

The Order 9821

Chapter: 9821

The power contained within that sword aura posed a deadly threat to him!

“Soul-Devouring Demon Armor! Protect!”

He roared, and the dark red scales on his body shone brightly.

Instantly, a thick shield covered in jagged barbs and burning with raging demonic flames materialized before him!

At the same time, he retreated rapidly!

“Clang!!!”

The sword aura struck the demonic flame shield, producing a deafening clang like metal clashing.

But it sounded more like the final wails of countless wronged souls being purified in an instant!

The shield held for less than a tenth of a breath before shattering! The broken shield fragments turned into a shower of sparks, which were then extinguished completely by the aftershocks of the sword aura.

Although the sword aura was weakened by the attack, its remaining power was still incredibly sharp, grazing past the rapidly retreating Soul Devourer!

“Pfft!”

Dark red demonic blood gushed out like a fountain from the Soul Devourer’s right shoulder!

His arm, along with half of his shoulder, was severed cleanly at the root by the aftershocks of the sword aura, which contained the power of chaotic decomposition, the sharpness of the golden dragon, and the purification of earth fire, exploding into a cloud of blood mist.

It was then completely shredded and evaporated by the subsequent sword intent, leaving not a trace!

“Ah!!!”

The Soul Devourer let out an extremely shrill scream, his massive body flying backward like a kite with a broken string, crashing heavily into a rock wall hundreds of feet away, creating a deep human-shaped crater, with cracks spreading across the rock wall like a spider web.

His aura instantly weakened significantly. Demonic flames flickered at the severed arm, attempting to regenerate, but were tightly bound by a hazy gray power, preventing the wound from healing—the lingering chaotic sword intent continuing to wreak havoc.

And Chen Ping was not faring much better.

As he unleashed that supreme sword strike, shattering the Ten Thousand Souls Burning Heaven and severely injuring the Soul Devourer, the Soul Devourer, in his final moments, launched a desperate counterattack, striking out with a palm from afar!

“Soul Devouring Demonic Flame Palm!”

A condensed, almost tangible, dark red palm print seemed to pierce through space, striking Chen Ping’s left chest the instant his old power dissipated and new power was generated!

“Pfft!”

Chen Ping was struck as if by lightning; his body shuddered violently, and he coughed up a mouthful of scalding blood, most of it instantly vaporizing in the scorching air.

He was blasted backward by the force of the palm, crashing heavily against the rock wall with a dull thud.

Chapter: 9822

His clothes were torn on his left chest, revealing a charred, festering, and terrifying palm print deep enough to expose bone!

Around the palm print, dark red demonic flames, like maggots clinging to bone, frantically eroded his flesh, attempting to penetrate his body and burn his meridians and soul.

A chilling, insidious soul-devouring power surged along the wound, rushing straight into his consciousness!

“Cough cough...cough cough cough...”

Chen Ping knelt on one knee, using the Dragon-Slaying Sword for support, barely managing to stay upright.

His face was ashen, each cough bringing up copious amounts of blood and froth. The excruciating pain in his left chest and the icy chill of his soul being eroded caused his vision to blur.

But his hand gripping the sword remained steady.

His eyes remained as sharp as ever. The chaotic immortal power within his body was circulating at an unprecedented speed, frantically attacking the wound in his left chest, engaging in a tug-of-war with the corrosive soul-devouring demonic flames;

His golden dragon bloodline released a vast amount of life essence, repairing his damaged organs and bones;

The true flames of the earth burned away the invading, insidious soul power from within.

Chen Ping hadn't expected that the Soul-Devouring Venerable, having just recovered to the peak of the first rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, could injure him. It seemed he had overestimated his strength.

Or perhaps the Soul Devourer was a great demon who had lived for tens of thousands of years, and his strength as a peak first-grade Upper Immortal was greater than that of other cultivators of the same realm.

That was the only possibility. Chen Ping couldn't believe that he, a third-grade Heavenly Immortal, could be injured by a peak first-grade Upper Immortal.

"Boy...boy..."

Hundreds of feet away, the Soul Devourer struggled to emerge from the crater in the rock wall, hovering in mid-air on his remaining five fleshy wings. Black blood still dripped from his severed arm, and his aura was chaotic.

He stared intently at Chen Ping, his eerie green eyes now filled with horror, resentment, and a trace of fear that even he himself refused to acknowledge...

"You...you actually..."

His voice was hoarse, filled with the weakness and disbelief of someone severely injured.

He was a peak first-grade Upper Immortal!

Having fused with the Earth Core Demon Flame, his strength had skyrocketed!

And his opponent was merely a third-grade Heavenly Immortal!

Logically, this should have been a crushing defeat, an instant kill! But what was the result?

He paid the price of an arm and half a shoulder to receive a single blow to the chest!

And judging from his opponent's appearance, although severely injured, his eyes were clear, his fighting spirit undiminished, clearly indicating he still had the strength to fight again!

Chapter: 9823

This completely overturned his understanding! It shattered the age-old common sense of the cultivation world!

"Cough cough..."

Chen Ping coughed up another mouthful of blood, but slowly, inch by inch, he stood up from the ground.

He wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth. Although the wound on his left chest was still gruesome, and although his face was pale, his spine was ramrod straight, and the sharpness and mockery in his eyes remained undiminished.

"What?" Chen Ping's voice was hoarse, yet still clearly reached the Soul Devourer's ears. "Surprised? Find it unbelievable?"

A blood-red smile tugged at the corner of his mouth, his eyes gleaming with disdain. "You think being a Celestial Realm cultivator makes you invincible? You think cultivation level represents everything?"

"Soul Devourer, you've lived tens of thousands of years, have you wasted them all?"

"Don't you even understand the principle that 'the higher the Dao, the higher the Dharma'? Your Dao is devouring, plundering, and destruction. It seems fierce, but it's all bark and no bite, its foundation hollow."

"My Dao is chaos, protection, and creation. How can your solid foundation compare to that of a worthless Celestial Realm cultivator who rose through the ranks by devouring wronged souls?"

With each sentence he spoke, the Soul Devourer's expression grew increasingly grim, his eyes filled with more resentment and shame.

"Today, you can fight me to a standstill not because you're so powerful,"

Chen Ping slightly raised his sword, pointing it at the Soul Devourer, his tone chilling, "but because I haven't reached my peak yet. The day I ascend to the Upper Immortal Realm, killing you will be as easy as slaughtering a dog!"

The Soul Devourer trembled with rage, demonic flames surging wildly across his body.

He desperately wanted to rush forward and devour Chen Ping alive, but his remaining sanity and severely injured body were frantically warning him that he couldn't fight any longer!

This kid's regenerative abilities were too monstrous, that strange power was too much of a counter to his own; if he continued fighting, he might truly be defeated in a ditch, losing ten thousand years of cultivation in a single day!

"Fine...fine! What a sharp-tongued little beast!"

The Soul Devourer almost ground his teeth to dust, forcing out the words, "I admit, I underestimated you today, and you managed to take advantage of me."

His six wings slowly flapped, and he began to retreat deeper into the Demon Abyss, the resentment in his eyes almost tangible.

"However, Chen Ping, you will remember this! The humiliation of today, the hatred of losing an arm, I will repay a hundredfold, a thousandfold!"

"Once I reach the Twelfth Heaven and recover my full strength, I will make sure you, those around you, and everything you care about are plunged into the boundless Demon Prison, forever doomed!"

Having uttered these harsh words, the Soul Devourer no longer hesitated. His six wings suddenly flapped, transforming into a much dimmer black-red streak of light.

Without looking back, he shot towards the bottomless depths of the Demon Abyss, where the demonic flames were most concentrated, disappearing in the blink of an eye behind the churning lava and thick fog. Chen Ping did not pursue.

Not because he didn't want to, but because he couldn't.

His condition was equally dire; the Soul-Devouring Demonic Flame Palm force was still raging in his left chest, requiring his full strength to suppress and neutralize it.

Chapter: 9824

Moreover, he knew perfectly well that with the Soul-Devouring Venerable's cultivation at the Upper Immortal Realm, if he was determined to escape, he couldn't possibly stop him now.

He slowly exhaled a breath of foul air, tinged with the smell of blood, his tense body slightly relaxing, but his eyes remained warily fixed on the direction where the Soul-Devouring Venerable had disappeared.

"Chen Ping!"

Huo Ling'er rushed over, her voice trembling with tears, supporting his swaying body, tears streaming down her face like broken pearls. "How are you? Are you badly injured?"

She frantically took out the best healing pills from the Earth Fire Pavilion, wanting to feed them to Chen Ping.

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord also arrived closely. Looking at the horrific wound on Chen Ping's chest and his paper-white face, his eyes were filled with complex emotions—worry, shock, and an indescribable admiration.

"Boy...you really are..."

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord shook his head, unsure how to describe it. "A third-grade Celestial Immortal, fighting head-on against a peak first-grade Upper Immortal Soul Devourer, and even driving him away...If word gets out, the entire Eleventh Heaven, no, I'm afraid the Twelfth Heaven will be in an uproar!"

Chen Ping swallowed the pill, slowly regulating his breathing with its effects. Hearing this, he gave a bitter smile, his voice weak yet carrying an undeniable firmness.

"Senior...please don't tease me. If it weren't for the innate restraint of Chaos Immortal Power against his Soul-Devouring Demonic Art, if it weren't for the strong regenerative power of the Golden Dragon bloodline, if it weren't for the Earth Fire True Flame's ability to purify the demonic flame...I would have been defeated long ago."

"The Soul-Devouring Venerable, after all, is a demon with a notorious reputation from ten thousand years ago, not to be underestimated."

He looked in the direction the Soul-Devouring Venerable had fled, his eyes becoming deep and unfathomable: "He fled to the deepest part of the Demon Abyss...there should be a hidden spatial rift or an ancient teleportation array leading to the Twelfth Heaven there."

Huo Ling'er was startled, her tear-streaked face filled with worry: "Then isn't he going to join the Evil Path Palace? He just said he was going to the Twelfth Heaven!"

"Most likely."

Chen Ping nodded, a slight frown appearing on his brow from the pain in his chest. "That old demon, the Soul Devourer, is incredibly astute and cunning, like a fox."

"He knows that under the pressure from the Earth Fire Pavilion and me, there's no place for him in the Eleventh Heaven. Joining the Evil Path Palace, a powerful sect within the demonic path that's actively gathering powerful individuals, is his best option right now."

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord's expression turned grave: "A Soul Devourer who has recovered to the Upper Immortal realm, coupled with the unfathomable Lord of the Evil Path Palace—if they were to completely collude, the consequences would be unimaginable!"

Chen Ping took a deep breath, suppressing the surging blood and the icy pain from the demonic flames, a resolute glint in his eyes.

"We'll meet force with force, and water with earth. Thinking about that now is useless. The most urgent task is to obtain the Earth Core Jade Marrow Milk to heal your Daoist companion, Senior. Then, we must head to the Twelfth Heaven as quickly as possible!"

Chen Ping's gaze fell on the ancient map given to him by the Earth Fire Ancestor, his finger slowly tracing a hidden path.

"We must find the Soul Devourer and the Evil Path Palace before they form a stable alliance, and eliminate them!"

Chen Ping's voice was soft, yet it contained boundless fighting spirit. "Otherwise, once they are fully prepared, and with the power of the Gate of Reincarnation and the two Supreme Immortals, they will launch a counterattack, and we, and indeed the entire Eleventh Heaven, will face annihilation."

He put away the map and looked ahead at the entrance to the deep, narrow passage leading to an unknown destination—the only safe path marked on the map to the Heart of Lava.

"Let's go."

Chapter: 9825

Supported by Huo Ling'er, Chen Ping steadied himself. Though his steps were slightly unsteady, his eyes had regained their sharpness. "Our target is just ahead."

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord nodded emphatically, saying nothing more, and led the way.

Huo Ling'er held Chen Ping tightly, her beautiful eyes filled with heartache and determination.

The three ignored the lingering demonic energy of the Soul Devourer behind them, adjusted their stance, and headed towards the hidden passage leading to their final destination.

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord walked at the forefront, his body surrounded by crimson demonic energy, forming a solid protective shield.

Each step he took was extremely heavy, clearly indicating that he was on high alert.

The depths of the Earth's Core Demon Abyss were fraught with danger. Although the Soul Devourer had retreated, the dangers inherent in such a perilous place were sometimes more deadly than demons themselves.

The narrow passage wound downwards, and the temperature increased the deeper they went.

The rock face gradually changed from dark red to a dazzling bright red, even beginning to resemble semi-molten glass.

The air was thick with the mixed scent of sulfur and some ancient mineral; inhaling it made even the flow of immortal energy sluggish.

"There's a fluctuation in the array ahead," the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord suddenly stopped and gestured.

Supported by Huo Ling'er, Chen Ping focused intently on sensing the surroundings. At the wound on his left chest, the Soul-Devouring Demon Flame was still entangled with chaotic immortal energy, each breath bringing excruciating pain. He endured the discomfort, a wisp of chaotic energy quietly emerging from between his brows.

"It's an ancient restriction, connected to the earth's veins," Chen Ping's voice was hoarse. "It shouldn't have been set up by the Soul-Devouring Venerable; it's more likely it formed naturally here, or is a remnant from ancient times."

The passage ahead suddenly widened, forming a natural cave about a hundred feet in diameter.

In the center of the cave, molten lava surged like a spring, but it wasn't chaotic. Seven streams of lava flowed slowly along some mysterious trajectory, outlining a vast and complex array on the cave floor.

At the edge of the array, nine dark red crystal pillars burst forth from the ground, their shafts inscribed with ancient, twisted runes, now radiating a scorching light.

The entire cave's intense spiritual energy was drawn and bound by this array, forming a visible, pale red barrier that sealed off the path ahead.

"Earth Fire Binding Spirit Array."

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord recognized it, his brow furrowing. "And it's a complete ancient version. This array draws power from the earth's core fire veins, endlessly regenerating. A direct attack will only trigger a lava surge, completely submerging this entire area."

Fire Spirit'er's face paled: "Then what do we do?"

Chen Ping slowly pushed away her support and steadied himself on his own.

He drew his Dragon-Slaying Sword, its tip lightly touching the ground. A wisp of chaotic immortal energy seeped into the rock strata along the blade, spreading like a spiderweb.

"Cough cough..."

He coughed up several mouthfuls of blood tinged with black mist, his face paling even more, but his eyes shone with an astonishing brightness. "Every formation has a core. This formation is based on the earth's veins; the core must be at the nexus of the fire veins' flow."

Chapter: 9826

He closed his eyes, focusing his mind, letting the chaotic immortal energy flow and sense within the earth's veins.

The Golden Dragon bloodline murmured within him, providing the last vestiges of clarity;

Although the circulation of the Earth Fire True Scripture was slowed by his injuries, it subtly resonated with the surrounding earth fire spiritual energy.

An incense stick's time passed.

Fine beads of sweat appeared on Chen Ping's forehead. The demonic flames at the wound on his left chest seemed to retaliate against his full-force exertion, the dark red patterns spreading an inch outwards.

Huo Ling'er watched anxiously, but dared not utter a sound to disturb him.

"Found it."

Chen Ping suddenly opened his eyes, pointing his Dragon-Slaying Sword at a seemingly ordinary crystal pillar in the northeast corner of the formation. "The slight obstruction in the flow of the earth's veins beneath that pillar is a man-made blind spot, the only viable opening in the entire formation."

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord followed the direction, concentrating for a moment before a look of astonishment flashed in his eyes: "Indeed... boy, your understanding of formations is truly terrifying."

"Senior flatters me."

Chen Ping, panting, took out three pale blue ice-attribute formation flags from his storage ring. He had specially selected them from the Earth Fire Pavilion's treasury as a precaution. "I still need Senior's cooperation. This formation borrows the power of fire; I must temporarily suppress the flow of the fire veins with extreme cold before I can break through the formation's core."

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord nodded, his crimson demonic aura suddenly transforming into a deep dark red—a trace of "Nine Netherworld Cold Fiend" contained within his original demonic art. Although not his primary cultivation, it was perfectly suited for this moment.

“Three breaths,” the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord said in a deep voice.

“Enough.”

Chen Ping took a deep breath, forcefully drawing upon his Chaos Immortal Power. The wound on his left chest immediately reopened, blood soaking his clothes.

He gritted his teeth and endured the pain. Three array flags flew from his hand, tracing three azure trajectories in the air before precisely embedding themselves around the crystal pillar, forming an equilateral triangle.

“Now!”

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord formed hand seals, and dark red demonic energy erupted, transforming into three ferocious, icy pythons that lunged straight at the ground in the center of the array flag triangle!

“Boom—!”

Extreme cold clashed with extreme heat, unleashing a piercing shriek.

The magma throughout the cave erupted instantly, but in that instant, the ice serpent burrowed into the earth’s veins, freezing the surging fire energy for a fleeting moment!

Chen Ping moved.

He didn’t even use the Dragon-Slaying Sword; instead, he formed a sword shape with his fingers, a wisp of hazy, yet perfectly refined chaotic sword energy gathering at his fingertips.

His steps faltered, yet his figure moved with ghostly speed, flashing past the center of the three array flags.

Chapter: 9827

His fingertip touched the base of the crystal pillar.

“Break.”

A single, light word.

A series of fine cracking sounds came from within the crystal pillar, and the light from the runes on its surface dimmed rapidly.

Immediately afterwards, like a chain reaction, the other eight crystal pillars trembled simultaneously, and the magma flow on the array diagram began to become turbulent and reverse.

“Retreat!”

Chen Ping shouted, turning and retreating rapidly.

Just as the three of them exited the cave entrance, a deafening explosion resounded behind them.

Nine crystal pillars shattered, sending magma soaring into the sky and engulfing the entire cave. However, the shockwave was contained by the narrow passage and didn't spread far outwards.

When the magma subsided and the dust settled, the original formation was gone, leaving only a bottomless crater where magma slowly flowed back.

At the bottom of the crater, a natural stone staircase leading downwards was faintly visible, leading into deeper darkness.

“Let's go.” Chen Ping wiped the fresh blood from the corner of his mouth and stepped onto the staircase first.

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord watched his swaying yet upright back, a complex expression flashing in his eyes, but ultimately said nothing, following closely behind.

The stone staircase spiraled downwards, the temperature rising higher and higher.

The surrounding rock walls had completely vitrified, transparent as a mirror, reflecting the distorted figures of the three.

Occasionally, the fossilized outlines of ancient creatures flashed in the mirror—all previously unseen subterranean alien species.

After walking for about half an hour, another obstacle appeared ahead.

This wasn't an array, but a naturally formed "lava waterfall."

Dark golden lava cascaded from the dome above, forming a scorching curtain tens of meters wide, completely blocking any path. Behind the waterfall, a faint jade-like glow flowed—the unique aura of the Earth's Core Jade Marrow Milk.

However, the lava waterfall wasn't inanimate; countless lava beasts, formed from pure fire spirits, swam about.

They resembled lizards, but possessed three heads and six legs, their bodies engulfed in incandescent flames, each exuding an aura no weaker than an early-stage Celestial Immortal.

Even more troublesome was the waterfall itself, which contained a kind of "earthly gravity"—the closer one got, the heavier one became.

Given Chen Ping's current state, he would likely collapse before reaching even halfway.

"I'll clear the way."

Chapter: 9828

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord took a deep breath, his demonic energy surging, condensing into a ferocious crimson demonic armor on his body. “Boy, conserve your strength. We’ll need your Chaotic Immortal Power to isolate the earth’s veins and extract the Jade Marrow Milk in the end.”

Chen Ping didn’t try to be brave, nodding. “These lava beasts are formed from the essence of earth fire, their core in their central heads. They possess immense strength and can regenerate infinitely, thanks to the waterfall’s force, unless we simultaneously destroy the fire cores in all three heads.”

“Understood.” The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord roared, ancient demonic runes appearing on his armor, temporarily resisting the earth’s gravity.

He transformed into a crimson meteor, crashing headlong into the lava waterfall!

“Roar—!”

The lava beast horde surged, dozens charging forward simultaneously.

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord’s hands surged with demonic energy, condensing into two enormous crimson blades, which he swept horizontally.

Where the blade flashed, lava beasts were decapitated one after another, but just as Chen Ping had said, magma surged at the severed points, ready to regenerate in an instant.

“Demonic Flame – Core Incineration!”

A fierce glint flashed in the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord’s eyes. The blade suddenly exploded, transforming into hundreds of thin, hair-like crimson fire threads, precisely piercing the brows of each lava beast’s three heads!

“Puff puff puff...”

With a series of muffled thuds, the lava beasts froze, their bodies rapidly dimming and disintegrating, turning into ordinary magma and merging into the waterfall.

This technique required extremely high precision in fire control; the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord had clearly used his true skill.

But there were simply too many lava beasts; they couldn't be killed all of them.

Moreover, the deeper they went, the stronger the gravity became, and cracks began to appear in the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord's demonic armor.

Seeing this, Chen Ping said to Huo Ling'er, "Protect me for a moment."

He sat cross-legged, the Dragon-Slaying Sword held horizontally in front of his knees, his hands forming an ancient hand seal. A point of chaotic light shone between his brows, gradually spreading throughout his body. The Soul-Devouring Demonic Flame at the wound on his left chest seemed to be stimulated, retaliating wildly, dark red lines spreading towards his heart.

"Suppress!"

Chen Ping shouted, his Golden Dragon bloodline surging, the roar of a dragon echoing through his meridians, forcefully pushing the demonic flame back slightly.

Taking advantage of this opening, he fully circulated his Chaotic Immortal Power, adjusting its nature to "assimilation."

This was not an attack, but infiltration.

The Chaotic Immortal Power flowed like mercury, silently merging into the surrounding earth veins, simulating an aura originating from the same source as the lava waterfall.

This process was extremely dangerous; the slightest carelessness would result in a backlash from the earth fire spiritual power, further exacerbating his injuries.

Ten breaths later, Chen Ping suddenly opened his eyes, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth, but he shouted, "Senior, seven zhang to the left, three feet behind the waterfall, there's a gravity node there that can shatter it!"

Chapter: 9829

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord, besieged by five exceptionally large lava beasts, didn't hesitate upon hearing this. He withstood two heavy lava blows, his demonic armor shattering slightly, but he used the momentum to lunge to the left, gathering all his demonic power, and punched the spot Chen Ping pointed to!

"Crack—crack—"

A crisp sound like shattering glass.

The entire lava waterfall trembled violently, the gravity field suddenly weakening by thirty percent.

The swimming lava beasts froze, their bodies becoming much less solid.

"Now!" Chen Ping mustered his last strength to stand up. "Follow me!"

He rushed into the waterfall first, his Dragon-Slaying Sword drawing a chaotic vortex in front of him, temporarily deflecting the surging lava and the lava beasts.

Huo Ling'er followed closely behind, her Earth Fire True Flame forming a protective shield. Behind the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord's palace, demonic energy surged, stubbornly holding back the opening that was attempting to close.

The three pierced through the waterfall like arrows, and a breathtaking view suddenly appeared before them.

It was a small cave, no more than ten zhang square, yet breathtakingly beautiful.

Countless jade-colored crystal pillars, like stalactites, hung from the cave ceiling, each radiating a warm, jade-like light.

In the center of the cave, a pool of milky-white water, no bigger than a washbasin, lay still, its surface shimmering with iridescent light, permeated with an intense, almost palpable, vitality and Daoist aura.

Earth's Core Jade Marrow Milk!

But around the pool, nine slender jade-colored stalagmites were arranged in a ring, each topped with a drop of solidified jade marrow milk, like stars surrounding the moon.

An invisible force field intertwined between the stalagmites, forming a final natural barrier.

"The Nine Star Spirit-Nourishing Array, formed naturally by heaven and earth."

Chen Ping, panting, his eyes shone brightly. "This array has no solution. Only by using pure life force to resonate with the Jade Marrow Milk can its approval be gained."

He looked at Huo Ling'er: "Miss Ling'er, may I lend you a drop of your primordial essence blood?"

Huo Ling'er didn't hesitate, forcing out a drop of blood—a crimson-gold tinged with pale blue—from her fingertip. This was a symbol of reaching a high level in the direct lineage of the Earth Fire Pavilion and the Earth Fire True Scripture.

Chen Ping took the drop of blood, then pricked his palm with his finger, forcing out a drop of golden-red blood containing chaotic energy and the bloodline of the Golden Dragon.

The two drops of blood merged in his palm, transforming into a seven-colored, glass-like blood bead.

He gently flicked the blood bead towards the Jade Marrow Milk Pool.

As the blood bead passed through the invisible force field, ripples appeared, but it did not impede its movement.

The moment the blood bead fell into the milky-white pool water...

Chapter: 9830

“Buzz...”

The jade-colored crystal pillars throughout the cave resonated simultaneously, playing a celestial melody.

The pool water rippled, and a fist-sized, condensed, jade-like essence slowly rose from its center. Its seven-colored glow subsided, transforming into a pure, warm white jade luster.

Chen Ping reached out and guided the jade essence obediently, placing it into the cold jade bottle he had prepared beforehand.

The instant the jade essence left the pool, jade droplets from the tips of the nine surrounding stalagmites simultaneously dripped down, merging into the pool. The pool water visibly replenished itself, though the glow faded slightly. The spiritual essence of heaven and earth, when properly sourced, is inexhaustible.

“It’s done.”

Chen Ping let out a long sigh, unable to support himself any longer. He staggered backward, supported by Huo Ling’er.

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord gazed at the cold jade bottle; his eyes, usually calm and still for millennia, finally stirred with excitement.

He opened his mouth, but only managed to utter, “Young man, this favor...”

“Senior, saving your Daoist companion is paramount.”

Chen Ping smiled weakly, handing over the jade bottle. “We must leave the Abyss of the Earth’s Core immediately. Although the Soul Devourer has fled, this place is not safe to linger.”

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord nodded emphatically, carefully putting away the jade bottle.

The three returned the way they came. Since the formation had been broken, the journey was much smoother.

Two hours later, they finally saw the entrance to the Abyss, guarded by the Earth Fire Pavilion.

The moment he stepped out of the Abyss, Chen Ping looked back at the bottomless darkness, his eyes deep and unfathomable.

The Soul Devourer had fled to the Twelfth Heaven, the shadow of the Gate of Reincarnation, the threat of the Evil Path Palace... all of this would face its final confrontation in that vaster, more perilous realm.

He gripped the Dragon-Slaying Sword tightly. Although the wound in his left chest still throbbed with pain, the Chaos Immortal Power was gradually gaining the upper hand.

The road ahead is fraught with peril, but the sword is already in hand.

And so, a path is carved out.

.....

In the twelfth heaven, the main altar of the Evil Path Palace stands majestically deep within the void.

The entire palace complex is constructed from countless jet-black bones, with eternal lamps, their eerie green glow flickering in the void like the silent wails of countless departed souls, hanging from the eaves.

Nine streaks of greyish-white reincarnation energy coil around the palace like colossal pythons reaching to the heavens, each breath causing the surrounding spatial rules to distort and tremble, emitting a groaning sound as if unable to bear the strain.

Deep within the main hall, countless bone chains hang from the hundred-foot-high dome, each chain ending in a still-pulsating core of a divine soul.