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Instead, he drew his sword.

The instant the Dragon-Slaying Sword was drawn, a sharp sword intent that severed cause and effect and annihilated all laws soared into the sky, and the temperature in the entire cave seemed to drop several degrees!

“Slash—the—Void!”

Chen Ping uttered softly, his longsword tracing an unfathomable trajectory as it lightly sliced through the incoming short spikes and ghostly claws.

There was no deafening sound, no dazzling light.

Only a thin, almost transparent gray sword thread silently extended from the tip of the sword.

Where the sword thread passed, subtle ripples spread through the space, like a pebble thrown into still water.

The next moment—

“Swoosh! Swoosh!”

Two soft sounds, like cloth being torn by a sharp blade.

The poisoned dagger, just three inches from Chen Ping’s throat, suddenly snapped in two! The break was as smooth as a mirror!

The two powerful, heavy ghostly claws, upon touching the sword thread, shattered like rotten wood, turning into countless metal fragments!

The two black-clad men, who were charging forward, froze abruptly, their eyes filled with disbelief and horror.

They looked down at their weapons, then at the slowly dissipating gray sword thread, as if they had witnessed the most unbelievable thing in the world.

“This... what kind of swordsmanship is this?!” the leading black-clad man exclaimed in shock.

The answer he received was Chen Ping’s cold gaze, and the second sword strike.

This time, the sword thread was no longer a single, thin strand, but split into two, like two nimble snakes, silently slithering towards the necks of the two men.

Fast!

Fast beyond the reach of conscious thought!

The two men in black paled drastically, frantically activating their protective immortal power, attempting to dodge and block.

But the sword thread seemed to ignore spatial distance; the moment they even entertained the thought of dodging, it had already slicing across their necks.

“Pfft! Pfft!”

Two heads wearing demon masks flew high into the air, blood gushing from their severed necks, instantly vaporized into a blood mist by the scorching heat of the cave.

Two elite assassins from the Evil Path Hall, both at the seventh rank of the Celestial Immortal Realm, were killed instantly without even receiving a single blow!

The entire scene fell silent.

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Whether it was the third black-clad man besieging Mad Blade and his group, or the Evil Path Palace cultivator locked in combat with the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord, they all stopped in their tracks, staring in disbelief as the two headless corpses slowly collapsed.

The smugness and fawning on Liu Wenyuan's face froze completely, replaced by boundless terror; his entire body trembled like a leaf.

Mad Blade and the others were also stunned. The elation of surviving a calamity hadn't even begun to rise before the shocking scene before them left their minds blank.

A first-grade Celestial Immortal, killing two seventh-grade beings with a single sword strike?!

This...this completely overturned their understanding!

Chen Ping sheathed his sword, his face slightly pale.

Using "Severing the Void" twice in succession had consumed nearly half of his immortal power.

While this sword technique was powerful, it was a considerable burden for him in his current state.

But he had no time to recover, for the third man in black had already reacted, letting out a piercing scream:

"Form the formation! The Netherworld Three Kill Formation!"

Upon hearing the command, the remaining dozen or so cultivators from the Evil Path Hall immediately abandoned their opponents and swiftly gathered around the third man in black, taking their positions according to some mysterious orientation.

At the same time, everyone bit their tongues, spitting out their essence blood, forming hand seals, and chanting incantations.

“Buzz—!”

A sinister, evil, and terrifying wave filled with killing intent erupted from their bodies!

The essence blood and immortal power of the thirteen men intertwined in the air, rapidly condensing into a black formation with a diameter exceeding thirty feet!

In the center of the formation, a blurry, three-headed, six-armed demonic phantom slowly emerged, its six eyes simultaneously opening, shooting out six scarlet beams of blood-red light, locking onto Chen Ping!

“With my lifeblood, I sacrifice my soul, summoning the demons of the netherworld to slay this scoundrel!”

The third man in black roared, his face ashen white from the loss of his lifeblood, but the killing intent and madness in his eyes reached their peak.

The Netherworld Triple Killing Formation—one of the forbidden killing formations of the Evil Path Palace—requires at least three seventh-grade Heavenly Immortal cultivators as the lead, and more than ten fifth-grade Heavenly Immortal cultivators as support, burning their lifeblood to activate it.

Once activated, this formation’s power is enough to threaten first and second-grade True Immortal cultivators!

The Evil Path Palace has spared no expense this time to kill Chen Ping!

“Chen Ping, be careful!”

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord shouted anxiously, trying to rush over, but was forced back by the terrifying pressure emanating from the black formation.

Mad Blade and the others were pressed to the ground, unable to move, their eyes filled with despair.

Liu Wenyuan collapsed to the ground, his crotch soaked, muttering, "It's over...it's over...the Netherworld Three Killing Formation has appeared..."

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Chen Ping felt the overwhelming killing intent and pressure emanating from the black formation, his pupils slightly contracting.

This power had indeed surpassed the realm of Celestial Immortals, touching the threshold of True Immortals.

To withstand it head-on would likely result in severe injury.

But he had no way out, for the three-headed, six-armed demonic phantom was already facing him, all six arms swinging simultaneously, six crimson beams of light as thick as arms, like six venomous dragons, tearing through space and hurtling towards him!

Where the crimson beams passed, even the scorching heat of the cave was frozen and corroded, the ground and rock walls silently melting into deep ravines!

This attack was unavoidable!

Chen Ping took a deep breath, a golden light flashing in his eyes.

Since he couldn't avoid it, he would shatter it head-on!

He gripped the Dragon-Slaying Sword tightly with both hands, the remaining chaotic immortal power within his body burning wildly, the chaotic fire lotus swirling violently in his dantian, and even the faint trace of true dragon blood was fully activated!

“Chaos Returns to Origin—Dragon Flame Break!”

Chen Ping roared, slamming the Dragon-Slaying Sword into the ground!

“Boom—!”

Embracing Chen Ping, an indescribable chaotic aura erupted!

The hazy chaotic immortal power intertwined with the dark golden true dragon flames, transforming into a ferocious chaotic fire dragon, roaring to the sky, and charging headlong into the six scarlet beams of blood light!

The fire dragon and the blood light collided violently in mid-air!

“Boom—!!!”

A terrifying explosion swept through the entire cave! The blinding light temporarily blinded everyone, and the deafening roar ruptured everyone’s eardrums, causing them to bleed!

A violent energy shockwave spread outwards like a tsunami, scraping a thick layer of rock off the cave walls and shattering the ground!

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord, Mad Blade, and others were thrown back by the shockwave, crashing heavily against the cave walls, spitting blood.

Liu Wenyan was directly knocked unconscious.

Of the thirteen Evil Path Hall cultivators who had set up the formation, only the third black-clad man, barely standing due to his seventh-grade cultivation, was affected by the backlash, bleeding from all seven orifices and collapsing to the ground. The formation instantly collapsed!

The dust slowly settled.

In the center of the cave, Chen Ping knelt on one knee, leaning on his sword, panting heavily, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth, his face as pale as paper.

His azure armor was torn in several places, revealing skin that shimmered with a faint golden light—his indestructible golden body had also been cracked in several places.

But he was still alive.

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Opposite him, the third man in black stood rooted to the spot, his eyes glazed over. A gaping hole, the size of a bowl, ran through his chest; his heart and internal organs had long since been incinerated by the Chaotic Dragon Flame.

His lips moved, as if he wanted to say something, but ultimately, not a word came out. He fell straight down, lifeless.

The Netherworld Three Killing Formation, broken!

Thirteen elites of the Evil Path Hall, including three Ghost Fiend Envoys at the seventh rank of the Heavenly Immortal Realm, were completely annihilated!

This formation, capable of trapping even a peak ninth-rank Heavenly Immortal, failed to trap Chen Ping!

However, Chen Ping was also injured.

Three seventh-rank Heavenly Immortal experts from the Evil Path Hall, plus ten fifth-rank Heavenly Immortal elites, had actually managed to create such a formidable force.

Chen Ping had to take the Evil Path Hall seriously now.

The surviving members, including Mad Blade, struggled to their feet, their gazes towards Chen Ping filled with awe, fear, and disbelief, as if they were looking at a war god descended from ancient times.

Crimson Cloud Demon Lord staggered to Chen Ping's side and supported him. "Chen Ping! How are you?"

"I'm fine...just exhausted."

Chen Ping shook his head, took out a handful of pills and popped them into his mouth, then handed a few to Crimson Cloud Demon Lord.

He looked at the surviving cultivators and said in a deep voice, "I don't want today's events to get out. You can leave."

Mad Blade and the others felt as if they had been granted a pardon, nodding repeatedly. "Fellow Daoist, rest assured! We will remember your life-saving grace today and would never dare to divulge a single word!"

After saying this, they helped each other up and fled the cave without looking back, afraid that Chen Ping would change his mind.

Only after everyone had left did Chen Ping look at the unconscious Liu Wenyuan.

Crimson Cloud Demon Lord understood and stepped forward, splashing a basin of cold water on him to wake him up.

Liu Wenyuan slowly awoke, terrified by Chen Ping's cold gaze and the corpses of the Evil Path Hall scattered on the ground. He repeatedly kowtowed, "Fellow Daoist Chen, spare my life! Senior Chen, spare my life! I was forced! The Evil Path Hall captured my family and forced me to cooperate with their scheme... I had no choice!"

Chen Ping remained unmoved: "Is the clue about the Earth Core Jade Marrow Milk real or fake?"

“Real! Real!”

Liu Wenyuan hurriedly said, “The Lava Demon Abyss is in the southern part of the Flame Domain. The Earth Fire Pavilion does indeed possess some clues!”

“I also know that the Earth Fire Pavilion organizes the ‘Earth Fire Trial’ every hundred years. The top ten have the opportunity to enter the outer perimeter of the Lava Demon Abyss to seek opportunities! The next trial is in three months!”

“The Earth Fire Trial...”

Chen Ping noted this information and then asked, “How many strongholds does the Evil Path Hall have in the Eleventh Heaven? What is their strength?”

“This... I’m just a nobody. I only know the strongholds in Sand Rock City and a few nearby towns...” Liu Wenyuan stammered out a few locations. Chen Ping then asked Liu Wenyuan for more information about the Evil Path Hall and the Eleventh Heaven forces. Liu Wenyuan answered all his questions, pleading for his life.

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Finally, Chen Ping looked at Liu Wenyuan and coldly said, “You helped the Evil Path Hall set a trap to harm people; you should be executed. But considering you provided information, I will spare your life.”

“Thank you, thank you...” Liu Wenyuan quickly thanked him.

“If I have someone else kill you, are you satisfied?” Chen Ping said!

“Damn it...”

Liu Wenyuan was stunned!

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord, understanding perfectly, struck out with a palm.

Liu Wenyuan was instantly killed.

“Let’s go.”

Chen Ping said to the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord, “This place is not safe to stay.”

The two quickly cleaned up the battlefield, collected the Evil Path Hall members’ storage equipment and useful items, destroyed any traces in the cave, and then left Black Wind Valley, returning to Sandstone City.

Unbeknownst to them, less than an incense stick’s time after they left, a figure in black robes silently appeared in the cave.

It was Elder Poison Heart!

He stared at the corpses and traces of battle scattered on the ground, especially the remaining array patterns after the collapse of the Netherworld Three Kill Array. His face was so grim it was almost dripping with water.

“Well done, Chen Ping... he actually managed to break the Netherworld Three Kill Array...”

Elder Poison Heart’s voice was hoarse. “It seems I underestimated you.”

He crouched down, examining the corpses of the three Ghost Fiend Envoys, a hint of surprise flashing in his eyes: “This sword intent... severing the connection of laws? Could it be... the inheritance of Ten Thousand Swords Star?!”

As a high-ranking member of the Evil Path Hall, Elder Poison Heart was no stranger to the name Ten Thousand Swords Star.

That sword genius who once amazed the entire Divine Race, only to be ultimately suppressed!

“The successor of Wan Jianxing...” Elder Poison Heart’s eyes flashed with cold light, “This child must not be allowed to live!”

He took out a blood-red jade talisman and whispered into it, “Order all branch halls of the Eleventh Heaven to conduct a full-scale manhunt for Chen Ping.”

“At the same time, notify Elders ‘Blood Soul’ and ‘Bone Demon’ to set off immediately and lie in wait in Crimson Flame City of the Flame Domain. This child will definitely go to the Earth Fire Pavilion!”

“Yes!” came the reply from the other end of the jade talisman.

Elder Poison Heart put away the jade talisman, took one last look at the cave, and slowly disappeared into the shadows.

Three days after the battle of Black Wind Valley, Chen Ping’s injuries had basically healed.

After processing the spoils obtained from the assassins of the Evil Path Hall, he and Crimson Cloud Demon Lord quietly left Sandstone City.

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Before leaving, Chen Ping went to Listening Wind Tower again.

He found several records about the Evil Path Hall’s strongholds in the northern region of the Eleventh Heaven, as mentioned by Liu Wenyan, and took away some valuable intelligence and supplies.

“The Flame Domain is in the southern part of the Eleventh Heaven, more than a million miles from here.”

Chen Ping unfolded a map he had obtained from the Listening Wind Pavilion. “We’ll pass through hundreds of towns and cities along the way. According to the clues provided by Liu Wenyan, at least three of them have strongholds of the Evil Path Palace.”

A cold glint flashed in the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord's eyes: "You mean..."

"Since the Evil Path Palace wants to kill me, then I won't hold back."

Chen Ping said calmly, "We'll head south and clear out these strongholds along the way."

"Firstly, to weaken the Evil Path Palace's power; secondly, to acquire resources; and thirdly... perhaps we can find out more about the Earth Core Jade Marrow Milk and the souls of the Count of Sesame Seed's clan."

"Alright!" The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord nodded, "I'll go with you!"

The two didn't delay any longer, taking to the skies and speeding south.

The territory of the Eleventh Heaven was vast beyond imagination; even a Celestial Immortal cultivator would need several months to traverse from north to south.

Fortunately, both Chen Ping and the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord were quite powerful. Although their flight speed was suppressed, they could still travel ten thousand miles a day.

The towns they passed through were mostly similar in size to Sandstone City, with a few large cities boasting towering walls and formidable formations, clearly guarded by True Immortal Realm experts.

Chen Ping didn't enter the large cities, only stopping in small and medium-sized towns to resupply and secretly gather information about the Evil Path Hall's strongholds.

The clues provided by Liu Wenyuan were largely accurate, making Chen Ping's raid much smoother.

The first stronghold was located in a small town called Green Stone Town, disguised as a medicinal herb shop.

Chen Ping and the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord infiltrated under cover of night, swiftly eliminating the two fifth-grade Heavenly Immortal Realm Evil Path Hall cultivators and several of their subordinates, seizing a batch of pills and materials, and obtaining some intelligence about the Evil Path Hall's activities in the surrounding area.

The second stronghold was located in a bandit hideout called Blackwater Village.

The Evil Path Hall cultivators here colluded with local bandits, making their actions even more brutal. Chen Ping showed no mercy, cooperating with the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord to wipe out the entire stronghold in one night, killing three Evil Path Hall cultivators and rescuing a group of kidnapped cultivators and civilians.

The third stronghold was hidden beneath a gambling den in the medium-sized city of Iron Rock.

The defenses here were even tighter, with a seventh-rank Celestial Immortal Evil Path Hall steward stationed there.

Chen Ping adopted a more cautious strategy, first infiltrating the gambling den using disguise to ascertain the stronghold's structure and personnel distribution, then coordinating with the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord to launch a surprise attack at the moment of utmost relaxation before dawn.

This battle was more difficult than the previous two; the seventh-rank steward was quite powerful and possessed several vicious evil techniques.

But Chen Ping didn't give him a chance to unleash his power. He immediately used his Void Slash to shatter the man's protective magic treasure. Then, the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord and the Little Fire Qilin launched a combined attack, while Chen Ping seized the opportunity to pierce the man's heart with his sword.

Of the more than twenty Evil Path Hall cultivators in the entire stronghold, only three escaped in the chaos; the rest were all killed.

Having destroyed three strongholds in succession, Chen Ping gained a large amount of spirit stones, pills, materials, and several jade slips containing lists of some of the Evil Path Hall's missions and personnel.

More importantly, in a secret room in the Iron Rock City stronghold, he found a secret book recording some of the Evil Path Hall's strongholds and contact methods in the southern region of the Eleventh Heaven.

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"It seems the Evil Path Hall's influence in the Eleventh Heaven is indeed vast."

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord flipped through the secret manual, his brow furrowed. "This manual alone records five strongholds near the Flame Domain, the largest being in Crimson Flame City, reportedly guarded by an elder of the Eighth Grade Celestial Immortal Realm."

Chen Ping nodded: "Crimson Flame City is the largest city in the Flame Domain, and the Earth Fire Pavilion is also there. The Evil Path Hall has considerable power there; we must be even more cautious once we arrive."

"There are still more than two months until the Earth Fire Trial; that's enough time."

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord calculated, "We cleared out strongholds along the way, which, although it took some time, weakened the Evil Path Hall's power, making it difficult for them to organize an effective encirclement in the short term."

"Indeed."

A cold glint flashed in Chen Ping's eyes. "Moreover, I suspect the Evil Path Hall's higher-ups already know about the failure at Black Wind Valley. They're likely laying a trap for us in Crimson Flame City. The commotion we've caused along the way might disrupt their plans."

The two continued south, clearing out two more smaller Evil Path Hall strongholds along the way.

As they approached the Flame Domain, the environment changed significantly.

The temperature gradually rose, and the fire-attribute spiritual energy in the air became increasingly concentrated.

The terrain below gradually transformed from a barren desert into reddish-brown hills and canyons, with occasional steaming hot springs and sporadic volcanic eruptions.

The vegetation became sparser, consisting mostly of peculiar, drought- and heat-resistant plants.

“We’re almost at the Fiery Domain.”

Chen Ping felt the scorching heat in the air. “The environment here is favorable for fire-type cultivators, but oppressive for others. The Evil Path Hall mainly cultivates sinister techniques, so their strength will likely be affected here.”

“It’s not all good for us either.”

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord frowned. “I’m a demonic cultivator; the fire spiritual energy here is too intense. Staying here for a long time will make me uncomfortable. Your Chaos Immortal Power is more inclusive, so it shouldn’t be a big problem. The Little Fire Qilin, on the other hand, is thriving.”

Indeed, the Little Fire Qilin had been unusually excited since entering the edge of the Fiery Domain, frequently emerging from its storage ring to greedily absorb the fire spiritual energy in the air, its golden flames brightening considerably.

After flying for several more days, a magnificent crimson city appeared on the horizon.

The city walls were hundreds of feet high, entirely constructed of crimson flame stone, reflecting a scorching luster under the sunlight.

A faint red light shield enveloped the city walls—the city’s protective array.

The city’s buildings stood shoulder to shoulder, the tallest pavilions reaching hundreds of feet high, piercing the clouds.

From afar, one could sense countless powerful auras emanating from the city, some subtle and profound, clearly belonging to True Immortal Realm experts.

Crimson Flame City, the premier city of the Flame Domain, had arrived.

Chen Ping and the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord landed several miles outside the city, concealing their auras, and followed the flow of people towards the city gate.

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Crimson Flame City was more than a hundred times larger than Sandstone City. The city gate was teeming with people, and those entering and leaving were generally of higher cultivation levels. Sixth and seventh-grade Heavenly Immortal Realm cultivators were commonplace, and occasionally, even ninth-grade Heavenly Immortal Realm experts could be seen flying directly into the city—clearly, Crimson Flame City’s no-fly zone decree was ineffective against ninth-grade Heavenly Immortal Realm cultivators.

The entrance fee was also astonishingly high: ten thousand high-grade spirit stones per person.

Chen Ping paid twenty thousand spirit stones and stepped into this colossal city of the Flame Domain with the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord.

The city streets were wide, paved with polished crimson stone slabs, and lined with shops.

They mostly sold fire-elemental materials, elixirs, and magical artifacts. The air was thick with the smell of sulfur and magma, and the temperature was several degrees higher than outside the city. Even ordinary True Immortal cultivators would likely need to circulate their immortal power to withstand the intense heat.

“Let’s find a place to stay first, then head to the Earth Fire Pavilion,” Chen Ping said.

The two found a medium-sized inn in the city and settled in.

The inn was called Flame Heart Abode. Its location wasn’t central, but the environment was acceptable. Most importantly, the owner seemed honest and upright, unlike someone from the Evil Path Hall.

After settling in, Chen Ping asked the innkeeper for directions to the Earth Fire Pavilion.

“The Earthfire Pavilion?”

The waiter was a clever young man, only at the fifth rank of the Celestial Immortal realm, but he was very familiar with Crimson Flame City. “You two seniors are here to participate in the Earthfire Trial, right? The Earthfire Pavilion is in the city center; it’s the largest crimson tower. However, not just anyone can enter the Earthfire Pavilion. You either need an introducer or be an invited participant.”

“An introducer?”

Chen Ping frowned. “We’ve come from afar and don’t have an introducer. How can we obtain the qualification to participate in the trial?”

“This...”

The waiter scratched his head. “The selection process for the Earthfire Trial ended three months ago. To participate now, you either need special permission from an elder within the Earthfire Pavilion, or... before the trial begins, complete certain special tasks issued by the Earthfire Pavilion to earn contribution points to exchange for qualification.”

Special tasks?

Chen Ping’s heart skipped a beat: “Where does the Earthfire Pavilion post its missions?”

“At the Mission Hall in the south of the city. All the major powers post their missions there, and the Earthfire Pavilion is no exception. However...”

The shopkeeper lowered his voice, “The missions posted by the Earthfire Pavilion are usually very dangerous. They either involve collecting rare materials in the perilous depths of the Flame Domain, or hunting powerful fire-type beasts. Many cultivators who try to take shortcuts accept these missions, but none of them ever return.”

“Understood, thank you.” Chen Ping handed the shopkeeper a few spirit stones as a tip.

The shopkeeper happily accepted them and added, “If you two seniors wish to go to the Mission Hall, I can lead the way.”

“Also, a word of caution: Crimson Flame City is rather unsettled lately. I heard that a cultivator named Chen Ping has offended the Evil Path Hall, and they are currently searching the entire city for him, offering a bounty of a million high-grade spirit stones.”

“If you two encounter anyone suspicious, it’s best to stay far away.”

Chen Ping and Crimson Cloud Demon Lord exchanged a glance, both seeing the gravity in each other’s eyes.

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The Evil Path Hall acted swiftly; the bounty had already reached Crimson Flame City.

And judging from the waiter’s tone, the bounty had caused quite a stir in the city; many were probably already secretly searching for Chen Ping.

“We understand, thank you for the reminder,” Chen Ping said calmly.

After the waiter left, Crimson Cloud Demon Lord set up a soundproof barrier and said in a deep voice, “Chen Ping, the Evil Path Hall’s influence in Crimson Flame City is probably considerable. We must proceed with caution.”

“Mm.”

Chen Ping nodded. “Let’s go to the Mission Hall first and see if there’s a way to quickly obtain the Earth Fire Trial qualification.”

“Also, we need to go to the Earth Fire Pavilion. Even if we can’t get in, at least we can find out its location and the guards.”

After a short rest, the two left the inn and headed to the Mission Hall in the south of the city.

The Mission Hall was a vast circular building, bustling with activity. Hundreds of enormous jade walls floated in mid-air, displaying various mission information.

The area was bustling with cultivators accepting, submitting, and issuing quests, creating a lively atmosphere.

Chen Ping quickly found the area where the Earth Fire Pavilion issued quests.

The jade tablets there were crimson red. There weren’t many quests, but each one offered extremely generous rewards.

Each quest was marked “Extremely Dangerous.”

“These quests simply can’t be completed in a short time,” the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord said, shaking his head after reviewing them. “And the risks are too great.”

Chen Ping also frowned.

The qualification for the Earth Fire Trial required 10,000 contribution points. Based on the difficulty and rewards of these quests, at least two or three extremely dangerous ones would need to be completed.

There simply wasn’t enough time.

“It seems the conventional methods won’t work.”

Chen Ping murmured. “We need to think of another way.”

Just then, he overheard the chatter of several cultivators nearby:

“Have you heard? Elder Yan Xin of the Earthfire Pavilion is leading a team to the Crimson Flame Canyon to collect Flame Spirit Grass and is recruiting temporary guards.”

“Flame Spirit Grass? That’s the main ingredient for refining Flame Heart Pills. It only grows deep within the Crimson Flame Canyon, guarded by Flame Dragons. Elder Yan Xin is personally leading the expedition this time, so the demand must be considerable.”

“What’s the reward?”

“It’s said to be quite good. Guards who complete the mission will not only receive a generous amount of spirit stones, but will also get a discount on future purchases of Earthfire Pavilion’s pills and magical artifacts. If they perform exceptionally well, they might even catch Elder Yan Xin’s eye and be recruited into the Earthfire Pavilion.”

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“Then what are we waiting for? Let’s sign up quickly! Elder Yan Xin is one of the three great alchemists of the Earthfire Pavilion. Following him is a rare opportunity!”

Several cultivators hurried towards the recruitment area on the other side of the hall.

Chen Ping’s eyes lit up.

Elder Yanxin?

A master alchemist from the Earthfire Pavilion?

Leading a team to collect Flame Spirit Grass?

This might be an opportunity.

If he could infiltrate this team and perform exceptionally well during the mission, he might directly gain Elder Yanxin's favor, thus qualifying for the Earthfire Trial, or even obtaining clues about the Earth Core Jade Marrow Milk!

"Let's go take a look," Chen Ping said to the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord.

The two arrived at the recruitment area, where dozens of cultivators had already gathered, all at least at the fifth rank of the Heavenly Immortal Realm.

On a makeshift wooden platform ahead, a steward from the Earthfire Pavilion was explaining the recruitment requirements.

"...This escort mission will last seven days, with the destination being Crimson Flame Canyon. The main responsibilities are guarding and assisting with resource gathering. A cultivation level of at least Celestial Immortal Realm Rank 5 is required."

"The reward is 5,000 high-grade spirit stones per person, with additional bonuses for successful completion of the mission. Applicants must pass a simple test; places are limited, only the first ten will be accepted."

The conditions weren't harsh, and the reward was reasonable.

More importantly, this was an excellent opportunity to get close to the higher-ups of the Earthfire Pavilion.

Chen Ping and Crimson Cloud Demon Lord exchanged a glance and both decided to sign up.

The test was simple, merely demonstrating cultivation and attack/defense capabilities.

However, when he reached the testing area to register, a young Earthfire Pavilion deacon in charge of registration glanced at him, his brows immediately furrowing.

“Fellow Daoist, are you sure you want to sign up?”

The young deacon’s tone was clearly suspicious. “The escort mission requires a minimum cultivation level of Celestial Immortal Realm Rank 5. You... seem to be less than qualified.”

Chen Ping was currently only at Celestial Immortal Realm Rank 1, completely ineligible.

His words immediately attracted the attention of the other applicants around him.

Dozens of gazes focused on Chen Ping. When they sensed his aura as a first-grade Celestial Immortal, many wore undisguised contempt and mockery.

“A first-grade Celestial Immortal wants to join the fun? Isn’t that just courting death?”