

## The Order 8881

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“Not many.”

Wu Hao sighed, his expression solemn. “The Evil Path Hall operates in extreme secrecy. Divine Nation’s spies have investigated repeatedly, but have only scratched the surface. They haven’t even been able to locate their headquarters.

As for the Sixth Lord of the Divine Temple, while there are rumors of close ties with the Evil Path Hall, there’s no concrete evidence. The Divine Temple holds immense influence within the Divine Clan. Without solid evidence, rashly attacking him could spark a conflict between the Divine Nation and the Divine Temple.”

“I understand.”

Chen Ping pondered. “Then our first step should be to investigate within the Divine Capital. The theft of the Thunder Sound Bell is a secret, and few know of it. Perhaps we can find a breakthrough among the Divine Nation’s high-ranking officials. Also, I wonder what kind of character the Prime Minister, whom the Your Majesty mentioned, is?”

Wu Hao heard “Prime Minister.” He frowned slightly as he read the last two characters. “The Prime Minister’s name is Liu Kun. He has served the late Emperor for many years and single-handedly controls the Divine Kingdom’s ‘National Guard Legion,’ which boasts over ten thousand soldiers and formidable strength.

He may appear to be utterly loyal to the Divine Kingdom, but I cannot guarantee complete trust in him—” Liu Kun is extremely power-hungry. Over the years, he has amassed a deep influence within the court, wielding numerous officials. During your investigation, if you encounter anyone of his, be cautious.

Chen Ping’s heart stirred, and he memorized Liu Kun’s name. “Thank you, Your Majesty, for your reminder. Fellow Daoist Ziyuan and I will begin our investigation today and will report any progress as soon as we make it.”

“Okay!”

Wu Hao stood up and patted Chen Ping on the shoulder. “The safety of the Divine Kingdom is in your care, Fellow Daoist Chen. If necessary, I will support you with all the power of the Divine Kingdom.”

After leaving the palace, Ziyuan looked at Chen Ping. “Fellow Daoist Chen, where should we begin our investigation?”

“Let’s go to the Divine Kingdom’s Secret Service and review the files.”

Chen Ping said, “Since the Evil Dao Palace was able to infiltrate the Leiyin Temple and steal the Leiyin Bell, they must have already conducted extensive research and understanding of the temple. Perhaps we can find clues from past secret service reports. We should also investigate Liu Kun’s background while we’re at it— The King has doubts about him, so we must be on guard.

Zi Yuan nodded in agreement and led Chen Ping to the Secret Investigation Division. The Secret Investigation Division was located in a secluded courtyard west of the Divine Capital. While seemingly ordinary from the outside, it was heavily guarded and filled with hidden formations.

The head of the Secret Investigation Division was an elderly man named Mo Chen, whose cultivation reached the seventh level of the Earthly Immortal Realm. Upon seeing Chen Ping in possession of the Detective Jade Token and hearing that he possessed the Golden Dragon bloodline, he dared not neglect the slightest bit and immediately retrieved all the files concerning the Evil Path Hall and Liu Kun.

The two spent an entire day searching the Secret Investigation Division, but their results were minimal.

The files on the Evil Path Hall consisted mostly of scattered rumors, documenting the appearance of suspected Evil Path monks in certain locations, but lacking any follow-up.

The files on Liu Kun, on the other hand, contained records of his achievements in assisting the Divine Kingdom and some daily government affairs, revealing no trace of any collusion with the Evil Path Hall.

“It seems Liu Kun is hiding quite well, or rather, he truly isn’t colluding with the Evil Dao Hall.”

Zi Yuan put down the file in her hand, somewhat disappointed.

Chen Ping shook his head: "The more perfect something appears, the more likely it is to be flawed. Liu Kun has been in power for so many years, it wouldn't be difficult for him to cover up some traces. We can't rely solely on the files from the Secret Service; we must investigate other areas."

Just then, a clerk from the Secret Service hurried in with a report: "Lord Mo Chen, Lord Zi Yuan, Mr. Chen, the Prime Minister's Mansion has sent an invitation to a banquet tomorrow."

Zi Yuan took the invitation and opened it. It stated that Liu Kun invited Chen Ping to a banquet at the Prime Minister's Mansion at noon tomorrow to discuss "assisting the Kingdom of God in responding to the crisis."

She looked at Chen Ping with a wary look in her eyes. "Liu Kun's sudden invitation to you might be more than meets the eye."

Chen Ping picked up the invitation, a sneer curling his lips. "Since he invited me, I'll go meet him. This is a perfect opportunity to see what the Prime Minister is up to."

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At noon the next day, Chen Ping went alone to the Prime Minister's Mansion.

The Prime Minister's Mansion was located in the aristocratic district east of the Divine Capital. It occupied a vast area and boasted magnificent architecture. Two enormous stone lions stood at the entrance, imposing a majestic presence.

Inside, the mansion was filled with carved beams and painted rafters, pavilions and terraces arranged in a staggered pattern. The gardens, filled with exotic flowers and plants, shrouded in a celestial aura, exuded a sense of opulence.

Liu Kun had already been waiting in the "Invitation to the Moon Pavilion" within the mansion. He was about sixty years old, dressed in purple official robes, with a gaunt face and deep eyes. He appeared gentle, yet he exuded the dignity of someone who had held a high position for a long time.

Upon seeing Chen Ping enter, Liu Kun quickly stood to greet him, a smile plastered across his face. “Mr. Chen, I’m so honored to be here. I apologize for not welcoming you from afar.”

“You’re so polite, Prime Minister.”

Chen Ping bowed in return, his gaze calmly scanning the area around the Yueyue Pavilion. Outside the pavilion stood several black-robed cultivators, all of them possessing the aura of an eighth-grade Earthly Immortal Realm or higher. They were clearly Liu Kun’s guards.

Inside the pavilion, a stone table was laden with delicacies, and two maids stood respectfully by its side.

Liu Kun invited Chen Ping to a seat and personally poured him a cup of celestial wine. He smiled and said, “Mr. Chen possesses the bloodline of the Golden Dragon and possesses unparalleled strength. It is truly an honor for our Divine Kingdom to have you here to assist us. I have long admired your name, and today I have prepared a small amount of wine, hoping to establish a friendship with you.”

Chen Ping took a sip from his wine glass and said calmly, “I am deeply unworthy of the Prime Minister’s kindness. I wonder what other reasons, besides friendship, the Prime Minister has for inviting me here today?”

A flicker of approval flashed in Liu Kun’s eyes. He felt that Chen Ping was straightforward, so he stopped beating around the bush and spoke directly, “To be honest, I invited you here today because I hope you will stay in the Divine Kingdom and assist me.”

“Assist the Prime Minister?”

Chen Ping feigned surprise. “The Lord has already indicated that I will assist in the investigation of the Leiyin Bell. If I were to assist the Prime Minister, wouldn’t that be contrary to the Lord’s wishes?”

“The King is kind, but sometimes he can be too indecisive.”

Liu Kun's tone was tinged with disdain. "Currently, the Divine Kingdom is plagued by internal and external troubles. The Thunder Sound Bell has been stolen, the Demonic Soul is about to emerge, and the Divine Temple is eyeing us covetously. Only I can stabilize the situation.

If Mr. Chen can assist me, once I take control of the Divine Kingdom, I will appoint you as 'Great General Protector of the Nation', granting you vast acres of fertile land and countless immortal stones.

As for the resources needed for cultivation with the Golden Dragon Bloodline, I will also fully supply them."

At this point, Liu Kun's gaze fell on the storage bag at Chen Ping's waist, a glint of greed in his eyes. "I heard that you possess a divine weapon called the Dragon Slaying Sword? If you are willing to lend me the Dragon Slaying Sword, I will also hand over some of the military power of the National Defense Corps to you."

Chen Ping sneered inwardly, finally understanding Liu Kun's purpose—not only did he want to win him over for his own use, he also coveted the Dragon Slaying Sword, and perhaps even wanted to leverage his Golden Dragon Bloodline for something else.

He set down his wine glass and spoke in a cold tone, "I appreciate the Prime Minister's kindness, but I am a partner with the Kingdom of God, not a subordinate. The Dragon Slaying Sword is my personal sword and I never lend it to anyone. Prime Minister, please retract your words."

Liu Kun's smile vanished instantly, his eyes darkening. "Mr. Chen, are you being disrespectful to me? I kindly invited you, yet you are so ungrateful?"

"It's not that I'm being ungrateful, but simply that we share different ideals."

Chen Ping stood up. "Since we're not on the same page, I'll take my leave."

"Want to leave?"

Liu Kun slammed the stone table, and the black-robed monks outside the pavilion instantly surrounded him, their gaze fixed on him. “Mr. Chen, I’ll give you one last chance—” “Either stay and assist me, or don’t blame me for being rude!”

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“You’re welcome?”

Chen Ping scoffed. “Does the Prime Minister think he can keep me here with these men?”

“I know you’re formidable. Even Ao Lie is no match for you.”

Liu Kun said sinisterly, “But do you think I’ll only send these men? To be honest, I invited you here today precisely for your Dragon Slaying Sword and Golden Dragon Soul! If I can obtain your soul and refine your Golden Dragon bloodline, my power will soar to new heights. The entire Divine Kingdom will then be under my control!”

As soon as he finished speaking, a massive light formation suddenly illuminated around the Yaoyue Pavilion, enveloping it.

The formation activated, and countless black runes emerged, emitting a sinister and eerie aura that could suppress the cultivator’s spiritual energy.

“This is the ‘Soul Locking Formation,’ specifically designed to suppress the spiritual power of the powerful.”

Liu Kun chuckled triumphantly. “Mr. Chen, even if you possess Golden Dragon bloodline, you wouldn’t be able to unleash even 30% of your strength in this Soul Locking Formation. If you know what’s good for you, surrender your Dragon Slaying Sword and your soul, and I might even be able to leave you with an intact body.”

Chen Ping’s eyes darkened. With a flick of his right hand, the Dragon Slaying Sword appeared in his hand, flashing with silver lightning as it slashed towards the surrounding black-robed cultivators.

However, the suppression of the formation proved to be powerful. His spiritual energy stagnates, and the Dragon Slaying Sword's power is greatly diminished.

"Stop him!"

Liu Kun shouted.

The black-robed cultivators attacked one after another, attacking Chen Ping with various magical weapons and supernatural powers.

An eighth-rank Earth Immortal cultivator wielded a massive axe, unleashing a golden axelight that flew directly over Chen Ping's head.

Another cultivator cast a massive black net, attempting to trap Chen Ping.

Chen Ping dodged the axe's blade with a flash, simultaneously swinging his Dragon Slaying Sword and severing the black net.

But at that moment, a cultivator hidden in the shadows suddenly fired a poison-laced arrow, aimed straight at Chen Ping's back.

"Be careful!"

When Chen Ping noticed it, it was too late to dodge, and he could only channel his spiritual energy to protect his back.

The arrow struck the spiritual barrier with a "puff" sound. Although it didn't injure Chen Ping, the poison on the arrow traveled through his spiritual energy and penetrated his body, causing a sharp pain in his meridians.

"Hahaha, Mr. Chen, this 'Spirit-Eroding Poison' specifically attacks a cultivator's spiritual energy. In less than half an hour, you'll be completely drained of it, leaving you vulnerable!" Liu Kun laughed wildly.

Chen Ping's face changed slightly. He could feel the poison slowly eroding his spiritual energy.

He knew he couldn't fight for long; he had to break through the formation and escape as quickly as possible.

He took a deep breath and forced his spiritual energy to retreat.

The spiritual energy within Chen Ping instantly erupted.

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"Break!"

Chen Ping shouted, and swung his Dragon Slaying Sword, unleashing a massive silver bolt of lightning that struck the light curtain of the formation.

"Boom!"

The lightning collided with the light curtain, causing it to shake violently and a crack to appear.

Liu Kun, horrified by this, quickly mobilized his spiritual energy to reinforce the formation: "Quick, kill him! We can't let him escape!"

The black-robed monks attacked frantically, leaving Chen Ping struggling, wounds mounting.

But relying on the power of chaos and the formidable physique of his Golden Dragon bloodline, he withstood the attacks and swung his sword again, striking the crack in the light curtain.

"Crack!" The light curtain finally shattered, the Soul-Locking Formation broken. Seizing the opportunity, Chen Ping flashed, dashing out of the Invitation Moon Pavilion and fleeing towards the Prime Minister's Mansion.

“Chase! We must capture him!” Liu Kun roared, personally leading the black-robed monks in pursuit.

Chen Ping rushed out of the Prime Minister’s Mansion and fled towards the outskirts of the Divine Capital.

The soul-corroding poison in his body continued to spread, and his spiritual power was dwindling. Liu Kun and the black-robed monk were hot on his heels, closing in on him.

Chen Ping had to find a safe place, calm down, and use the Concentrated Heart Technique to refine the poison.

“Chen Ping, you can’t escape! Surrender!”

Liu Kun’s voice came from behind him, tinged with a smug grin.

Chen Ping gritted his teeth, not daring to turn back, desperately mobilizing the power of chaos to maintain his speed.

He knew that if he were caught, in his current state, he would be no match for Liu Kun.

Liu Kun’s cultivation level was at the Human Immortal Realm, second only to Wu Hao in the Divine Kingdom. If it weren’t for the sneak attack with the Soul-Locking Formation and the soul-corroding poison, Chen Ping might not have been at a disadvantage. But now, poisoned and with his spiritual power weakened, he was no match for Liu Kun.

After escaping the Divine Capital’s gates, Chen Ping fled towards the mountains and forests outside.

The dense trees in the forest provided easy hiding opportunities, perhaps offering a chance to evade his pursuers.

He slipped deeper into the woods, constantly shifting directions to exploit the terrain. The footsteps and shouts of the pursuers behind him were gradually drowned out by the forest’s silence.

Chen Ping found a secluded cave and entered, daring not to pause. He leaned against the wall, breathing heavily, feeling utterly exhausted.

He quickly sat cross-legged, practicing the "Concentration Heart Technique" to refine the Soul-Eating Poison.

The power of the Golden Dragon slowly flowed, gradually refining the toxin that had invaded his body.

But the Soul-Eating Poison was extremely stubborn, making complete elimination difficult.

It took Chen Ping an hour of practice to refine more than half of the poison.

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Just then, a familiar voice rang out from outside the cave: "Fellow Daoist Chen? Are you in there?"

Chen Ping's heart raced, recognizing Zi Yuan's voice. He quickly stood up and left the cave: "Fellow Daoist Zi Yuan, why are you here?"

Zi Yuan saw Chen Ping covered in wounds, his clothes torn, and his face pale. She hurried forward and asked, "Fellow Daoist Chen, how did you become like this? Did Liu Kun attack you? I went to the Prime Minister's Mansion to look for you and found it in chaos. Liu Kun's men said you attacked the Prime Minister and are now on the run. I knew... "I knew something was wrong, and I hurried after him."

"Liu Kun coveted my Dragon Slaying Sword and Golden Dragon Bloodline, setting a trap to kill me and steal the treasure."

Chen Ping briefly recounted his experiences at the Prime Minister's Mansion. "If I hadn't fought tooth and nail to break through the Soul Locking Formation, I'd probably be his prisoner."

Zi Yuan's face drastically changed upon hearing this. "How dare Liu Kun be so bold! He dared to attack the king's distinguished guest in broad daylight. He's simply outrageous! I'll return to the palace to report to the king and have him convicted."

“No!”

Chen Ping grabbed Zi Yuan’s wrist, his tone urgent and firm. “Since Liu Kun dared to attack me so openly, he must have been prepared.

He’s been operating in the Divine Capital for many years, and he has loyalists throughout the court. If you report to the king now, not only will you not be able to persuade him, but you might even fall into Liu Kun’s trap.”

He could just retaliate, accusing the two of us of colluding with foreign enemies and plotting to murder the Prime Minister. With his current power, he might be able to turn right and wrong.

Zi Yuan was stunned for a moment, then reacted, her expression darkening even further. “What should we do then? We can’t just let him frame us like this, can we?”

“Now’s not the time to argue. Let’s get away from the pursuers first!”

As Chen Ping finished speaking, he suddenly heard the sound of heavy footsteps in the distance and Liu Kun’s furious shout: “Chen Ping! You can’t escape! Leave behind the Dragon Slaying Sword and the Golden Dragon Spirit, and I’ll spare your life!”

The two men’s expressions suddenly changed. They quickly found a cave and retreated deeper, hoping to find another exit.

But the cave was a dead end, with no way out except the entrance. Liu Kun, accompanied by over a dozen black-robed monks, quickly reached the cave entrance, blocking the only way out.

“Hahaha, Chen Ping, where can you go?!” ”

Liu Kun stood at the cave entrance, his eyes sweeping sinisterly across the interior. When he saw Zi Yuan, a flash of surprise flashed in his eyes, followed by a sneer. “Lord Zi Yuan is here too? What? Are you planning to betray the Kingdom of God?”

“Liu Kun! You’re slandering me!”

Zi Yuan stepped forward, blocking Chen Ping’s path, angrily scolding him. “Fellow Daoist Chen is a distinguished guest personally invited by the Lord. How dare you set a trap to murder him and even accuse him of rebellion? Do you have any regard for the Lord or the laws of the Kingdom of God?”

“Law?”

Liu Kun sneered, his eyes filled with disdain. “In this Divine Capital, my word is law! Chen Ping possesses a precious treasure and possesses the blood of the Golden Dragon. Keeping him around will only bring disaster upon the Kingdom of God. I’m eliminating this threat!

As for you, Zi Yuan, if you know what’s good for you, get out of here, or I’ll take care of you too!”

“I’ll see who dares to touch Fellow Daoist Chen!” ”

Zi Yuan summoned a cyan longsword, her spiritual energy flowing, and the aura of an eighth-level Earth Immortal Realm emanated from her.

Though she knew she was no match for Liu Kun, she couldn’t retreat at this moment.

“You’re asking for death!”

A fierce glint flashed in Liu Kun’s eyes, and he shouted to the black-robed cultivator behind him, “Go! Kill Zi Yuan first, then capture Chen Ping!”

Two eighth-level Earth Immortal Realm black-robed cultivators immediately charged forward, one summoning a chain, the other brandishing a long sword, attacking Zi Yuan.

Zi Yuan didn’t dare to be careless, wielding her cyan sword to meet the attack. With a flash of blade light, she engaged the two.

Despite her high cultivation level, she quickly fell to a disadvantage against the combined attack of two cultivators of the same level.

Liu Kun locked his gaze on Chen Ping, and with a flash of movement, he pounced upon him.

The aura of a first-level Human Immortal Realm erupted, creating a powerful pressure that made Chen Ping's breathing difficult.

"Chen Ping, prepare to die!" Liu Kun slapped out with his palm, a dark spiritual energy condensing in his palm. With a sinister aura, it charged straight at Chen Ping's chest. Chen Ping gritted his teeth, channeling the remaining spiritual energy within him, and swung the Dragon Slaying Sword to meet the blow.

With a clang, the Dragon Slaying Sword collided with Liu Kun's palm. Chen Ping felt a surge of force, his arm numb, and was thrown back repeatedly, crashing into the cave wall and spurting blood.

The Soul-Eroding Poison took advantage of the situation, causing unbearable pain in his meridians and further stagnation of his spiritual energy.

"Hahaha, that's all!" "

Liu Kun, taking advantage of his situation, lunged again, his palm strikes fierce and deadly. Chen Ping could only barely block them, and soon suffered several more wounds, his clothes stained red with blood.

Elsewhere, Zi Yuan was in critical condition under the siege of two black-robed monks.

One monk seized her weakness and wrapped a chain around her wrist, while the other monk slashed with his long sword, almost striking her shoulder.

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Zi Yuan struggled violently to break free from her chains, but was struck by a wave of spiritual energy. She staggered, spat out a mouthful of blood, and her face instantly turned pale.

At the same time, a barely audible stream of poisonous gas flowed through Zi Yuan's lower abdomen and entered her body.

"Fellow Daoist Zi Yuan!"

Chen Ping's eyes raged at the sight, and he tried to rush over to help, but Liu Kun slapped him on the back. He spat out another mouthful of blood and stumbled to his knees.

"Chen Ping! Do you understand how powerful I am now?"

Liu Kun walked up to Chen Ping, stepped on his back, and grinned, "Hand over the Dragon Slaying Sword and your soul, and I may be able to give you a quick death."

Chen Ping lay on the ground, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth, his eyes still determined.

He looked at the injured Zi Yuan not far away, then at Liu Kun's smug expression, and his anger and resentment erupted like a volcano.

He suddenly looked up, a golden light flashing in his eyes. The dragon crystal on his chest lit up again, this time, brighter than ever.

"Ah!"

Chen Ping roared like a dragon's roar, and the golden dragon blood within him erupted completely. Golden scales emerged from beneath his skin, and a massive golden dragon condensed behind him, instantly filling the cave with golden light.

His aura surged, temporarily suppressing the soul-corroding poison and unleashing a power approaching that of a first-level human immortal.

Liu Kun, shaken by this sudden surge of power, retreated repeatedly, a look of shock on his face. "A true golden dragon? Impossible! You're clearly poisoned, how can you unleash such power?"

Chen Ping ignored him and, in a flash, rushed to Zi Yuan's side, scooping her up.

At the same time, he swung his Dragon Slaying Sword, and a burst of golden sword energy drove back the black-robed monks besieging Zi Yuan.

"Liu Kun, I will remember this humiliation today! I will repay you a hundredfold one day!"

Chen Ping roared, his body enveloped in an indestructible golden form. He activated his Fire Control Step and charged towards the cave ceiling with Zi Yuan.

"Boom!"

The rocks at the cave ceiling shattered, and Chen Ping, holding Zi Yuan, rushed out, flying deep into the forest.

Liu Kun reacted and roared, "Chase! We must catch them!"

The black-robed monks all spread out and pursued Chen Ping.

But Chen Ping, harnessing the immense speed of his Golden Dragon bloodline, soon left his pursuers behind.

Carrying the faintly breathing Zi Yuan, he sped along until he was sure they were completely out of reach, stopping in a secluded valley.

"Fellow Daoist Zi Yuan, how are you?"

Chen Ping placed Zi Yuan on the ground and asked anxiously.

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Zi Yuan was covered in wounds and poisoned, her breath weak, and she had already fallen into a coma.

Chen Ping quickly took out the healing elixir, pried open her mouth, and fed it to her, then channeled his divine dragon power to help her refine the potency.

Gaze upon Zi Yuan's pale face, a fierce glint flashed in Chen Ping's eyes: "Liu Kun, this feud is irreconcilable! I will expose your plot and make you pay with blood!"

Liu Kun led his pursuers through the mountains and forests for an entire hour, but found no trace of Chen Ping. He returned angrily to the Prime Minister's residence.

In the study, Liu Kun paced back and forth, his face gloomy enough to drip water—Chen Ping's escape meant his plot had been exposed. If Chen Ping found Wu Hao and revealed the truth, he would be doomed.

"Sir, what should we do now? Chen Ping has escaped. If he complains to the King, we'll be in trouble!"

A black-robed monk asked anxiously.

Liu Kun stopped abruptly, a fierce look flashing in his eyes. "What's the panic?! Chen Ping is poisoned and injured. Even if we find Wu Hao, we might not be able to gain his trust. Besides, I have a backup plan."

He turned to his trusted advisor. "Prepare the carriage immediately. I need to go to the palace to see the king."

In the palace hall, Wu Hao was already worried because Chen Ping hadn't returned yet. Upon hearing Liu Kun's request for an audience, he couldn't help but wonder, "What's Liu Kun asking me for now?"

"Send him in."

Liu Kun stepped forward. He entered the inner hall, bowed, his face a look of concern for his country and its people. "Your Majesty, I have heard that there has been no progress in the theft of the Thunder Sound Bell, and the people of the Divine Capital have been in a state of panic lately. I am deeply concerned, and have come to offer my advice to you."

Wu Hao gestured for him to stand and said in a deep voice, "Speak frankly."

"Your Majesty, the demonic spirits are restless, the Evil Path Palace is watching covetously, and the Divine Palace's attitude is unclear. Our Divine Kingdom is in a difficult situation."

Liu Kun sighed and said slowly, "I believe that when The most urgent task is to consolidate our relationship with the Divine Temple. As long as we can form a marriage alliance with the Divine Temple and gain its support, the Evil Path Temple will not dare to act rashly, and the matter of the Demonic Soul will be further protected."

Wu Hao frowned slightly. "I've long considered the marriage, but Fellow Daoist Chen Ping is currently investigating the Thunder Sound Bell, so this matter requires further consideration."

"Lord, there's no time to lose!"

Liu Kun hurriedly said, "The Thunder Sound Bell has been stolen for days, and there's no clue where it's going. If we delay the marriage any further, the Divine Temple might think our Divine Kingdom is dishonest." "I agree."

The Third Palace Master holds a high position within the Divine Temple. A marriage with him would not only allow us to leverage his power to investigate the Evil Path Hall, but would also enhance our Divine Kingdom's standing among the gods. Killing two birds with one stone!"

He paused, then added, "I've heard that members of the Evil Path Hall have been active near the Divine Capital recently, seemingly spying on the demon soul seal beneath our Divine Kingdom."

Without the Divine Temple's support, if the Evil Path Hall joins forces with other forces to attack, our Divine Kingdom would be unable to resist."

Wu Hao fell silent. While Liu Kun's words were a bit exaggerated, they were not without reason.

The Divine Kingdom, currently facing internal and external troubles, truly needed external support.

Furthermore, he had originally planned to have the princess marry the Third Palace Master's son, using this opportunity to investigate his collusion with the Evil Path Hall. Liu Kun's proposal seemed to fit perfectly with his plan.

"You make sense."

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Wu Hao nodded slowly. "Then the marriage will be fully entrusted to you. Three days later, you will personally escort the princess to the Third Palace for the wedding ceremony."

Liu Kun was delighted, but his expression remained respectful. "I obey your command! I will not let the king down!"

After leaving the palace, Liu Kun immediately returned to the Prime Minister's Residence and summoned his trusted subordinates.

"Sir, has the king agreed to the marriage?" the counselor asked.

"Hmph, Wu Hao has taken the bait."

Liu Kun sneered. "This marriage? It's just a delaying tactic. In three days, I will not only kidnap the princess, but also use this opportunity to force Wu Hao to hand over the Sacrificial Manual!"

Everyone was shocked: "Sir, you want the Sacrificial Manual? Are you really going to..."

"Indeed!"

A hint of madness flashed in Liu Kun's eyes. "The Sacrificial Manual contains methods to strengthen and destroy the seal of the Demon Soul. If we obtain it, and then ally with the Evil Dao Hall, we can break the seal and release the Demon Soul. The entire Sixth Heaven will be plunged into chaos.

I will then use the power of the Demon Soul to eliminate Wu Hao and those old men from Leiyin Temple, and the entire Sixth Heaven will be mine!"

Everyone's faces were filled with shock, but even more so with greed—if Liu Kun truly could control the Sixth Heaven, they, as his trusted aides, would surely rise to prominence.

"Your Excellency is wise!" Everyone echoed in unison.

"Alright, everyone, go down and prepare."

Liu Kun waved his hand. "In three days, I will personally lead the escort team for the princess. You will secretly arrange for your men to kidnap the princess immediately after leaving the Divine Capital.

Remember, this must be done in secret; no one can detect it."

"Yes!" everyone replied!

Elsewhere, Chen Ping gathered a gentle spiritual energy from his fingertips and gently tapped Zi Yuan's forehead. "Hold on, I'll take you to a safe place."

Before he finished speaking, Chen Ping waved his hand, and the Demon Suppression Tower appeared.

Chen Ping no longer hesitated, helping Zi Yuan step through the tower. In the next second, the two found themselves in a completely different world.

Zi Yuan, drowsy from the poison, was instantly awakened by the rich celestial energy that washed over her. She stared wide-eyed at the scene before her, her breath catching in shock.

What she saw was not the dark, demon-suppressing cage she had imagined, but a vast expanse of spiritual land.

In the distance, several rolling hills shone brilliant white. Upon closer inspection, they were constructed from a pile of extremely pure immortal stones.

These were the immortal stone veins Chen Ping had collected, along with resources plundered from slain cultivators.

Between the hills, a stream formed from liquid immortal energy meandered. Its banks were filled with thousand-year-old spiritual herbs, ten-thousand-year-old Ganoderma lucidum, and even a few rare Enlightenment Tea trees. Spiritual dew condensed on the leaves dripped, forming tiny vortexes of spiritual energy in the air.

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Further away, the nine-story Demon-Suppressing Tower hovered in the void, its runes gleaming, illuminating the entire interior with a brilliant light.

And above the void, the traces of time's passage were visible to the naked eye. While the subtle movements of the spiritual herbs growing were clearly visible, everything seemed to be sped up several times faster, a strange and harmonious experience.

"This... what is this place?"

Zi Yuan's voice trembled uncontrollably. She had seen the top-tier mineral veins treasured by the Divine Kingdom's royal family, but compared to this place, the difference was worlds apart.

Especially those immortal stone mountains. The pure spiritual energy emanating from them nearly stretched her meridians, suppressing the toxins in her body at a visible rate.

"This is the interior of the Demon Suppression Tower."

Chen Ping helped her sit down beneath a tea tree and pulled a detoxification pill from his storage bag, handing it to her. "The flow of time inside the tower is different from the outside world. One day outside

is equal to a hundred inside. Furthermore, the spiritual energy in these immortal stone veins is pure enough, perfect for our recovery.”

Zi Yuan swallowed the detoxification pill as instructed. She felt a coolness slide down her throat, mingling with the spiritual energy within the tower. It instantly enveloped the toxins in her body, gradually removing them.

She gazed at the immortal stone mountains in the distance, then at Chen Ping’s pale yet resolute face. She felt a sense of shock, but also a sense of relief.

With such a precious treasure at their disposal, they might have a chance to turn the tables.

“Uh...”

Suddenly, Ziyuan’s brow furrowed, her expression turning grim.

“What’s wrong with you?” Chen Ping asked hurriedly!

“I...I...” Ziyuan squeezed her legs together, her expression unnatural.

“What’s wrong with you? Didn’t you completely remove the poison?”

Chen Ping asked anxiously.

Ziyuan nodded and said, “The poison entered my lower abdomen, and now it’s itchy down there...”

Chen Ping was stunned for a moment upon hearing this, unconsciously glancing at Ziyuan’s lower abdomen.

Ziyuan blushed and gritted her teeth, saying, “Don’t worry about me. I’ll slowly force the poison out myself and see if I can.”

“You’re too weak right now. There’s no way you can force the poison out.” Chen Ping shook his head, then, as if resolved, said, “Miss Ziyuan, if you can let go, I can help you suck the poison out...”

“What?” Ziyuan was stunned, her face flushing even more.

“Is it okay?” Chen Ping asked!

Zi Yuan hesitated for a moment, then nodded!

Chen Ping didn’t hesitate. He stripped Zi Yuan of her clothes, leaned over, and began to suck fiercely with his mouth.

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Zi Yuan felt as if her body was being drained, as if she were floating!

After an unknown amount of time, Zi Yuan fainted again, moaning.

Chen Ping licked his lips, glanced at the unconscious Zi Yuan, and after settling her down, he walked over to a mountain of immortal stones and sat cross-legged.

He took a deep breath and began to practice the Concentration Heart Technique. Instantly, the spiritual energy of the entire immortal stone mountain surged into his body like a tide, flowing madly through his meridians into his dantian.

Unlike the outside world, the spiritual energy of the immortal stones within the tower could be absorbed directly without refining. Coupled with the hundredfold increase in the speed of time, his cultivation efficiency instantly increased by more than a thousandfold.

Within his dantian, a cyclone began to swirl at high speed, the cyan spiritual energy continuously compressing and condensing, its color gradually shifting from light cyan to deep blue.

Chen Ping could clearly feel the barrier on his dantian wall, impeding a breakthrough, being continuously assaulted by the immense spiritual energy. Each impact caused tiny cracks to appear in the barrier.

Time flew by within the tower; while two days in the outside world seemed to pass two hundred days within the tower.

During these two hundred days, Zi Yuan's injuries were completely healed, thanks to the combined effects of the detoxification pills and the rich spiritual energy. She even leveraged the spiritual energy within the tower to advance her cultivation to the ninth level of the Earthly Immortal Realm, just one step away from breaking through to the Human Immortal Realm.

She often sat beneath the Enlightenment Tea Tree, watching Chen Ping not far away. Remembering the scene of Chen Ping sucking her with his mouth, Zi Yuan would unconsciously squeeze her legs together.

At this moment, Chen Ping was surrounded by a turquoise spiritual energy halo. From time to time, tiny arcs of lightning flashed within the halo, interplaying with the runes on the tower's body. The Immortal Stone Mountain before him shrank at a noticeable speed, evidently having absorbed most of the spiritual energy.

That day, as another surge of spiritual energy poured from the Immortal Stone Mountain into his dantian, Chen Ping suddenly opened his eyes, a gleam of light blazing in his vision.

With a low cry, he concentrated all his spiritual energy into a spiritual spear, thrusting it fiercely at the barrier on the wall of his dantian—

“Crack!”

A crisp, shattering sound echoed within him, and the barrier that had troubled him for so long was shattered!

Instantly, even more powerful immortal stone spiritual energy surged in from the outside world, causing the vortex within his dantian to expand rapidly, its color changing from deep turquoise to dark green, eventually solidifying into a condensed, almost tangible spiritual energy core, emitting an aura several times more powerful than before.

## Second Stage of the Earthly Immortal Realm!

Chen Ping slowly concluded his practice, feeling the surge of spiritual energy within his body and the thunder-attributed spiritual energy coursing through his meridians. A long-lost smile finally appeared on his lips.

He stood up and stretched his arms and legs. The hidden injuries from the poisoning and the forced use of spiritual energy had completely healed. In fact, having absorbed the pure spiritual energy from the immortal stone veins, his foundation was even more solid than before.

“Fellow Daoist Chen Ping, congratulations on your breakthrough!”

Zi Yuan walked quickly forward, her face filled with joy. She could clearly sense the aura emanating from Chen Ping: calm and powerful, a completely different person.

Chen Ping looked at Zi Yuan and smiled faintly. “Miss Zi Yuan, congratulations on your breakthrough too!”

“If it weren’t for your Demon Suppression Tower, I would never have achieved a breakthrough in such a short time. Thank you so much.”

“And... and thank you for helping me detoxify...”