

The Order 10681

Chapter: 10681

“Yes, yes, yes... Grandpa, come with me...”

He turned and walked towards the back of Holy Light Peak, his steps faltering, his back looking utterly disheveled.

Yun Xi walked to Chen Ping’s side and said in a low voice, “This person is a bit strange.”

Chen Ping nodded slightly: “I know.”

Of course he knew.

Zhou Yuanlang agreed too quickly, and his attitude was far too submissive.

A person who has served as an elder in the Divine Hall for thousands of years, even if afraid of death, shouldn’t so readily betray the sect’s core secrets.

Unless he has other plans.

“Then why are you going with him?” Yun Xi frowned.

Chen Ping looked at Zhou Yuanlang’s retreating figure and said calmly, “He has his plans, and I have my methods. My friend and his wife’s remnant souls won’t last much longer; I can’t wait.”

Yun Xi stopped speaking, only gripping her sword tighter, her eyes filled with even greater vigilance.

Ming Li, holding Liu Qianqian’s hand, walked at the very back, her Ghost Blade already half-drawn, ready to respond to any unexpected situation.

Yun Yao followed closely behind Chen Ping, her face deathly pale, but she bit her lip, uttering not a sound.

Six figures passed through the dilapidated buildings of Holy Light Peak, heading towards the back mountain.

Along the way, collapsed palaces and fleeing Divine Hall disciples were everywhere.

Upon seeing Chen Ping and his group, the disciples scattered in terror, screaming, as if they had seen ghosts. No one dared to stop them.

The Hall Master of the Divine Hall, Yao Chen, was dead; the protective array of the mountain was broken; the elders were either dead or had fled. This sacred land, which had once dominated the Holy Domain of Light for hundreds of thousands of years, was now nothing more than a toothless tiger, all show and no substance.

Zhou Yuanlang led them through ruins and a dark mountain tunnel, finally arriving at the entrance to a valley shrouded in thick fog.

“This is it.”

Zhou Yuanlang stopped and pointed into the valley, saying, “The Soul Returning Array is deep within the valley. However, it is perpetually shrouded in a restriction, preventing outsiders from entering. Only my elder’s token can activate it...”

He pulled a palm-sized golden token from his robes, its surface covered in dense runes, emitting a faint glow.

“Grandpa, please wait a moment, I will activate the restriction...”

Zhou Yuanlang held the token up before him, chanting incantations.

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The runes on the token began to light up, the golden light growing increasingly intense until it transformed into a beam of light that shot into the thick fog.

The fog churned and slowly parted to reveal a narrow passage.

At the end of the passage, an ancient stone platform could be vaguely seen, its surface covered with intricate patterns and emitting a faint blue glow.

“That’s the Soul Return Array,” Zhou Yuanlang said, pointing to the platform with a beaming smile. “Grandpa, please follow me. The spell will take a little time to cast, but it will definitely succeed...”

He finished speaking and stepped into the passage first.

Chen Ping followed, but the moment he stepped into the passage, his brow furrowed sharply.

Something was wrong.

The aura in this passage... something was wrong.

An extremely eerie aura emanated from the depths of the valley. It contained both the holy light unique to the gods and the malevolent demonic intent unique to the demons. These two diametrically opposed forces were forcibly mixed together, creating a distorted, chaotic, and nauseatingly oppressive feeling.

It was like forcibly mixing oil and water; on the surface, they appeared to blend, but in reality, every drop repelled and tore at each other.

“Chen Ping...”

Yun Xi’s voice came from behind, tinged with obvious apprehension, “There’s something wrong with this place.”

“I know.”

Chen Ping stopped, his gaze sharp as lightning, sweeping towards the thick fog at the end of the passage.

The distorted aura grew thicker and heavier, as if something was awakening from its slumber.

Zhou Yuanlang had reached the middle of the passage when he suddenly stopped and turned around.

His expression changed.

The obsequious, servile look vanished, replaced by an almost manic smugness and resentment.

“Chen Ping, Chen Ping, you actually dared to follow me in.”

Zhou Yuanlang’s voice no longer trembled; instead, it carried a long-suppressed sense of exhilaration, “What do you think the Divine Hall is? You think I’d obediently help you? Hahahaha...”

He burst into laughter, the sound echoing shrilly in the narrow passage. Chen Ping looked at him silently.

Zhou Yuanlang suddenly raised the token in his hand and slammed it against the wall of the passage.

Boom—!

The entire passage shook violently, and thick fog surged in from all directions, completely blocking their escape route.

On the ancient stone platform at the end of the passage, the intricate patterns glowed with a blinding red light, like flowing blood.

But what was most chilling was the heartbeat emanating from beneath the platform.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

The heartbeat was deep and powerful, each beat causing the ground to tremble slightly, each beat like a heavy punch to the heart.

Zhou Yuanlang retreated to the side of the platform, his smile growing increasingly sinister.

“Come forth, my clan’s most perfect masterpiece!”

His words had barely left his lips when the stone platform shattered!

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Debris flew, dust billowed, and a colossal figure soared into the sky from beneath the stone platform, landing heavily at the end of the passage.

As the dust settled, Chen Ping finally saw the thing in its entirety.

It was... a humanoid monster.

Its size was enormous, over two zhang tall, its body covered in dark golden scales, each scale flowing with eerie blood-red patterns.

Its left half radiated a holy golden light, the holy light power unique to the gods;

The right half, however, surged with pitch-black demonic energy, the malevolent intent unique to demons.

These two diametrically opposed forces clashed wildly within it, yet were forcibly fused together by some bizarre method, making it appear like a torn and reassembled doll, twisted and mad in every way.

Its face was expressionless, or rather, its face was incapable of expression.

It wasn't a normal human face at all. The left half retained some human features, but the right half was completely twisted and deformed, with countless worm-like blood vessels bulging beneath the skin. One eye was blood-red, while the other was empty and lifeless.

"This is..."

Yun Xi gasped, instinctively taking a step back.

"The only finished product of the secret fusion of the Divine Hall."

Zhou Yuanlang stood behind the monster, his voice filled with pride and resentment. "We spent ten thousand years, using thousands of divine and demonic cultivators as test subjects, to successfully create this one."

He reached out and gently patted the monster's back, his manner resembling that of someone showing off their most prized creation.

"Its body is fused with the bloodlines of twelve divine cultivators and the demonic cores of six demonic cultivators. We spent ten thousand years repeatedly adjusting and improving it to achieve its current stable state."

Zhou Yuanlang's smile grew increasingly maniacal.

“Peak of the third rank of True Immortal Realm. This is the greatest achievement the Divine Hall has made in tens of thousands of years! Given enough time, it could even grow to the peak of the ninth rank of True Immortal Realm, or even break through to the legendary realm!”

He looked at Chen Ping, his eyes filled with contempt and disdain. “If it weren’t for that trash Hall Master being too careless and being instantly killed by that demon Ning Zhi, as long as we release it, none of you would have escaped! Not a single one of you would have escaped!”

Chen Ping stared at the monster, his brows furrowed.

His intuition was screaming warnings.

This thing... was indeed very strong.

The aura of the peak third rank of True Immortal Realm was almost tangible, pressing down on him so hard he could barely breathe.

The distorted holy light and demonic energy intertwined, forming a strange force field that made the surrounding space unstable.

He could sense that this thing’s strength far surpassed Yao Chen’s.

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Yao Chen was only a second-rank True Immortal Realm cultivator, and accustomed to a life of luxury, his true combat strength might not even reach the level of a second-rank True Immortal Realm cultivator.

But this monster was different.

It was created for battle; every inch of its flesh, every bone, was born for slaughter.

“Chen Ping...”

Yun Xi's voice was soft, yet carried an unprecedented gravity, "This thing is not easy to deal with."

Chen Ping nodded slightly and took a deep breath.

The golden dragon bloodline within him began to boil, golden dragon energy surging around him, and the Dragon-Slaying Sword appeared in his palm, emitting a deep sword hum.

"Not easy to deal with, but we have to deal with it."

His voice was calm, but his eyes were sharp as knives.

Zhou Yuanlang laughed loudly, his laughter filled with disdain and smugness.

"Deal with it? Chen Ping, what do you think you can do with it? You can't even beat Ning Zhi, yet you dare to challenge my Divine Hall's most perfect masterpiece? Hahahaha... Kill them all!"

Before he finished speaking, the monster moved.

It made no sound, not even a breath, and charged forward silently.

But its speed was terrifying! The colossal body, over two zhang tall, unleashed a terrifying speed completely disproportionate to its size. Like a dark golden meteor, wreathed in distorted holy light and demonic energy, it hurtled straight towards Chen Ping!

Where it passed, footprints over a foot deep were left in the ground, and ear-piercing explosions echoed in the air—sonic booms! Its speed had broken the sound barrier!

Chen Ping's pupils constricted sharply. He held the Dragon-Slaying Sword horizontally in front of him, golden dragon energy surging wildly into the blade.

"Clang—!"

The monster's fist slammed into the Dragon-Slaying Sword, producing a deafening metallic clang.

That power... was immense!

Chen Ping felt as if he had been struck head-on by a mountain. He was sent flying like a kite with a broken string, crashing heavily against the wall of the passage.

The wall shattered with a deafening roar, sending debris flying and dust billowing.

His back shattered through at least three feet of rock before he finally came to a stop. His hand went numb, the Dragon-Slaying Sword trembled violently, its clang carrying a hint of sorrow.

A trickle of blood escaped from the corner of his mouth; the punch had injured his internal organs.

"Such immense power..."

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Chen Ping gritted his teeth and straightened up, a look of horror flashing in his eyes.

He had defended with all his might, yet the monster's power still far exceeded his expectations.

A full-force attack from a peak third-grade True Immortal was indeed something a peak fourth-grade Upper Immortal could not withstand.

Moreover, this monster's true combat strength was likely higher than that of an ordinary peak third-grade True Immortal cultivator.

No wonder even a legitimate divine clan like the Divine Hall secretly engaged in things that defied the laws of nature.

Having landed its blow, the monster charged again without hesitation.

Its movements were devoid of any fancy tricks or techniques; they were pure, primal, beast-like violence.

A punch, a kick, a slam—each strike carried earth-shattering power, enough to level a mountain.

Chen Ping gritted his teeth and met the attack head-on, his Dragon-Slaying Sword transforming into a sky full of sword light, locked in combat with the monster.

Golden light clashed with dark golden scales, erupting in dazzling sparks.

But Chen Ping soon discovered a chilling truth—his sword couldn't penetrate the monster's defenses.

The Dragon-Slaying Sword struck its scales, leaving only a shallow white mark, unable to even cut through the scales.

And each of the monster's attacks left him in grave danger.

“Boom!”

Another punch sent Chen Ping flying, crashing through three stone pillars, blood gushing from his mouth.

His left arm, already shattered by Yao Chen's shoulder injury, was now further aggravated, the entire arm numb.

“Chen Ping!”

Yun Xi could no longer restrain herself, drawing her sword and charging forward. Her ghostly blade, imbued with a chilling aura, pierced the monster's back.

The monster didn't even turn its head, retaliating with a slap.

Yun Xi parried with her sword, but the terrifying force forced her back several steps, her hand splitting open and bleeding profusely.

"This thing's defense is too strong..."

Yun Xi gritted her teeth, "Ordinary attacks can't hurt it at all."

Chen Ping struggled to his feet, wiping the blood from his mouth, a ruthless glint in his eyes.

"Ordinary attacks won't work, then I'll use something extraordinary."

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He took a deep breath, and the golden dragon bloodline within him boiled completely.

Golden dragon energy surged from his body, condensing behind him into the phantom of a five-clawed golden dragon.

The phantom was more solid than when it fought Ning Zhi, its dragon eyes blazing, its dragon might vast, as if it were about to break free from the void.

The golden dragon patterns on the Dragon-Slaying Sword flickered wildly, every line on the blade burning and roaring.

This was the limit of what he could achieve.

He had pushed the power of the Golden Dragon bloodline to its limit, pouring everything into this single sword strike.

“Yunxi, help me restrain it!” Chen Ping said in a deep voice.

Yunxi didn’t hesitate. She twirled the Ghost Blade in her hand, and eerie ghostly energy transformed into countless black chains, coiling towards the monster.

The monster, bound by the chains, let out a low roar, its arms trembling as it snapped the chains in two.

But that brief pause was enough.

Chen Ping moved.

His figure transformed into a golden streak of light, the Dragon-Slaying Sword in front of him, and he shot towards the monster’s chest like an arrow released from a bow.

This sword strike contained all his power, all his will, and all his life.

The sword’s intent arrived before the sword itself.

The sword intent was as chilling as winter, as sharp as a blade, tearing a dark rift through the air.

The monster seemed to sense the threat. For the first time, it let out a sound—a low, beast-like roar, filled with resentment and rage.

It clenched its fists, and holy light and demonic energy erupted simultaneously from its body, coalescing into a twisted shield before it.

The shield was half golden, half pitch black, the two opposing forces swirling wildly within, forming an extremely eerie vortex.

“Break—!”

Chen Ping roared, plunging the Dragon-Slaying Sword fiercely into the vortex.

Boom—!

The moment the sword collided with the shield, a deafening roar erupted.

The golden dragon energy and the twisted holy and demonic energy exploded simultaneously, transforming into a terrifying shockwave that spread outwards.

The walls on both sides of the passage were ripped to shreds by the shockwave, sending debris flying and dust billowing.

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Cracks appeared all over the rock face above, and large chunks of rock rained down from above.

Chen Ping felt his arms, shoulders, and even the bones in his entire body groan and tremble.

The Dragon-Slaying Sword and the shield were locked in a stalemate, neither able to advance.

The monster's power was too great; its cultivation far surpassed Chen Ping's. Even with Chen Ping burning his bloodline, he couldn't overpower it in strength.

"Break... for me!"

Chen Ping gritted his teeth, his eyes turning a deep crimson gold.

At this moment, the Golden Dragon bloodline within him broke through its limits. The bottleneck that had plagued him for so long shattered in this life-or-death moment!

Fifth Rank of the Upper Immortal Realm!

His aura surged instantly, golden dragon energy erupting from his body like a volcanic eruption, condensing behind him into an even more solid and majestic five-clawed golden dragon.

The light on the Dragon-Slaying Sword surged several times over, the dragon patterns on its blade seeming to come alive, emitting a deafening roar!

Crack—

A crack appeared on the distorted shield.

The cracks spread rapidly, densely packed like a spiderweb.

"Break!"

Chen Ping roared again, thrusting the Dragon-Slaying Sword forward with tremendous force.

Boom—!

The shield shattered with a deafening crash, the Dragon-Slaying Sword piercing the monster's chest with unstoppable momentum!

"Awooo—!"

The monster let out a piercing howl, its voice filled with resentment and rage.

Dark golden blood gushed from the wound, containing both golden holy light and black demonic energy. The two forces repelled each other in the air, emitting a hissing sound.

But the monster did not fall.

It frantically swung its arms, smashing them towards Chen Ping.

Chen Ping didn't have time to draw the Dragon-Slaying Sword; he could only loosen his grip on the hilt and retreat.

But the monster's fist was too fast, slamming into his chest.

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"Bang!"

The sound of bones cracking was clearly audible. Chen Ping felt at least two of his sternums break, and he flew backward like a kite with a broken string, spitting blood from his mouth.

"Chen Ping!"

Yun Xi was shocked. She flashed forward and caught Chen Ping.

But the impact was too great. She staggered back more than ten steps with Chen Ping in her arms before barely regaining her balance.

The monster glanced down at the Dragon-Slaying Sword stuck in its chest, let out a low roar, reached out and gripped the blade, and yanked it out.

Dark golden blood gushed out again, but the monster seemed to feel no pain. It casually tossed the Dragon-Slaying Sword to the ground and turned to walk towards Chen Ping and Yun Xi.

Though its steps were unsteady, its killing intent remained undiminished.

Each step he took left a deep footprint in the ground, the edges of the soil stained a dark gold by blood.

“It’s not dead yet...”

Chen Ping gritted his teeth, the excruciating pain in his chest making it almost impossible to breathe.

Yun Xi set him down, gripped her ghostly blade tightly, and stood in front of him.

“I’ll handle this.”

Her voice was calm, but the killing intent in her eyes was intense.

The monster drew closer and closer.

Yun Xi took a deep breath, her ghostly energy surging wildly.

Behind her, a gigantic phantom vaguely appeared—a woman in black robes, with cascading long hair, a blurred face, and holding an equally massive ghostly blade.

That was her innate ghostly form, her trump card cultivated for thousands of years.

“Ghost Slash.”

Yun Xi uttered two words softly, her voice low, yet like a judgment from the deepest abyss.

She drew her sword.

This sword strike was unlike any before.

The ghostly energy on the demon blade condensed to its peak, transforming into a jet-black blade of light that slashed towards the monster’s neck.

Where the blade of light passed, space was torn open with a dark rift, its edges emitting a piercing shriek.

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The monster sensed a deadly threat and frantically channeled its holy light and demonic energy, attempting to reconstruct a shield.

However, its chest had been pierced by the Dragon-Slaying Sword, its power greatly diminished, and the shield shattered before it could even form.

The blade of light sliced through its neck without hindrance.

“Crack.”

The sound was soft, yet clearly audible.

The monster's head flew high, dark golden blood gushing from the severed neck like a fountain.

Its body stood still for a full three breaths before crashing to the ground, kicking up a cloud of dust.

The head fell to the ground, rolled a few times, and the contorted face still bore the grotesque expression of its dying moments.

Everything fell silent.

Yun Xi sheathed her ghost blade, her face paling, and a fine layer of sweat beaded on her forehead.

This single sword strike had almost exhausted most of her strength.

"Dead..."

She gasped for breath, looking at Chen Ping, "How are you?"

Chen Ping struggled to his feet, the sharp pain in his chest causing cold sweat to pour down his forehead, but he still shook his head: "I'm not dead."

He glanced down at the monster's corpse on the ground, a complex emotion flashing in his eyes.

A fusion monster at the peak of the third rank of True Immortal Realm... If it weren't for Yun Xi's sword strike, he probably would have truly perished here today.

"What about Elder Shentang?"

Chen Ping suddenly remembered something and abruptly looked up.

The end of the passage was empty.

Zhou Yuanlang was gone.

“He ran away the moment you pierced that monster’s chest.”

Ming Li’s voice came from behind, tinged with frustration. “I’ll go after him...”

Before he could finish, a scream suddenly rang out in the distance.

That voice...it was Zhou Yuanlang’s.

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Chen Ping’s heart sank. He suppressed the excruciating pain in his chest and rushed towards the direction of the sound.

Ming Li followed closely behind.

The three of them passed through the passage and arrived at the other side of the valley. The scene before them made Chen Ping abruptly stop in his tracks.

Zhou Yuanlang’s corpse lay on the ground, a thin line of blood running down his throat, slowly seeping from the wound.

His eyes were wide open, his face still showing an expression of terror and disbelief, as if he couldn’t believe he was dying here.

Yun Xi stood beside the corpse, blood still dripping from the ghost blade in her hand.

Her expression was calm, even somewhat cold.

“He tried to run,” Yunxi said calmly. “I killed him.”

Chen Ping was silent for a moment, then slowly said, “I... wanted to spare his life.”

Yunxi turned to look at him, a hint of confusion flashing in her eyes: “Why keep him alive? Keeping someone like that around is just asking for trouble.”

Chen Ping didn't answer.

He couldn't speak.

He couldn't say that he had spared Zhou Yuanlang because he still needed him to control the Soul Return Array to release the remnants of Mu Sha and his wife's souls.

But now... Zhou Yuanlang was dead.

Chen Ping turned to look at the shattered stone platform at the end of the passage. The Soul Return Array had been completely destroyed in the battle; its intricate patterns were broken into countless pieces, scattered across the ground, beyond repair.

His heart sank to the bottom.

“Chen Ping?”

Yun Xi noticed his unusual expression and frowned, asking, “What's wrong?”

Chen Ping didn't answer, but slowly took out the Soul Crystal from his robes.

The two white lights within the Soul Crystal... dimmed even more.

Their movement became slower and slower, as if two utterly exhausted souls were about to stop beating at any moment.

Chen Ping's fingers trembled slightly.

The shrine was destroyed, the Soul Return Array was ruined, and Zhou Yuanlang was dead.

The remnant souls of Mu Sha and his wife... cannot be released.