

## The Order 10781

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Long Zhan was taken aback: "Take the initiative?"

"Yes."

Chen Ping pointed to a marker deep within the Demon Realm on the map. "Instead of sitting here waiting for them to attack, we should just storm their doorstep. Destroy the Demon Dragon lineage, cut off that demon cultivator's claws, and then find that demon cultivator."

Long Zhan's expression changed: "Mr. Chen, the Demon Realm is the territory of the demons. If we rashly venture in..."

"I know," Chen Ping interrupted him, "but have you considered that the reason the Demon Dragon lineage dares to swagger outside Cloud Immortal City is because we've been on the defensive? If we demonstrate sufficient strength, letting them know we're not to be trifled with, they'll actually back down."

He paused, looking at Long Zhan.

"Furthermore, I won't bring too many people. You, the core fighting force of the Heavenly Dragon lineage, plus myself, that's enough."

Long Zhan hesitated for a moment, then finally nodded.

"Okay. I'll listen to Mr. Chen."

Chen Ping patted his shoulder. "Go prepare. We're leaving tomorrow."

Long Zhan turned and left the council hall.

Chen Ping stood before the map, staring at the red marker deep within the Demon Realm, a cold glint flashing in his eyes.

Dragon Demon, no matter who's backing you, this time, I won't give you another chance.

That evening, when Chen Ping returned to his room, he found Chen Wanqing sitting on his bed waiting for him.

Her expression was complicated, as if she wanted to say something but didn't know how to begin.

"What's wrong?" Chen Ping walked over and sat down beside her.

Chen Wanqing was silent for a moment, then asked softly, "That Jiang Xuelan... are you really not together?"

Chen Ping paused, then smiled bitterly. "You're still thinking about that?"

"I just want to know."

Chen Wanqing looked up, meeting his eyes. "The way you look at her is different from how you look at others."

Chen Ping was silent for a moment.

"Her and I..." Chen Ping chose his words carefully, "I can't say we're unrelated. We've been through life and death together; she saved me, and I saved her. She helped me a lot, and I helped her a lot. But as for feelings... I can't quite put my finger on it."

Chen Wanqing bit her lip: "Then do you like her?"

Chen Ping didn't answer immediately.

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He thought for a moment, then said seriously, "I don't know if that counts as liking. But I'm certain that she's already my woman, and we've cultivated together."

"You two cultivated together?"

Chen Wanqing's eyes reddened slightly.

She and Chen Ping were practically husband and wife, after all, they'd chosen each other through a martial arts contest. Although she'd initially been scheming against Chen Ping, now she genuinely liked him.

Now Chen Ping was cultivating together with Jiang Xuelan, and she hadn't even slept with him yet!

"You're really annoying," her voice choked with emotion, "Knowing I'd be jealous, you still brought a woman back."

Chen Ping reached out and pulled Chen Wanqing into his arms.

"I'm sorry."

Chen Wanqing leaned against him, listening to his strong heartbeat, and the jealousy in her heart slowly dissipated.

"Never mind," Chen Wanqing said sullenly, "You have plenty of women anyway, one more won't matter."

Chen Ping: "..."

He decided to remain silent.

“I also want to cultivate with you...” Chen Wanqing said.

Chen Ping looked at Chen Wanqing, somewhat hesitant.

Then he said, “Wanqing, in a while, I might have to go to the Fifteenth Heaven. I won’t be able to take you with me. You’ll have to stay in Yunxian City. As for when I’ll be back, I don’t know.”

Chen Ping thought of how many women he had slept with in the Heavenly Realm, perhaps they were all waiting for him to return.

But he couldn’t turn back. He could only climb towards the highest peak of the Heavenly Realm until he saw his father.

But what about those women?

Chen Ping had even forgotten some of their names.

Therefore, Chen Ping didn’t want to continue being so promiscuous; he felt somewhat guilty towards Chen Wanqing.

Although they had engaged in a martial arts contest to choose a husband, it was all just for show; both harbored their own ulterior motives, so it didn’t count.

“It’s alright, I can wait for you...” Chen Wanqing said.

“Wanqing, listen to me, I might never return to the Fourteenth Heaven, so you should find a man you like,” Chen Ping advised.

But to everyone's surprise, Chen Wanqing burst into tears, saying through her tears, "If you never come back, I'll cultivate with you even more; I want to preserve your last bit of tenderness."

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After saying this, Chen Wanqing immediately took off her clothes...

Seeing this, Chen Ping could only helplessly submit!

As he pressed himself against Chen Wanqing, Chen Ping thought to himself, "This isn't because I'm a scumbag; these women are the ones who took the initiative. I can't help it; my charm is just too great."

The next morning, Chen Ping woke up refreshed, while Chen Wanqing was still lying in bed, too weak to move.

Chen Ping, leading Long Zhan and twenty elite warriors from the Heavenly Dragon lineage, embarked on their journey to the Demon Realm.

Yun Xi, Yun Yao, Ming Li, and Liu Qianqian all wanted to go with him, but Chen Ping refused.

"I can handle it alone," he said calmly, yet with an undeniable confidence. "You stay in Yunxian City and guard the home."

Yun Xi was somewhat unwilling, but she knew Chen Ping was telling the truth.

With Chen Ping's current strength, there were indeed few in the Fourteenth Heaven who could stop him.

"Then be careful," Yun Xi cautioned.

“Okay.”

Chen Ping, along with Long Zhan and the others, transformed into streaks of light and disappeared into the horizon.

Jiang Xuelan stood on the city wall, watching their departing figures, her brows slightly furrowed.

She had wanted to go with them, but Chen Ping wouldn't allow it.

Jiang Xuelan turned and walked down the city wall.

Yunxi stood on the city wall, watching Jiang Xuelan's retreating figure, and suddenly asked, “Do you like Chen Ping?”

Jiang Xuelan paused, but didn't turn around.

“Whether I like him or not, does it matter?”

Yunxi was taken aback.

Jiang Xuelan's voice was very soft, as if she were talking to herself: “I've lived for tens of thousands of years, long past the age of romance. My mission is to rebuild the Ice God lineage, everything else... is unimportant.”

She continued walking forward, disappearing around the corner of the city wall.

Yunxi stood there, watching that aloof figure, a strange emotion welling up inside her.

That woman was far more lonely than she had imagined.

The Demon Realm was thirty thousand miles north of Yunxian City, a desolate land shrouded in black mist.

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The sky there was always gray, the sun obscured by thick clouds, with only a few pale rays occasionally piercing through the gaps.

The ground was barren, covered only with charred rocks and cracked earth.

The air was thick with a stench of sulfur and decay, nauseating to the senses.

After entering the Demon Realm, Chen Ping and his group slowed noticeably.

Not due to resistance, but because of the eeriness.

An unnatural silence.

“Mr. Chen, something’s wrong,” Long Zhan said in a low voice.

“There are usually many low-level demons wandering the outskirts of the Demon Realm, but we haven’t seen a single one after walking for so long today.”

Chen Ping nodded.

He sensed it too.

This Demon Realm seemed to have been emptied out by something.

“Keep going,” he said calmly. “Whatever tricks they’re playing, we’ll settle this today.”

The group continued deeper into the Demon Realm.

After walking for about another hour, a massive valley appeared ahead.

Towering black cliffs rose on either side of the valley, and a wide passage ran through its depths. At the end of the passage, a massive stone gate could be vaguely seen.

The gate was carved with ferocious dragon reliefs, its two enormous eyes inlaid with blood-red gems, emitting an eerie red glow in the darkness.

“That’s the lair of the Demonic Dragon lineage, Dragon Abyss Valley,” Long Zhan’s voice tightened. “Dragon Abyss is named after this valley.”

Chen Ping looked at the stone gate and suddenly smiled.

“Dragon Abyss Valley? A nice name. Unfortunately, after today, it will be renamed.”

He took the lead, heading towards the valley.

Long Zhan and twenty elite members of the Heavenly Dragon lineage followed closely behind.

The group had just stepped into the valley when a deafening roar came from behind them.

Countless boulders tumbled down from the cliffs on either side, completely blocking their escape route.

At the same time, countless pairs of blood-red eyes lit up at the end of the valley passage.

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One after another, demonic dragons emerged from the darkness.

They varied in size, the largest being a hundred zhang long, the smallest still several tens of zhang.

Their bodies were covered in jet-black scales, from which flowed a dark red light, like magma from the earth. Black smoke billowed from their mouths, their eyes filled with bloodthirsty ferocity.

Leading them was the largest demonic dragon.

Its body was a full two hundred zhang long, its horns twice as thick as the others, and the demonic energy surrounding it was so dense it was almost tangible.

The moment it saw Long Zhan, a complex emotion flashed in its eyes.

“Long Zhan, long time no see.”

Its voice was low and hoarse, with a metallic, grinding quality.

Long Zhan looked at it, his eyes filled with hatred: “Long Yuan.”

Long Yuan’s gaze shifted from Long Zhan to Chen Ping.

A hint of apprehension flashed in Long Yuan’s eyes.

He had witnessed Chen Ping’s power before; his combat strength was enough to instantly kill a second-grade True Immortal cultivator.

Such strength was beyond his capabilities.

Moreover, it seemed Chen Ping's cultivation had increased again; even a third-grade True Immortal cultivator might not be a match for him.

"Chen Ping, I know you're very capable,"

Long Yuan's voice was deep, "but this is the Demon Realm, my territory. No matter how strong you are alone, can you defeat my thousand demonic dragons?"

The demonic dragons behind him simultaneously let out a low roar, the sound waves shaking the valley.

Chen Ping looked around at the densely packed demonic dragons, a slight smile playing on his lips.

"A thousand? Quite a few. But..."

He raised his hand, purple chaotic power condensing in his palm.

"To me, quantity is meaningless."

As soon as he finished speaking, he moved.

A purple sword light, like a bolt of lightning, ripped through the darkness of the valley.

The first sword strike ripped through the ten leading demonic dragons, tearing them to shreds like paper.

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The second sword sliced through the dragons attempting to ambush from the mountainside, their black blood gushing like a torrential downpour.

The third sword saw Chen Ping transform into a streak of purple light, plunging into the horde of dragons.

His speed was too fast for the naked eye to follow.

Where the sword light passed, dragons fell in droves, like wheat being harvested.

One sword, ten dragons.

Ten swords, a hundred dragons.

In mere moments, nearly half of the thousand demonic dragons had been slain.

The remaining dragons finally collapsed.

They roared in terror, scattering and fleeing desperately into the depths of the valley.

Chen Ping did not pursue.

He sheathed his sword and turned to look at Long Yuan.

Long Yuan's face had turned deathly pale.

It knew Chen Ping was strong, but it hadn't expected him to be this strong.

Thousands of demonic dragons couldn't even withstand the power of an incense stick burning for long before Chen Ping.

This kind of strength was beyond its ability to contend with.

“Long Yuan,” Chen Ping’s voice was calm, “I’ll give you a chance. Kneel down, and I might spare your life.”

Long Yuan’s body trembled slightly.

It looked at Chen Ping, then at Long Zhan, a flicker of struggle in its eyes.

Then...

It slowly knelt down.

The massive dragon body lay prostrate on the ground, head bowed, its voice hoarse: “I... surrender.”

Long Zhan watched this scene, a complex emotion welling up within him.

He hated Long Yuan.

He had hated him for countless years.

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But when Long Yuan truly knelt before him, he found himself not experiencing the satisfaction he had imagined.

“Long Zhan...” Long Yuan’s voice was low, “I know you hate me. But I was forced to side with the Demon Clan.”

Long Zhan's expression changed: "Forced?"

"Do you think I wanted to be a lackey of the Demon Clan?"

Long Yuan's voice carried a hint of bitterness, "Back then, the Heavenly Dragon lineage was suppressed by the God Clan, and was on the verge of extinction. If I hadn't side with the Demon Clan, the Heavenly Dragon lineage would have been wiped out long ago. At least... at least after sidelining with the Demon Clan, the bloodline of the Heavenly Dragon lineage could have continued."

Long Zhan's fists clenched so tightly they cracked.

"You still have the nerve to say that? After you sidelined with the Demon Clan, how many members of the Heavenly Dragon lineage did you kill?"

Long Yuan was silent for a moment.

"I killed those who refused to submit. If I hadn't killed them, the Demon Clan would have wiped out our entire clan. I had no choice."

A trace of pain flashed in Long Zhan's eyes.

He knew there was some truth to what Long Yuan said.

Back then, the Heavenly Dragon lineage had indeed reached a dead end.

The gods are suppressing them; without a powerful backer, the Heavenly Dragon lineage might truly be wiped out.

But that doesn't mean Long Yuan's actions were right.

“Mr. Chen,” Long Zhan turned to Chen Ping, “I want to... handle this myself.”

Chen Ping glanced at him and nodded.

“This is a matter for your Heavenly Dragon lineage; you decide for yourself.”

Long Zhan walked up to Long Yuan and remained silent for a long time.

Then he spoke.

“Long Yuan, I won’t kill you.”

Long Yuan looked up, his eyes filled with surprise.

“But you must take us somewhere.”

“Where?”

“The lair of that demonic cultivator behind you.”

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Long Yuan’s body stiffened.

“That demonic cultivator... has already escaped.”

Its voice was low. “Three days ago, he suddenly disappeared. Before leaving, he took everything he owned, leaving nothing behind.”

Chen Ping frowned: "Escaped?"

"Yes."

Long Yuan nodded. "He left in a hurry, as if he was frightened by something. I asked him why, but he wouldn't say. I guess it's because of Ning Zhi's departure."

"Ning Zhi left several days ago and hasn't returned."

Even Ning Zhi couldn't defeat Chen Ping, so how could that demonic cultivator dare to remain in the Demon Realm?

"Take me to see it," Chen Ping said.

Long Yuan led the group through the valley to a grand hall deep within the Demon Realm.

The hall was quite large, but it was now deserted. The doors were open, and the interior was a mess, clearly hastily emptied.

Chen Ping entered the hall and looked around.

A faint trace of demonic energy lingered in the air, but it was so faint as to be almost imperceptible.

He walked to the deepest part of the main hall, looking at the empty space, and suddenly laughed.

"You ran fast, didn't you?"

He raised his hand, and purple chaotic power condensed in his palm, transforming into a ball of purple flame.

The flame landed on the floor of the hall, instantly spreading and engulfing the entire hall.

The purple firelight illuminated the gray sky of the Demon Realm, dispelling the surrounding darkness completely.

Chen Ping turned and walked out of the hall without looking back.

“Let’s go. Home.”

Long Zhan glanced at the burning hall, then at Long Yuan kneeling on the ground, and remained silent for a moment.

“Long Yuan, I won’t kill you. But from this day forward, you and your people are forbidden from ever setting foot on the territory of the Heavenly Dragon lineage again. Otherwise...”

He didn’t finish his sentence, but the meaning was clear.

Long Yuan lowered his head. “I understand.”

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Long Zhan turned and followed Chen Ping away.

Behind them, the purple flames still burned, reducing the once invincible palace to ruins.

On the way back to Yunxian City, Long Zhan remained silent.

Chen Ping walked beside him, not disturbing him.

He knew Long Zhan needed time to process what had happened today.

His enemy, whom he had hated for countless years, knelt before him, begging for mercy.

But now that the time for revenge had come, he discovered that the other's actions were not simply evil.

"Mr. Chen," Long Zhan suddenly spoke, "Did I make a mistake by not killing Long Yuan today?"

Chen Ping thought for a moment and shook his head.

"There is no right or wrong, only choices. You chose not to kill him; that was your decision. As long as you don't regret it, you didn't do anything wrong."

Long Zhan remained silent for a long time.

"I don't regret it." His voice was soft, yet firm, "But I won't forgive him."

Chen Ping patted his shoulder: "That's enough."

The group quickened their pace, flying towards Yunxian City.

Behind them, the black mist of the Demon Realm gradually dissipated in the purple flames.

For the first time, the land shrouded in darkness revealed its original color.

Grayish-white rocks, cracked earth, and faint green glimmers in the distance.

Three days later, Chen Ping and his group returned to Yunxian City.

At the city gate, Yun Xi, Chen Wanqing, Yun Yao, Ming Li, Liu Qianqian, and Jiang Xuelan stood waiting.

Seeing Chen Ping's figure appear on the horizon, Chen Wanqing was the first to rush forward.

"Chen Ping!" She threw herself into his arms, hugging him tightly. "You're back!"

Chen Ping patted her back and chuckled, "It's not like we're going to war, what's there to be nervous about?"

Chen Wanqing didn't speak, only burying her face in his chest, her eyes red-rimmed.

Yun Xi walked over, looking Chen Ping up and down, and only breathed a sigh of relief after confirming he wasn't injured.

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"How's it going in the Demon Realm?" she asked.

"It's resolved," Chen Ping briefly explained the situation.

When she heard that Long Yuan had knelt and begged for mercy and that the demonic cultivator had fled beforehand, Yun Xi's brows furrowed slightly.

"That demonic cultivator ran away? Will he come back?"

“No,” Chen Ping shook his head. “The person behind him is Ning Zhi. Ning Zhi suffered a defeat at the Divine Palace and won’t dare to show his face again anytime soon. With him gone, that demonic cultivator won’t dare stay in the Demon Realm either.”

Yun Xi nodded and didn’t ask any more questions.

The group returned to the City Lord’s Mansion. Long Zhan arranged for the disciples of the Heavenly Dragon lineage to rest, while he followed Chen Ping into the council hall.

“Mr. Chen, what are your plans next?” Long Zhan asked.

Chen Ping remained silent for a moment.

“I’m going to the Fifteenth Heaven.”

The council hall fell silent instantly.

Yun Xi’s eyes lit up; she had waited a long time for this day.

Jiang Xuelan’s expression remained unchanged, but her fingers twitched slightly.

Chen Wanqing’s face turned deathly pale.

“So soon?” Chen Wanqing’s voice trembled slightly.

Chen Ping looked at her, a wave of guilt washing over him.

His relationship with Chen Wanqing was somewhat absurd.

During the martial arts contest for marriage, both of them harbored their own ulterior motives, neither taking it seriously.

But after spending time together, Chen Wanqing had developed genuine feelings for him, and he couldn't deny his own affection for her.

Especially after that night... some things, once done, can never be undone.

"Wanqing, I have to go."

Chen Ping's voice was soft, yet firm. "Yuqi was taken away by Ning Zhi, and I don't know where she went. I suspect they might have gone to the Fifteenth Heaven. I have to find her."

Chen Wanqing bit her lip, remaining silent.

She knew Chen Ping was right.