, Yao Chen's pupils contracted again upon witnessing this scene.

"Chen Ping? He's here too?"

An ominous premonition welled up within him.

Ning Zhi was already a headache enough; now, with Chen Ping, capable of killing a True Immortal with a single palm strike, what if these two joined forces...

No.

Yao Chen keenly sensed that the atmosphere between Chen Ping and Ning Zhi was not that of allies.

It was a deep-seated hostility, an irreconcilable grudge, so intense that he could clearly sense it even through the protective array of the mountain.

"They... are enemies?"

A thought flashed through Yao Chen's mind. The fear in his eyes gradually faded, replaced by a hint of anticipation, and a sly calculation like that of an old fox.

The enemy of my enemy is my friend.

If he could use Chen Ping to restrain Ning Zhi, or use Ning Zhi to eliminate Chen Ping, either outcome would be entirely beneficial to the Divine Hall.

If the two were both severely injured, that would be even better; he could then reap the benefits and eliminate both of his greatest threats in one fell swoop.

He suppressed his calculations, his gaze fixed intently on the foot of the mountain, a slight smile playing on his lips.

At the foot of the mountain, Ning Zhi looked at Chen Ping, his smile deepening.

"Chen Ping, we meet again."

His tone was relaxed and casual, as if greeting an old friend, even tinged with a hint of leisure. "Your injuries have healed? Not bad, faster than I expected."

Chen Ping stared at him, his eyes filled with hatred and murderous intent, his gaze like two sharp blades, wishing he could tear Ning Zhi to pieces.

"Ning Zhi, where is Yuqi?"

He cut to the chase, his voice icy, each word uttered slowly and deliberately, as if squeezed out from between his teeth.

Ning Zhi smiled, a smile tinged with amusement, mockery, and an indescribable meaning.

“Yuqi? She’s my senior sister, naturally she’s with me. What, you want to see her? Want to see her stab you a few more times with that fire sword?”

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Chen Ping clenched his fists, his knuckles white, his nails digging deep into his palms, blood dripping from between his fingers.

“What did you do to Yuqi? Why doesn’t she remember me?”

Ning Zhi tilted his head, his tone flippant, but a cold glint flashed in his eyes: “I didn’t do anything. She just... finally woke up. No longer blinded by a mortal ant like you, she found her true self. You should be happy for her; after all, she’s finally rid of you, this burden.”

Chen Ping’s eyes practically spit fire, his golden dragon aura surging violently, like a raging dragon.

“Ning Zhi, I don’t care what you’re planning, but let me tell you, I will help Yuqi regain her memories. Everything you’ve placed on her, I will repay a hundredfold,” Chen Ping roared.

Ning Zhi shook his head, sighed, his expression like that of someone looking at a stubborn child, a mixture of pity and disdain.

“Chen Ping, you’re still so naive. Do you think that her remembering you will change anything? Do you really think those so-called feelings between you are that important?” He paused, his gaze turning icy, like a frozen wasteland, devoid of any warmth.

“Before absolute power, feelings are nothing but a joke. You can’t even beat me, so what do you have to protect her? What do you have to do to retrieve her memories?”

Ning Zhi’s words were like sharp blades piercing Chen Ping’s body.

Chen Ping fell silent.

He slowly raised his right hand, his fingers forming a loose fist.

The Dragon-Slaying Sword appeared out of thin air, its blade as black as ink, covered with fine golden dragon patterns. The dragon patterns seemed to move across the blade as if alive, emitting a deep, resonant sword hum.

That sword hum carried the majesty of the dragon race, the arrogance of the Dragon Emperor, and a resolute determination to fight to the death.

The sword trembled slightly, as if responding to its master's anger.

"Then let me see just how much skill you've acquired."

Before the words were finished, he took a step forward.

This step, seemingly ordinary, caused the ground within a hundred-foot radius to explode the instant his foot touched the ground!

Pebble was blasted into the air, only to be pulverized into dust by the violent dragon energy in the next instant.

Golden light surged, like a second sun rising beneath Holy Light Peak, the blinding light causing the disciples on the peak to instinctively close their eyes.

A dragon's roar shook the heavens.

That was no longer the low murmur of an illusion, but a true dragon's roar!

The phantom of a five-clawed golden dragon burst forth from behind Chen Ping, its hundred-foot-tall golden body coiled in mid-air, its dragon eyes like torches, its dragon might vast and boundless, causing the entire protective array of Holy Light Peak to tremble violently.

The Dragon-Slaying Sword, imbued with overwhelming sword intent, slashed down towards Ning Zhi!

This sword strike contained all of his power.

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At this moment, Ning Zhi unleashed his full power, holding nothing back.

The sword light transformed into a hundred-zhang-long golden beam, like a bolt of lightning descending from the sky, tearing through the void. Wherever it passed, space itself was cleaved into a dark rift, emitting a piercing tearing sound.

A hint of admiration flashed in Ning Zhi's eyes, quickly replaced by an even stronger fighting spirit.

He raised his hand and threw a punch.

This punch, seemingly casual, caused the world to change color the instant his fist was thrown!

Demonic energy surged from all directions, condensing into a massive black vortex before his fist.

The vortex spun faster and faster, swallowing up the surrounding air, light, and even sound, turning it into a deathly darkness.

The fist's energy, as black as ink, erupted from the center of the vortex!

“Boom—!”

The fist and sword collided, unleashing a deafening roar.

The sound was beyond description as merely “roar.”

The entire area within a hundred miles fell silent in that instant. Not that there was no sound, but the sound was so immense, far exceeding the limits of what the ears could bear.

Everyone’s ears were filled with a buzzing blankness; even thought paused for a moment.

A terrifying shockwave swept outwards from the point of impact, turning the ground upside down as if plowed by a giant plow. Soil, pebbles, vegetation—everything was hurled into the air, only to be shredded into fragments by the violent energy.

The protective array of Holy Light Peak trembled violently from the shockwave. Ripples spread across its golden shield like those on a lake tossed with a boulder, wave after wave, endlessly.

Chen Ping staggered back three steps, each step leaving a footprint over a foot deep in the ground. The soil around the footprints was scorched black by the intense heat, emitting wisps of smoke.

Ning Zhi remained motionless, but a tear had been ripped in his sleeve by the sword energy.

A gentle breeze stirred, causing the torn fabric to flutter softly, revealing a lean yet powerful wrist beneath.

He glanced down, a smile playing on his lips.

That smile held surprise, admiration, and a hint of... long-lost excitement.

“Interesting.”

These four words escaped his lips with a touch of nonchalance, but those who knew him knew that when he uttered those words, he was truly serious.

Chen Ping remained silent.

He knew that his previous sword strike had been merely a test.

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He took a deep breath, his golden dragon bloodline surging, the dragon blood coursing through his veins like molten lava.

He could feel every muscle burning, every bone trembling—the Dragon Emperor’s bloodline responding to his will.

He struck again.

This time, it was no longer a test.

The sword light flashed like a rainbow, continuous and unending.

The first sword strike transformed into a golden, raging dragon, its claws outstretched, lunging towards Ning Zhi.

The dragon’s mouth gaped open, its fangs menacing, as if it wanted to devour him, soul and all.

Ning Zhi dodged to the side, then slammed his fist into the dragon’s head, blasting it into a shower of golden light.

The second sword strike followed immediately, its tip aimed directly at Ning Zhi’s throat.

This strike was incredibly fast, so fast that even the sword light couldn’t leave a trace in the air, so fast that the elders at the peak of the Upper Immortal Realm on Holy Light Peak couldn’t even see the sword’s trajectory.

Ning Zhi raised his hand, two fingers precisely clamping the sword tip.

The clang of metal clashing exploded, sparks flying. Where his fingers touched the sword tip, the air was compressed into a visible, transparent sphere, emitting a piercing buzz.

The third sword, the fourth sword, the fifth sword...

Chen Ping's attacks were like a storm, each strike faster and more ruthless than the last. He needed no fancy moves, only relentless, unwavering sword strikes, each imbued with a deep-seated hatred and a relentless, death-defying resolve, as he relentlessly attacked Ning Zhi.

Each strike contained earth-shattering power, each capable of leveling a mountain.

Where the sword light passed, deep furrows, several meters deep, were carved into the ground, and the air was thick with the scorching heat of clashing sword and demonic energy.

Ning Zhi neither dodged nor evaded, meeting each punch head-on.

His fist techniques were simple and unadorned, devoid of any fancy variations, yet each punch was terrifyingly precise.

No matter the angle from which Chen Ping's sword thrust, no matter its speed, his fists always struck the blade with perfect precision, neutralizing Chen Ping's attacks.

Their speed increased exponentially.

The disciples nearing Holy Light Peak couldn't see their movements clearly, only two streaks of light, one golden and one black, clashing wildly, each impact unleashing a deafening roar.

Golden light intertwined with demonic energy, dyeing the entire sky an eerie dark gold.

Even the True Immortal realm elders could barely catch afterimages.

Their eyes widened, their faces filled with horror, unable to believe this was a battle between two Upper Immortal realm cultivators.

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This level of combat was top-tier even among True Immortal realm cultivators.

Ning Zhi was also capable of fighting beyond his level. Although he was currently only at the ninth rank of Upper Immortal realm, a true master could instantly kill a second-rank True Immortal.

The clash of sword light and fist energy grew increasingly intense and frequent.

In just a few breaths, the two had exchanged hundreds of blows.

Each collision unleashed terrifying shockwaves, cratering the surrounding ground, leaving no intact patch of ground within a radius of several miles.

Debris was blasted into the air, only to be pulverized in the next shockwave.

Dust billowed, obscuring the sky, but the dust was instantly vaporized by the violent energy the moment it approached the center of the battle, leaving not a trace.

On Holy Light Peak, Yao Chen watched this scene, his face growing increasingly grim, veins bulging on his hand gripping the railing.

“These two... are monsters.”

He had initially thought that Chen Ping’s ability to kill the Qingxuan Sect Leader with a single palm strike was the limit.

But now he realized that Chen Ping’s strength was far more terrifying than he had imagined.

That terrifying fighting instinct, that bloodline power that grew stronger with each battle, was something the Qingxuan Sect Leader could never match.

And Ning Zhi was even more unfathomable.

He had fought Chen Ping for so long, yet remained completely at ease, even having the energy to observe his surroundings.

This strength, this composure, filled him with a deep-seated fear. What alarmed him even more was that, although the two were fighting fiercely, neither was using their full strength.

They seemed to be testing each other, probing each other's limits, searching for weaknesses.

"Hall Master, should we..." a guardian elder asked in a low voice, his eyes filled with anxiety.

Yao Chen raised a hand to stop him, a glint of shrewdness flashing in his eyes: "No rush, let them fight. Ideally, they should both be severely injured, then we can reap the benefits."

He paused, then added: "Pass down the order, all elders prepare to attack immediately once they are exhausted. Neither of these two can be spared."

The guardian elder nodded and turned to relay the order.

At the foot of the mountain, the battle between Chen Ping and Ning Zhi continued.

The two fought from the ground to mid-air, and then back to the ground.

Golden light and demonic energy intertwined, sword intent and fist energy collided, each move enough to instantly kill a second-grade True Immortal Realm expert.

Chen Ping's sword grew faster and more ruthless.