

The Order 9841

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Three months ago, he could only barely open the Gate of Reincarnation, using the leaked power to refine some low-level Reincarnation puppets, or toss captured souls into it in exchange for meager rule feedback.

But now...

Zhan E opened his gray-white pupils, a burning glint in his eyes.

He felt that his connection with this gate had deepened.

Like a originally thin and fragile thread, gradually thickening and becoming stronger through countless energy exchanges, even beginning to carry more information.

“Soon...”

He murmured to himself, his withered fingers tapping lightly on the bone surface. “As long as I can obtain that Reincarnation Puppet General, using it as a medium, I can connect more deeply to the Land of Reincarnation, and perhaps... even glimpse a trace of the Lord of Reincarnation’s true form.”

Then, he might truly understand the origin of this door, and the true purpose of the three terrifying beings behind it.

Suddenly...

“Buzz!!!”

The Gate of Reincarnation trembled violently!

The greyish-white flames in the eye sockets of the skulls on the entire bone door simultaneously surged, shooting skyward and illuminating the entire hall as if it were daytime.

The runes on the door writhe and recombine wildly, emitting a piercing shriek—the mournful cry of rules being forcibly twisted and torn apart.

Zhan E abruptly stood up, his greyish-white eyes fixed on the center of the door.

There, in the center of the once perfectly sealed bone door, a tiny crack slowly appeared.

The crack, initially only as thick as a hair, rapidly widened, expanding in the blink of an eye to a foot wide, then a foot wide... eventually forming a gap large enough for an ordinary person to pass through.

Inside the gap, instead of the palace behind the door, lay a deep, greyish-white vortex.

The vortex slowly rotated, each turn distorting the surrounding space and emanating a terrifying suction force that sent shivers down one's spine.

Then, a figure stepped out of the vortex.

It was a man eight feet tall, slender and upright, clad in dark red, form-fitting scale armor, the surface of which rippled with eerie greyish-white patterns.

His six broad, fleshy wings on his back were intact, each edge burning with tangible, dark red flames, the depths of which faintly revealed greyish-white runes.

His face bore a seven-tenths resemblance to the Soul Devourer, but was colder, more perfect, like a sculpture meticulously sculpted by a master craftsman.

His once emerald green eyes were now a pure gray-white, devoid of pupils and whites, only two slowly rotating gray-white vortexes, so deep they seemed capable of swallowing all light.

Most striking was his left arm; the part severed by Chen Ping had now regrown.

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The new arm was indistinguishable from the original, even more intricate in its scales and sharper in its fingertips, except for a gray-white line running from his shoulder to his wrist, like some kind of seal, or perhaps a conduit for power.

He stepped out of the vortex, his foot landing on the bone-like surface with a muffled thud.

The Gate of Reincarnation slowly closed, the tremors subsided, the flames receded, and everything returned to normal.

The figure stood still, his gray-white eyes slowly turning, finally settling on Zhan E.

Then, he knelt on one knee, head bowed, his voice mechanical and monotonous, devoid of emotion: "Master."

An uncontrollable ecstasy flashed in Zhan E's gray-white pupils. He slowly stepped forward, reaching the kneeling figure. His withered fingers rose, gently touching the other's forehead, cheek, and shoulders... as if inspecting a newly completed work of art.

"Perfect...too perfect..."

Zhan E murmured, his voice trembling slightly.

He could feel the power contained within this body—the power that retained the entire foundation of a peak first-grade Immortal Realm cultivator from the Soul Devouring Venerable.

Even more so, having undergone the refining and reshaping in the Land of Reincarnation, its physical strength and energy purity were superior to its original state.

More importantly, he could feel the close, absolutely obedient "connection" between himself and this body.

Like the connection between an arm and a brain, a single thought would be executed unconditionally by this body, without the slightest hesitation, resistance, or even questioning.

A perfect killing machine, virtually invincible below the True Immortal Realm.

“Get up.”

Zhan E suppressed his excitement and said calmly.

The figure rose and stood motionless to one side, lifeless like a statue.

His posture was ramrod straight and stiff, every joint in a state of perfect combat readiness, his greyish-white eyes fixed straight ahead, awaiting the next command.

“From this day forward, your name is ‘Soul-Devouring Puppet’,”

Zhan E said slowly, walking to the Soul-Devouring Puppet, his greyish-white eyes staring directly into the empty greyish-white vortex within. “I command you to lead all the Soul Hunters of the Evil Path Hall, patrolling the Twelve Heavens.”

His tone gradually turned cold, carrying an undeniable authority: “Within the Twelve Heavens, all cultivators of the eighth rank or higher in the Heavenly Immortal Realm, regardless of whether they are disciples of immortal sects, powerful rogue cultivators, or reclusive old monsters... anyone whose soul strength meets the standard, shall be captured, their souls extracted, and sent to the Gate of Reincarnation.”

“If there is any resistance...”

Zhan E paused, a cruel smile curving his lips, “...” “Kill without mercy. Refine their physical bodies into low-level reincarnation puppets, and extract their souls at double the rate.”

The vortex in the Soul-Devouring Puppet's gray-white eyes spun slightly faster, mechanically replying, "Yes, sir."

"Furthermore,"

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Zhan E's voice lowered, carrying a chilling aura, "if you encounter anyone possessing Chaos Immortal Power, Golden Dragon Bloodline, or Earth Fire True Flame... capture them alive at all costs."

He added, "Remember, capture them alive. Even if you destroy their physical body, you must preserve their complete soul. This person... will be of great use to me."

"Yes, sir."

The Soul-Devouring Puppet responded again, its voice still completely flat.

Zhan E nodded in satisfaction, raised his hand, and a palm-sized gray-white token flew from his sleeve, landing in the Soul-Devouring Puppet's hand.

The token was made from special bones from the Reincarnation Land, with a twisted character for "puppet" engraved on the front and densely packed authority runes on the back.

"This is the 'Puppet General's Token'," Zhan E said.

"With this token, everyone in the Evil Path Hall, except for myself, can see me as if I were their personal servant. All resources, all puppets, and all Soul Hunters within the hall are at your command."

The Soul-Devouring Puppet grasped the token, runes flashing in its greyish-white eyes. The token merged into its palm, leaving only a faint greyish-white mark on its skin.

"Go," Zhan E said, waving his sleeve. "Let the Twelfth Heaven... feel the majesty of reincarnation."

The Soul-Devouring Puppet bowed, turned, and stepped out of the hall.

His steps were steady and precise, each step measured with perfect precision, as if measured with a ruler.

The six fleshy wings on his back slightly folded, the dark red flames at their edges receding, but the aura emanating from them caused all the Evil Path Hall disciples, guards, and puppets along the way to instinctively kneel and tremble.

That was the oppressive aura of a peak Immortal, mixed with the deathly aura unique to the Land of Reincarnation, like tangible ice, freezing the souls of every living being.

Outside the palace, nine strands of Reincarnation Qi surrounding the palace sensed the appearance of the Soul-Devouring Puppet and emitted excited buzzing sounds.

Like nine loyal dogs seeing their master, they circled and danced around the Soul-Devouring Puppet, finally coalescing behind him into a hundred-foot-tall gray-white cloak. Countless tiny runes flowed along the edges of the cloak, each rune representing a rule of reincarnation.

The Soul-Devouring Puppet stepped into the void, its gray-white eyes overlooking the vast complex of the Evil Path Palace stretching for thousands of miles below.

It raised its right hand, palm upward.

“Soul Hunters, assemble.”

The mechanical voice wasn’t loud, but it was like a commandment, instantly resounding throughout every corner of the Evil Path Palace.

“Whoosh—whoosh—whoosh—”

Countless black shadows soared into the sky from the depths of the palace, from the training grounds, and from the secluded cultivation areas!

That was the Soul Hunter force, trained by the Evil Path Hall for thousands of years, numbering over thirty thousand. The lowest cultivation level was at least fifth-grade Celestial Immortal, with over a thousand commanders at eighth-grade Celestial Immortal.

They were uniformly clad in jet-black soul armor, wielding specially crafted soul-locking chains, soul-capturing banners, and soul-refining furnaces. Each was an expert in the Dao of Souls, adept at capturing and refining divine souls.

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At this moment, these thirty thousand Soul Hunters, like a black tide, rapidly assembled and formed ranks in the void, ultimately creating a massive square formation beneath the Soul Devouring Puppet.

Everyone lowered their heads, not daring to look directly at the figure clad in a greyish-white cloak. It was a fear originating from the depths of their souls, an instinctive awe of a higher-level being.

The Soul Devouring Puppet's greyish-white eyes swept across the square formation below, and the mechanical voice sounded again:

"Target: The entire Twelfth Heaven."

"Mission: Hunt divine souls of eighth-grade Celestial Immortals and above."

"Action, commence."

There was no pre-battle mobilization, no rousing oaths, only the most concise command.

But the thirty thousand Soul Hunters simultaneously knelt on one knee, responding in unison like a tsunami:

"As commanded, Puppet General!"

The next moment, the greyish-white cloak behind the Soul-Devouring Puppet unfurled, transforming into a greyish-white light curtain stretching across the sky.

Where the light curtain covered, the rules of space were forcibly distorted, and a teleportation channel leading to various parts of the Twelve Heavens rapidly formed.

The Soul-Devouring Puppet was the first to step into the channel.

The thirty thousand Soul Hunters followed closely behind like a black torrent.

When the last figure disappeared into the channel, the greyish-white light curtain slowly retracted, transforming back into a cloak and returning to the Soul-Devouring Puppet's back.

The channel closed, and the void returned to calm, as if nothing had happened.

But the fate of the Twelve Heavens, from this moment on, had been completely changed.

The main hall of the Evil Path Palace.

Zhan E stood before the palace gate, his greyish-white eyes gazing in the direction the Soul-Devouring Puppet had departed, the cold smile on his lips lingering for a long time.

He could sense that with the deployment of the Soul-Devouring Puppet, the teleportation array throughout the Twelve Heavens was being activated.

These were the hidden teleportation array nodes he had painstakingly laid out across the Twelve Heavens over countless millennia.

Each node was both an eye and a passageway.

Through this pervasive network of reincarnation, the Soul-Devouring Puppet could appear anywhere in the Twelve Heavens at any time, and could instantly teleport captured souls back to the Evil Path Palace, casting them into the Gate of Reincarnation.

More importantly, Zhan E could perceive the energy fluctuations, the auras of powerful individuals, and the distribution of power in every corner of the Twelve Heavens through this network... like a spiderweb covering the entire region, no movement could escape his perception.

“Finally... it has begun.”

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Zhan E murmured to himself, his withered finger lightly tapping the void.

A circle of grayish-white ripples spread out, and at the center of the ripples appeared a three-dimensional star map—a panoramic view of the Twelve Heavens, marking the locations of major immortal sects, aristocratic families, gathering places of rogue cultivators, and dangerous secret realms.

At this moment, over three hundred points of light were flashing and moving simultaneously on the star map.

Each point of light represented a Soul Hunter squad.

The brightest and fastest-moving point of light was the location of the Soul Devouring Puppet.

He had arrived in the eastern part of the Twelfth Heaven, that prosperous region jointly controlled by the three great immortal sects.

“Let’s start by devouring the most fertile parts,” Zhan E said, a cruel glint in his eyes. “The three great immortal sects... Hmph, occupying the richest region of the Twelfth Heaven for ten thousand years, it’s time to pay a price.”

He turned and walked back to the main hall, sitting cross-legged again before the Gate of Reincarnation.

His greyish-white eyes closed, his mind sinking into the reincarnation network that permeated the entire realm, beginning to watch this hunting feast he had personally orchestrated, sweeping across the Twelfth Heaven.

Meanwhile, in the far more distant depths of the void, beyond Zhan E's perception.

Inside a white jade palace suspended in chaotic currents.

An elderly man in a blue robe, his face blurred, suddenly opened his eyes, a flicker of surprise crossing them.

"The fluctuations of the power of reincarnation... have suddenly intensified by more than a hundredfold..."

He calculated with his fingers, his brows furrowing deeper and deeper. "And... mixed in is a familiar, repulsive aura of devouring... Is it that demon who should have died ten thousand years ago?"

"No... even colder, even more deathly still, like... a puppet?"

The old man abruptly stood up, stepping out of the palace and reaching the edge of the void, gazing towards the direction of the Twelfth Heaven.

After a long while, he slowly exhaled a breath of stale air, a grave look flashing in his eyes.

"It seems that the Twelfth Heaven, which has been peaceful for too long... is about to change."

"I just wonder how many lives this storm will ultimately devour, and how many forces will be drawn into it..."

He shook his head, turned, and returned to the palace, beginning to contact several other reclusive old monsters.

The storm had begun; no one could remain uninvolved.

Earthfire Pavilion, Heavenfire Secret Realm. Crimson-gold true flames flowed gently around Chen Ping like warm silk.

He sat cross-legged on the flaming lotus platform in the center of the secret realm, his eyes closed, his breathing long and even.

The once ferocious and terrifying Soul-Devouring Demonic Flame palm print on his left chest was now just a pale red scar, its surface faintly revealing intertwined chaotic energy and the phantom of a golden dragon.

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Three months.

Three months had passed since his return from the Abyss of the Earth's Core.

During these three months, Chen Ping had hardly stepped out of the Heavenly Fire Secret Realm.

The Earthfire Pavilion spared no expense, continuously supplying him with various healing elixirs, body-tempering elixirs, and calming teas.

After taking the Earth Core Jade Marrow Milk, the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord did not leave immediately. Instead, he remained at the Earthfire Pavilion, imparting to him his millennia-old demonic body-tempering secrets.

Fire Spirit stayed day and night outside the secret realm, using her own cultivation of the Earthfire True Scripture to guide the Earthfire spiritual energy within, aiding Chen Ping's recovery.

At this moment, Chen Ping slowly opened his eyes.

Deep within his eyes, a primordial grayness, a soaring golden dragon's majesty, and a burning earth fire's intensity alternated and flowed, ultimately settling into a profound tranquility.

He gently exhaled a breath of turbid air.

The turbid air, upon leaving his body, transformed into a small three-colored dragon, circling three times in the air before dissipating into pure spiritual energy.

“Finally... I’m completely recovered.”

Chen Ping clenched his fist, feeling the ceaseless flow of power within his body.

His Chaotic Immortal Power was even more refined and pure than before his injury, and his Golden Dragon Bloodline showed faint signs of breaking through to the next stage. Furthermore, taking advantage of his recovery from this serious injury, the Earth Fire True Scripture had broken through to the seventh level.

Although he was still only at the third rank of the Heavenly Immortal Realm, his true combat strength...

A sharp glint flashed in Chen Ping’s eyes.

If he were to fight the Soul Devourer again, he was confident he could completely slay him within fifty moves!

“Husband!”

A joyful cry came from the entrance of the secret realm, and then a crimson figure darted in like a swallow.

Huo Ling’er was dressed in a fiery red outfit today, her long hair tied in a high ponytail, looking spirited and energetic.

She looked Chen Ping up and down, her beautiful eyes full of concern: “How are you feeling? Are your injuries fully healed?”

Chen Ping stood up and smiled, "I'm much better now, in fact... I've benefited from this misfortune; my cultivation has improved slightly. We can cultivate together tonight."

Upon hearing this, Huo Ling'er breathed a sigh of relief. If Chen Ping's injuries were serious and he couldn't cultivate together, wouldn't she feel terrible?

After all, once you've tasted the sweetness, you can't resist.

"Father sent me to invite you, saying he has important matters to discuss. There are quite a few strangers in the main hall... their auras are very strong."

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"Strangers?" Chen Ping raised an eyebrow slightly.

As one of the top powers in the Eleventh Heaven, the Earthfire Pavilion naturally receives many visitors daily. However, for Huo Fentian to specifically send someone to invite him, and for Huo Ling'er to take it so seriously...

"Let's go, let's go see."

.....

The atmosphere in the main hall of the Earthfire Pavilion was heavy.

The usually spacious hall now seemed somewhat crowded.

Dozens of figures sat or stood, arranged on both sides of the hall.

Their clothing varied; some were luxurious and elegant, some simple and plain, some even ragged and bloodstained, but without exception, they all exuded powerful auras.

The lowest level was at least a seventh-grade Celestial Immortal!

The moment Chen Ping entered the hall, he felt dozens of gazes simultaneously fall upon him.

Those gazes contained scrutiny, curiosity, suspicion, and even a few that concealed undisguised hostility.

“Young Master, this way.”

Huo Fentian, seated at the head of the table, rose to greet him.

Today, he was unusually dressed in the formal robes of the Earthfire Pavilion Master, a crimson robe embroidered with nine golden lotuses of earthfire, and a crimson-gold crown on his head, his expression solemn.

Chen Ping walked to Huo Fentian’s side and stopped, his gaze sweeping across the hall.

He saw several familiar faces.

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord sat at the head of the left side, eyes closed in meditation, but a faint demonic aura emanated from his body, clearly indicating he was not letting his guard down.

The Earthfire Ancestor sat on Huo Fentian’s other side. This ancestor, usually elusive and rarely seen, had actually appeared today, stroking his long beard, his gaze deeply scrutinizing the people in the hall.

But most of them were strangers.

An old man wearing a tattered blue robe, his left arm severed at the shoulder, had a strange, grayish-white aura swirling around the wound, which was constantly eroding his life force, turning his face ashen.

A middle-aged woman, beautiful and refined, clutched a broken jade zither, its strings snapped. Blood seeped from her fingertips, yet she seemed oblivious, staring blankly at the sky outside the hall.

Three men clad in identical golden armor stood side by side, their armor riddled with sword and blade marks. One man's chest armor was even ripped open by some kind of claw, revealing a deep, bone-revealing wound.

Seven or eight young cultivators huddled together, their clothes relatively intact, but each wore a terrified expression, like frightened birds, tense at the slightest sound.

Most striking were the three standing in the center of the hall.

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The leader was an old Taoist priest with white hair and beard, his face ancient and weathered. He held a whisk, its threads mostly broken.

His aura was deeply restrained, and Chen Ping couldn't immediately gauge his strength, but he was at least a peak ninth-grade Celestial Immortal!

Behind the old Taoist, a man and a woman stood on either side.

The man, around thirty years old, had sharp eyebrows and bright eyes. He carried a long sword wrapped in coarse cloth on his back; though unsheathed, a sharp sword intent subtly emanated from it.

The woman, in her early twenties, had a beautiful face and wore a light blue dress. A string of silver bells hung from her waist, their soft tinkling carrying a soothing rhythm.

"Young Master..." Huo Fentian's deep voice broke the silence in the hall, "Let me introduce you. This is the Grand Elder of the 'Azure Sword Sect' of the Twelfth Heaven, True Person Xuanwei."

The white-haired old Daoist nodded slightly, his gaze lingering on Chen Ping for a moment, his long, gray eyebrows twitching imperceptibly.

Huo Fentian continued, “These two behind True Person Xuanwei are his personal disciples, Lin Xiao and Su Qianyue. As for the other fellow Daoists in the hall...”

He paused, his voice growing even deeper, “They are all recently... refugees from the Twelfth Heaven.”

Refugees?

Chen Ping’s pupils contracted slightly.

Cultivators strive against fate, defying the heavens, always seeking higher realms.

Eleventh-level cultivators dream of ascending to the twelfth level, while twelfth-level cultivators yearn for the legendary thirteenth level and even higher.

This is an immutable law.

But now, these twelfth-level experts have actually fled to the eleventh level?

“Father-in-law...”

Chen Ping suppressed his doubts and cupped his hands, saying, “May I ask what brings you all here?”

Upon hearing this, several suppressed cold snorts echoed in the hall.

The old man in the green robe with the missing arm suddenly looked up, his eyes bloodshot, and hissed, “What is it? Boy, do you really not know, or are you just pretending?!”

“Qingyangzi, watch your words!”

Master Xuanwei said in a deep voice, then looked at Chen Ping, his tone softening slightly, "This young friend must have been in seclusion recently and is unaware of the changes in the outside world. I'll get straight to the point."

He took a deep breath and said, word by word, "The Twelfth Heaven has fallen into a calamity."

"Three months ago, the Evil Path Palace suddenly mobilized its entire force. Palace Master Zhan E now commands a terrifying puppet called the 'Soul-Devouring Puppet.' This puppet's strength is comparable to the peak of the first rank of the Upper Immortal Realm, and it is fearless of death and pain."

"The Soul-Devouring Puppet led 30,000 Soul Hunters, starting from the eastern part of the Twelfth Heaven, and began a... hunt that swept across the entire region."

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"A hunt?" Chen Ping frowned deeply.

"Hunting living beings, extracting their souls."

Master Xuanwei's voice was bitter. "Cultivators at the eighth rank of the Celestial Immortal realm and above are all their targets. In just three months, the three major immortal sects in the east have been completely wiped out. Whether their disciples surrendered or not, their souls were extracted and refined, their bodies turned into low-level puppets to supplement the Soul Hunters' forces."

He pointed to the people in the hall: "Fellow Daoist Qingyangzi comes from 'Xuan Shuang Valley.' Two of the valley's three patriarchs died in battle, and the rest scattered and fled. Lady Qinxin comes from 'Tianyin Pavilion.' To protect her disciples' retreat, the pavilion master self-destructed her natal immortal artifact, perishing along with three Soul Hunter commanders. Those three golden-armored warriors were the last elite of 'Zhenyue Sect.' When the mountain gate fell, they protected three hundred children and fought their way out of the encirclement. Now... only the three of them remain."

The hall was deathly silent.

Only the suppressed sobs of the young cultivators and the dripping sound of blood from Lady Qinxin's fingertips could be heard.

Chen Ping's heart sank.

He recalled the Soul Devourer's last words in the Abyss of the Earth's Core.

"Once I reach the Twelfth Heaven and recover my full strength..." He remembered the inexplicable sense of crisis he felt when leaving the Abyss.

So, it wasn't an illusion.

"The Evil Path Hall... the Soul Devourer Puppet..."

Chen Ping murmured, then suddenly looked at True Person Xuanwei, "Does True Person know the origin of that Soul Devourer Puppet?"

True Person Xuanwei shook his head: "I only know that this puppet's face is extremely similar to the infamous Soul Devourer Demon Lord from ten thousand years ago, but its cultivation method has been completely changed, mixed with a dense aura of reincarnation and death. Some fellow Daoists speculate that the Soul Devourer Demon Lord may have been cruelly manipulated by Zhan and turned into this puppet."

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

The thing they feared most had happened.

"Why not unite and resist?"

Chen Ping pressed. "The Twelfth Heaven is teeming with powerful figures, and there must be many experts at the Upper Immortal Realm. Are we just going to let the Evil Path Hall run rampant?"

"Resist?"

Qing Yangzi gave a bitter laugh, raising his only remaining right hand to point to his empty left shoulder. "Boy, do you know what kind of injury this is? It was left by a casual wisp of Reincarnation Qi from the Soul-Devouring Puppet! I, a peak eighth-grade Heavenly Immortal, couldn't even last three moves against that puppet!"

His voice was hoarse, filled with endless despair and fear: "As for the seniors at the Upper Immortal Realm... in the past three months, seven Upper Immortals have joined forces to besiege the Soul-Devouring Puppet. And the result? Three died on the spot, two were captured and had their souls extracted and refined, one was seriously injured and escaped without a trace, only Senior 'Lingxiao Sword Immortal' managed to escape, but his Dao foundation was damaged, and he will never be able to advance an inch in this life."

A collective gasp filled the hall.

Even the Earth Fire Ancestor opened his eyes, a look of horror flashing in his cloudy eyes.

Seven Immortal Realm cultivators ganged up on him, yet he suffered such a crushing defeat?

Just how terrifying was the Soul-Devouring Puppet's strength?!

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"So you all ran away?" A cold voice suddenly rang out.

Everyone turned to see that the Crimson Cloud Demon Lord had opened his eyes at some point, his scarlet demonic pupils sweeping over everyone in the hall, a sneer playing on his lips: "Unable to win, you ran away, fleeing to a lower realm to eke out a living. Is this all the backbone left for Twelfth Heaven cultivators?"

"You..." Qingyangzi was furious, but the words turned into a long, dejected sigh.

What could he say?

The Crimson Cloud Demon Lord's words, though harsh, were the truth.

Master Xuanwei remained silent for a moment, then slowly said, "Fellow Daoist, your words are true. When I led the disciples of the Azure Sword Sect to retreat, I also asked myself, after cultivating for ten thousand years, how laughable it is to end up like a stray dog."

He raised his head, looking at Huo Fentian, then at Chen Ping, a resolute glint in his eyes: "But I did not come here merely to eke out a living. The Twelfth Heaven has become a living hell, and the Evil Path Palace's ambitions extend far beyond that."

"Zhan E used the Gate of Reincarnation to refine countless souls; he must have something in mind. Once he is fully prepared, his next step... will likely be the Eleventh Heaven, or even other worlds."

"I have shamelessly come here today in the hope that my fellow Daoists in the Eleventh Heaven can prepare early. If we can unite the power of all realms, perhaps... there is still a glimmer of hope."

The hall fell silent again.

Huo Fentian's brows furrowed, and the hand that had been stroking the beard of the Earth Fire Ancestor stopped. The other elders of the Earth Fire Pavilion in the hall all wore solemn expressions; they all knew the weight of Xuanwei Zhenren's words.

If what he said was true, then the Eleventh Heaven... would inevitably face this calamity sooner or later.

"Young friend Chen Ping," Huo Fentian suddenly spoke, his voice heavy, "you have grudges against the Evil Path Hall and the predecessor of that Soul-Devouring Puppet. What... do you think of this matter?"

All eyes focused on Chen Ping once more.

Chen Ping slowly exhaled.

He walked to the center of the hall, his gaze sweeping over the faces—some filled with despair, some with fear, some with hope—finally settling on Xuanwei Zhenren.

“Does the True Immortal know why the Evil Path Palace extracts souls on such a large scale?”

True Immortal Xuanwei paused, then shook his head: “I only know it’s related to the Gate of Reincarnation. Zhan E seems to need a large number of souls as sacrifices to gain some kind of power or achieve some purpose.”

“That Gate of Reincarnation...”

Ancestor Earthfire paused, a hint of hesitation flashing in his eyes, then continued, “It’s not some divine artifact for reincarnation at all.”

His voice was clear, each word echoing throughout the hall: “It’s a... passage to a certain purgatory of rules. All the souls thrown into it are refined, decomposed, and recombined, made into various puppet tools. The so-called ‘reincarnation,’ the so-called ‘immortality,’ are nothing but fabricated lies.”

“The Soul Devourer is not the first, and will certainly not be the last.”

A clamor erupted in the hall!

The cultivators who escaped from the Twelfth Heaven all paled, Qingyangzi trembling violently: “You...what did you say?! The Gate of Reincarnation is fake?! What about our master, our fellow disciples...?”