

The Order 8861

Chapter: 8861

Chen Ping calmly closed his book, turned to Zi Yuan, and asked, "Miss Zi, in your opinion, which is more important, studying or practicing?"

Zi Yuan raised her eyebrows slightly, and replied without hesitation, "Of course, both are important. Cultivation improves strength and protects the dignity of our Protoss Clan; reading enlightens the mind and allows our Protoss Clan to forever enjoy the light of civilization."

"Fellow Daoist Chen, you are from the Fifth Heaven. I imagine that cultivators there focus solely on practicing, neglecting inner cultivation, right?"

As she spoke, she observed Chen Ping's expression, trying to find flaws in his reaction.

Chen Ping thought to himself, this Zi Yuan is indeed pressing forward, but he wouldn't give away his secrets so easily.

He shook his head slightly and feigned a sigh, "Miss Zi is absolutely right. Most cultivators in the Fifth Heaven are busy surviving and truly don't have time to worry about such things."

"I am fortunate to have come to the Divine Kingdom and witnessed such a prosperous civilization. But I wonder, if I simply immerse myself in ancient texts and ignore the changes in the outside world, how can I improve my strength?"

Zi Yuan's lips curled up, revealing a confident smile. "Fellow Daoist Chen, you may not know that in our Divine Kingdom, cultivation methods and learning complement each other. Through reading and gaining understanding, one's understanding of the spiritual power of heaven and earth will deepen, making cultivation more effective."

"Furthermore, the Divine Kingdom's academies also have training grounds. With their balanced work and rest, their strength should not be underestimated."

Just then, the bell inside the academy rang, and a group of students filed out, heading towards the training grounds.

Chen Ping's eyes flickered, and he suggested, "Miss Zi, since that's the case, could you please let me witness the cultivation style of the Divine Kingdom students?"

Although Zi Yuan harbored some doubts, she didn't want to lose her composure in front of Chen Ping, so she nodded and agreed, "Very well, Fellow Daoist Chen, please follow me."

The two arrived at the training grounds, where they saw dozens of students unleashing their magical powers.

Some, shrouded in golden divine patterns, manipulated their spiritual energy into sharp blades, slashing through the void; others chanted incantations, summoning the power of space and whipping up a fierce wind.

Their moves were fluid and coordinated, evidently the product of long training.

Chen Ping, outwardly amazed, was secretly analyzing the situation.

These students were indeed quite capable for their level, but their fighting style was too rigid and lacked flexibility.

If they encountered an opponent of equal strength but with unconventional tactics, they would likely be overwhelmed.

As he observed, he discreetly engaged in conversation with Zi Yuan, attempting to extract more information about the Divine Kingdom from her, particularly clues related to the theft of the Leiyin Bell.

However, Zi Yuan seemed well-prepared, her words remaining impervious to every whim, making it difficult for Chen Ping to break through.

At this moment, a male student glanced over and then walked straight over.

The student wore a brocade blue academic robe and a jade pendant engraved with the Chinese character “Wei” (Wei) at his waist. His face was handsome yet tinged with arrogance.

Seeing Chen Ping standing shoulder to shoulder with Zi Yuan, his brows furrowed. He bowed to her and spoke gently, “Master Zi Yuan, why are you here at the training ground?”

As he spoke, his gaze swept over Chen Ping like a sharp sword, with undisguised scrutiny and hostility, as if he were sizing up something of inferior character.

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Zi Yuan smiled faintly and introduced, “This is Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, who has just arrived in the Divine Capital from the Fifth Heaven. I’m showing him around the academy. This is Lord Weiwei’s son, Wei Feng.”

At the mention of “Fifth Heaven,” Wei Feng’s disdain deepened. He nodded perfunctorily at Chen Ping, his tone aloof and polite, “So you’re a fellow Daoist from the Fifth Heaven? No wonder you look unfamiliar. But this academy is a sacred place in the Divine Kingdom, not just anyone can visit.”

He clearly didn’t take Chen Ping, a First-Rank Earth Immortal Realm cultivator, seriously, especially since he was a human cultivator from a lower world.

Zi Yuan looked at the two with a half-smile, not interrupting, clearly pleased to see Wei Feng putting pressure on Chen Ping.

Seeing that Zi Yuan didn’t stop him, Wei Feng grew bolder and deliberately raised his voice, “Fellow Daoist Chen, I see you seem quite interested in the academy. However, I must remind you that the Divine Kingdom Academy teaches profound knowledge passed down from ancient times.

It involves the laws of heaven and earth, the mysteries of the soul, and is far beyond the reach of your superficial Fifth Heaven methods. I’m afraid even if you were allowed to stay at the academy, you wouldn’t even be able to fully grasp this knowledge.”

This statement was both boastful and blatantly insulting.

The surrounding students, upon hearing the noise, paused their training and gathered around curiously, their eyes flickering between the three of them, many with a look of anticipation.

Chen Ping smiled nonchalantly, his tone calm, “Young Master Wei, you’re mistaken. The true meaning of learning lies in practical application, not pretentiousness.

I just flipped through a few tomes in the library, and they’re all about the glory of the Protoss and the inferiority of other races. But they don’t mention the truly crucial balance between the soul and spiritual energy in cultivation. It’s better not to learn such knowledge.”

“Nonsense!”

Wei Feng’s face darkened, and he immediately retorted, “The Divine Rune Resonance Technique, recorded in the texts of our Divine Kingdom, is the supreme method for harmonizing the soul and spiritual power. You haven’t even understood it, yet you dare to comment on it?”

“Oh? Divine Rune Resonance Technique?”

Chen Ping raised an eyebrow, as if intrigued. “Could it be that by using the mental fluctuations generated when drawing the Divine Runes, you can guide spiritual power to a specific frequency? If so, then this method is incredibly backward.”

He paused, his voice clearly echoing throughout the room: “The essence of Divine Runes is the embodiment of the laws of heaven and earth. True resonance isn’t about deliberate guidance, but about allowing the soul to merge with the laws themselves.

Just like water naturally diverges when it encounters a rock, there’s no need for forced manipulation. Your obsession with fixed Divine Rune patterns is actually restricting the natural flow of spiritual power. This is missing the point.”

These words, seemingly simple, directly pointed to the core flaw of Divine Rune Technique, and even Zi Yuan couldn't help but flash a hint of surprise in her eyes.

Wei Feng's face flushed red as he forced himself to defend himself. "What nonsense! How can a foreign cultivator like you slander the techniques of my Divine Nation, passed down for millennia? You say our knowledge is useless, then what profound knowledge do you possess?"

Chen Ping smiled faintly and looked around. "Knowledge isn't about quantity, but about refinement. For example, I just saw a student cultivating spatial magical powers, only forcibly tearing through the void, without knowing the secret of 'space folding'.

Using the soul as a mirror, reflecting the folds of space, a mere trace of spiritual energy can pry across a distance of a hundred miles—a hundred times less effort than brute force."

He casually picked up a dead branch and drew a simple folding symbol on the ground. "Understand this symbol, then activate your soul to sense it. Try it and you'll see."

A student who had just manipulated the power of space skeptically tried Chen Ping's method. After a moment, he exclaimed, "It really works! I feel the space around me soften, and I can manipulate it effortlessly!"

The whole audience erupted in shock. Even Wei Feng was stunned. He only had a passing knowledge of the advanced spatial magical power method, yet Chen Ping could actually reveal it in one sentence?

"Hmph, you only know some techniques!" Wei Feng immediately pulled out an ancient tome. "This is 'The Divine Theory of Heaven and Earth,' written by my divine ancestor. It contains the ultimate understanding of the principles of the Great Dao. How can a casual cultivator like you from a lower world possibly comprehend it?"

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Chen Ping glanced at it and realized he had seen this so-called Divine Theory of Heaven and Earth in the library before. He smiled faintly and said, "For example, the book says, 'Divines are judged by bloodline, and all who are not divine are ants.' But all things in heaven and earth are spiritual, and even ants can shake trees, so what does bloodline mean?"

Furthermore, this chapter on cultivation emphasizes the step-by-step approach to absorbing immortal vein energy, but doesn't mention how to break through in desperate situations. If these students leave the divine kingdom's immortal vein treasures, how much strength can they achieve?"

He spoke at a steady pace, each sentence accurately pointing out the ancient text's biases.

Wei Feng's face flushed crimson, and he pointed at Chen Ping for a long moment, speechless. "You... you're making a false argument! How can you possibly interfere with the texts of my divine race? If you have the guts, explain them clearly. If not, today I will make you pay for your blasphemy against our ancestors!"

Zi Yuan's eyes flashed with surprise. She hadn't expected Chen Ping to memorize the contents of a book he'd just casually flipped through in the library, let alone offer insights into the divine texts.

Zi Yuan followed up the conversation, saying, "Since Young Master Wei is interested, why not let Fellow Daoist Chen speak? It'll also give us a chance to hear a different perspective."

Wei Feng immediately perked up, adopting a debate stance: "Okay! Then let me ask you, the Hongmeng Sutra states, 'Divine Runes are the mark of the creation of heaven and earth, and can only be activated by those without divine blood.' Do you dare to refute that?"

Chen Ping smiled. "Divine Runes are indeed the manifestation of the laws of heaven and earth, but activating these laws relies on the control of spiritual energy, not bloodline.

Although I'm not a divine being, I can draw talismans that suppress Divine Runes."

He flicked his fingertips, and a demon-suppressing talisman appeared out of thin air. Runes swirled across it, faintly emitting fluctuations that could suppress the golden Divine Rune.

Chen Ping had learned Divine Rune from both the Divine Rune Patriarch and the Formation Demon. They were all taught directly. For Wei Feng to discuss Divine Runes in front of Chen Ping was like wielding a sword in front of Guan Gong.

Wei Feng's pupils shrank, and he asked, "Then the Wanfa Tongjian says, 'Cultivation should proceed step by step, and one should not leapfrog.' Do you dare to say this is wrong?"

"Gradual progress is fundamental, but it's not an iron rule."

Chen Ping shook his head. "When the ancestor of the human race experienced enlightenment in despair, he leaped through two major realms from Earthly Immortal to Heavenly Immortal in one night. Did he also follow a step-by-step approach? Cultivation is like sailing against the current; sometimes, burning your boats can open up a new path."

He cited classic texts, from ancient human texts to practical examples of cultivation, and thoroughly refuted each of Wei Feng's questions.

The students gradually gathered around, listening to Chen Ping's words, many of them with thoughtful expressions.

Veins bulged on Wei Feng's forehead. He was completely outmatched in knowledge, and he could only rage in humiliation: "Empty talk harms the nation! Ultimately, cultivation depends on strength!

You're a worthless, first-level Earth Immortal. Even if you talk big, it won't change the fact that you're weak! If you're brave, let's have a duel. I'll show you how I can teach you, a human who doesn't know your place!"

As he spoke, golden divine patterns illuminated around him, unleashing the aura of a seventh-level Earth Immortal. It was clear he was truly furious.

Zi Yuan frowned and said, "Wei Feng, don't be rude!"

But Wei Feng wouldn't listen. He stared at Chen Ping, his tone stern: "What? You're scared? Weren't you so talkative just now? Now I'll show you that in the face of absolute strength, your twisted theories are nothing!"

Chen Ping observed his exasperated expression, a cold smile curling his lips: "Let's have a duel, but I have a condition."

"What condition?" Wei Feng, assuming he was begging for mercy, smiled smugly.

"If I win, you'll have to admit that not everything taught in the Divine Kingdom Academy is true." Chen Ping's gaze swept over the surrounding students. "You'll also have to admit that divine cultivators aren't necessarily superior to human cultivators."

Wei Feng agreed without hesitation: "Alright! If you lose, kneel down and kowtow, slap yourself in the face, and get out of the Divine Capital!"

A playful smile played on Chen Ping's lips. "No problem. But I'm a man of few words. If Young Master Wei gets hurt, don't cry and complain to the Lord Guards."

"Arrogant!" Wei Feng roared angrily. His figure flashed, and golden spiritual energy condensed into a fist. With a piercing sound, it flew straight towards Chen Ping's door!

"Puff..."

Chen Ping's eyes were filled with disdain. The Dragon Slaying Sword suddenly appeared in his hand, and he struck with a single blow.

The sound of blood splattering was particularly piercing in the quiet academy courtyard. Warm droplets of blood splashed onto the bluestone slabs, instantly creating a dazzling crimson.

Wei Feng, a seventh-rank Earth Immortal, froze in place, his pupils suddenly constricted as he stared intently at his bare right arm.

Where his arm should have been connected, only a smooth wound remained. The broken meridians still gushed with spiritual energy and blood. The excruciating pain washed over him like a tide, instantly drowning him.

“Ah, my hand!”

A shrill scream erupted, and Wei Feng stumbled back two steps, his free hand firmly pressing against the wound. The pride and arrogance on his face were instantly shattered by fear and pain.

He looked at Chen Ping with a look of disbelief and resentment. “How dare you hurt me? I’m the son of the Divine Kingdom’s Lord Guardian. How dare you, a lowly human cultivator, cut my arm off!”

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Zi Yuan’s face darkened. Chen Ping’s sword had just been so swift that she couldn’t even stop it.

The surrounding Divine Clan students, already pale with fear, were now silent and instinctively recoiled.

They had grown up in the Divine Kingdom and were accustomed to witnessing sparring between fellow cultivators, but they had never witnessed such brutality. Without a word or hesitation, with a single strike, he severed the arm of a seventh-rank Earth Immortal cultivator.

The Dragon Slaying Sword, gleaming with a cold glow, looked ordinary, but the moment it was swung, they hadn’t seen Chen Ping’s movements clearly. They only felt a flash of silver light before their eyes, followed by a splatter of blood.

A first-rank Earth Immortal cultivator effortlessly severing the arm of a seventh-rank Earth Immortal cultivator—if they hadn’t seen it with their own eyes, none of them would have believed it.

Zi Yuan’s pupils shrank sharply. She had always believed that Chen Ping was merely a pawn pushed by a backing force, a lowly cultivator who only dared to escort the princess back thanks to the support of others.

But the scene just now completely overturned her perception. A First-Rank Earth Immortal slashing the arm of a Seventh-Rank Earth Immortal—this couldn’t be explained by luck or a powerful weapon.

The control of spiritual energy, the timing, and the absolute command of the situation with that sword swing were simply beyond the reach of an ordinary First-Rank Earth Immortal cultivator.

“We agreed not to pursue accusations. Do you Protoss cultivators talk like farts?”

Chen Ping slowly retracted the Dragon Slaying Sword. The blood on the blade flowed along the blade’s veins like a living thing, instantly returning to its original, radiant color.

And these words made everyone present blush!

They had just heard Chen Ping and Wei Feng agree that even if they were injured, no accusations would be pursued.

Now Wei Feng was using his status to pressure others, clearly showing a lack of credibility. Chen Ping glanced at the Divine Clan students present. Wherever his gaze fell, all the students subconsciously lowered their heads, not daring to meet his gaze.

The young men, whose faces were filled with disdain just now, now felt his gaze as piercing as ice, as if one more glance would lead to the same fate as Wei Feng.

“We Divine Clan cultivators believe in ‘persuading others with reason.’ How dare you so easily hurt others?”

A middle-aged cultivator in a cyan Confucian robe stepped forward from the crowd. He was an instructor at the academy, with a cultivation level of the eighth rank in the Earthly Immortal Realm. He stared at Chen Ping with a sullen expression.

“Fellow Daoist Chen, this is the Divine Clan Academy, not a place for you to act recklessly! Why don’t you apologize immediately? Come with me to see the Lord Guardian and explain this matter!” the middle-aged cultivator said!

“Convince him with reason?”

Chen Ping scoffed, his eyes filled with mockery. “Just now, your student, relying on his advanced realm, humiliated me in every possible way, calling me ‘uneducated, a barbarian,’ and saying I was ‘unworthy of entering the academy as a first-grade Earth Immortal.’ Why didn’t you come out and ‘convince him

with reason?' Now that he's been injured after failing to attack, you're the one who's trying to enforce the rules?"

He took a step forward, and an invisible pressure suddenly emanated. The instructor was forced back half a step, horrified.

This aura was clearly that of a first-grade Earth Immortal, yet it carried an overwhelming dominance, as if facing not a low-level cultivator but a formidable, long-held master.

"Doesn't the Kingdom of God advocate 'cultivating both the inner and the outer'?"

Chen Ping's voice was low, but it reached everyone clearly. "Didn't your books teach you 'Do not do to others what you do not want done to you'? Didn't they teach you 'Do not bully others'? Or is it that the 'etiquette' of your Kingdom of God only applies to those weaker than you?"

The instructor was speechless. He opened his mouth, but couldn't find a rebuttal.

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He had indeed been present when Wei Feng had provoked him, and he even felt that Chen Ping, a human cultivator, deserved a lesson for daring to be so presumptuous in the Kingdom of God's academy. But now that Chen Ping had used their own self-proclaimed "etiquette" to challenge him, he was left speechless.

Zi Yuan took a deep breath and quickly stepped forward, placing herself between Chen Ping and the instructor. She tried to maintain composure, but the turmoil in her eyes was unmistakable.

"Fellow Daoist Chen, it's true that my Divine Kingdom student was at fault in this matter, but amputating someone's arm in public is too extreme.

The Guardian holds a high position in the Divine Kingdom. If this matter becomes a big deal, it will not benefit you, fellow Daoist.

How about having the academy's physician treat this student's injuries first? I will report the follow-up matters to the King and handle them appropriately. How about that?"

She no longer dared to treat Chen Ping as a “pawn.”

A cultivator who could crush a seventh-grade Earth Immortal with his first-grade Earth Immortal Realm and even eloquently expose the hypocritical etiquette of the Divine Kingdom, even if he truly had power behind him, was undoubtedly a key figure.

This kind of person must not be offended, at least not before understanding his motives.

Chen Ping glanced at Zi Yuan but didn't respond. Instead, he looked at Wei Feng, who was clutching his wound, his face pale. He said calmly, “You just called me useless? Now it seems you're the real loser, unworthy of my full strength.”

“You!”

Wei Feng trembled with rage, but he dared not move forward. He could only glare at Chen Ping, gnashing his teeth. “My father won't let you go! Just wait!”

“I'll wait.”

Chen Ping's tone was impassive, as if the threat had fallen on deaf ears. “But if you dare to speak so arrogantly again, it won't be as simple as breaking an arm.”

With that, he ignored the others present and turned to walk towards the academy's gate.

His figure stood tall and proud. Though he was only a first-level Earth Immortal, he made all the divine cultivators present feel as if he were the master of this world, and no one dared to stop him.

Zi Yuan watched Chen Ping's back, feeling a mixture of emotions.

She had originally hoped to use her visit to the Divine Capital to gradually uncover the forces behind Chen Ping. But now it seemed she hadn't uncovered any clues. Instead, Chen Ping had severely slapped the Divine Kingdom in the face.

First, he crushed them intellectually, then used force to intimidate them, and finally, he shattered the Divine Kingdom's facade of "noble etiquette."

"What are you still standing there for? Take him to heal!"

Zi Yuan glared back at the gathered students and instructors, lowering her voice. "This matter must not be spread. If the King learns of this happening at the academy, none of you will be able to bear the consequences!"

Everyone quickly agreed, and hurriedly carried Wei Feng to heal his wounds.

Zi Yuan hurried after Chen Ping. When she reached his side, her tone was no longer scrutinizing, but now more serious. "Fellow Daoist Chen, weren't you too hasty just now?"

The Guardian is a key official close to the king, in charge of the Divine Capital's defense. If he were to pursue the matter, even with me here, I might not be able to protect you."

"Protect me?"

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Chen Ping tilted his head and glanced at Zi Yuan, a hint of a smile in his eyes. "Miss Zi, do you think I need protection?"

Zi Yuan choked, unable to speak.

The moment Chen Ping swung his sword, she clearly felt the murderous aura emanating from it, a murderous aura not possessed by ordinary cultivators.

This murderous aura is condensed through countless life-or-death battles, far more potent than those cultivators in the Divine Kingdom who cultivate in a greenhouse.

The two walked side by side on the streets of the Divine Capital. The Divine Clan cultivators on the street instinctively avoided Chen Ping when they saw him, for he now radiated a faint hint of murderous intent.

“Miss Zi, is your Divine Kingdom’s academy designed to cultivate students who cultivate both inner and outer abilities?” Chen Ping suddenly spoke, breaking the silence. “You’re so arrogant because of your high realm, and you threaten us with your family background when you lose. Is this what you call ‘noble’?”

Zi Yuan’s face darkened, but she forced herself to speak with pride. “Fellow Daoist Chen, the mistakes of individual students don’t represent the entire Divine Kingdom. The Divine Kingdom has a millennium-old tradition, emphasizing ‘propriety, righteousness, benevolence, wisdom, and trustworthiness.’ It’s just that some young people, with their immature minds, are inevitably a bit arrogant.”

“Arrogant?”

Chen Ping sneered. “I think it’s arrogance. In this celestial realm, strength is fundamental, yet your Divine Kingdom uses ‘study’ and ‘etiquette’ as flaunting assets, believing that studying in addition to cultivation makes you nobler than others.

But what’s the reality? Your students aren’t as advanced in cultivation, nor as knowledgeable, and in the end, they can only use ‘divine bloodline’ as a shield. What’s the difference between them and frogs in a well?”

Zi Yuan was speechless by Chen Ping’s words. She wanted to refute him, but she couldn’t find a reason.

Earlier, at the academy, Chen Ping had debated, citing scriptures and expounding on everything from the Great Dao of Heaven and Earth to the very essence of cultivation. Even she, the emperor’s advisor, found the material profoundly insightful.

The students of the Divine Kingdom, however, could only recite a few verses and were unable to even engage in basic logical debate. In the end, they relied on their realm to suppress him, only to have their arm severed by Chen Ping's sword.

"Up ahead is the Divine Kingdom's 'Treasure Pavilion,' housing a collection of rare treasures from the celestial realm. Would you like to take a look?"

Zi Yuan changed the subject. She knew that further arguing with Chen Ping about "noble" would only embarrass herself. She preferred to continue probing his intentions. "The Treasure Pavilion contains many treasures that can enhance cultivation. Although you are quite powerful, your realm is still a bit low. Perhaps you can find something suitable here."

Her words seemed well-intentioned, but in reality, they were testing him.

If Chen Ping had a powerful backing, he would surely have no shortage of treasures. If he were merely a casual cultivator, he would inevitably reveal a tinge of greed when faced with the treasures of the Treasure Pavilion.

Chen Ping glanced at the nearby Wanbao Pavilion. Constructed entirely of white jade and inlaid with countless luminous pearls, it emanated a soft glow even during the day. Two guards of the eighth rank of the Earthly Immortal Realm stood at the entrance, their auras calm and composed.

It was clear that the treasures within the Wanbao Pavilion were extremely valuable, otherwise they wouldn't have employed guards of the eighth rank.

"No need,"

Chen Ping flatly declined. "I'm not interested in treasures."

Chen Ping's storage bag held numerous treasures, and his Divine King Bow was a truly divine weapon, far superior to anything in the Wanbao Pavilion.

Zi Yuan's eyes flashed with surprise; she hadn't expected Chen Ping to refuse so bluntly.

The treasures within the Wanbao Pavilion wouldn't be easily accessible even to cultivators of the Divine Kingdom. How could Chen Ping, a cultivator of the first rank of the Earthly Immortal Realm, remain unmoved?

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"Fellow Daoist, don't you want to improve your realm?"

Zi Yuan pressed. "A First-Rank Earth Immortal is only considered a low-level cultivator in the Celestial Realm. If you could obtain the 'Marrow Cleansing Immortal Dew' from the Myriad Treasures Pavilion, you might be able to directly break through to the Third-Rank Earth Immortal."

"Realm?"

Chen Ping glanced at Zi Yuan, his tone tinged with disdain. "In my opinion, realm is merely a facade of cultivation. Some people have high realms, but are merely superficial, unable to defeat even a First-Rank Earth Immortal.

Some people have low realms, yet can kill cultivators several ranks higher than themselves. Miss Zi, which do you think is more important, realm or strength?"

Zi Yuan fell silent.

She thought of Wei Feng, at the Seventh-Rank Earth Immortal, whose arm was severed by Chen Ping's sword.

She thought of herself, at the peak of the Eighth-Rank Earth Immortal, yet subconsciously felt fear in the face of Chen Ping's pressure.

"Fellow Daoist, you have a point."

Zi Yuan sighed, her tone less arrogant and more sincere. "But in the Divine Kingdom, your realm directly determines your status. Without a sufficient realm, no matter how strong you are, it's difficult for others to recognize you."

“That’s why your Divine Kingdom is growing weaker and weaker.”

Chen Ping said calmly, “If you only focus on superficial realms and ignore actual strength, over time, you will become a group of useless people who only care about showing off their bloodlines and realms.”

Zi Yuan’s face darkened completely. She stopped and looked at Chen Ping, her tone carrying a hint of warning: “Fellow Daoist Chen, you can eat whatever you want, but you can’t speak carelessly. The Divine Kingdom is the top power in the Sixth Heaven, and you can’t slander it casually.”

“I don’t...” It’s slander, and you know it.”

Chen Ping also stopped, staring at Zi Yuan sharply. “The Thunder Sound Bell has been stolen, and the demonic spirit is about to break free. Instead of focusing on resolving the crisis, your Divine Nation is still contemplating a marriage alliance with the Divine Temple.

Furthermore, your Divine Nation is very likely colluding with the Evil Path Hall. You must know that the Evil Path Hall is a notorious demonic cultivator. With your skills, how can you be considered a top-tier power?”

Zi Yuan’s pupils suddenly constricted. She took a step forward and lowered her voice, “How did you know about the Thunder Sound Bell? Who else told you that the Divine Nation was colluding with the Evil Path Hall?”

She had always assumed Chen Ping was merely there to escort the princess, but she hadn’t expected him to know about the theft of the Thunder Sound Bell and even that the Divine Nation might be colluding with other forces.

This was definitely not information an ordinary cultivator could possess, unless the forces behind him were truly connected to the theft of the Thunder Sound Bell!

Chen Ping observed Zi Yuan’s nervous expression, a sneer curling his lips. “I know more than you imagine.”

Miss Zi, instead of trying to understand my identity, consider this: if the demonic spirit truly breaks free from its seal, can your Divine Kingdom still maintain its 'nobleness'?"

With that, Chen Ping ignored Zi Yuan and walked straight ahead.

Zi Yuan stood there, watching Chen Ping's back, a wave of turmoil rising within her. She was now certain that Chen Ping wasn't simply here to escort the princess; his motives were likely related to the Thunder Sound Bell!

"We must report this to the King as soon as possible!"

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Zi Yuan thought to herself. She hurried after Chen Ping, her eyes growing more alert. "Fellow Daoist Chen, the Divine Kingdom's sacrificial square is just ahead. The King is holding a grand sacrificial ceremony there, praying for divine protection. If you'd like to see the King, I can take you there."

She decided not to test him further and took Chen Ping directly to see the King. Since Chen Ping knew so much, it would be better to let the king decide how to proceed. After all, his cultivation and intelligence far surpassed hers.

Chen Ping glanced at the sacrificial square ahead. In its center stood a massive statue, crafted entirely of gold and emanating a rich aura of divine power.

The square was filled with divine cultivators in ceremonial robes, slowly kneeling in prostration to the rhythm of the ritual music.

"A grand sacrificial ceremony?"

A hint of amusement flashed in Chen Ping's eyes. "With the demonic spirit about to break free from its seal, instead of seeking a solution to the crisis, you're here to pray for divine protection. Your Divine Kingdom is truly devout."

Zi Yuan's expression darkened, but she didn't protest.

She knew Chen Ping was telling the truth, but the Divine Kingdom had been passed down for millennia, and the grand sacrificial ceremony was a custom passed down from their ancestors. Even in times of crisis, it couldn't be easily abolished.

The two reached the entrance to the sacrificial square, where guards stopped them.

The leading guard was an eighth-rank cultivator in the Earthly Immortal Realm. He glanced at Chen Ping, then at Zi Yuan, and respectfully asked, "Miss Zi, who is this?"

"He's the cultivator who brought the princess back. His name is Chen Ping. I'm taking him to see the king," Zi Yuan said.

The guard frowned, looking at Chen Ping with a hint of disdain. "The king is holding a grand sacrificial ceremony. Outsiders are not allowed. Besides, he's only a first-rank cultivator in the Earthly Immortal Realm. He's unworthy to set foot in the sacrificial square."

Zi Yuan was about to speak, but Chen Ping beat her to the punch, saying in a flat tone, "Unworthy?"

He stepped forward, and an invisible pressure instantly enveloped the guard.

The guard's face suddenly changed. He hadn't expected a first-rank cultivator in the Earthly Immortal Realm to emanate such a powerful aura. He subconsciously tightened his grip on his spear, only to find his body stiffening.

"How dare you act so presumptuously in front of the sacrificial square?"

The guard gritted his teeth. "This is the most sacred place in the Divine Kingdom. How can we allow a mere human cultivator like you to run wild?"

"Holy?"

Chen Ping scoffed, raised his hand, and a wisp of golden spiritual energy gathered at his fingertips, pointing it at the ground in front of the guard.

With a loud boom, the ground instantly cracked, a bottomless fissure appearing. The ground around the crack was covered with spiderweb-like cracks, and a terrifying aura emanated from the gap.

The guard's face paled with fear, and he stumbled back several steps, dropping his spear.

He stared at the crack, his eyes filled with terror—this power was definitely beyond the reach of a first-level Earthly Immortal!

“Now, am I worthy enough to enter?”

Chen Ping looked at the guard, his tone still calm, yet filled with unquestionable authority.

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The guard trembled all over, no longer daring to utter a single “no,” and quickly made way: “Worthy... worthy... Fellow Daoist, please come in...”

Zi Yuan watched this scene with even greater shock.

She finally understood that Chen Ping had no power behind him. He was a hidden powerhouse in his own right. His First-Rank Earth Immortal Realm was probably just a facade he deliberately projected.

The two entered the sacrificial square. The divine cultivators in the square paused their rituals upon seeing Chen Ping and glanced sideways.

They looked at this ordinary-dressed, first-rank Earth Immortal cultivator, accompanying Zi Yuan's staff, with confusion and disdain on their faces.

“Who is that? Why is he with Zi Yuan's staff?”

“It looks like the cultivator who brought the princess back. I heard he’s only a First-Rank Earth Immortal.”

“A First-Rank Earth Immortal dares to come to the sacrificial square? This is the most sacred place in the Divine Kingdom!”

Discussions swirled, and the divine cultivators’ eyes were filled with disdain and scorn.

Chen Ping paid no attention to any of this. His gaze fell on the statue in the center of the square.

The statue had a solemn face, wielding a scepter. Its body was intricately engraved with divine patterns, emanating a rich ripple of divine power.

Chen Ping unexpectedly detected a familiar aura within these patterns.

The patterns on the statue bore resemblance to those on the Leiyin Bell, both imbued with the power of a seal.

“Miss Zi, what material is the statue of your Divine Kingdom made of?” Chen Ping suddenly asked.

Zi Yuan was stunned for a moment, then said, “It’s made of ‘Divine Meteorite Gold’ from the Celestial Realm. Divine Meteorite Gold, imbued with rich divine power, is the perfect material for crafting statues. What’s wrong?”

“Nothing,” Chen Ping shook his head, pondering inwardly.

Divine Meteorite Gold can contain divine power and can also be used to strengthen seals. The Leiyin Bell had been stolen, and the demonic spirit was about to break free of the seal. Yet, the statue of the Divine Kingdom bore a similar aura of sealing. Could there be some connection between the Divine Kingdom and the seal of the Leiyin Bell?

At this moment, on the high platform of the sacrificial square, an old man dressed in golden sacrificial robes opened his eyes.

The old man's hair and beard were white, his face covered with wrinkles, yet he exuded an unfathomable aura, the aura of the human immortal realm!

He was the ruler of the Kingdom of God, Wu Hao.

Chen Ping had never imagined that the ruler of the Kingdom of God would be a human immortal realm!

This meant that the Sixth Palace Master of the Divine Temple was no match for the ruler of the Kingdom of God.

Even Taoist Wuji of the Leiyin Temple was no match for Wu Hao.

No wonder the Kingdom of God was so vast, occupying such a vast expanse of Feng Shui land, and yet no one else came to compete.

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Wu Hao's gaze fell on Chen Ping, a flicker of surprise flashing before he regained his composure. "Zi Yuan, is this the cultivator who brought the princess back?"

Zi Yuan hurried forward and bowed respectfully. "Your Majesty, yes. His name is Chen Ping, and he brought the princess safely back to the Divine Capital."

Wu Hao nodded, his gaze returning to Chen Ping. He spoke calmly, "Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, thank you for returning my daughter. I wonder if you have any requests during your visit? The Divine Kingdom will surely satisfy you."

Chen Ping's eyes pierced Wu Hao, and he spoke in a deep voice, "Your Majesty, I do have a question. I heard that the Leiyin Bell from the Leiyin Temple was stolen. I wonder if this is related to the Divine Kingdom?"

Wu Hao's previously calm expression suddenly darkened. He stared at Chen Ping intently, a hint of vigilance flashing in his eyes.

He then demanded, "How could you, a mere First-Rank cultivator in the Earthly Immortal Realm, know about the theft of the Leiyin Bell? This is a secret of Leiyin Temple. It would have been unknown to anyone other than the higher-ups!"

Chen Ping met Wu Hao's gaze and said frankly, "To be honest, I'm a close friend of Taoist Wuji of Leiyin Temple."

Wu Hao frowned slightly, pondered for a moment, and said, "Since that's the case, this isn't the place to talk. Come with me to the Imperial Palace to discuss this."

With a wave of his sleeve, he flew towards the Imperial Palace, leading Chen Ping.

Arriving at the inner hall of the imperial palace, Wu Hao dismissed his attendants and said solemnly to Chen Ping, "You know, this Thunder Sound Bell is of vital importance to the Leiyin Temple."

"In fact, the Divine Kingdom, like the Leiyin Temple, has countless demonic spirits suppressed underground. This grand sacrificial ceremony is to strengthen the divine patterns that suppress the demonic spirits."

"Now that the Leiyin Bell from the Leiyin Temple has been stolen, our Divine Kingdom is also in danger. I have strengthened the defenses of the Divine Capital over the past few days."

Chen Ping's heart sank. "Lord, in your opinion, the theft of the Thunder Sound Bell... "Who's involved?"

A cold glint flashed in Wu Hao's eyes, and he said in a deep voice, "I suspect this matter is closely linked to the Evil Path Hall. They operate in a secretive manner, specializing in shady activities. Furthermore, according to my covert investigation, the Sixth Palace Master of the Divine Clan also seems to have connections to the Evil Path Hall."

“A dignified Divine Clan cultivator would actually associate with those evil demons and heretics. What a shameless fellow! The Divine Clan is no longer what it used to be.”

It was clear that Wu Hao was deeply dissatisfied with the current state of the Divine Clan.

Upon hearing this, Chen Ping couldn't help but question, “If that's the case, why did the king marry the princess to the son of the Third Lord of the Divine Temple? Isn't that courting disaster?”

Wu Hao sighed and explained, “I had no choice but to do this. I suspect the Third Lord is colluding with the Evil Path Hall. I married my daughter to him so she could gain access to him and investigate the matter. If that's the case, the Divine Kingdom can take precautions and avoid a catastrophe.”

Chen Ping pondered this and concluded that Wu Hao's words were true. It seemed the Divine Kingdom's king wasn't in cahoots with the thieves of the Thunder Sound Bell.

He had made up his mind and stood up, saying, “Lord, since that's the case, I will not disturb you any further. I intend to leave the Divine Kingdom and search for the Evil Dao Palace to see if I can find the whereabouts of the Thunder Sound Bell.”

Wu Hao quickly reached out to stop him, saying sincerely, “Fellow Daoist Chen, please stay! Since you have such determination and strength, why not stay and cooperate with our Divine Kingdom?”

The demon souls are about to break free from their seal. If they are allowed to see the light of day, the entire Sixth Heaven will be doomed.

The Divine Kingdom is willing to devote all its resources to investigate the matter of the Thunder Sound Bell with you. We must not allow the demon souls to be released.”

Chen Ping's heart moved at Wu Hao's earnest gaze.

He knew this matter was of grave importance and that it would be difficult to accomplish alone.

With the Divine Kingdom's assistance, their chances of finding the Thunder Sound Bell would greatly increase.

After a moment's thought, he bowed and said, "Since the Lord is so sincere, I agree to stay and fight alongside the Divine Kingdom against this impending crisis!"

Wu Hao smiled with satisfaction, patted Chen Ping on the shoulder, and said, "Excellent! The Divine Kingdom and the Heavenly Realm are fortunate to have Fellow Daoist Chen to help us!"

Wu Hao's eyes lit up with a genuine smile as he saw Chen Ping agree to cooperate. He knew full well that while the Divine Kingdom appeared strong, it was actually plagued by internal and external troubles.

The shadow of the theft of the Thunder Sound Bell lingered, and the conspiracy between the Divine Temple and the Evil Dao Temple loomed. They desperately needed help from someone as unfathomable as Chen Ping.