SOVEREIGN OF THE THREE REALMS

BOOK 09

Plow Days

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Sovereign of the Three Realms

(三界独尊)

by

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Synopsis

Jiang Chen, son of the Heavenly Emperor, unexpectedly reincarnated into the body of a despised young noble, thus embarking on the path of the underdog trouncing all comers.

No one has the right to call himself a genius in front of Jiang Chen, as no one has a better understanding of the heavens than the son of the Heavenly Emperor.

Genius?

He who adheres to me shall ascend, those who oppose me can find solace in hell!

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Chapter 601: The Mysterious Ruins

Apart from the high-spirited and defiant words on the stone wall, names had also been carved into the stone wall as well. It was clear that these were the signatures left behind by the disciples of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

The calligraphy was elegant and bursting with energy, with the spirit of flying dragons and dancing phoenixes. Not a hint of the despondency and plaintive self pity of one about to die was present. Every single signature displayed the comprehension of one who'd transcended life and death.

One's words were a marker of one's person. Even though thousands of years had passed, Jiang Chen could still see the lofty sentiments of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect disciples. Even though they had charged into the frontlines to confront their implacable enemies, even though they were fully aware of their impending demise, they still held fast to their open-minded optimism and had found an understanding that transcended the cycle of life and death.

"Just what had happened in the ancient past? Such a powerful sect actually had to send all its members to the battlefield, and they all died in battle?" Jiang Chen's mind was filled with questions. He also sensed something strange about the origins of that powerful enemy. However, there were no clues to that end in the carvings on the face of the stone cliff.

Heavy stone steps girdled the face of the cliff, providing a path to the clifftop. At the clifftop, Jiang Chen was greeted by three

majestic statues. Each approximately one hundred and twenty meters tall, they towered over the cliff. Even though the trappings of time had eroded them, their valiant and formidable aura hadn't diminished in the slightest. A stone tablet off to the side was inscribed with two words: Ancestor Cliff.

Jiang Chen nodded slightly. So this was a sacred ground meant to offer tribute to their ancestors. These three ancestor statues had been carved with exquisite detail, almost life-like. Although they were but sculpted stone, they seemed to possess wisps of an ancient will, to the point where Jiang Chen could almost detect faint traces of vitality surrounding the statue. It was as though they could come to life any moment.

Jiang Chen knew that once they reached a certain level of skill, experts were capable of imbuing a statue with their will and consciousness, leaving the inanimate object a bit of vitality. In other planes, there were even titans who could create copies of themselves from paintings and sculptures simply by melding a portion of their consciousness with the object. Those who lacked strength could only leave behind a trace of their intention and consciousness. On the other hand, the ones with powerful arts at their disposal could create a fully autonomous and independent doppelganger.

The three statues that Jiang Chen was gazing at might contain a trace of ancient will, but had obviously not reached the level of independent autonomy. It was also fortunate that it was Jiang Chen who stood there before them. Any other youth of the Myriad Domain would not have the level of consciousness necessary to detect the abnormality in these statues.

Jiang Chen stood beneath the statues, experiencing the ancient presence that these statues exuded.

Wisps of presence curled up from beneath the pedestal of the three statues. The stone statues seemed to be almost arresting the presence, as the spirit energy bubbling from below seemed on the verge of exploding forward. It was enough to pique Jiang Chen's curiosity. He guessed that several extraordinary items were buried below the stone statues.

The words carved on the cliff face had explained that should any of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect disciples survive, they must return to revive the sect. However, it was apparent that all its disciples had perished in battle. And he, Jiang Chen, seemed to be the first person who'd discovered this place since that time. With that said, he really should be the one who could receive the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's legacy.

It's just... As Jiang Chen surveyed his surroundings, he was at a loss. With the exception of the overflowing spirit energy emanating from below the three statues, was there anything else belonging to this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect that he could inherit?

Besides the graveyard that sprawled over the mountainous wilderness, apart from the pieces of fallen ruins and shattered walls, there was only this towering cliff. As he stood atop the cliff, Jiang Chen used his God's Eye to carefully scan the area around him, but didn't detect anything out of the ordinary.

Even after a few minutes spent walking around the top of the

cliff, he still didn't find anything. As for the spirit energy emitting from the bottom of the statues, Jiang Chen surmised that they were likely from spirit herbs.

However, Jiang Chen did not consider moving them. After all, these were three monuments that had been dedicated to their ancestors, clearly a sacred ground for the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. Even if there were treasures beneath, they could not be reached without destroying the statues. Only, to destroy someone else's sacred statues for the sake of a few stalks of spirit herbs, Jiang Chen couldn't be bothered to do so. And neither would he do it.

Not only was this blasphemy to the ancestors, it was further disrespect to the sect. If this had been a sect which had conducted all kinds of misdeeds, Jiang Chen might not have had any qualms about wrecking their grounds for herbs. But although Jiang Chen had never witnessed the conduct of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect first-hand, he could tell from the rousing words on the cliff face that this was a morally upright sect that inspired veneration from all.

Naturally, Jiang Chen would not desecrate their sacred grounds for some mere spirit herbs. Not to mention, he wasn't particularly excited about the legacy of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect either. After all, with all the knowledge he'd retained from his previous life, no matter how impressive the ancient sect had been, it still wouldn't measure up to his past.

He circled the area a few more times, still empty-handed. Although he was slightly disappointed, he wasn't excessively

upset. “Forget it. This Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect is already a thing of the past. Even if they had a legacy, I’m just an unrelated party. It’s fine, right now, time is of the essence. I should start thinking about how to get out of this place.”

Jiang Chen had not forgotten that there were only two more days that he could remain in Mt. Rippling Mirage. And if he remembered correctly, the ruins he had entered were in the area of the ancient herb garden. The formation covering this area opened only once in three thousand years. If he did not leave as soon as possible, he might be trapped here for the next three millennia.

The moment he thought of this, Jiang Chen stepped before the stone statues and cupped his fists in a show of respect. “The members of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect all died in defense of its homelands. This is worthy of nothing less than utmost respect. Even if I, Jiang Chen, have not found fortune here, I will remember this matter, and search for any descendents to send here.”

When all was said and done, Jiang Chen still deeply revered the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. No matter what, such an illustrious sect had actually sent all its members into battle, to the extent that it had sealed its gates shut. This kind of selflessness and noble integrity was something Jiang Chen admired greatly. This was why this sect had won Jiang Chen’s respect.

When he finished, Jiang Chen turned and descended along the stone steps, using the nameless saber to find his way back to the altar. However, the moment that Jiang Chen stepped off the cliff, rays of dazzling light suddenly exploded from the area around the

cliff. In an instant, an enormous formation appeared on the ground beneath Jiang Chen. Every inch of the space around him was filled with numerous ancient characters and patterns. And on the lofty cliff face, an enormous Nine Palaces diagram appeared. This diagram shone with a light golden glow, emanating a terrifying feeling. The lines that delineated the Nine Palaces flickered on and off, bright and dark with a moment's difference.

The Chinese divided the sky up into nine quadrants to gather information about the seasons. This school of thought is often used in geography, military tactics, calligraphy and martial arts

"The Nine Palaces Formation?" Jiang Chen was slightly taken aback. He had seen a great variety of things in his previous life so naturally, he knew what this was. This wasn't even an extraordinarily complicated design, but this version couldn't be considered a simple Nine Palaces Formation.

But to think that such a formation had been hidden on the cliff face?

Jiang Chen subconsciously took a step back, but he soon discovered that the area around the cliff had been enclosed by a ring-shaped formation, as though the the ground had been split by a circular crack. Frighteningly powerful spirit pulses overflowed from the crack, forming an enormous circular energy cyclone that covered this entire mountainous region.

"Formations amongst formations, this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect seems to be a sect renowned for its formations." In his previous life, Jiang Chen had studied formations rather extensively, so he could see that the Ancient Crimson Heavens

Sect's techniques were definitely extraordinary.

Apart from the formation that surrounded Mt. Rippling Mirage, another encircled the large waterfall at the entrance to the ancient herb garden. There was yet another formation around the interior of the island. And the position of that altar was clearly the location of another formation. Layers upon layers of formations covered the area around the cliff.

The road here had been dotted with formations. For a person entering this place from the outskirts of Mt. Rippling Mirage, he would have to face at least four or five formations along the way. If not for this chance, there would have been no other way to enter this place.

Jiang Chen pondered for a brief second before a ray of powerful light shot out from one of the grids of the Nine Palaces Formation, enclosing his entire body. With a quick, easy motion, Jiang Chen was sucked into the grid. He didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Once again, he had been summoned to a brand new territory without even the time to decide on his options.

This time, Jiang Chen entered a giant residence that had been carved into a mountain. The residence's architecture was distinctly antique. The dense feeling of desolation and timelessness left Jiang Chen wondering if he had suddenly traveled back to an ancient era.

"Welcome." An aged and desolate voice resounded.

Jiang Chen froze in his steps, instantly raising his guard. He spread out his senses and observed his surroundings. Never in his wildest imagination had he expected someone to be here in this cavern. However, he soon realized that the voice hadn't emerged from a real person, but was rather a message left behind by an ancient consciousness.

"No matter who you may, no matter where you come from, if you are able to reach this point, you must have passed through several formations. Moreover, you must have possessed a token from our Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. Along the way, you must have scaled the ancestor cliff.

"Fortune seems to have smiled upon you, because the ability to enter this cavern proves that you are not willing to throw away all your principles in order to accomplish your goals. At the very least, you are not a person completely devoid of conscience. Otherwise, not only would you have been unable to receive our Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's legacy, but you might even have perished in your attempt to do so."

Jiang Chen was shocked. Why had this ancient message said something like that? Had they anticipated people trying to break into their place?

"Do not be alarmed. Different people have different natures, and the fate that befalls each person who enters our sect grounds is wholly different. In reality, amongst the nine gates of the Nine Palaces Formation, there is only one working gate. The other eight will lead either to your death or to your destruction."

Only one working gate?

Jiang Chen broke out in cold sweat. There was actually only one gate that resulted in life in the Nine Palaces Formation? The other gates would lead to death and destruction? How could… how could this not cause Jiang Chen to feel nervous? He'd subconsciously walked up to and miraculously turned back right in front of the gates of hell. But, why was it that he'd been brought to the single working gate instead of being sent to his demise through the other gates?

Jiang Chen had some vague conjectures, but was still very much bewildered by this situation. Although the voice had told him that he had arrived at the gate of life, Jiang Chen did not dare to relax just yet. Every corner of this ancient sect had been filled with peculiarities. Jiang Chen certainly did not wish to fall into dire straits from just a momentary lapse in focus.

"Fated one, you must be curious as to why your luck is so good. Eight out of nine gates of the Nine Palace grid leads to death, and just one to life, yet you've been sent through to the single working gate? The reason behind that is your triumph over your greed. Although that does not automatically make you a noble person, it at least proves that you are not completely unscrupulous. And only this kind of person is qualified to receive the legacy of our Ancient Crimson Heaven Sect!"

Chapter 602: Jiang Chen Trapped!

Jiang Chen knew that everything the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had organized had been meticulously arranged. Starting from the formation on the outskirts of Mt. Rippling Mirage, all the layers of the various formations had been carefully interlocked with each other. There were almost no flaws. If there had been the slightest break in the middle, he never would've made it here. It had indeed been the combined effect of many factors that he'd been able to reach here.

"Spirit power emanates from beneath the sculptures at Ancestor Cliff, but you didn't disturb them. This goes to show you aren't an avaricious man. Had you been tempted by the waves of spirit power and disregarded the sanctity of the Ancestor Cliff to disturb the statutes in search of treasure... you would have been killed by either the restrictions on the cliff, or plunged into a land of sure death by the Nine Palaces Formations."

The situation only dawned on Jiang Chen when he heard this. He'd had his suspicions before, but only realized now how sensible his decision not to shift the sculptures had been. If it'd been anyone else, it would indeed have been difficult to triumph over their greed after sensing that dense spirit power. It was because of his lack of desire and the respect in his heart that he hadn't disturbed those sculptures. That was how he'd avoided catastrophe.

Jiang Chen truly had to admire the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's ingeniously designed process. They'd first sent him to the cemetery that'd held ten thousand tombstones to strongly shake his psyche. The stirring words on the cliff face had further

impacted his mind. If it'd been anyone with ulterior motives in mind, they still would've gone for the treasures on Ancestor Cliff even after seeing the scene at the cemetery. And if it'd been anyone with a bit of righteousness to them, a bit of worship for the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect would've formed after seeing the cemetery and the words on the cliff face. They would've never had the heart to disturb the sanctity of the Ancestor Cliff.

This arrangement not only showed a keen understanding of human nature, it had been constructed in a way that tested one's very nature. As long as one's heart was not just, there was no way they could receive the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's approval. But if one was honest and generous, he would instead be sent to the single working gate of the Nine Palaces Formation, just like Jiang Chen.

The cavern fell completely silent after the voice finished speaking. Jiang Chen extended his senses a little. Only after discovering that there were no restrictions or danger around him did he proceed forward. Looking on from the outside, he hadn't thought the cavern to be very big. But after turning a corner and walking through several corridors, he realized that the cavern was truly a completely different world. It was divided into layer after layer and unexpectedly gave one a feeling of endlessness.

Jiang Chen walked past the lobby of the cavern and arrived at a place reminiscent of a library. This library had three floors and displayed a variety of old records. Much to his surprise however, there was not a single speck of dust tainting the rows of bookshelves. It was as though time had not left any traces on this place at all. Jiang Chen knew then that this cavern must be protected through some special means.

The four treasures of the study were placed on a simple desk. A simple, old-fashioned brush lay to the side, as if the ink was still drying on it. An ink slab in the shape of a dragon's tail was next to it, with ink still contained within. It was as if the owner of this residence had been writing something just a moment ago, and had just stepped out to run an errand.

Jiang Chen found this still wet ink slab and brush rather inconceivable. Truly, he was shocked for a moment. Countless months and years had passed from ancient times until now, but this ink and brush still had not dried up. It seemed that the owner of this room had indeed spent a lot of blood and sweat on the creation of this cavern. Jiang Chen could not help his curiosity as he walked over to the desk and looked down on the calligraphy scroll.

"Our sect partakes of the spirit power of the heavens and earth, and receives the worship of the peoples. As the strong enemy advances, we hereby declare our intention unto death to resist with strength, defend our homes, and regret not our deaths..."

There weren't many words on the scroll, but one could recognize the spirit of indomitable momentum that underlay each word. Jiang Chen surmised that the one who wrote these words must have faced his ultimate decision, and had been about to depart. He likely had not finished crafting his message before he left.

Jiang Chen had yet to find any concrete hints regarding the powerful invaders after searching around. Nonetheless, there were all things of the ancient past. If he took a moment to think, the

Divine Abyss Continent right now was perfectly fine. Those foreign invaders likely had not conquered the Divine Abyss Continent.

Jiang Chen wasn't the kind of person who would worry over sect members of an ancient sect. To be honest, he was more interested in the history of the Divine Abyss Continent. He wanted to know whether this Divine Abyss Continent was somehow linked to his previous world. Since this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had existed so long ago, there was the slight possibility that he could find some clues. Jiang Chen took a seat on the chair and took some scrolls from the desk. These scrolls were clearly some daily recordings that the room's owner had kept. He was quite surprised after scanning through them.

These notes actually mentioned that once one entered the central district of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, they needed to understand the mechanics of every formation the Sect had constructed in order to exit. This was because the formation the sect had used to seal the mountain only allowed entry, not exit. One had to master the formation in order to depart, and the formation used to seal the mountain had been formed from hundreds of smaller formations.

Jiang Chen was entirely dismayed as he clutched those notes in a state of shock. To control every formation in this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, just how many months, how many years would that take?

Before everything else, the notes had vaguely mentioned that at the very, very least, the minimum cultivation needed to control

every formation was the sage realm. That was to say, one who had not reached the sage realm wasn't even qualified to try. And what the notes truly revealed were that the status of sage realm was at best just an entry requirement for the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, a common sight for the sect.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but smile ruefully. "An ancient sect is after all, an ancient sect. Even among the sects of the Upper Eight Regions, sage realm could be considered a solid level of power. Yet it existed as merely the entry requirement for this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect? Could it be that such a perverse level of power was necessary to enter a sect from this ancient era?"

Jiang Chen's brain was filled with questions, but he was still not too shocked by this revelation. On the plane of existence that he had been in his past life, even a Great Titled Emperor didn't meet the minimum requirement of entry.

According to these notes, the majority of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's battle power came from emperor realm cultivators. And the owner of this notebook was an existence that obviously surpassed the emperor realm.

"Although the owner of this room only mentions his cultivation in passing, there is no question that he has surpassed the emperor realm. Only when one breaks through this realm does one have the ability to break through the void and enter the celestial planes. That would be when a cultivator is acknowledged by the heavenly dao and becomes a celestial level cultivator." Jiang Chen recalled his memories from his previous life, and guessed that the room's owner must also be a celestial powerhouse at the very least.

When he reached the end of that thought, a spark of curiosity ignited regarding the ancient era of the Divine Abyss Continent. In his notes, the room's owner had also mentioned some mysteries surrounding the Divine Abyss Continent, as well as the names of some other sects.

It seemed that the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect could not be considered a peak level of power amongst the entire Divine Abyss Continent. During that glorious era, there had been numerous sects and countless races. It had truly been a prosperous era. However, the names of these sects had not been recorded in modern history of the Divine Abyss Continent at all. It was as though that ancient era had been completely struck out of history.

At least, Jiang Chen had not seen any records of those sects in the Myriad Domain. As he went through all the notes on the desk, Jiang Chen used the anecdotes in the notes to collate and analyze information regarding that ancient era. The only problem was that the anecdotes were now so old, they were no longer applicable in the modern era.

His primary concern right now was how to escape this place. He certainly did not want to be trapped here for several hundred years. If he unraveled all the formations in this place and understood every one which sealed the mountain to escape this place, the outside world would have completely changed by then.

"No, I must get out. I have to." Jiang Chen wasn't someone who lost their cool easily. But the state of affairs outside was too volatile for him to stay in here for long.

He'd been worried about his father ever since the latter had left for the Upper Eight Regions. If he was stuck here for a few hundred years, by the time he left, his father might have encountered some danger or reached the end of his predestined lifespan.

As for his subordinates in the Regal Pill Palace, Jiang Chen foresaw tumultuous change in the Myriad Domains within the next ten years. If the Tristar Sect colluded with the Ninesuns Sky Sect, there would definitely be disaster. And once the disaster spiralled out of control, the order of the Myriad Domains would undergo great changes.

With the tyranny of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, they might even massacre the Regal Pill Palace if they faced any opposition. And from what Ding Tong had said, Jiang Chen knew that he had offended the third young genius of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, Yong Xingyun.

That was a perverse genius who was assailing the emperor realm! If that fellow decided to descend to the Myriad Domains because of Ding Tong's death, there would be no other result than a bloodbath!

Although the formations he had placed in the Regal Pill Palace were impressive, they could at best defend against a top tier sage realm heavyweight. The formations may somewhat sting one in the half step emperor realm, but that heavyweight could definitely break them if he put in enough time and effort. After all, that Nine Gates Incineration Formation was only at half of its maximum

power. At that time, Jiang Chen's resources had been limited and he had lacked enough origin spirit stones. Even the formation at half-power had been won through various swindles.

He had won tens of thousands of origin spirit stones on this trip to Mt Rippling Mirage, and could now return to improve his formation. However, he was now trapped in this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

His father in the Upper Eight Regions; his friends who were waiting for his return to the Regal Pill Palace; the constant possibility that a mishap could occur with the Generation Binding Curse despite the fact that he'd constrained it; his promise to cure Senior Sister Ling Bi'er's father...

These various concerns constantly nagged at Jiang Chen to leave this place. Nonetheless, he was aware that with his current level, brute-forcing his way through the numerous ancient formations was but a fool's daydream. Thus, no matter what he wished for, he had to accept this reality. He could only leave after cultivating, learning various formation techniques and mastering the formations set by the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

Jiang Chen didn't believe that he would have any problems learning the formation technique. The problem lay with the fact that he needed to be at least sage realm to be able to learn them to begin with. Since he was a mere fifth rank origin level cultivator, he would definitely require lots of time. Fortunately, the spiritual energy in this cavern was abundant, far beyond what the Regal Pill Palace could offer. If Jiang Chen did not consider the situation outside, this place was actually perfect for training.

Chapter 603: Sky Origin Realm, Breaking Through The First Formation

Thanks to Jiang Chen's experiences of two lifetimes, he possessed great wisdom and determination. After suitable assessment of the situation, he knew he had no other choice and decided not to focus and start cultivating.

To be honest, there had been all sorts of ties and concerns in the Regal Pill Palace that had prevented Jiang Chen from sitting down and concentrating for long periods of cultivation. This was actually an opportunity for him. Thus, Jiang Chen began his attempt on sixth level origin realm after swallowing some Origin Fostering Pills.

He'd been at the peak of the fifth level origin realm to begin with, so it was only a matter of time before he made it into the sixth level. Jiang Chen successfully broke through after roughly half a month, and was in no hurry afterwards. He took his time in fortifying his new realm, and then took out another pill flask when he had solidified his grasp on sixth level origin realm.

There were three Origin Doubling Pills within it. When Jiang Chen had gifted the Longevity Pill to the Regal Pill Palace, Palace Head Dan Chi had given Jiang Chen a storage ring, and Elder Yun Nie had presented Jiang Chen with these three pills.

The Origin Doubling Pill had been refined from the Firstwind Dew and could be viewed as a pill that had absorbed some of the qi of the heavens and earth. Jiang Chen had felt that Elder Yun Nie was completely wasting the Firsthand Dew in using it in the Origin

Doubling Pills, but he didn't think so now. The higher quality these pills were, the better they were for Jiang Chen as they could unconditionally increase one's cultivation by one level within the origin realm.

Jiang Chen had been planning on using such an amazing pill when he needed to assail the sky origin realm. Now that he was at the peak of the origin realm, at sixth level origin realm, what better time to take the pill?

Any pill useful in ascension could only be taken once. It would have almost no effect when taken a second time. This applied to the Origin Doubling Pill since taking one of them meant unequivocally ascending one level upward, with no effect if taken again. Thus, Jiang Chen put the other two pills away after he took one and then sat down cross-legged, beginning to refine the medicinal power held within the pill.

These kinds of pills usually had very domineering effects. How would it unconditionally help the cultivator ascend one level otherwise? The process of condensing a decades worth of toil and cultivation into a day or a half meant was filled with great agony and struggle. It was a good thing that Jiang Chen was mentally prepared.

Three days later—

Large beads of sweat continuously trickled down Jiang Chen's face, but the joy of advancing danced on his lips. "This is a pill refined from the Firstwind Dew alright! Simple and direct, the effects were quite domineering! If it wasn't for me practicing the

‘Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods’ and my physical body quite strong as a result, I likely would’ve been in for much more pain!”

Compared to others taking this pill, Jiang Chen hadn’t suffered as much physical pain. Breaking through to the seventh level origin realm instantly catapulted Jiang Chen into a new level, one of a true sky origin realm cultivator.

But even so, he wasn’t proud of himself at all. There was still eighth level origin realm, ninth level origin realm ahead. He’d then have to use ninth level origin realm as a foundation and reach for the peak of the origin realm, the border of half step sage realm.

Only when he found the clues to half step sage realm would he have the chance for enlightenment and set foot into the sage realm. This meant that he had at least three or four more steps to take before sage realm, and none of these steps were easy ones to make.

Jiang Chen wasn’t in a hurry after breaking through to seventh level origin realm, but remained within the library to peruse the ancient tomes and understand more of this residence. It wasn’t that he didn’t want to start exploring, but that he had no right to venture into the area beyond the library with his current strength. Layers upon layers of strong formations had become a natural barrier, making him only able to stare blankly at the area behind the residence.

According to the records in the journals, there should be a Tower of Inheritance behind the residence. All of the treasures that the

Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect left behind would be in that tower. Jiang Chen would have to break through each layer of formation testing in order to obtain what was in the tower.

Jiang Chen wasn't depressed. It was better to have a goal than to not have one. He wasn't the sort to halt in his tracks and look on, nor was he the sort to flee on the advent of battle. He could understand the caution of the owner of this residence. Considering how all in the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had fallen in battle, he naturally needed to design layer upon layer of tests to select the proper individual to pass the sect's inheritance onto.

For one, it would test the individual's mind and personality, and the other would be to hone the individual's will. If the one being tested couldn't overcome even a bit of testing, what right would he have to receive the sect's inheritance?

According to the journal, Jiang Chen would need to overcome three tests in order to make it through the Tower. The first one had to do with the Minor Artifice Formation. This was a formation that combined the tangible and the intangible. What was the tangible? It was what the eye could see, the ear could hear, the nose could smell, the hands and feet could touch. Anything that was, was also a fabrication.

This Minor Artifice Formation was real and illusory. Everything one saw, heard, smelled, and touched after entering the formation could be real, and could also be an illusion. One had to rely on only the consciousness and not the five senses in order to break through the formation. Now that Jiang Chen broken through to the seventh level, his consciousness had grown much stronger and he

wanted to challenge this Minor Artifice Formation. However, there was risk in all the formations here. If he set one foot wrong in the formation, he could trigger all sorts of attacks.

"There's nothing for it. Now that I've broken through seventh level origin realm and have learned much in formations, add to that my knowledge of formations in my past life, a mere Minor Artifice Formation should be of no difficulty." Jiang Chen leaped into the formation as soon as his thoughts travelled here.

The formation activated as soon as he jumped into it, surging and roiling with countless waves and instantly forming tidal waves that crashed upon mountain peaks. As Jiang Chen stood in the center, he heard thunder raging on all sides and enormous waves crashing upon him. Lonely wolves howled in his ears, and he almost thought that he'd plunged into the eighteenth level of hell for an instant.

Suddenly, a rip opened in a large wave as a posturing and snarling dragon pounced on Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen frowned and remaining coolly composed, shouting lowly, "You do not deceive me!"

Thunder clapped as he spoke as his angry roar roared out, smashing the enormous dragon into nothing and returning it to the void. It was indeed fake. Jiang Chen smirked. When it came down to things, this formation was a play on the mind. If one didn't understand the profundities of the formation, then they wouldn't understand the notion that all that was tangible was actually fake. This was at the heart of the formation.

If one actually tried to fight back against all the illusions that appeared, then that might actually plunge one into unredeemable depths. It was a good thing that Jiang Chen had a strong consciousness. If it was one with a weaker mindset, they might subconsciously form the desire to resist when they saw such a realistic dragon pouncing on them.

The Minor Artifice Formation was a game of minds. Even if the one knew that false images were attacking them, would their consciousness be able to withstand such an attack, would their minds falter, and would internal demons arise in the face of great fear? Once fear and internal demons appeared, the formation would detect it, thereby doubling down on this particular kind of illusion until one's mind collapsed.

Jiang Chen however, had been tempering his mind with "Boulder's Heart" ever since the spirit realm. The strength of his consciousness now now was on par with a cultivator of Dan Chi's level. Therefore, even though countless falsehoods appeared in the formation, Jiang Chen remained unmoving as a mountain through it all.

However, this only meant that he wouldn't be beaten by the formation, but he'd have to understand the foundation of this formation in the midst of all these illusions in order to break through to it. Unless his strength was so strong that he could forcefully crush this formation, he'd have to understand what made this formation tick in order to leave it. At his current level, he didn't possess the strength and immense arts needed to crush the formation.

It was at this time that his memories from his past life proved their worth. Although he hadn't studied this formation in his past life, he'd encountered similar ones. He'd never broken through one himself, but he'd read much about simulations and practical combat experience. Therefore, he ignored everything he saw, heard, and smelled within the Minor Artifice Formation and only used his consciousness to probe his surroundings.

The formation alternated between large fat flakes of snow drifting down, fiery flames from a volcano, hundreds of flowers blooming at the same time, and all growth withering and dying. All sorts of odd delusions and illusions assaulted Jiang Chen, but he ignored them all. Suddenly, his consciousness registered a faint ripple on the path of oval stones that he was walking on. "The foundation should be nearby!"

Jiang Chen's strong consciousness had picked up on something, and he swept his consciousness over the path as if the light from a light tower. "This is it!"

He suddenly darted forward and slammed his hand down on a grey-white stone. A strong beam of light pierced his eyes in the next moment as the space around him seemed to peel off in layers, collapsing in front of Jiang Chen's eyes. The stone transformed into a speck of pale-yellow light and landed in Jiang Chen's hands.

In the next instant, the illusions created by the formation, as well as the countless oval stones on the ground, all turned into odd runes that looked like tadpoles, which in turn were slowly evaporating in the air.

Bam!

All of the runes and scenery had melted into the void, as if they're completely evaporated. When Jiang Chen opened his eyes, he found himself standing in the middle of the corridor, less than ten meters away from where he'd just jumped into the formation.

"Tsk tsk. The Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect is well worthy of their name of being founded for formations. Such a strong formation was set up in a space of less than ten meters. There really is something to the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect!" Jiang Chen looked at his hand again and saw that the oval stone had turned into a formation disk.

He was delighted, this was the disc for the Minor Artifice Formation! So it turns out there are benefits to breaking through the formation. I've received a formation disk in return!

What was a formation disk? When it came down to things, it was the model for a formation. Not every formation had a disk, but if it did, one could quickly call upon the formation into being. Therefore, all strong formation masters had many disks on them. They would be able to set up a formation at any time necessary.

Formations without disks took too long to set up, and were impractical to use when needed to fight against enemies. That wasn't of a concern with a formation disk, as one only needed to activate the disk and supply the proper amount of spirit stones. The formation master didn't need to do anything else as the rest would be taken care of by the disk. The formation would even run automatically as well!

Chapter 604: Thundercloud Cicada Wings, Magnetic Golden Mountain

Since Jiang Chen had received a Minor Artifice Formation's formation disk, this meant that he'd also received a Minor Artifice Formation. This was nothing less than an incredible profit. Armed with this formation disk, even someone utterly hopeless at formation techniques would be able to activate the formation to confront any enemies as long as he had enough spirit stones at his disposal. Thus, Jiang Chen was naturally aware of the disk's benefits.

Creating a formation disk was a very complicated process. The difficulty of distilling such an enormous formation into such a tiny disk could well surpass the difficulty of setting up the formation in the first place. Moreover, the materials required to put together such a formation disk were uncommon, and not every formation could be condensed into a disk form.

However, if a disk containing a particular formation could be manufactured, it instantly became a more effective tool in battle. Leaving aside other considerations, the advantage of an instant deployment left its user with a significant edge over their opponents. Although techniques that could hasten the activation and deployment of formations existed, they could never surpass the direct speed of a disk.

In his previous life, Jiang Chen had extensively studied formation disks, even drawing up theoretical plans for various formation disks. It was just that his achievements regarding formation disks paled in comparison to his prowess with pills.

Nonetheless, Jiang Chen was not satisfied with just breaking through this Minor Artifice Formation.

In order to exit this Tower of Inheritance, he needed to break through three formations, of which this Minor Artifice Formation was only the first. The second and third formations would only be increasingly difficult. Although Jiang Chen wanted to leave as soon as possible, he knew the principle of “more haste, less speed”. If he simply blindly rushed forward and ended up in a trap, things would take an immense turn for the worse.

The first formation tested the level of his consciousness. The second was a pure combat formation. Jiang Chen estimated that he didn’t have much of a chance to break through this combat formation before he entered the ninth level origin realm.

Fortunately, the environment of this cavern was highly suited for training. If he single mindedly focused on his cultivation, he could actually accomplish twice as much with half the effort. Fortunately, he didn’t lack for any resources at the moment.

After entering the seventh level origin realm, Jiang Chen decided to refine the dragon crystal. Although he carried many upper rank Origin Fostering Pills with him, the spirit power and essence within those pills wasn’t on par with the dragon crystal. The spirit power that a single dragon crystal contained could rival that of at least a thousand Origin Fostering Pills. And Long Xiaoxuan had given Jiang Chen quite a number of dragon crystals.

Jiang Chen took out a crystal and began to refine it. The spirit power of the dragon crystal was so dense that Jiang Chen spent ten

days just to completely refine it. Jiang Chen pulled streaks of rich spirit energy into his dantian, reforging his entire body in the process. The might of the dragon crystal was most impressive. It was able to provide the energy necessary for cultivation while tempering his physical form at the same time. Since Jiang Chen practiced the Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods, the energy that overflowed from the dragon crystal wasn't wasted in the slightest.

Besides absorbing spirit energy everyday, Jiang Chen also did not neglect his arts and techniques.

The superiority of the Thundercloud Cicada bloodline was finally displayed after entering the sky origin realm. Jiang Chen had finally trained to the point where he could summon the Thundercloud Cicada Wings at will. Shapeless and transparent, the wings were invisible to the naked eye.

Although the wings he'd just cultivated could not yet be considered strong, once Jiang Chen had grown used to them, he would be on par with a sage realm cultivator in terms of flight capability. Incidentally, the Thundercloud Cicada Wings were capable of growth. Once his Cicada Wings had fully matured, his speed would definitely far surpass that of a similarly-ranked practitioner. Moreover, his agility and burst speed would grant him an even heftier advantage. The Cicada Wings were a great gain that markedly lifted Jiang Chen's spirits.

Now that he had entered the seventh level origin realm, he could finally begin using the previously untouched magnetic golden mountain. Ever since Jiang Chen had refined the magnetic heart,

that magnetic golden mountain had already become one of his personal treasures. It was just that he had never made full use of everything the magnetic golden mountain had to offer. With his current realm of seventh level origin realm, Jiang Chen wanted to summon the mountain and integrate it into his combat ability as a suppressive tool.

The magnetic golden mountain was not just a simple mountain. It also possessed a strong source of magnetic and metal power. Once he summoned the magnetic golden mountain, any opponent weaker than him would be crushed beneath it, and any stronger opponents would have their movements constrained by the mountain's magnetic ability. Coupled with the lethality of the metal power, it would be a shockingly formidable weapon.

Although Jiang Chen was now seventh level origin realm, his true strength was at the peak of the origin realm. Hence, when he summoned the magnetic golden mountain for the first time, its form was bigger and grander than he had imagined. Only, compared to the magnetic golden mountain at the peak of its glory, its appearance was less than a thousandth as impressive.

Of course, Jiang Chen wasn't upset at this. He believed that as his own potential increased, the might of this magnetic golden mountain would also rise step by step.

Even if its power was only at a thousandth of its original form, the kind of all-oppressing grandeur generated from having a small mountain suddenly crash down on one would be enough to complete petrify most other similarly-ranked practitioners.

……

Within the Regal Pill Palace.

Three months had passed since the trip to Mt Rippling Mirage, and no one had any word from Jiang Chen. Although Palace Head Dan Chi was very optimistic about Jiang Chen's chances, his spirits were still somewhat dampened.

"Yun Nie, what progress have you made with the Longevity Pill?" Dan Chi asked.

Elder Yun Nie replied with a wry smile, "The requirements for this Longevity Pill are incredibly high. I've attempted multiple times, but I've always failed at the most crucial moment. It seems that…"

Palace Head Dan Chi sighed softly. "If even you, Yun Nie, cannot refine this pill, it seems that this Longevity Pill is quite extraordinary. Ole brother Tian Ming of the Dark North Sect has been quite urgent on this matter. He's already messaged us twice within the past three months to inquire of the pill's progress."

"This pill exhausts so much of my consciousness that at most, I can only attempt it once every three months. Fortunately, my previous two attempts were both been failures so I managed to escape harming the foundation of my consciousness." Elder Yun Nie's tone was extremely exasperated as he spoke about the Longevity Pill.

Jiang Chen had not only given them the pill recipe, he had even passed them every secret and detail regarding the refinement process. From Elder Yun Nie's perspective, he shouldn't have too many problems refining it. However, only when he had truly tried to do so had he come to realize how tedious and difficult the refinement process was.

Even with Elder Yun Nie's current level of consciousness, he still felt helpless. If he could not raise his level of consciousness, then he could at most raise his success percentage to about ten or twenty percent when it came to refining this Longevity Pill. When he thought ruefully about his chances, he could not help but admire Jiang Chen. He'd been able to withstand the pressure and circumstances in Mt. Rippling Mirage to completely refine the Longevity Pill in just one go.

Just how astonishing was his mental strength? Just how stunning was his level of consciousness? Elder Yun Nie and Palace Head Dan Chi glanced at each other, amazement sparkling deep in their eyes. It was clear that these two people were simultaneously thinking about Jiang Chen's level.

Palace Head Dan Chi laughed ruefully. "If that is so, then Jiang Chen's level..."

"Has definitely surpassed mine," Elder Yun Nie finished for him.

"I pray that the heavens will help such a worthy person. Nevertheless, this trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage has definitely been a fruitful one. I've noticed that as of today, the geniuses of Rosy Valley have become much more united. In particular, Shen

Qinghong seems to have gained much motivation. He's not only broken into the sage realm since his return, but he has actively sought to pass on his cultivation experiences to younger disciples through his lectures. This is truly unusual behavior."

Elder Yun Nie smiled, "Shen Qinghong was provoked time and again by Wang Han and the rest on Mt. Rippling Mirage. His courage stems from the fact that he has experienced humiliation. His realization of this is a blessing that emerged from a curse. Moreover, Jiang Chen repeatedly helped him out of his predicament. Even if he doesn't say anything, his heart is genuinely thankful towards Jiang Chen. He's come to realize that in times of crisis, fellow sect members are ever the most reliable."

"Haha, Elder Yun Nie, have you realised that ever since Jiang Chen entered our Regal Pill Palace, our sect has run smoothly and has been improving day by day?

Elder Yun Nie nodded and exclaimed, "Indeed. Palace Head, back when you allied us with the Precious Tree Sect, I was still slightly skeptical. I have to say, Palace Head is truly far-sighted."

Actually, this matter was not just due to Palace Head Dan Chi's far-sightedness. The only reason for this was Elder Shun. If Elder Shun hadn't mentioned Jiang Chen, Palace Head Dan Chi never would have noticed Jiang Chen, thought to check his background, and discovered the child's miraculous growth. Only then had Dan Chi resolved to ally with the Precious Tree Sect due to his love for talent. He had never imagined that Jiang Chen would bring about so many unexpected benefits to the sect in just one short year.

Their victory atop Mt. Rippling Mirage had more or less been solely orchestrated by Jiang Chen. During their harvest on the mountain, Jiang Chen had been the one to reverse the tides and obtain quite a number of sky spirit herbs, the bulk of the earth spirit herbs and an even bigger quantity of Sage Fledgling Grass. Any one of those assets were enough to propel his wealth far above the six major sects.

Even a single stalk of sky spirit herb was unquestionably priceless. Now, the Regal Pill Palace possessed a grand total of seven sky spirit herbs, five of which were with the sect and the other two with Jiang Chen. Naturally, the Regal Pill Palace would avoid revealing any such news. Currently, the six major sects all believed that the bulk of the sky spirit herbs were entirely in the hands of the Regal Pill Palace, and they'd only held the initial allotment of two stalks of sky spirit grass. Moreover, as opposed to the Regal Pill Palace, the other sects all considered Jiang Chen to be dead without question.

If he was truly trapped in the ancient herb garden, who would still care about his life or death after three thousand years?

Palace Head Dan Chi sighed lightly. "What a pity. Jiang Chen has contributed so much to our Regal Pill Palace, but is now trapped in Mt Rippling Mirage. I had hoped that he would amaze the world during the Myriad Grand Ceremony in three years time. It seems that this plan is now nothing but dust."

"Not necessarily. If it was anyone else, they might truly be trapped in the mountain. But this is Jiang Chen... I remember reading a tidbit from his past that said he had been trapped in

some forbidden territory back in the Sixteen Kingdom Alliance. Didn't he escape in the end?" Elder Yun Nie was speaking of the time that Jiang Chen had been imprisoned in Eternal Spirit Mountain.

At that time, Elder Shun had been the one to disturb the fundamental formation of the mountain. As a result, the mountain had been sealed earlier than expected, trapping Jiang Chen within. Elder Yun Nie did not actually know the details of this event and had only heard all of this via hearsay.

"Indeed. This child is a miracle maker. If anyone in the Myriad Domains can escape from Mt Rippling Mirage, the first person this seat thinks of is him. Yun Nie, take a bit more care of our sect matters. I've decided to undergo secluded cultivation to break through the sky sage realm." With everything he'd gained this time, Palace Head Dan Chi had broken through to the sixth level from the fifth level of the sage realm. As of today, he made up his mind to use all his strength to break through to the sky sage realm in one go. After all, their trip to Mt Rippling Mirage had granted them some hefty profits, especially those stalks of Sage Fledgling Grass that could now be refined into sufficient numbers of Heroic Sage Pills for his use. To Dan Chi, it was as if he'd been granted freedom, as unrestrained as a fish that roamed the seas or a bird that soared through the skies.

Chapter 605: The Hearts Of The Girls

The conflict between the Sacred Sword Palace and Regal Pill Palace had only intensified during this last trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage, giving Palace Head Dan Chi a great sense of crisis. Although the Regal Pill Palace's martial ability had improved greatly over the recent years, there still existed a large disparity between them and the other fourth rank sects. The Regal Pill Palace's martial heritage still had some gaps that required shoring up. In this respect, Elder Yun Nie had recently become privy to the palace head's reasoning. He had previously felt that Palace Head Dan Chi's focus on strengthening the sect's martial dao had caused the Regal Pill Palace's pill dao to weaken.

Now it appeared that strengthening martial dao at the potential expense of the pill dao couldn't be an error as long as they lived in the world of martial dao. A temporary sacrifice of pill dao wasn't a heinous error. Why had the Sacred Sword Palace dared provoke the Regal Pill Palace again and again this time around? They were confident in the fact that the Sacred Sword Palace's martial dao was far stronger than the Regal Pill Palace's. Wang Jianyu, Wang Han and Elder Chen's repeated provocation of the Regal Pill Palace certainly gave Elder Yun Nie enough to reflect over.

In the world of martial dao, strength was the only rule that was respected. That was all the more evident in situations of strife and conflict. Take Shen Qinghong for example. In the Regal Pill Palace's Rosy Valley, he held enough power to summon clouds and rain with but a flick of his hands. But at Mt. Rippling Mirage, he was treated as a step below all of the other peak geniuses simply because he had yet to break through to the sage realm.

He could only stew silently in the face of Wang Han's barbed words. The world of martial dao was, in essence, a practical one – the strong set the rules. If one was a tad stronger than the others, then one could ride roughshod over others. If one was a tad weaker, than one could only suffer in silence.

Contrary to expectations, neither chaos nor confusion reigned in Jiang Chen's residence despite his absence for the past three months. His followers had an unshakeable faith in him. Even if Jiang Chen had not returned yet, they were convinced in their heart of hearts that it was but a matter of time before their young master came back.

When their young master had been trapped in the Eternal Spirit Mountain, hadn't the Precious Tree Sect also believed that he was dead without a doubt? Hadn't the young master returned in glory back then? Thus, even though he was currently trapped in Mt. Ripping Mirage, they still believed he would triumphantly return.

"Younger sister Huang'er, our young master has yet to return. It's been hard on you lately." Gouyu was somewhat apologetic towards Huang'er since Jiang Chen had entrusted the matters of his residence to Huang'er on his departure.

Huang'er laughed gently. "Elder sister Gouyu, I owe my life to your young master. What do these little things count for?"

Princer Gouyu had an indescribable feeling in the face of Huang'er's demeanor and comportment. She'd always felt that Huang'er should've had unparalleled looks to match her temperament, yet it was not to be.

Thus, Gouyu both liked and pitied Huang'er. As a woman beautiful inside and out, Huang'er knew that Gouyu looked compassionately upon her because of her looks. Despite this, she only smiled faintly and didn't offer up any explanations. "Elder sister Gouyu, you have no reason to worry. Huang'er has seen that your young master seems to be one blessed with great fortune. Though he hasn't returned yet, he'll surely return after a period of time."

Gouyu nodded, "That's for sure. There really hasn't been anything that's managed to trap him since he's set out in the world, despite all the big and small battles he's encountered."

As the two of them chatted, footsteps sounded from behind the door. It was Jiang Chen's cousin and personal guard, Xue Tong.

"Greetings to Miss Huang'er. Greetings to Princess Gouyu."

Gouyu quickly asked, "Xue Tong, is it news of the young master?"

Xue Tong shook his head, "No, it's Miss Ling from the Sovereign Area's third residence sending over a batch of cultivation resources."

An odd look flashed through Gouyu's eyes as she remained silent for a moment. She smiled ruefully. "This is already the third time Ling Bi'er has sent over cultivation resources. Younger sister Huang'er, do you think this Miss Lin fancies the young master?"

Gouyu was always direct and spoke whatever came to mind.

Huang'er dimples formed once again as she smiled gently. "Your young master is so outstanding that it's certainly possible for him to receive Miss Ling Bi'er's favor." Mentioning Ling Bi'er brought Ling Hui'er to mind, and Huang'er couldn't help but remember how she'd seen Ling Hui'er's daring move that day when she was picking flowers in the woods. Ling Hui'er had actually grabbed Jiang Chen's hands at that time and pressed them onto her chest. This matter had left quite a deep impression on Huang'er, making her remember the Ling sisters.

Hearing this, Gouyu flashed a mischievous smile and teased Huang'er, "Well, younger sister, since you think my young master is impressive, do you also like him a little?"

Other girls might have acted shy or coy when faced that particular question. However, Huang'er only gave a light sigh. "What does it mean to like or love someone in this world?"

Somehow, Huang'er thoughts had turned to her own life experiences and how her parents' generation had caused hate and resentment to spring from love. The Generation Binding Curse that afflicted her had been caused precisely by the emotional entanglements of the prior generation. Thus, the word "love" appeared quite hazy to Huang'er. Though a bud had perhaps sprouted in her heart, she dared not allow it to grow. Or to put it more aptly, there had been no opportunity for it to grow. These words of Huang'er seemed to have also stirred some thoughts within Gouyu's heart as she too fell silent.

……

Within Ling Bi’er’s residence.

Ling Bi’er kept watch over her father, Ling Su’s, bed while holding her father’s hand.

“Sis, it’s all your fault. Why didn’t you stop senior brother Jiang Chen?!” Ling Hui’er still had not let this matter go even after three months. She kept feeling that her sister should have stopped Jiang Chen and the two of them should’ve come out together.

Ling Bi’er was also deeply feeling the pangs of regret at that moment. If she had another chance, she would not have been so reserved or cared so much about how the others would’ve viewed her. She would have held back Jiang Chen back with all her strength and not let him risk himself. Alas, it was too late to say anything now. Although Jiang Chen had already given Ling Bi’er the four spirit herbs necessary to cure her father’s Miasma, without Jiang Chen, she could not actually perform the detoxification.

“Big sis, why don’t you say something, ah? Will senior brother Jiang Chen be able to come out?” Ling Hui’er continuously clung to and swung Ling Bi’er’s other arm.

Ling Bi’er felt endless remorse within her heart as she blamed herself. During the past three months, whenever she sent cultivation resources to Jiang Chen’s residence, her sense of guilt had always pushed her to leave without seeing his followers.

Hearing her sister repeatedly ask her, Ling Bi'er's eyes grew red-rimmed and a few pearly tears rolled down her beautiful face.

"Hui'er, junior brother Jiang Chen is a good person. He will certainly turn misfortune into fortune." Ling Bi'er mustered all of her resolve.

"But... the next time Mt. Rippling Mirage opens will be in thirty years." Ling Hui'er didn't know about the ancient herb garden and thought that Jiang Chen was only stuck in Mt. Rippling Mirage. Ling Bi'er felt a knife twisting in her heart. She knew that the place where Jiang Chen had truly disappeared in was the ancient herb garden, and the next time it would open was possibly three thousand years later.

Three thousand years...

Ling Bi'er felt like her body empty of energy at the enormity of that timespan. She could wait for Jiang Chen three thousand years or even thirty thousand years. If this life wasn't enough, she could keep waiting in her next life. Whether it was for ten lives, or a hundred lives... she could wait for him. But her father's affliction could not wait three thousand years!

Ever since Jiang Chen's appearance, Ling Bi'er's iceberg-like emotions seemed to have melted, gradually opening up. Jiang Chen was like a stone pebble that had slammed into her heart's door, sending aftershocks rippling within.

Time after time, Jiang Chen's outstanding conduct had

overbearingly intruded into her heart.

Time after time, Jiang Chen's superior moral character had silently melted the iceberg about her.

On that trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage, they'd interacted more than they'd ever before. Though they hadn't spent every day together, a small seed of affection had been planted in the heart of a girl experiencing love for the first time. Unlimited strands of feeling had sprung into being to tie themselves into thousands of knots. Moreover, Ling Bi'er had previously sworn that she would stay by the side of whoever saves her father. And although Jiang Chen had not yet cured Ling Su, in Ling Bi'er's heart, Jiang Chen was the only one that could.

Just like one who had experienced the vast oceans wouldn't be attracted to another body of water, no one else was worth considering now that she'd acknowledged someone to be the one. Even if there jumped out a genius who was ten times stronger than Jiang Chen, he would not be able to replace Jiang Chen's status in Ling Bi'er's heart.

Compared to Ling Hui'er's straightforward enthusiasm, Ling Bi'er's temperament was as cold as ice. She was very slow to warm up to the affections between man and woman. But once she did, her feelings went far beyond merely pledging undying love or being steadfast until the seas ran dry and stones eroded to dust.

She had made up her mind that once Mt. Rippling Mirage opened next time, she would take her father to the mountain. If she could find Jiang Chen, that was for the best. If not, then she would stay,

grow old and live out the rest of her days on Mt. Rippling Mirage.

……

Tristar Sect, inside the Tristar Great Hall.

Sect Head Zhu and Elder Tan Lang were keeping a few Sky Sect inspectors company. It was evident these inspectors were all extraordinary. The first was a middle-aged man who wore a purple robe with two golden stars embroidered on his chest. A two-starred purple robe indicated his status as an eleventh rank inspector of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, one rank above Feng Beidou. The difference of a single rank was actually an enormous difference in status. Eleventh rank inspectors were at minimum sky sage realm, with most at peak sage realm. As for twelfth rank inspectors, those was even more rare and they were all at least half-step emperor realm or even emperor realm experts.

In addition to this eleventh rank inspector, there also sat a blue browed youth with a sinister, calculating temperament. He seemed coldly detached, arrogant to the point where it seemed like he disdained even introducing himself. He just sat there with his eyes closed, the very picture of haughtiness. However, not a single member of the Tristar Sect dared to even put a single whisker out of place. In addition to the eleventh rank inspectors, there were also several ninth and tenth rank inspectors – obviously the subordinates of the eleventh rank inspector.

“Sect Head Zhu, your Tristar Sect is truly disappointing. Although Ding Tong couldn’t be considered a top genius of the Sky Sect, but he was at least considered a proper first class genius. The

Sky Sect sent him to help you set the board, but you don't even know how he perished?" The eleventh rank inspector's tone was like the frozen tundra, and held no doubt of who he thought was to blame.

Sect Head Zhu was full of fear and trepidation, "This really was an accident. Young master Ding Tong moved independently after entering Mt. Rippling Mirage. Elder Tan Lang tried contacting him several times but he did not respond..."

"Alright, stop explaining. Sect Head Zhu, just tell me this. Is the Tristar Sect truly capable or not? If not, then it's not necessary to support you, as the Sky Sect can just find another sect to raise."

Sect Head Zhu and Elder Tan Lang wore miserable expressions, but were unable to refute any of his barbs. They were constrained by their heavenly oaths and thus unable to disclose the matters that had occurred in the ancient herb garden at the heart of Mt. Rippling Mirage. And since they could not reveal anything, they were unable to use that information to atone for their sins.

Chapter 606: The Ten Great Disciples, Sky Sect Geniuses

When he saw that both Sect Head Zhu and Elder Tan Lang hesitated to speak, the inspector harrumphed coldly. “As matters stand, what else are you unable to speak openly about? Stalling amongst yourself like this, it seems you still have something to hide?”

Sect Head Zhu smiled wryly and replied. “There are certainly things we wish to keep hidden. Only, Elder Tan Lang’s previous heavenly oath holds the fortunes of the sect at stake, so we cannot reveal anything. Yet this matter is of utmost concern, so Elder Tan Lang and I are also finding it difficult to explain our troubles.”

The eleventh rank inspector furrowed his brows. “The fortunes of your sect?”

“That’s right. If we reveal anything, our Tristar Sect will be subject to heavenly judgment.” Elder Sect Zhu’s face revealed his unease. The descent of heavenly judgment was a petrifying thought.

The members of the Ninesuns Sky Sect were naturally well aware of this fact. The eleventh rank inspector fell into a contemplative silence. However, after a moment of thought he relaxed his brows and chuckled icily. “Sect Head Zhu, you are certain that this matter is very important?”

“It is truly very important.” Sect Head Zhu nodded.

“Fine. Since that is so, the Sky Sect will grant your Tristar Sect another chance. From this moment on, the Tristar Sect will henceforth become a division of the Ninesuns Sky Sect and will enjoy treatment corresponding to one of the twelfth star divisions. When we establish a manor in the Myriad Domain in the future, Sect Head Zhu, you will be granted a seat as the vice manor lord.”

“What?” Both Sect Head Zhu and Elder Tan Lang were bewildered.

“What is it? You’re unhappy?” The eleventh rank inspector’s voice grew cold.

“No, that’s not it. Respected inspector, what do you mean?” Sect Head Zhu’s breathing increased in pace.

“Is my meaning still not clear? The Tristar Sect no longer exists from this moment henceforth. Since it doesn’t exist, then the heavenly oath doesn’t bind it, and the fortunes of the sect are all just empty talk. We will set up a Myriad Domain Manor within the sect, and you will be appointed vice manor lord. Why not be happy about this? The Tristar Sect will enjoy the treatment of a twelfth star division, how would that be less than a mere fourth rank sect?”

There were less than 20 twelfth star divisions of the Sky Sect in the entire Divine Abyss Continent, and the position of a division was absolutely higher than a mere fourth rank sect. As for the manors that the Sky Sect were divided into, there were only nine

at the moment. Even if a new one was created for the Myriad Domain, even ranked dead last of all the vice manor lords, Sect Head Zhu would grasp power far beyond that of a fourth rank sect head. Sect Head Zhu was utterly delighted by this new development. The most critical thing was that if the Tristar Sect no longer existed, then the heavenly oath would no longer bind them.

The eleventh rank inspector smiled faintly and slapped a medallion of a division head onto the table. “Zhu Changsheng, if you accept this, then the Tristar Sect will no longer exist. It is entirely up to you whether you accept it or not.

Sect Head Zhu didn’t hesitate at all as he quickly snatched it. “Subordinate Zhu Changsheng greets all the superiors present.”

“Good! Straightforward and decisive!” The inspector smiled faintly. “Allow me to introduce myself, I am Weizi Kuai, an eleventh rank inspector of the Sky Sect. These are all my subordinates.” He then pointed at the remote youth with the blue eyebrows. “This youngster is one of the ten great disciples. He is Sir Cao Jin, ranked ninth amongst the ten great disciples.

The ten great disciples?

Zhu Changsheng and Elder Tan Lang started sweating profusely inside. “We greatly welcome Sir Cao! We had eyes but did not recognize Mt. Tai, please forgive us!”

How could these two sit still in the presence of one of the vaunted

ten great disciples of the Sky Sect? There were countless disciples in the Sky Sect, with geniuses as numerous as hairs on oxen. For one to be ranked amongst the top ten, even at number nine, that was still exceedingly stunning!

It was obvious that even the eleventh rank inspector was respectful in front of Cao Jin, as this genius' future accomplishments would far exceed that of an eleventh rank inspector. If Cao Jin developed into his full strength, even if he wasn't one of the candidates for sect head of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, he would at least be in charge of one of the manors. His position then would be completely incomparable to that of an eleventh rank inspector!

Although an inspector was a high position, they were still only sect representatives sent to investigate the various divisions. There was a qualitative difference between an inspector and a manor lord who held true power in their hands.

Although Cao Jin had yet to ascend to the emperor realm, he was already at the peak of the sage realm at his young age! This level of cultivation was capable of trampling everyone in the Myriad Domain. Therefore, it was understandable that Cao Jin emanated such an overbearing attitude. He smiled dispassionately and waved his hand, "Zhu Changsheng, you've heard Envoy Wei's words and accepted the division head medallion. Shouldn't you speak of useful things now?"

Cao Jin's tone wasn't particularly stern or soft, but it contained a naturally overpowering aura.

Zhu Changsheng hastily nodded, throwing a glance at Elder Tan Lang. “Tan Lang, you were actually part of things, it’s more detailed coming from you.”

Elder Tan Lang nodded and organized his thoughts, thoroughly describing the events of the ancient herb garden. He waxed eloquent with regards to the various schemes between the sects and how Jiang Chen had used the antidote for the Miasma in the end to swindle the sects out of great amounts of spirit herbs. He concealed nothing, freely explaining everything he knew of.

Zhu Changsheng tacked on further details when the elder was finished, “Everyone present here might be unfamiliar with Jiang Chen’s name. The Purple Sun Sect of the sixteen kingdom alliance was almost destroyed at this person’s hands.”

This matter suddenly reminded Weizi Kuai of something. “Jiang Chen, the one who killed all those in the Purple Light Division by himself? It’s said that there was also a young girl with an azure phoenix constitution that fell?” His tone was held a note of pure surprise.

“Indeed. When Inspector Feng Beidou made his bet with the Regal Pill Palace, it was the appearance of this child who wrecked the Sky Sect’s first setup.” Zhu Changsheng’s words were filled with an unconcealed intent to worsen relations between the two parties.

Cao Jin suddenly smiled coldly. “This kid seems to be a bit interesting? I heard that that azure phoenix constitution had been earmarked as a cultivation furnace for senior brother Yong

Xingyun. Her death has caused his Dragon Phoenix Sword to remain yet uncompleted. This kid is something else, isn't he? He has yet to set foot out of the Myriad Domain, but he's already offended senior brother Xingyun. Apparently senior brother Xingyun gave orders to Ding Tong to bring this kid back for him. It looks like Ding Tong's disappearance might have something to do with this kid, hmm?"

Cao Jin might look the image of a spoiled brat, but his powers of deduction were nothing to laugh at. He was arrogant but not brainless. On the contrary, to be able to emerge from a crowd of geniuses meant that his intelligence was very high. Something that neither Weizi Kuai nor Zhu Changsheng had thought of, but Cao Jin had instantly cut to the heart of.

"What? Ding Tong's disappearance has something to do with that kid?" Zhu Changsheng started, and even Elder Tan Lang had a look of incredulity on his face.

Cao Jin smiled faintly and didn't explain himself.

However, Wei Zikua laughed ruefully. "According to your descriptions, there's no entity within Mt. Rippling Mirage on the level of the sky sage realm. And amongst those who entered, there wasn't anyone who could possibly have killed Ding Tong. Then how could he have perished without cause or reason? Given his temper, he must have gone to pursue Jiang Chen but this Jiang Chen brat must have used some unknown way to kill Ding Tong instead. Don't you agree, Sir Cao?"

Cao Jin didn't put on any airs in response to Wei Zikua's query,

and only nodded calmly. “This must be the case.”

“But... but that Jiang Chen is only an earth origin realm cultivator. And Ding Tong is in the earth sage realm...” Sect Head Zhu still found this explanation somewhat unbelievable.

“Hmmph. That’s your problem of being too narrow-minded. If that Jiang Chen didn’t have any tricks up his sleeves, how could he have toyed around with all of you? The only thing you see is martial power. Haven’t you considered how strange it was that he wasn’t even afraid of the Miasma?”

“Indeed, not only was this brat the victor of the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles, he’d triumphed with flying colors. Could it be that he is a genius in poisons?”
Cao Jin replied calmly, “Even a genius in poison might not have been able to best Ding Tong. But Ding Tong might not have been aware of his enemy’s ability and underestimated him, thus falling prey to an insidious plot. This is certainly a possibility.”

“In any case, that’s enough, there’s no more need to discuss this. For such an insignificant ant, he’s already in Senior Brother Yong Xingyun’s blacklist even if he wasn’t trapped in Mt. Rippling Mirage. This brat is assuredly a dead man walking. On the other hand, since the Regal Pill Palace has gained so many sky and earth sage herbs...” Cao Jin’s lips twisted into a cold smile.

“Not only that, they also possess the Longevity Pill.” Elder Tan Lang suddenly spoke up, “That Longevity Pill can extend the life of a sage realm expert by five hundred years!”

“What?” Wei Zikua surged to his feet when he heard this. “Extend the life of a sage realm expert by five hundred years? Are you sure?”

Elder Tan Lang’s heart quailed under the pressure from Wei Zikua’s aura but nonetheless, he nodded, “Sect Head Zhu… no, Division Head Zhu also witnessed it first-hand.”

Zhu Changsheng nodded and replied in a grave voice, “That is definitely true. The head of the Sacred Elephant family of the Great Cathedral, Xiang Wentian had originally reached the end of his predestined lifespan and would have perished within fifty years. But after he ingested the Longevity Pill, his condition transformed completely — his life force returned, his appearance changed; he must have gained at least five hundred years!”

Wei Zikua and Cao Jin glanced at each other, their faces unable to conceal their shock. Both of them could be considered well-learned individuals in the Upper Eight Regions. They had also seen many variations of pills capable of extending one’s life. But five hundred years was too ridiculous. Moreover, the way Zhu Changsheng had spoken of it exaggerated its prowess even further, since it seemed to produce instant effects.

Zhu Changsheng was worried that they wouldn’t believe him and hurriedly added, “This subordinate also finds this matter hard to believe. I would not have dared to speak of it had I not seen it with my own two eyes. That Longevity Pill well and truly produces such an effect. If you don’t believe me, please ask anyone at the scene where it was used.”

Cao Jin clapped the back of his chair, “No need to ask. We’ll just go directly to the Regal Pill Palace.”

The top ten geniuses of the Ninesuns Sky Sect were able to freely traverse the Myriad Domains. The Regal Pill Palace? To Cao Jin, that place was no different than his own backyard. Of course he would feel entitled to take anything he wanted.

“Coming, Inspector Wei?”

Wei Zikua hesitated for a second. “Sir Cao, this matter requires careful deliberation. If we reveal ourselves, we’ll be laying our cards on the table. The people of the Myriad Domain might not unite for much, but once a matter concerns the future of their domain, they will still stand together. We…”

“Then we should just show our hand. If you ask me, we were too nice in trying to arrange this and that. Just massacre them all. We can talk after killing a few of their stronger members.” Killing intent suddenly surged into Cao Jin’s eyes.

Wei Zikua laughed ruefully. If they did as Cao Jin wanted, they’d certainly be more content. But once things reached that level, they would truly be showing their entire hand. The Sky Sect’s plans had not reached fruition just yet. Showing their hand now would only be detrimental in the larger scheme of things.

Chapter 607: Attack On The Regal Pill Palace

Wei Zikua was an inspector whose responsibility was to lay the groundwork for the Myriad Domain plan. On the other hand, Cao Jin didn't care about such matters. As a genius disciple, the only thing he looked to was profit, so he wasn't in the least interested in the Myriad Domain's overall situation. What he was interested in were the earth and sky rank herbs. How could Cao Jin not be moved when he heard that Jiang Chen had received a hundred earth rank herbs? Not to mention the extra seven sky rank herbs he held!

Both Zhu Changsheng and Elder Tan Lang had played a little trick by deliberately omitting the fact that the sky rank herbs might be with Jiang Chen instead of the Regal Pill Palace. All they wanted was to instigate matters and see misfortune fall upon the Regal Pill Palace.

Zhu Changsheng laughed. "Truthfully, if you attack the Regal Pill Palace, the other sects might not help them aside from the Darknorth Sect. At the very least, it's guaranteed that the Sacred Sword Palace will stand by and gloat. The Walkabout Sect also prefers not entering the fray until others have exhausted themselves. The Great Cathedral's response might be a bit more ambiguous, but they usually will not act unless they spy profit so they might not help either."

Cao Jin nodded slightly. These things were not important to him at all. From the very beginning, he had not taken any of the Myriad Domain sects seriously. Whether or not they would assist

the Regal Pill Palace was just a fleeting concern to him. With his peak sage realm cultivation, who could stop him from gracing the Regal Pill Palace with his presence? Wouldn't he be able to take whatever and however much he wanted?

Earth rank herbs were used by emperor realm cultivators, but even emperor realm experts weren't able to use as much as they wanted to.

In the entire Divine Abyss Continent, the higher rank the spirit herb, the lower the supply. Though Cao Jing was only in the peak sage realm at the moment, he was but a step away from emperor realm. He naturally felt a rush of excitement when he heard that the Regal Pill Palace had so many earth rank herbs. What's more was that there were even several sky rank herbs. To him, these sky rank hebs were luxuries that rarely circulated even in the Upper Eight Regions.

Cao Jin smiled casually, having already made his decision. He cupped his hands towards Weizi Kua. "Envoy Weizi, you have your duty, but I have my ambitions. I must make this trip to the Regal Pill Palace."

Weizi Kua very much wanted to prevent Cao Jin from going but his identity and status were simply insufficient to stop Cao Jin. He could only smile ruefully. "Great Sir Cao, this matter really is important. Revealing our cards too early will affect the Sky Sect's overall plan for the Myriad Domain..."

"What overall plan? Overall plan or not, the Myriad Domain is just a Lower Region. Even if we establish a manor there, what of it

then? Sky rank herbs are heavenly treasures. If we don't accept what heaven gifts us, we'll only invite calamity onto ourselves. Rest assured Inspector Weizi, I'm only going for the spirit herbs and not seize power. I won't affect the overall plan."

Cao Jin clearly had not explained things because he was afraid of Weizi Kua. What he was concerned about was if he really did derail the overall plan, even his status as one of the ten great disciples would not save him from receiving some sort of punishment when he returned to the sect.

If he could avoid damaging the sect's plans, he should definitely do so. Although Cao Jin was assured of his own superiority, that didn't mean he was a musclehead who only knew to fight. Cao Jin had already left his seat as he was speaking. He turned into a shadow and disappeared from the Great Hall. Weizi Kua could only stare after him, dumbfounded.

Zhu Changsheng and Elder Tan Lang were secretly gloating. Rivers of blood would flow once this murderous star invaded the Regal Pill Palace. Elder Tan Lang particularly had a belly full of grievances when he remembered how Jiang Chen had extorted him out of a sky rank herb on the lake shores. Now that a Sky Sect genius like Cao Jin would be calling upon them, even if the Regal Pill Palace wasn't wiped out entirely, they would at minimum lose a layer of skin.

Weizi Kua's face darkened as he glanced at Zhu Changsheng and Elder Tan Lang. "Are you two gloating secretly now that you believe your mind games worked?"

Zhu Changsheng and Tan Lang looked at each other, not knowing how to answer.

“Don’t be naïve. Cao Jin has a strong dao heart, how could you possibly sway him? The reason he went was because of the spirit herbs and Longevity Pill. If he wasn’t interested, then it would be futile even if you talked his ears off. Forget it. Apart from a few final details, our sect’s plan for the Myriad Domain is nearing its completion and we’re just waiting for a few final things. Hopefully nothing goes wrong or else, or all our previous work would have been for naught.” As he was a cautious person by nature, Weizi Kua was worried after he saw Cao Jin leave. While openly invading the Regal Pill Palace might be gratifying and enjoyable, it would be much harder to conquer the Myriad Domain without bloodshed once they had alarmed the region. Thus, he decided it was best to follow as an observer.

……

Cao Jing streaked at lightning pace towards the Regal Pill Palace in a beam of light. If this had been the Upper Eight Regions, then he might not have flown so impetuously, but he had no such fear in the Myriad Domain.

He arrived at the Regal Pill Palace’s boundaries half a day later, and at the outskirts of the Regal Pill Palace complex in another two hours. Cao Jin stood in the air and looked down condescendingly over the entire Palace. Suddenly, his eyes rested upon a residence in the Rosy Valley. “Hm? That residence is a bit odd. There seems to be a some sort of formation over it?” Cao Jin opened up his consciousness, scanning the entire Regal Pill Palace complex. Even

Dan Chi's residence didn't catch his interest, but Jiang Chen's Nine Gates Incineration Formation had piqued Cao Jin's attention.

As Cao Jin's consciousness flit about outside Jiang Chen's residence, Huang'er, who happened to be bathing in the wood spirit spring, frowned. "Where did this peeping tom come from? Someone actually dares sweep my residence with their consciousness?" Though Huang'er was normally mild-mannered, she could not help but be more sensitive when she was bathing in the spring.

Although she knew that that person's consciousness was unable to see through the wood spirit spring or spy her bathing, Huang'er still felt deeply offended. Not only was a girl without her clothes always particularly sensitive, this consciousness felt condescending, menacing and unscrupulous. This made Huang'er sure that this wasn't an expert from the Regal Pill Palace but someone with ill intentions!

Huang'er emerged from the wood spirit spring with a splash. Her perfect body appeared even more fairy-like after being purified by the spring. The fog from the spring rose in wisps and shrouded the area, exuding a holy and spiritual feeling. As she exited the spring, her clothes immediately covered her flawless body with a flash of light. Although the person might not have come for Jiang Chen's residence, she felt responsible for safeguarding it since Jiang Chen had entrusted his residence to her. Thus, though Huang'er had never paid special attention to anything in her life before, this matter became particularly important to her. Huang'er would absolutely not agree to anyone who bore ill intention towards this residence.

As Cao Jin's consciousness was extremely overbearing, the entire Regal Pill Palace was soon alerted. The Hallmaster of the Hall of Might, Lian Cheng, was immediately aware of the strong sense of provocation within this consciousness. With a long hiss, he transformed into a beam of light and shot into the sky with a momentum as fierce as dragons and tigers. "What presumptuous person dares to sweep my sect with their consciousness?" Elder Lian Chen wasn't a shrinking violet. Once his violent temper erupted, even Elder Yun Nie needed to give him some room.

Cao Jin had a face of indifference and clasped his hands behind his back, the very picture of an old wise man.

"Kid, was it you who used your consciousness to sweep my Regal Pill Palace?" Elder Lian Cheng quickly noticed Cao Jin. However, Cao Jin merely gave Elder Lian Chen a cursory glance before he continued to wantonly probe the sect with his consciousness.

"Kid, are you deaf or mute? This seat is questioning you!" Elder Lian Chen thundered.

"What qualifications do you have to question me?" Cao Jin sneered, "Old man, let me ask you a question. Who is the one in charge of your Regal Pill Palace?"

Old man?! Elder Lian Chen was about to go ballistic. In this day and age, there was someone who actually dared come to the Regal Pill Palace and call him an old man?! Had this kid gone insane?

"Where are you from, ignorant child? Are all your elders dead? Is

that why no one has ever taught you to respect your elders?" Elder Lian Chen was hopping mad.

"My elders?" Cao Jin sneered, "A rotten old man like you, are you worthy to be considered my elder?"

Elder Lian Cheng was completely enraged, "This little beast! It seems that if this old man doesn't teach you a..."

Before he could finish his sentence, Cao Jin's face turned cold and he suddenly shouted, "Scram!"

His voice was as imposing as tribulation lightning as it thundered towards Elder Lian Cheng with overwhelming momentum. Right as Elder Lian Cheng was rushing over, this thunder-like sound wave crashed into him head on.

Bam!

Unable to put up the slightest resistance, Hallmaster Lian Cheng was directly blown away. He tumbled down from the sky.

Nearly every Regal Pill Palace disciple clearly witnessed this scene as it happened in the skies above the sect. The person who was akin to the God of War in their hearts, peak earth sage realm Elder Lian Cheng, had actually been blasted away with a single shout! This was completely horrifying! Thankfully, someone on the ground had seen Elder Lian Cheng fall down and hurried to catch him. Even so, the person who caught Elder Lian Cheng also

felt as though he'd been struck in the chest and took multiple steps back before he could stand firm. His chest was heaving and he was unable to catch his breath. A single sound wave had actually been so unimaginably powerful! When he looked at Elder Lian Cheng again, the latter had a mouth full of blood and was gasping weakly.

"Hurry... quick... start the Great Protection Formation," Elder Lian Cheng struggled to spit out these words before he collapsed in a dead faint

"Elder Lian Cheng is seriously injured! Quick, quickly start the Great Protection Formation!"

"Start the formation!"

"Inform the palace head, go, go!"

"Sound the highest level alarm, sound the highest level alarm!"

The whole Regal Pill Palace immediately descended a chaotic mess reminiscent of a knocked-over ant hill. Fortunately, the disciples manning the Great Protection Formation were well-trained and quickly initiated the formation matrix upon receiving the message.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The Great Protection Formation swiftly started up, enclosingg the entire Regal Pill Palace complex. Cao Jin smiled and crossed his

arms, apparently not in a hurry to attack. This caused the people below to feel some relief amidst their fear. Thankfully, the enemy was arrogant and had not taken the chance to start his assault before the formation had been set up

However, who was able to contend with such a vicious enemy?

It wasn't that Cao Jin had not seen the opportunity to attack, but rather that he had deliberately let it go. He wanted to wait for them to complete their Great Protection Formation.

He knew that blasting away that old man was but the first step. This wasn't enough to completely intimidate the Regal Pill Palace. Only when he'd completely broken apart the Great Protection Formation that they were so proud of would their spirits be crushed. And when that happened, it would be easy for him to pick and choose whatever he wanted.

Chapter 608: An Arrogant Cao Jin

“The Great Protection Formation, is it?” Cao Jin smiled faintly. Before he’d arrived at the Regal Pill Palace, he’d seen that formation when he had fully opened his consciousness. But this was also what he found odd—the greatest formation of this fourth rank sect was inferior to a small formation that protected one of its residences. This Great Protection Formation could shield the sect from at most a cultivator in the ninth level sage realm. For Cao Jin who was at the peak of the ninth level sage realm and one step away from the emperor realm, it wouldn’t do much against him. Rather, the formation around the residence was exceedingly complex and offered much higher defensive capabilities despite being smaller in scale. Cao Jin felt that he’d have to use more effort to break through that formation.

However, he was one of the ten great disciples of the Sky Sect and carried countless treasures on him. Naturally, he had treasures that could break through formations. With a wave, a silver-colored awl appeared in his hand. It was but one foot long, but its splendor soared into the skies when it appeared. The exotic silver light flaring out from it was resplendent and glorious, changing the colors of the mountains and rivers and outshining the sun and the moon. This was called the Moonshatter Awl and was a treasure designed to break through formations. Only the true disciples of the Sky Sect had the privilege of owning it.

Cao Jin wielded the Moonshatter Awl in one hand and stuck the other hand behind his back. He arched one blue brow and smiled faintly. “Three moves. If I can’t break apart this so-called Great Protection Formation in three moves, then hail me as incompetent!”

He drew an arc with his hand as he spoke, a faint, careless movement that actually held the feeling of sketching out the land.

Whoosh!

A trail of resplendence akin to the galaxy followed his movement and landed on the formation like an ancient silver dragon.

Wham wham wham!

The Great Protection Formation instantly reacted with a series of fierce rumbles, the countless runes hovering in the air as they shook and trembled. These runes made up the formation as parts of a cohesive whole. Each rune was connected to the others like the links of a chain. If any of them were broken apart, then the entire formation would also be affected.

Cao Jin's Moonshatter Awl was an earth rank treasure, and normally only emperor realm cultivators had the right to use it. However, the Sky Sect was enormously wealthy. Adding that to his status as one of the ten great disciples meant he had more than one earth rank treasure on him despite having yet to set foot into the emperor realm. Compounding the Moonshatter Awl's status as an earth rank treasure with Cao Jin's arts, meant that this blow had been absolutely on par with the full blow from a first level emperor realm cultivator.

The Great Protection Formation wasn't a bad formation, but its level was still that of the Myriad Domain. Therefore, it was more

than enough to defend the mountain under ordinary conditions, but who would've thought that this enemy would be so domineering? Parts of it had cracked open under this first blow and the entire formation started shaking severely.

"This is bad! The enemy is strong! He's broken the foundation of the formation with just one move!"

"Notify the palace head! Hurry!"

It had to be said that the Regal Pill Palace was greatly frightened by Cao Jin's ability to shatter the formation with one blow. It had been crazy enough that that blue eyebrowed monster had sent Elder Lian Chen flying. But shaking the Great Formation with one blow was even more unheard of!

It wasn't that the Regal Pill Palace had never faced strong enemies before, but it was the first time they'd come face to face with such an overwhelming one. As the entire Regal Pill Palace shook and trembled, the younger generation in particular was filled with shock and dismay. They had no idea who'd they antagonized for such a terrifying character to descend upon them. Judging from the person's age, he was unlikely to be over thirty years old. But how could someone who under 30 years possess such terrifying strength? Could it be... someone from the Upper Eight Regions?

The upper executives of the Regal Pill Palace were all alarmed as well. Even even those ancient characters who'd sealed themselves in closed door cultivation emerged due to the disturbance. After all, everyone could feel in every corner of the sect that the Great

Protection Formation was shaking. They all knew that it was a matter of life and death for the sect once the formation was attacked. If they didn't stop him even now, then the sect might very well be destroyed.

At this moment, Palace Head Dan Chi had been assailing the seventh level of the sage realm with all his strength during this time, but he was disturbed as well and had to stop his meditation, bringing large numbers of experts with him into the air. Almost all of the earth sage realm cultivators had gathered, along with some old antiques who'd never revealed themselves.

"Tsk tsk. Isn't that Venerated Elder Hu?"

"Look over there, it's Forefather Qi, the junior brother of the last palace head!"

"And look...!"

All of the Regal Pill Palace disciples were pointing and whispering. Though they were worried about the situation at hand, they also felt that there should be no problem after so many hidden experts of the sect had appeared. A cloud of uneasiness enveloped the sect.

Dan Chi approached Cao Jin whilst flanked by a crowd of earth sage realm experts. "Who might you be and what is your reason for arbitrarily attacking the Great Protection Formation of my sect?"

Dan Chi was still one of the preeminent geniuses within the Myriad Domain. Although he was the palace head now, that heroic air and charisma he'd possessed back in the day was still there. However, with his eye, he could tell that this unfathomable young man had yet to fully reveal his full power. Dan Chi was widely knowledgeable and thus knew that this young man most likely had an impressive background and would be difficult to deal with.

Cao Jin's blue eyebrows twitched slightly as he flicked a glance at Dan Chi. The others seemed as extraneous as air to him, not worthy of even a glance. "You represent the Regal Pill Palace?"

The question was exceedingly discourteous, but the attitude brimming in his tone sent a rush of blood through all the earth sage realm cultivators' veins, as if a veritable mountain was bearing down on them.

Dan Chi frowned. "I am Dan Chi, the current palace head of the Regal Pill Palace."

Cao Jin's brow smoothed out. "You're the palace head? When did the Myriad Domain become so weak that a mere sixth level sage realm can become the head of a fourth rank sect?"

"How dare you?!"

"Keep a clean mouth!" Loud exhortations travelled out from behind Dan Chi, all the experts exceedingly displeased by Cao Jin's arrogant tone.

Cao Jin smiled nonchalantly. “What, am I wrong?”

In the Upper Eight Regions, the head of a fourth rank sect was at least peak sage realm, with even stronger ones in the emperor realm. There was no doubt that the Myriad Domain was only a Lower Region since even their strongest sect, the Great Cathedral, only boasted a ninth level sage realm expert as their leader.

As Dan Chi had only recently ascended to sect head, he was still new to his position. Add that to his youth and relative lack of tenure, it was natural that there was a gap between his cultivation levels and that of the other old monsters in the Myriad Domain. However, the heavyweights of the other four sects didn’t dare belittle Dan Chi, because none of them had been even a normal elder in their own sects at Dan Chi’s age. Yet here he was, already the head of the Regal Pill Palace based on his own talents and charisma. He was less than a hundred years old and already at sixth level sage realm. Who was to say that he wouldn’t surge to the peak of the sage realm in another one or two hundred years, or even have the chance to assail the emperor realm? After all, he was simply too outstanding for a region on the level of the Myriad Domain.

Dan Chi kept his head and restrained the Regal Pill Palace from cursing the outsider even further. He responded in a manner that was neither servile nor haughty, “My Regal Pill Palace’s ability to propagate our legacy for a thousand years has never been driven by only a single person. I, Dan Chi, have only accepted everyone’s nomination to take the seat of palace head. Who might you be in coming to instigate trouble here? Why duck and hide, afraid to announce your identity?”

Instead of growing angry when he heard this, Cao Jin maintained his indifferent expression tinged with a bit of arrogance. “Trying to goad me into action through mockery?” He immediately shook his head slightly and stared at Palace Head Dan Chi. “Although you’re a bit weak, you seem to be the tallest amongst a short crowd. Then you’ll do. You have the right to ask me questions if you can take three of my hits.”

The entire crowd erupted in a mass of angry shouts and yells when they heard this.

Three hits?

This brat was much too arrogant! Palace Head Dan Chi’s standing was quite high in the Regal Pill Palace, and it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that he was viewed as the reincarnation of a god. Ever since he’d made palace head, everything he had done had greatly revitalized martial dao in the sect and increased its overall strength in a few short decades. Although there was still a gap between the Regal Pill Palace and the Sacred Sword Palace in terms of martial cultivation, that gap was rapidly shrinking. Therefore, everyone greatly admired and worshipped Palace Head Dan Chi.

This blue eyebrow cretin wanted their beloved palace head to take three hits before he could ask any questions? This insanely cocky attitude thoroughly antagonized the entire Regal Pill Palace. They’d seen arrogant individuals before, but never one on this level.

Dan Chi however, was inwardly paying solemn attention. According to his internal analysis, not only was this blue browed

kid not a friendly newcomer, his surefire attitude concealed his supreme confidence. Dan Chi speculated that this person was a supreme genius from the Upper Eight Regions. Based on his cultivation level, he was at least ninth level sage realm, if not emperor realm.

If he'd been an ordinary ninth level sage realm cultivator, Dan Chi might have had some confidence in taking three hits. But if it was a top genius from the Upper Eight Regions, Dan Chi had to take a step back to think carefully because such a person was absolutely someone no Myriad Domain level cultivator could compare to in terms of both potential and resources. If this blue browed youth was ninth level sage realm, then Dan Chi would rather face off against Xiang Wentian's ninth level sage realm.

"Palace Head, allow me to try his paces." A venerated elder of the fifth level sage realm walked up. These old fellows were also well aware at this moment that Palace Head Dan Chi represented the Regal Pill Palace. His humiliation meant the entire sect's humiliated. If Dan Chi was defeated, then the sect would have no more trump cards to work with. The blue browed youth seemed arrogant but was actually deviously calculating. He well knew the theory of needing to capture the leader first when rounding up bandits. The Regal Pill Palace would be at his feet once he defeated Dan Chi!

Palace Head Dan Chi nodded. "Be careful Elder Hu, this person is quite strange. He's at least ninth level sage realm. Focus on keeping yourself safe if anything goes wrong."

Elder Hu nodded with a solemn expression and jumped out of the

crowd, calling out with an arch of his eyebrow, “I’ll take you on!”

Chapter 609: Mysterious Cloaked Person

Cao Jin glanced at Elder Hu to his side and quirked his lips. He brandished his sleeves carelessly. “Scram!”

The angle from the flourish actually formed a terrifying whirlpool of inner energy that struck through the air like a nebula descending from the heavens. It was only when this momentum was crashing towards him that Elder Hu learnt how terrifying this blue browed youth was. He grit his teeth and punched out with his fists, simultaneously crushing two defensive talismans.

Bam!

Two shields blossomed around him, but the enormous power crashed into them like dragons ripping through the void, tearing them apart.

“No!” A trace of terrified surprise flashed through Elder Hu’s eyes as he tried to retreat. But the power from the sleeve seemed to follow him like his shadow. It raced closely after Elder Hu before hurtling into his chest. He opened his mouth and spewed a great gout of blood before he dropped like a kite with cut strings.

One move, again!

Even the reclusive Elder Hu, whose strength was on par with Elder Lian Cheng, had been sent flying with one move from this young man! Everyone, including Dan Chi, sucked in a breath. The old monsters standing behind Dan Chi were even more shocked.

All of them had lived for over a thousand years, but they were actually this helpless against a youth! Such dominating strength shouldn't appear in the Myriad Domain. Even the slowest amongst them knew by now that this youth was from the Upper Eight Regions.

"Dan Chi is it? I don't mind slaughtering you all if you send out more cannon fodder." Cao Jin's gaze was cold as he locked onto Dan Chi. He may have seemed cocky, but he was an exceedingly smart person. When he'd sent Elder Lian Cheng and Elder Hu flying, he'd injured them gravely but not fatally. If he'd attacked with full force, both of the two elders would've died just now, but he'd held back for other reasons.

His goals were the sky and earth rank herbs, and the Longevity Pill recipe. If he started killing people, he might rouse the ire of the entire Regal Pill Palace and they might very well decide to fight to the death with him. Once the other side decided to go down together, it'd be impossible for Cao Jin to gain what he wanted even if he was able to leave. Therefore, he had refrained from killing anyone, not because he couldn't, but out of purposeful calculation. If things really escalated to the point where the entire sect was willing to put their lives on the line, then he would end up with nothing.

Dan Chi knew that if he didn't take a stand soon, the Regal Pill Palace would teeter on the edge of destruction, and his own reputation would free fall. He nodded slowly, "Judging from your overwhelming strength, you must come from a first rank sect of the Upper Eight Regions. The geniuses from that area have lofty visions. Why have you set your sights on my Regal Pill Palace today?"

Cao Jin smiled faintly. “You want to know?”

“I wish to hear the particulars.” Although a life and death struggle was staring at him in the face, Dan Chi didn’t lose his composure.

“Alright, take three of my hits first then. If you can, I’ll leave without another word..” Cao Jin smiled slightly. “But if you can’t, then what I say goes.”

Dan Chi thought for a moment. Although he knew that there was a great gap between his strength and Cao Jin’s, there was still a thirty percent chance that he would be able to take three hits. Now that things had progressed to this, he had to fight to the death even if there was a ten percent chance, much less thirty. If he shied away from battle, then even if this youth didn’t destroy the Regal Pill Palace, the sect’s morale would be greatly affected and its strength sapped. This might even prove its undoing. Then, as sect head, he would lose all his authority and dignity, and all his hopes and ambitions would disappear like fleeting clouds. Therefore, he had to take to the battlefield no matter what. Fleeing was not an option.

“Alright, since you insist upon this matter, then I will take three of your hits.” Palace Head Dan Chi made up his mind.

“Think twice, Palace Head!”

“Palace Head, this kid is strange. Why don’t we all attack him at

the same time along with the Great Protection Formation. If so, we might be able to withstand him! Then, we can then call the other sects for help and everyone can destroy this cretin together."

"Indeed, Palace Head! All sects have the responsibility to step forth when strong enemies invade the Myriad Domain. Our Regal Pill Palace doesn't have to face this alone!"

The old fellows behind Dan Chi were all prudent and cautious. It was apparent that they didn't think well of Dan Chi's chances against the blue browed youth. But with a wave of his hand, Dan Chi stoppered their protests and advice. He was the head of the Regal Pill Palace and had just participated in the Pill Battles. Naturally, he had a deeper understanding of the relationship between the six great sects of the Myriad Domain compared to these elders who didn't usually step out of the sect. To be blunt, each of the six great sects had their own plans. Ask them for help? Apart from the Dark North Sect who would respond, none of the others were worth depending on! In particular, they'd be lucky if the Sacred Sword Palace didn't delight in the Regal Pill Palace's misfortune instead!

Cao Jin was slightly surprised to see Dan Chi walk out. The edges of his lips curved into a smile. "Dan Chi, it seems that I've underestimated your courage. Three hits..."

A faint blue air current that flowed in tune with the endless heavens had startled rippling over Cao Jin's body as he was speaking. At that moment, Cao Jin seemed to dissolve into the void.

“The first hit,” Cao Jin said apathetically as he pointed a finger downwards. Starlight flashed by, melting into the air before it splashed outwards like a river pouring forth from the heavens, instantly covering the surroundings with countless stars. This was one of Cao Jin’s arts, the “Milky Way Point”.

The tip of his finger was festooned with the resplendent celestial radiance of a river of stars.. Each flicker of a star held enough power to crush mountains and rivers. The stars twinkled on and off before they suddenly converged into a single point and transformed into a terrifying cloud of blinding light. It crashed towards Dan Chi like a meteor!

Dan Chi’s entire body tensed as he focused on the attack. He fully extended his consciousness as he locked onto Cao Jin’s every movement and gesture. He knew how difficult it would be to take three hits from someone as strong as Cao Jin. But he’d never thought that what looked like a careless point of a finger had such terrifying might behind it! How was this a ninth level sage realm genius? This was absolutely the peak of the sage realm, half step emperor realm! Dan Chi didn’t dare underestimate this attack. He drew a circle with his hands and quickly formed a vortex within it. Gusts of air continued to converge as the vortex spun faster and faster, becoming a glossy mirror of air currents!

Wham!

The point that seemed to contain the Milky Way hurtled down and crashed into the air current mirror!

Bam!

The mirror shattered as all its air currents scattered. Dan Chi gave a muffled grunt as he was caught in the wake of the attack. He stumbled a dozen steps backwards, a wave of nausea and disgust bottled in his chest. A mouthful of blood welled up in his throat, but he struggled to force it back down. Dan Chi circulated his breathing and flushed red and white, before finally settling back down after he'd circulated his qi seven or eight times.

"Hmm?" Cao Jin was taken aback. Even though he'd only use seventy to eighty percent of his power, he hadn't thought that a sixth level sage realm fellow would be able to take on his vaunted Milky Way Point. The air current mirror that Dan Chi had formed within the vortex was clearly quite a profound technique. There was a layer to it that even Cao Jin couldn't understand.

Dan Chi was also supremely shocked. The move he'd just used was one that Elder Shun had passed onto him before the latter had left. It was meant to be an ultimate trump card to save his life! Since Dan Chi had only practiced it for a short time, he'd only excavated ten to twenty percent of its potential. But even so, this was already his strongest defensive measure. Who would've thought that the other's first blow was enough to force out his trump card? And even then, Dan Chi had still come off worse in the exchange?!

Whilst Dan Chi was stunnedCao Jin was also slightly surprised. He hadn't anticipated either that a mere fourth rank sect would have such marvelous defensive arts!

The rest of the Regal Pill Palace were even more surprised, but

also quite excited. As expected of the palace head! Although his cultivation level was theoretically not that much higher than Elder Hu and Elder Lian Cheng, the two elders had been sent flying with one blow with their lives on the line. However, Palace Head Dan Chi had taken on an even stronger blow, but had only backed up a dozen steps. There didn't seem to be a clear winner in this exchange.

Everyone's confidence in Palace Head Dan Chi surged in this moment. They all knew that the previous palace head had been strong, but it had been many years since he'd passed on. No matter whether they were willing, the current Regal Pill Palace had to rely on the young Dan Chi now. Now it seemed that although the young Dan Chi might not be on the previous palace head's level yet, he was the most dependable person in this sect!

Huang'er had been observing quietly, concealed in the doorway of Jiang Chen's residence. She'd planned on seeing how things played out, but when she saw Palace Head Dan Chi's move, her heart leaped. "Elder Shun? Elder Shun has taught Palace Head Dan Chi before? This move,'Vortex Looking Glass', is one of Elder Shun's arts!"

The highly intelligent Huang'er immediately pieced the puzzle together. Elder Shun must have passed through the Regal Pill Palace after leaving the sixteen kingdom alliance on his search for the Requiem Wood. He knew that the Regal Pill Palace had been founded on pill dao, so he wanted to come here to try his luck. He must've stayed briefly because he'd gotten along with Palace Head Dan Chi. Many thoughts spun through Huang'er's mind as her body vanished with a flash.

Cao Jin was laughing heartily up in the air. “Good! This is a bit interesting. Dan Chi, you deserve your title as palace head just from being able to take that blow. Your strength isn’t below seventh or eight level sage realm. However, I’ll use my full force for my next move!”

Cao Jin didn’t care about the process, only about the results. Since he’d promised to deal three blows, he wouldn’t allow himself to use a fourth. He would grasp all initiative.

Dan Chi treated this with grave solemnity. His opponent had already seen his trump card. Although he still had another, it could only be used once. That’d still leave the other with one more move! Just as he was concentrating fiercely, the air suddenly shook violently. A crack ripped through the clouds, from which a black shadow darted out.

Without forewarning, a mysterious person in a black cloak suddenly inserted themselves between Dan Chi and Cao Jin. “The Ninesuns Sky Sect must treat you quite well to give you treasures like the Moonshatter Awl and the Milky Way Point. It looks like you’re one of ten great disciples?” The person’s voice was dry and cracked, a sign that it was obviously obscured. However, when this voice traveled into Cao Jin’s ears, it actually pierced straight through his consciousness, making it tremble uncontrollably!

Chapter 610: There's Always Someone Stronger

Cao Jin was greatly astonished. He hadn't detected this mysterious person before they'd popped out, and he also inwardly sucked in a breath. "Who are you?"

The cloaked person responded noncommittally, "Don't ask me who I am. Take three of my hits. If you can take them, I'll let you go. I won't make things difficult for you if you can't, just don't let me see you in the Myriad Domain anymore."

These words were spoken so nonchalantly as if this all made complete sense, like Cao Jin was just a clay doll in the cloaked person's eyes, completely harmless. This person's sudden appearance had caused the scene to take another turn, and the situation that had been extremely disadvantageous towards the Regal Pill Palace had changed greatly. It seemed that... this cloaked individual was on the Regal Pill Palace's side?

Cao Jin's eyebrow was arching slightly as he looked at this black cloaked person, arrogance no longer to be found in his eyes. He wanted to look straight through the cloak and see just who was within it! But no matter how he probed, it was as if his consciousness had sunk into the vast seas like a rock. The newcomer had a strong restrictive ability that barred all probes into them, and seemed to be ignoring Cao Jin's attempts as well. They only hovered nonchalantly in midair. Only a pair of eyes that was as deep as the endless starry skies apparent from beneath the cloak.

The atmosphere at the scene grew a bit odd. Cao Jin had been overweeningly arrogant just now and sent two Regal Pill Palace elders flying, and had then made an agreement of three moves with Palace Head Dan Chi. The palace head had just barely managed to withstand the first blow with all his strength, and now this mysterious cloaked person had appeared, wanting Cao Jin to take three hits instead!

Those of the Regal Pill Palace couldn't quite react in time to this new development. Everyone, including the palace head, was quite curious about the newcomer. Not only was this person mysterious, but they'd revealed Cao Jin's background with one word. This greatly shocked everyone assembled as the entire sect became on high alert when they learned that a supreme genius of the Ninesuns Sky Sect had come knocking.

Cao Jin was even more so as he hadn't told anyone of his background since arriving, but this person had seen through everything instantly. This kind of observation skills made Cao Jin suspect that he had no secrets at all in front of the other. Even incredibly confident as he was, he couldn't help but feel a bit uncertain at the moment. He felt that he was mysterious enough in the eyes of the Regal Pill Palace, but this newcomer was even more so.

Should he take the three hits?

As resolute as Cao Jin was, he began to hesitate. This person had appeared so suddenly and without forewarning, completely ignoring the probe from his consciousness. All signs pointed to that this person was only stronger than Cao Jin, and not weaker.

The strength of their single word penetrating his defenses and consciousness made Cao Jin apprehensive. The other possessed the arts to attack the consciousness!

As one of the ten grand disciples of the Sky Sect, it would simply be too embarrassing if he was unable to take even three hits from the other. His reputation would be ruined if word got out. Thus, he waffled for quite a while and decided to not do anything that he wasn't completely certain of. He could return to the Regal Pill Palace at any time. The thing to do was to take care of this cloaked person first.

Cao Jin laughed heartily when his thoughts travelled here. "You must not be from the Regal Pill Palace. This is a private grudge between me and them. It doesn't seem that appropriate, does it now?"

The cloaked person smiled faintly. "You have the right to ask me questions if you can take three of my hits."

This had been what Cao Jin had said to Palace Head Dan Chi previously, and now the cloaked person had returned them verbatim. The Regal Pill Palace felt greatly vindicated, and Palace Head Dan Chi in particular felt such a great flow of warmth in him. Although he didn't know where this mysterious person had come from, he could be certain at this moment that this mysterious person was very kindly predisposed towards the Regal Pill Palace. The elders behind him all looked curiously at the palace head. It was obvious that they were very curious where this cloaked person had come from.

Dan Chi smiled faintly and didn't say anything. He didn't know where this person had come from either, but it was necessary sometimes to maintain a bit of a mysterious air as the palace head. Making it so that his men couldn't see straight through him was also a management method. When he heard this person's words and how they were in obvious support of the Regal Pill Palace, Dan Chi was even more certain that the newcomer bore no ill will towards the sect.

Cao Jin was quite infuriated at the moment. Karma had certainly arrived quickly. He'd put on such airs with Dan Chi before because he'd wanted to take down the morale of the Regal Pill Palace and shave away at their face. Now that these words had been returned exactly to him, he felt even worse than if he'd eaten shit! A ball of rage built in his chest as blood surged to his brain. He almost wanted to throw caution to the wind and agree.

However, Cao Jin was a calculating person after all and he smiled slightly, affecting a dashing air. "I can let things go this time since you have jumped out to defend them. We'll meet again next time. We shall meet again in the future."

Cao Jin was someone who could set things aside when needed to. He wanted to leave now that things weren't going his way. He could come back at his leisure when this cloaked individual left. With the Regal Pill Palace, he could come and go anytime he wished and do whatever he wanted. In Cao Jin's eyes, this person was at most a visitor in the Regal Pill Palace. This kind of person wouldn't spend a long time in a place like this, and could even just be passing by.

However, Cao Jin had obviously underestimated the cloaked person. He was about to dash away when he realized that the cloaked person had landed in front of him with a flash.

“In a hurry to leave?”

Cao Jin frowned. “I gave you face. Are you pushing your luck?”

The cloaked person shook their head slightly. “Then don’t give me face.”

Cao Jin was instantly at a loss for words. He’d seen his fair share of difficult people to deal with, but this one did things completely out of the ordinary. He’d shown them face, but they didn’t want it? He struggled to keep his head. “Then what do you want to do?”

“Speak. What did you come to the Regal Pill Palace for, and with such an overbearing manner?” The cloaked person seemed to be completely removed from the world as there was no hint of emotion in their detached tone at all.

Cao Jin asked angrily, “Are you part of the Regal Pill Palace?”

“The Regal Pill Palace has a deep relationship with me. Out with it. You still have the freedom to speak now. It will be too late to do so when we exchange moves later.”

It’d only ever been Cao Jin threatening others, so it was quite a novel feeling that one of the ten great disciples of the Sky Sect

would be threatened in a mere Myriad Domain! But he actually felt a bit guilty beneath the pressure from the cloaked figure. However, the other plainly didn't plan on giving him time to hesitate. A stunning aura suddenly rose around the cloaked figure and formed a pale-green vortex!

When this vortex formed, it seemed to create an independent zone in the air, becoming an intangible cage!

"Emperor realm sphere of influence!" Cao Jin trembled all over. He'd be a waste of his life if he still didn't recognize what was staring at him in the face. This was the sphere of influence unique to emperor realm cultivators!

What was meant by this sphere of influence was a cultivator using their own aura to create an area of space that was completely under their control. They were the rulers of this zone! Only emperor realm cultivators could do this. Although there was the occasional peak of the sage realm cultivator who could do so, those were one in a million and usually not a human cultivator.

For human cultivators, only those in the emperor realm had the ability to create their own sphere, and this mysterious person in front of him had extended their own sphere with no forewarning and sealed Cao Jin in.

He was absolutely scared witless.

"This is your last chance. Speak." The cloaked person's tone was as measured as always.

Large beads of sweat dripped down continuously from his forehead. He didn't want to accept how the situation had developed. "Just who might you be, must we really deny face to this extent?"

"Do you have any face left?" The cloaked person asked faintly.

Cao Jin was backed into a tight corner as this was how the person responded, no matter what he said. He couldn't get a rise out of them at all. "Fine. Fine!! You're something alright." Cao Jin spat out. "I heard that the Regal Pill Palace had come into the possession of some sky rank spirit herbs and earth rank herbs, as well as a Longevity Pill recipe. I came hunting for treasure."

The cloaked figure looked at Cao Jin with a remote look and nodded slightly. "Very smart. You didn't lie." The person then looked at Palace Head Dan Chi. "Palace Head Dan Chi, this person has come in an unbridled manner to your territory. How would you like to handle him?"

The palace head looked at Elder Yun Nie. Both were extremely taken aback. How did this person know about the sky and earth rank spirit herbs? Everyone had sworn a heavenly oath in Mt. Rippling Mirage, but someone had gone back on it and revealed the matter of the ancient herb garden? Their spirits were exceedingly heavy. They knew that there would be no peace in the Myriad Domain now that this secret had been revealed.

Palace Head Dan Chi called out, "I only ask one question, from

whence did you come by this news?”

Cao Jin smirked dismissively and ignored the palace head. He was wary of the cloaked person, not Dan Chi. How did a mere Regal Pill Palace palace head have the right to interrogate him? The cloaked person looked at Cao Jin and didn’t take down their sphere of influence.

Cao Jin seemed to know that the cloaked person wanted to interrogate him and smirked proudly. “I’ve already explained my intentions, is it important where my information is from? Since you are able to deploy a sphere of influence, you also have at least seventy to eighty percent guarantee of killing me. However, I still have my trump cards. If you force me too hard, I might throw all caution to the wind and take you all down with me. Even if you can ensure that you’ll leave with your life, you still might be injured…”

The cloaked person didn’t seem to want to trade verbal spars with Cao Jin either. “You think too highly of yourself.” They didn’t make a single move, but Cao Jin felt a cool breeze whisk by the back of his head. His neatly tied hair suddenly loosened as they were all cut off.

“Get out of the Myriad Domain. What comes off the next time I see you isn’t your hair, but your head.”

Cao Jin felt his body relax as an enormous surge of power pushed him several thousand meters outwards.

Chapter 611: Fleeing For His Life

Ever since the cloaked person had appeared, Cao Jin had completely fallen under their control like a puppet on strings, without even the slightest power to resist. When his body finally stabilized, his long hair had been completely sheared off from its roots. A cold breeze brushed against the back of his scalp, endless hatred and shame welling up within him. Only, no matter how fiery his rage was, how violent his humiliation, he had no one to vent it on.

He knew that if he turned back again, the only thing waiting for him would be death. That mysterious cloaked man could kill him as easily as lifting a finger! It was laughable that Cao Jin had previously threatened to take his opponent down with him. In the sphere of his opponent's control, he was like a sheep sent to the slaughterhouse. That person could slice off his head just as easily as he sliced off his hair. In that moment, Cao Jin was both ashamed and angry. But he could only flee for his life like a stray dog. This mysterious cloaked man was like a sudden nightmare who had not only foiled all his plans, but also completely shattered his misplaced sense of self-importance.

He'd originally had thought that as a peak sage realm cultivator, he could do as he wanted, rampage as he pleased in this decrepit Myriad Domain? Moreover, the Regal Pill Palace had never been known for its martial strength in the Myriad Domain. So as far as he understood, this Regal Pill Palace should have caved easily in his grasp like a ripe persimmon.

However, the first time he tried to squish one of the Myriad Domain's "ripe persimmons", he found himself mistaken, fatally

mistaken. He had kicked directly at a steel plate instead. Not only had he not squashed a ripe persimmon, he had almost done himself in.

“Fortunately, this cloaked person shouldn’t be part of the Regal Pill Palace. If he had been part of the Palace, I probably wouldn’t have seen the sunlight again after entering the sect.” Cao Jin felt rather lucky, but also sensed that things were rather strange. “This Regal Pill Palace is just a no-name fourth rank sect of the Myriad Domain. Since when did they have such powerful backing? They have the support of an emperor realm expert?”

Cao Jin was a little dispirited. He had long since heard that there wasn’t a single emperor realm expert in the entire Myriad Domain, making them one of the weakest domains of the Divine Abyss Continent. Who’d have thought that the moment he’d arrived here, he’d run head-first into an emperor realm expert, what’s more, a cultivator who thoroughly overshadowed him!

Cao Jin might not have been afraid if they’d been just ordinary first level emperor realm. After all, he was still one of the ten great disciples; his treasures were countless, his potential unparalleled. But he hadn’t even been given the chance to show his cards in the face of this mysterious cloaked person. He’d been completely overpowered the moment his opponent had flared his emperor realm sphere.

Cao Jin believed that someone who was able to so effortlessly employ the sphere of influence was definitely not be at the first level emperor realm. The fact that shocked him most was that although he’d been unable to assess the parameters of that cloaked

individual, that person's unreadable eyes had been exceptionally bright—it was clear that his opponent was relatively young!

This revelation was most startling to him. A person who might be even younger than Cao Jin himself was able to control a sphere of influence. Just the thought of this was enough to raise goosebumps along Cao Jin's body.

"I must have sensed wrongly. How could he be younger than me? I've seen so many geniuses from the Upper Eight Realms. There are definitely some juniors who are stronger than me, but not a lot. Which one of them can use the emperor realm domain as freely as this?" Cao Jin pondered on this matter for a long time but couldn't come up with an answer.

Just as he prepared to leave, a person hurried directly over to him. When Cao Jin saw who it was, his expression shifted slightly, but he turned around to leave as he did not want to deal with that person.

"Sir Cao." Unexpectedly, that person was actually the eleventh rank inspector from the Ninesuns Sky Sect, Weizi Kua. Upon seeing Cao Jin turn around to depart, he quickly called out. But, Weizi Kua soon realised why Cao Jin was avoiding him. Cao Jin's dishevelled hair looked as though it had been cut off with some kind of sharp tool, making the usually elegant and graceful youth appear with an extremely wretched appearance. With Cao Jin's pride, there was no way he was willing to show this sorry side of himself to Weizi Kua. In that instant, Weizi Kua was somewhat regretful that he had called out to Cao Jin.

“Sir Cao, what... what happened here?” Weizi Kua could only push through with his question when he saw Cao Jin’s gloomy expression.

“Inspector Wei, were you following me?!” Cao Jin wasn’t happy.

“I wouldn’t dare,” Weizi Kua hurriedly waved a hand. “I was just worried that Sir Cao might forget about our Sky Sect’s grand plans in your battlelust.”

“So in Inspector Wei’s eyes, Cao Jin is the someone who ignores what’s important?” Cao Jin’s belly was filled with anger.

Inspector Wei silently cursed his bad luck, very much regretting that he had stopped Cao Jin just now. Judging from the latter’s behavior now, he must have had a hard time at the Regal Pill Palace. But this was what Weizi Kua found difficult to understand. Amongst the 6 fourth rank sects of the Myriad Domain, the Regal Pill Palace was one of the weakest in terms of martial prowess. This was accepted as a general fact.

A century ago, the Regal Pill Palace had a doddering old palace head. He’d lived close to two thousand years and by virtue of his age and experience alone, he had just managed to rise to the ninth level sage realm. But ever since that old palace head had exhausted his years, the Regal Pill Palace had not possessed any more sky sage level experts. This was the information that had been reported to the Ninesuns Sky Sect.

With the plans the Ninesuns Sky Sect had for the Myriad

Domain, it naturally knew the domain's major sects like the back of its hand. Weizi Kua was no exception. Previously, he'd been concerned that Cao Jin was too hot-blooded. If he began a battle to the death with the Regal Pill Palace and massacred them, the other sects in the Myriad Domain would naturally be on their guard. If such a stifling enmity formed, the Ninesuns Sky Sect's plans would be derailed. But never in his wildest dreams would Weizi Kua have imagined that Cao Jin would lose to the hands of the Regal Pill Palace. "Sir Cao, I have always deeply admired you. There shouldn't be anyone who can threaten you in this Regal Pill Palace."

With an icy laugh, Cao Jin replied, "If you want to know the whole story, why don't you run over to the Regal Pill Palace and see for yourself?"

Weizi Kua smiled ruefully. A peak sage realm cultivator like you was beaten black and blue. I'm not even half as strong as you are, wouldn't I just be looking to suffer if I went there myself? He knew that Cao Jin was in a bad mood so it would be difficult to question him any further.

Cao Jin didn't seem to want to thoroughly offend Weizi Kua, so he gestured with a hand and dully replied, "There's nothing to hide about it. The Regal Pill Palace is not worth considering, but this emperor realm expert suddenly appeared out of thin air. I was too careless and almost died at his hands."

"An emperor realm expert?" Weizi Kua was dumbfounded. "There's an emperor realm expert in the Regal Pill Palace?"

“Likely not part of the Regal Pill Palace. He only said that he shares a rather deep history with the Palace, but I don’t know if he was just making things up.”

A cautious expression crossed Weizi Kua’s face as he fell momentarily silent. There was too much information in Cao Jin’s words. If the Regal Pill Palace had an emperor realm expert, no matter if he was a member of the Palace or someone who backed the Palace, this was still an enormous unknown variable. The Ninesuns Sky Sect had never accounted for this factor in their plans. To suddenly involve an emperor realm expert... if this had not been discovered beforehand, this existence would’ve definitely fatally impacted their arrangements. It was lucky that Cao Jin had found this out early.

In a grave tone mixed with some amount of pandering, Weizi Kua said, “Sir Cao, although you did not manage to snatch those things this time, you’ve done a great service for our sect. This information that the Regal Pill Palace has the backing of an emperor realm expert heavily impacts our plans.”

Cao Jin was obviously disinterested in this kind of service. “I’ll count this as my own carelessness, but there’s nothing I can complain about losing at the hands of an emperor realm expert. Much less an extraordinary emperor realm expert who could actually effortlessly control the sphere of influence.”

“What?!” Weizi Kua’s expression changed again. “Effortlessly control the emperor realm domain?”

“That’s right. In addition, maybe I perceived wrongly but I felt

like that person was even younger than me," Cao Jin revealed this as well.

Weizi Kua's expression took an even greater turn for the worse. "Younger than you? This kind of terrifying prodigy exists in the Upper Eight Realms that they can effortlessly control the sphere of influence?"

There were also a handful of emperor realm experts able to freely control the sphere within the Ninesuns Sky Sect. But among the younger generation, there wasn't a single person capable of effortlessly doing so. After all, there were only a couple of young prodigies in the sect who were able to enter the emperor realm. There was an extremely limited number of existences in the Upper Eight Realms who was younger than Cao Jin and could effortlessly manipulate the sphere of influence. In that moment, both Weizi Kua and Cao Jin were feeling downcast, their minds full of questions.

……

Above the Regal Pill Palace, Palace Head Dan Chi cupped his fists in salute. "Dan Chi represents the Regal Pill Palace to thank this kind friend's act of justice…"

The cloaked man shook their gently. "There's no need. The Ninesuns Sky Sect has set its sights on the Regal Pill Palace, so you will need to take care in the future."

After he said this, the cloaked person's shadow wavered before

they vanished into thin air. This caused waves of astonishment to spread through the Regal Pill Palace. By the time Dan Chi thought of retaining them, the person had already disappeared without a trace.

"This senior is truly mysterious. I couldn't even see how he left." Dan Chi murmured to himself. Then, he turned around and said, "This time, our Regal Pill Palace's misfortune has turned into a blessing thanks to this mysterious senior. Everyone should learn something from their mistakes. Take this as a warning."

"Indeed, from what happened today, it seems that Palace Head Dan Chi is correct in vigorously training our martial prowess. If our Regal Pill Palace was more prosperous in martial prowess, we would not have suffered such heavy losses today."

"Yes, a random prodigy from a first ranked sect could oppress our entire sect to the death. Thinking about it is so disheartening!"

"Don't be dismayed, everyone. Didn't that mysterious senior say that boy is one of the ten great disciples? Among the younger generation of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, he ranks amongst the top. We don't have to belittle ourselves. The first ranked sects are have abundant resources and numerous prodigies. Our Regal Pill Palace will learn from our shame and work harder to reach the top," Palace Head Dan Chi encouraged, upon seeing everyone's low spirits.

Beside him, Elder Yun Nie also nodded, "Just now, that mysterious senior was very kind to our Regal Pill Palace, and was also an unexpected discovery."

Dan Chi gestured, “Everyone, dismissed. Let’s check on the condition of Elder Hu and Elder Lian Cheng’s injuries.”

The sudden arrival of this mishap created a strange sense of urgency in every member of the Regal Pill Palace. Cao Jin’s unannounced presence caused them to recognize the cruelty of the the martial world. Even a fourth ranked sect like them could be easily extinguished with the flick of a finger by a higher power. When they thought about this, everyone in the Regal Pill Palace felt an even more pressing need to diligently train. A genius disciple of a first ranked sect had taught them what a gap in power truly meant. Compared to a genius from a first ranked sect, they realized that they were but frogs trapped at the bottom of a well.

Chapter 612: The Ancient Slaughter Formation

Although Elder Lian Cheng and Elder Hu had suffered relatively severe injuries, they weren't life-threatening. However, Dan Chi and Yun Nie's mood remained extremely downcast. This was because the secret of the ancient herb garden had been exposed, which was definitely not good for the various sects of the Myriad Domain. Not only because everyone had received sky sage herbs but because of the existence of the garden itself. Once more powerful forces noticed the ancient herb garden, who knew how experts would flock over and join the turmoil that was the Myriad Domain. At that time, how much of a right to speak would the indigenous sects of the Myriad Domain hold then?

"Palace Head, judging from this, someone has betrayed our Myriad Domain," Elder Yun Nie sighed.

Palace Head Dan Chi's expression was grave. "I have already sent out several messages. Besides Wang Jianyu of the Sacred Sword Palace, the other sect heads will soon receive my message."

The Regal Pill Palace had been attacked for the sky rank herbs, and the secret of the ancient herb garden was revealed! When the various other sects learned of this, they were all indescribably shocked.

These people were all old foxes so how could they not be able to predict the consequences of an event like this?

The primary suspect everyone had in mind was the Sacred Sword Palace since the conflicts between the Sacred Sword Palace and the Regal Pill Palace was an unresolvable grudge in the Myriad Domain. And only the Sacred Sword Palace would have the motive to expose the secret. Only, did the Sacred Sword Palace really dare to expose the secret? Were they not afraid of receiving heavenly tribulation?

In an instant, every member of the various sects felt a great sense of danger. In particular, the far-seeing leaders of the great sects could all sense that this might be the start of a chaotic era for the Myriad Domain.

Who was the traitor?

The air between the sects grew thick with suspicion.

Within Jiang Chen's residence, Huang'er had returned to the wood spring. A set of black robes had been discarded to one side beside the fountain. Huang'er descended and soaked her perfect body into the waters.

"It's so tiring to put up a threatening, dangerous front." When she thought of her experience just now, she found it it a little funny. Still, using the sphere of influence had caused her to recklessly tap into her consciousness, leading to a slight ripple in her mindset.

She did not dare to treat this lightly, so she had hurried back to the cavern to recite the Sacred Deliverance Mantra and play the

Ethereal Soothing Melody few times. Only then did she barely bring her somewhat agitating consciousness back under control. She had always spent these days in a smooth and steady mindset, and the Generation Binding Curse had not flared up at all. That was because she held no complications in her heart and lived her life very simply, without recklessly disturbing her consciousness. And just now, she had originally decided to abstain from interfering with the Regal Pill Palace's matters. But that Cao Jin was unreasonably tyrannical and would possibly have destroyed the entire Regal Pill Palace with a single word.

Moreover, Huang'er could see that the Palace Head Dan Chi actually had some history with Elder Shun. Huang'er was usually someone who treasured relationships. From a emotional point of view, she felt that she should take some interest in this matter.

Firstly, this was because of the relationship between Elder Shun and Palace Head Dan Chi.

Secondly, this was also a task she had been entrusted with by Jiang Chen. Before Jiang Chen had left, he had entrusted this residence to her so she felt obliged to protect everything.

Only, with her usage of the sphere of influence, her consciousness had been disturbed and that Generation Binding Curse she had kept under control seemed to be rearing its ugly head again. Fortunately, that Cao Jin had fled quickly. Otherwise, if Huang'er continued to fight, she would overstimulate her consciousness and it was entirely possible that the Generation Binding Curse would have backlashed on her.

Even so, Huang'er actions this time had been slightly perilous. Nonetheless, she didn't regret what she'd done.

"Sir Jiang freed me temporarily from the agony of the Generation Binding Curse. So what if I take some risks in helping him run some errands?" As Huang'er cleansed herself in the wood spirit spring, her consciousness gradually settled down.

……

In the forbidden area of the Ancient Scarlet Heavens Sect.

Jiang Chen had unknowingly cultivated in this Ancient Scarlet Heavens Sect for over half a year. By now, he had risen another level, reaching eighth level origin realm. "If I wasn't in a hurry to leave, this cavern is actually a very suitable place to train. If I continue at this pace, considering the resources I have at hand, there should be less than three months to go before I break through to the ninth level."

Jiang Chen was still fairly satisfied with his current progress. He had given himself the target of leaving this place within two years. By now, half a year and passed and he was already in the eighth level origin realm. He would enter the ninth level in another three months. Once he successful broke through to the ninth level, he would be qualified to start assailing the sage realm. Once he broke through to sage realm, he would not dally here any longer.

If it was anyone else, no matter how urgent matters outside were, they still would not be as determined to leave this place as Jiang

Chen. After all, the Ancient Scarlet Heavens Sect's inheritance was truly extraordinary. But to Jiang Chen, no matter how wondrous this inheritance was, it was still overshadowed by the people he held dear.

"Judging from my calculations, there's only a year and a half to that Myriad Grand Ceremony. No matter what, I need to leave this place before that ceremony." Jiang Chen set this goal for himself.

It wasn't so much that Jiang Chen felt strongly about that ceremony, but more that he had a premonition. The Myriad Grand Ceremony would prove to be a turning point for the Myriad Domain. The betrayal of the Tristar Sect, the machinations of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, there was danger hidden everywhere, waiting to erupt. Once it erupted, the structure of the Myriad Domain would be completely overturned.

Jiang Chen obviously did not possess a savior complex, but if great change occurred in the Myriad Domain, he hoped that he would have enough ability to protect those he needed to protect. Moreover, Palace Head Dan Chi had brought him to the Regal Pill Palace from the Precious Tree Sect. When it came to crucial moments, Jiang Chen hoped that he could return the favor and help him out. Palace Head Dan Chi was a heroic and ambitious person, but Jiang Chen knew that the Palace Head's dream of unifying the Myriad Domain would prove to be an even more difficult and tedious task than he could ever anticipate. It was just, there were some things that Jiang Chen could not easily speak of.

Palace Head Dan Chi's martial prowess was middling in the Myriad Domain to begin with. The betrayal of the Tristar Sect was

also adding fuel to the flames. What was more, the Myriad Domain had yet another potential enemy—the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Why had the popular and powerful Myriad Domain fallen down to the backwards location it was today? Why had the Myriad Empire completely crumbled?

This was because the royal family of the Myriad Empire had offended the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Six hundred years ago, a son of the royal family had wandered outside and unintentionally sullied a certain powerful holy maiden of that mid region, thus inciting the monster known as the Great Scarlet Mid Region. The formidable Empire had almost collapsed entirely within the span of a night, and every cultivator above the sage realm had been killed.

That battle had caused the Myriad Domain to lose a large fraction of its power. Six hundred years later, the Myriad Domain still had not improved in status, even today. Some of the elders in the Myriad Domain had experienced that previous assault. Only, these elders had only been insignificant ants back then.

Jiang Chen had previously heard Palace Head Dan Chi talk about these historical anecdotes, and the palace head had also viewed Jiang Chen as the single transformation factor of the Myriad Domain. It was just that Jiang Chen himself wasn't too passionate about this cause. As an reincarnator, he was not particularly attached to the Myriad Domain and he had set his sights far above this tiny region. Nevertheless, no matter which angle he view Palace Head Dan Chi, Jiang Chen still admired this leader. Therefore, should his strength allow it, Jiang Chen was willing to help him.

Once a disciple of the Regal Pill Palace, always a disciple of the Regal Pill Palace. Jiang Chen naturally did not wish for any mishaps to fall upon the Regal Pill Palace in the impending assault.

“Power. In the end, I still need more power. If I don’t have enough power, I will only be controlled by others when the tumultuous storms arise. Only if I have domineering power will I be able to dictate the winds and clouds. No matter what changes the future will bring, I will grasp control with one hand!” As he thought of this, Jiang Chen stood up.

He decided that it was time to challenge the second formation!

The second formation was purely a killing formation that tested him on his combat abilities. Since he had continuously raised his martial prowess, Jiang Chen’s actual combat ability had also naturally greatly improved. This was the perfect time to put it to the test. He stood by boundary of the formation and gazed upon it. When he saw nothing but a haze of blurry ash, Jiang Chen knew that this formation would certainly not be simple.

These three great formations that led to the inheritance possessed one positive. Their foundations all lay within the formations themselves. No one ruled over them and no one guarded them. As long as Jiang Chen could find the key to the foundation, he could break it. What’s more, these formations gave him a free disk each time. This was absolutely receiving a nice reward after receiving a hard slap first.

If someone was presiding over these formations, then the key could be moved at any time according to the will of its master. In

that case, there would be no way for a challenger to find the location of the foundation. This meant that there was an enormous difference between a human-controlled foundation and one without.

Keeperless formations were relatively easy to break. Most masterless formations were fixed formations, which made their foundations immovable. On the other hand, because human-controlled formations had someone at the helm, they were living creations. These formations had unpredictable changes to them and once within the formation, the keeper held an insurmountable advantage, making them far more difficult to break.

Of course, these were all approximations. In reality, many formation masters were able to design living formations even if they did not have a keeper. It was even possible to insert a formation into another, using one technique to propel the next, turning the formations into a chain reaction that would kill the challenger before he even figured out what was going on. Therefore, the strength of a formation lay in the methods used by its master, and not whether it was a fixed or a living formation. But if they were on the same level, live formations were indeed more difficult to break than fixed ones. The second formation that Jiang Chen faced was called the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven. Jiang Chen had already made plenty of simulations of the formation before taking it on.

Whoosh!

Jiang Chen turned into a streak of light that dissolved into the formation. Numerous vines from the Lotus surrounded his body,

protecting him from harm. He descended to the ground and found that an expanse of yellow sand lay below his feet. There was only a yellow desert in the distance as far as his eyes could see. As he hesitated, the sand before him began to toss and turn like frothing water. His vision was filled with sand as countless sandstorms surged towards him as if golden dragons.

"Bring it on!" Jiang Chen shouted lowly, using his Golden Cicaca Wings to propel himself high into the sky. With a grasping motion of his hand, a golden colored mountain fell into his palm.

"Suppress." Jiang Chen held nothing back, choosing to employ the newest card in his arsenal straight away—the magnetic golden mountain.

That magnetic golden mountain transformed into a hill and smashed downwards with a crash.

Chapter 613: Jiang Chen Challenges The Formation

The power of the magnetic gold mountain was beyond Jiang Chen's expectations. As the golden hill crashed down, the billowing sands were subdued and the sand dragons helplessly dissipated into nothingness. The scene suddenly changed before Jiang Chen's eyes.

The rolling yellow sands disappeared and were replaced by a sea of fire. Billowing thick smoke ascended into the sky, and all around was bubbling magma that occasionally spawned horrifying flame dragons. As birds flew overheard, some of them were swallowed up by the flame dragons, turning into lumps of charcoal and tragically falling into the rolling magma. Jiang Chen found that he had actually been surrounded by magma.

Boom! Boom!

The crimson magma surrounding him constantly erupted in streams that closed in on Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen did not dare disregard this phenomenon. Countless ice lotuses materialized to protect his body. At the same time, an outer ring of fire lotuses roiled forwards, their vines reaching swept out over thirty meters long. Like an ancient beast opening their mouths, their enormous petals opened up and wolfed down the incoming magma streams.

The Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice's natural talent was very high since it was at a divine rank. Although Jiang Chen was currently only in the eighth origin realm, the Lotus' ability was already quite good.

The numerous fire lotus petals devoured the magma streams as soon as they drew near. Some magma would occasionally slip the net, but they were all blocked and frozen by the wall of ice lotuses. As things stalemated, Jiang Chen's view changed once again.

That field of boundless magma suddenly decided to sing a song of fire and ice and transformed into a silvery snow-covered world.

The wind was howling and the snow flurries were dancing across a thousand miles. Snowflakes larger than goose feathers continued to fall and soon covered the ground like a heavy blanket beneath his feet. Jiang Chen was slightly surprised; the changes of the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven changes were astonishingly fast. Fortunately, the Lotus of Ice and Fire had not been put away yet. The countless fire lotuses had just absorbed a large amount of magma, so their pedals opened wide and spewed out numerous tongues of flame.

Boom!

A radius of a few thousand meters around Jiang Chen were swept clean by a few dozen tongues of flames, and the impacts caused the icy ground to form spider web cracks. This icy snowy world could not deter Jiang Chen in any way. As Jiang Chen tread on the ground, the ice beneath his feet shattered into fragments.

At this moment, an unexpected situation arose as the pieces of ice all suddenly levitated into the air. They were sharpened in a flash of light and turned into razor-sharp icicles.

In that instant – over a hundred thousand icicles shot towards Jiang Chen like a mighty army. Jiang Chen scoffed as a sudden burst of heroism rose up within him.

He stretched out both of his hands and strands of magnetic storm surged forth while his whole body started overflowing with a golden light that illuminated the surroundings.

Jiang Chen's body arts, the Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods, had long since transformed his body into iron-like muscles and steel-like bones. As soon as he activated this body art, his golden body became full of explosive power, like an indestructible small mountain range.

Pfft. Pfft. Pfft!

As the numerous icicles came near, a portion of them were swallowed up by the magnetic storm, while the rest crashed into Jiang Chen's golden aura. A bizarre scene appeared at this time. The icicles were actually unable to penetrate the golden aura around Jiang Chen. The most powerful icicles could only pierce through about three feet of light before stopping. Jiang Chen called upon his art and the golden aura churned, crushing all the suspended icicles into vapor which dissipated into nothingness.

Jiang Chen was overjoyed with complete delight. "I didn't expect that after practicing the 'Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods' into the fifth transformation, my Golden Body of Demons and Gods would reach such high success success. With this defense

level, I have a seventy percent confidence in enduring a mortal sage realm cultivator's full strength attack, not to mention these icicles."

One had to know, Jiang Chen was only at the eighth origin realm. Once he reached sage realm, he would be able to use his physical body alone to withstand one or two blows of a sky sage realm expert. One or two blows was nothing to scoff at. During a duel between experts, if one side was willing to take a blow to their body, then the probability of striking their opponent in return would also greatly increase. After all, this risky method of fighting was akin to gambling with their lives. One could increase their chances of dealing a devastating blow if they took one in return as well.

After continuously receiving the brunt of attacks from sandstorms, magma fire dragons, and the icy world, Jiang Chen felt more confident in facing this Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven.

"Seven should mean that there are seven kinds of slaughter, and thus seven kinds of attacks." Jiang Chen had an overall understanding of this formation by now and his confidence was enhanced quite a bit with this understanding. Sure enough, as Jiang Chen finished his words, the icy world changed once again and transformed into an endless forest with him landing in the midst of a dense jungle. Various vine-like creatures surrounded him like thousands of snakes and rushed toward him in an attempt to entangle him.

Vines? Jiang Chen smirked coldly. What vine would be stronger

than the Lotus of Ice and Fire? However, Jiang Chen did not plan on using the Lotus here. One of his hands grasped at the air and the magnetic golden mountain appeared once again. Boundless metallic spirit power emanated from his hands and turned into rays of golden, rippling light. Jiang Chen's eyes suddenly glared as his fingers pointed forward, "Try the power of my Supernova Point's fourth technique!"

His index finger started pointing and waving, as drawing a picture of the mountains and rivers. Streams of golden spirit power radiating from the magnetic mountain started coiling around Jiang Chen's index finger, accumulating energy that was poised to spring into action. Suddenly, Jiang Chen shouted lowly, "Galaxy Slash!"

Sfzzzzt. Sfzzzt!

Countless crisp cutting sound came from the void and formed layers of rampaging, deadly sword qi. The vines surrounded by the cutting power of the void were helplessly grinded into pieces. "Not bad, this Supernova Point's fourth technique is indeed a lot stronger."

The Supernova Point's first three techniques of the Skyblaze Point, Profound Dark Point, and Galaxy Point were all powerful single target attacks. However, Galaxy Slash wasn't just a single target skill now, but rather a frightening area of effect attack. Explosive force could burst forth from a single finger like a wave of shooting stars decimating all the King's men and all the King's horses. The Ninesuns Skysect's Cao Jin would certainly be shocked if he had seen this move.

This was because this art was very similar to Cao Jin's vaunted Milky Wave Point, although the Supernova Point's inherent mysteries were far deeper and more complex. Compared to the Supernova Point, the Milky Wave Finger was only a beginner technique.

Of course, Jiang Chen had played a trick with this previous move as well. Because the magnetic golden mountain was a strong source of metallic energy, Jiang Chen had borrowed the power of the metallic spirit power and fused it with his Supernova Point to counter the wood properties of the vines.

In the five elements, different elements beget and restrain one another. In this case, since metal happened to counter wood, the wood property vines were completely overpowered by the strong metallic attribute attack.

Jiang Chen's nose lightly twitched. "Mm, not bad. These vine are not only a physical attack, but also poison as well? Thankfully I've already refined the Thundercloud Cicada's bloodline, or else I really might have fallen to this." Jiang Chen now fully understood everything. "Five of the seven attacks of this formation correspond to the five elements." The representations were: the sandstorm, earth; the magma fire dragons, fire; the icy world, water; and the vines, wood. Thus, it was likely that there would be a metal property attack next?

Jiang Chen wasn't afraid at all since with the magnetic golden mountain, the treasure could absorb any metallic attack that came at him How would Jiang Chen be injured by such an attack?

The endless forest disappeared and Jiang Chen abruptly appeared amidst a cacophony of fighting sounds, as if he had suddenly been transported to an ancient battlefield. Countless shadows of swords and other weapons charged towards Jiang Chen.

His lips quirked. As expected.

These shadows were just like the weapon-shaped monsters he had encountered during the tenth level trial of the magnetic golden mountain. However, these sword shadows were a bit stronger and more violent. Countless shadows made from metal power postured and brandished weapons, storming over. Violent sounds of “kill!” rose in the air. A vast ocean of sword shadows appeared before Jiang Chen’s eyes while his ears were full of a powerful army’s battle cries.

“Kill! Kill! Kill!”

The hundred thousand strong army shouted vigorously in unison, their murderous aura overflowing as if wanting to split the heavens and shatter the air itself.

“Insignificant tricks. Magnetic golden mountain, swallow them all!”

The magnetic golden mountain went forth and like a black hole, its powerful magnetic storms mercilessly swallowed all the sword shadows. In a blink of an eye, everything became tranquil as the suppressive murderous air disappeared just like that.

“The five element’s attacks have passed, what’s left? There should be two attacks left.” Jiang Chen did not let down his guard and paid close attention. He was confident in facing the five elements, but the remaining two attacks were likely more formidable.

At this time, Jiang Chen felt the air fluctuate. “Oh?”

His ears twitched as he suddenly detected a hint of a weird presence. The air suddenly ripped apart as a wind blade slashed towards Jiang Chen’s chest.

Jiang Chen’s Golden Body once again erupted into being and the wind blade screeched to a halt upon striking his aura. But following this, the crack in the air continuously blew out wind blades, slashing towards Jiang Chen.

“Wind attack formation?” Although Jiang Chen was surprised, he remained undaunted.

He once again rotated his inner power and his Golden Body flared up and expanded into a golden body that ten meters tall. Jiang Chen slapped or kicked aside the various wind blades. At this time, the air violently shook and an enormous hole in the air appeared in front of Jiang Chen. Like a black hole, a strong sense of suction pulled at Jiang Chen. A spatial rip and spatial storm? Jiang Chen was immensely surprised.

Chapter 614: The Mystery Of The Myriad Domain

Spatial turbulence would often appear in spatial rips. Ordinary turbulence was easy to deal with, but it was difficult to handle when they formed into storms. This formation had actually formed a storm in the void through a spatial rip. How would this not possibly surprise Jiang Chen?

“This sect was an ancient sect alright! There are so many changes in just a formation. This is absolutely much superior to any sect in the Myriad Domain. Even those first rank sects might not be a match for this sect.” As shocked as Jiang Chen was, he knew that he couldn’t be churned into the spatial storm. He guessed that he wouldn’t actually be faced with life threatening danger if he was embroiled into the storm. He might just be thrown out of the formation. However, since he’d entered to break the formation, he wouldn’t let himself be stopped halfway!

He called upon the magnetic golden mountain continuously and also increasingly strengthened his body. The golden body that had been nine meters tall previously increased to thirty meters before long. Jiang Chen made a pushing motion with his hand and gathered the mountain into a ball of golden light, smashing it ferociously on the spatial rip.

Wham!

The spatial rip instantly collapsed when pummeled by the immense magnetic energy.

Bam bam bam bam!

Several enormous explosions rang out as the spatial rip winked out of existence, restoring clear skies to the surroundings again. Jiang Chen was in a great mood after being able to take care of a threat like this with one move.

“An increase in strength allowing me to crush opponents with absolute strength is hell of a lot more satisfying than any tricks or plots!” Jiang Chen discovered that his practical strength had risen noticeably after he’d entered the sky origin realm, particularly as he was able to tap into the true strength of all sorts of treasures now. His battle strength was increasing in leaps and bounds. Although he was eighth level origin realm now, he’d still have a roughly eighty percent chance of winning if he was in a face to face battle with Wang Han.

When he thought of how Wang Han had attacked him, a ball of rage welled up in Jiang Chen’s heart. Wang Han had strutted in front of the Regal Pill Palace more than once, and now that Jiang Chen’s strength had increased tremendously, his first thought was that he wanted to crush Wang Han.

However, he didn’t let his thoughts drift too far away. He knew that he had only gone through six stages in the formation, so there should be another one coming up. But looking at how clear the skies were, what could possibly be the last stage?

Jiang Chen didn’t dare treat this casually as he knew that the

formation could flicker through formations incredibly quickly. He couldn't relax his guard as long as he was still caught in this active formation. He focused his concentration and scanned an area of several thousand meters with his consciousness.

He suddenly squinted in the midst of deploying God's Eye and looked up at the sky. A turquoise cloud had drifted over.

"Hmm? What's that?" As Jiang Chen wondered, the cloud suddenly split open as turquoise lightning arced through the sky and came crashing down.

"No way... a slaughter formation of thunder?" Jiang Chen was taken aback. He knew how impressive this formation was, but hadn't anticipated that it would embody even a thunder formation. Just who was the person who'd set this formation up, and how incredible was his strength?!

Although this formation wasn't quite fatal and it was used more for testing than to slaughter those trapped within, Jiang Chen still had to sigh with admiration at the transformative ability of the formation.

The Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven well deserved its name! And, it just so happened that Jiang Chen was least afraid of thunder. Even if he hadn't refined the Thundercloud Tree into him, he was impervious to all thunder and lightning thanks to the Golden Cicada Bloodline. How would he be afraid of the thunder formation? He could count on one hand the number of kinds of thunder that could harm him now.

He smiled faintly and retracted the golden body, allowing the turquoise lightning to strike him at will.

Boom!

When the lightning arc grazed him, it was as if a raindrop had dropped onto him and disappeared. Numerous clouds flurried over in a multi-colored dance, blue, purple, green and orange...

Lightning the colors of the rainbow rained down like a rain shower. Jiang Chen stood in the midst of a dome of lightning with no reaction at all. The lightning always seemed to be swallowed by some sort of power when they neared Jiang Chen, disappearing completely.

The thunder formation was the last strike of the Ancient Slaughter Formation, the strongest and most frightening of its attacks. But who would've known that it'd actually be the easiest of the formations to get through for Jiang Chen? He seemed to be taking a walk in the park as he stood in the midst of the thunder formation.

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When the thunder formation vanished, all the scenery in front of him disappeared as well as a formation disk once again landed in Jiang Chen's hand, and he found himself standing in the hallway again.

Successful attempt on the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven!

Jiang Chen toyed with its formation disk. As he peered at the etchings on it, he could see that this disk had a higher degree of precision and was more complex.

“Tsk tsk, this disk is uncommon alright. It can actually adjust the level of the formation?” Upon closer study, he saw that this disk was actually quite sophisticated and could adjust the difficulty level of the formation. “So it seems that the version I was in was actually the simplest level that this disk could produce, and there are two higher level difficulties?”

Jiang Chen suddenly felt that he’d picked up quite a treasure. “Having this formation disk means I grasp a great weapon! If even the simplest level is thus, then wouldn’t the power of the mid and upper levels be even more astounding?”

Jiang Chen was quite delighted and felt that it was still somewhat worth it toe be trapped in the forbidden area of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. With the successful challenge of the second formation, he was drawing ever closer to the tower of inheritance. However, he didn’t plan on continuing to challenge the third formation. He wouldn’t take this risk before he broke through ninth level origin realm. Although he wanted to leave immediately, he also knew that great haste was not always good speed.

Back in the library, Jiang Chen started perusing the books again.

He'd flipped through all of the journals of the residence master in these days and read many of the tomes here, gaining a better understanding of the Divine Abyss Continent. However, he still had no memory of the so-called ancient times of the Continent.

"This is odd. I feel that there's a connection between the Continent and my past life, but I haven't heard of any of the ancient characters and happenings mentioned in these books. Can it be that the Divine Abyss Continent wasn't one of the planes of existence in my prior life?" The more Jiang Chen understood, the more confused he was.

"Just what kind of world have I arrived in? What plane of existence is this? If I say it's a secular plane, it's refuted by the fact that gods and demons warred here in ancient times. But if I say it's of a divine level, its level is obviously not there."

Ordinary secular planes could also give birth to gods and demons, but definitely not large numbers of them. This was because such a plane could support large numbers of them at all. Any secular plane suffered from limited resources and land. It could possibly nurture billions of mortals, but it might not be able to accommodate a hundred gods and demons. After all, the resources and energy required by a divine being was absolutely greater than countless ordinary cultivators.

This was also why that in the world of martial dao, the higher in cultivation levels one went up to, the fewer there were at that level. When one reached a certain level, limited resources would never satisfy all of their needs. This was how wars arose, why there were fights and killing and those who perished. This was

how the food chain of the martial dao world was sustained. Otherwise, if all cultivators ascended continuously with no end in sight and continued consuming resources, this plane of existence would collapse due to exhaustion of resources in less than a hundred years.

However, this Divine Abyss Continent was really quite odd. Ever since he'd entered the forbidden area that was the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, Jiang Chen had steadfastly felt that this Continent was just a secular plane. It wasn't until he'd come here that he knew that wars between gods and demons had occurred here in the ancient times. This was proof that things weren't as simple as he thought, and this plane had once had an exceedingly glorious history in ancient times.

"How is this possible?" Jiang Chen felt that this plane was truly a riddle, and the more he dug into it, the more extraordinary he felt it was. He was now wondering how many years it'd been since he'd reincarnated. How long had it been since his timeframe? However, answers were lacking.

"Ai, this is all too far away. I'm not even in the sage realm at the moment, it's a bit too early to think of all this. Cultivation... I need to continue to cultivate! Only through continued increase in strength will I be able to uncover more useful information..."

Once Jiang Chen had worked through this train of thought, he flung all this to the back of his mind and once again entered a state of oblivious cultivation. Although refining dragon crystals to cultivate was a very wasteful method, it was very effective. He successfully broke through to ninth level origin realm after three

months!

“Mm, there is still a year and three months until the Myriad Grand Ceremony. I wonder how the Regal Pill Palace is doing?” After consolidating his grasp on the ninth level origin realm, he finally had some time to himself. He had decided that he would challenge the third formation after another half of a month of cultivation. He’d be able to enter the tower of inheritance as long as he broke through that one. Although there would certainly be many trials within, it would bring him one steps closer on the path of exit.

“I’ll challenge the third formation in the ninth level origin realm, then fully challenge the tower of inheritance when first level sage realm!” Jiang Chen set down his targets. According to the journals of this residence’s master, he would be able to receive the sect’s inheritance after passing through the tower’s test and become the sect’s successor. He would be able to control all of the hidden formations of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect then.

There was a key formation hub for all the formations in the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. Whoever controlled this hub would thoroughly become the new master of the forbidden area. That meant he’d be able to come and go as he would then.

“Time to get back to work!” Jiang Chen mused briefly and then began to cultivate again.

Chapter 615: Disbandment Of The Tristar Sect

Fortunately, this was Jiang Chen. His power of perception was extremely strong. Adding that to the memories and knowledge he gained from his previous life, he faced no difficulties at all when trying to understand the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's formation techniques. After all, the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect was strong, but ultimately incomparable to the level in which Jiang Chen had been in in his previous life. The knowledge that Jiang Chen possessed from before still far surpassed that of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

Therefore, Jiang Chen did not face any trouble when deciphering the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's formations. Even if there were occasionally some difficulties, he did not need to meditate much on them. Some slight thinking was enough for him to master the formation entirely. This advantage allowed Jiang Chen to take to formations like a fish to water.

If it was any other youth in the Divine Abyss Continent, even if the strongest prodigy of the Upper Eight Regions entered this place, they would need at least one or two hundred years to completely master the inheritance left by the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. Only Jiang Chen was qualified to complete everything in the span of three years. Because his knowledge reached far and wide, he stood on a platform above everyone else. To put it in perspective, this was akin to asking a Titled Great Emperor to decipher some sage realm techniques. There was naturally no difficulty. But if it was an origin realm cultivator was asked to solve a sage realm technique, the level of difficulty would naturally be enormous.

In this lifetime, Jiang Chen's cultivation resources could not compare to those top tier prodigies, and neither could his physical conditions and upbringing. But his memories of his previous life gave him a unique advantage that no prodigy could possibly match.

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The Myriad Domain had been rather chaotic recently, and the eye of the storm was the Tristar Sect.

Strange things had begun to happen repeatedly to the sect starting roughly three months ago. One day, a certain elder of the Tristar Sect, who had shut himself in secluded cultivation, was suddenly mysteriously struck by lightning. He was instantly killed, his body burnt into a crisp. A few days later, the gates of the Tristar Sect were shattered after being suddenly struck by numerous meteorites. The most exaggerated event was that several days after that, the high level experts of the sect were holding a conference in the main hall of the sect when countless blows of lightning struck the hall like torrential rain. A full third of the experts were killed by the lightning! If sect head, Zhu Changsheng, hadn't reacted quickly enough to pull another elder in front of him as a shield, he would have been killed on the spot as well.

After that, it seemed that various heavenly tribulations would fall on the Tristar Sect every few days. Their members were constantly killed. Even after they sealed off various areas of their sect, these areas and the restrictions on them were still destroyed.

The death counter of the Tristar Sect's high level experts and geniuses kept rising. The entire sect was enveloped in a sense of danger. They didn't know which deity they had offended to repeatedly incur this kind of heavenly judgment. Only those who had taken part in Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles knew very clearly that the sect must have violated its heavenly oath, hence resulting in this heavenly tribulation.

The heart of every Tristar Sect member was gripped by various suspicions and terror. It was to the extent that some heavyweights of the sect could no longer endure this kind of atmosphere. They secretly left behind the medallions signaling their sect membership, departed the mountain and bid farewell to the Tristar Sect.

"Sect Head, I'm already old and no longer useful to the sect. Please allow me to depart. Even if you refuse, I will leave quietly on my own."

"Sect Head, just what kind of shady business is being conducted here? Our Tristar Sect is suddenly the recipient of this heavenly judgment without rhyme or reason? Did you all swear some kind of heavenly oath or make a promise on Mt. Rippling Mirage and break it?"

"That's right, Sect Head, you must give us an explanation. Otherwise, we can only leave the Tristar Sect for other sects in order to preserve our lives."

"Yes, who can endure this kind of thing every few days? How can we cultivate when we're living in fear?! We could be struck dead by

lightning at any moment!”

“Indeed, what’s the point of staying in the sect when suffering from this kind of fear? I might as well become a rogue cultivator.”

Various elders of the sect stepped forth one by one to discuss leaving the sect with Zhu Changsheng. He and Elder Tanlang were troubled, but could not speak their mind. They obviously knew where the problem lay but how could they say anything about it? Just as Zhu Changsheng was stammering, trying to think of a more glorious-sounding excuse to defuse the situation, a loud rumbling echoed from outside the gates.

The entire Tristar Sect shook heavily again. Rumble, rumble.

The entire Tristar Sect tottered as though it would collapse at any instant. Someone hastily reported in a while later, “Sect Head, things are looking very bad! Mt. Brightmoon has been struck by lightning and many of the sect’s leading geniuses have perished.”

Mt. Brightmoon could be considered the Rosy Valley of the Regal Pill Palace. It was a place where only geniuses of origin realm and above could enter. These geniuses, including Zhu Feiyang, all temporarily lived atop Mt. Brightmoon. In this period of time, misfortune after misfortune had fallen upon the Tristar Sect. Zhu Changsheng had been praying all along that this heavenly judgment would pass quickly. But judging from the current situation, this retribution wouldn’t stop at all!

Previously, many had been injured and killed, but most of them

had been the sect elders, some of whom did not care about sect matters at all. This kind of old fellow only enjoyed sect resources without contributing much. It was fine if they died. Truth be told, Zhu Changsheng didn't feel very heartbroken at all. But the young geniuses represented the future of the sect. If too many of the geniuses on Mt Brightmoon died, the Tristar Sect would really be done for.

Although they were no longer called the Tristar Sect, but rather the Tristar Division, the essence of the matter remained the same. How many people did Zhu Changsheng have under him, how many geniuses, how much resources—these were all cards that he could use to bargain with the Ninesuns Sky Sect. If the people he commanded perished, leaving only a leader behind, what use would he be to the Ninesuns Sky Sect then? In that case, what would he have to bargain with the Ninesuns Sky Sect?

At this moment, Zhu Changsheng was truly a little regretful. He really shouldn't have revealed the secret of the ancient herb garden. Although he had believed Weizi Kua of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, which was why he'd removed the name of the Tristar Sect and accepted the position of a division master to become the Tristar Division, this matter had not been publicly announced. Without a public announcement, this matter was only accepted internally and not by the world.

Zhu Changsheng had previously thought this would be enough to evade heavenly tribulation. Who would have thought that he was only deceiving himself in trying to deceiving others? By now, he really felt that he had dug his own grave.

The most depressing thing was that by revealing the secret of the ancient herb garden, he had dropped a rock on his own foot. Not only had he not received any benefits from the Sky Sect, their one remaining sky rank herb had been extorted from them by Cao Jin, along with a few stalks of earth rank herbs. This situation really made Zhu Changsheng want to cry.

However, in the face of such mass unease, Zhu Changsheng knew that things would truly go sour if he did not put his foot down. He kept pressing his hands downwards as he called out, “Everyone, please calm down for a moment. I guarantee that I will give all of you answers in three days time. Please wait patiently for three days. If the sect has still not answered your questions then, you are free to do as you like without my obstruction.”

Elder Tanlang also replied off on the side. “Everyone, please wait patiently for a bit. If we have still not defused the situation after three days, I, Tan Lang, will take my own life to take responsibility!”

Only when they agreed to this did the complaining elders slowly begin to calm down. Zhu Changsheng glanced meaningfully at Tan Lang before the two of them entered the interior side by side. Elder Tan Lang grumbled angrily the moment they entered one of the secret rooms. “Envoy Weizi, we cannot wait any longer. We need to announce the Tristar Sect’s change in allegiance right now. If not, I’m afraid this heavenly tribulation will never cease!”

Weizi Kua replied coldly, “Announce it now? The Sky Sect has made our plans for such a long time. If you announce it now, wouldn’t that be laying your cards on the table early? What would

the Sky Sect do then?”

The veins on Elder Tan Lang’s neck pulsed in his anxiety. “Since the Sky Sect has planned for so long, just when are you going to reveal your plans?! If you’re not going to reveal it now, are you going to announce it all after the Tristar Sect has been exterminated? What would be the point of your plans then?”

Weizi Kua calmly replied, “Laying all our cards down is not possible. The only thing we can do now is to break up the sect until the day we reveal our plans…”

“Impossible! We can’t possibly break up the sect. How would we be qualified to discuss things with your Sky Sect then?!” Elder Tan Lang began to rage.

“Not possible?” Inspector Wei’s tone grew icy. “Tan Lang, are you teaching me how to conduct my matters?”

Elder Tan Lang pushed on despite his difficulties.. “My Tristar Sect has suffered crisis after crisis up to today. Your Sky Sect must at least answer to that, right?”

“I have already told you what to do. Go gather the main members of your Tristar Sect and secretly inform them that you’re part of the Sky Sect from now on. Then, announce that you’re dissolving the sect. When our Sky Sect’s plans have been completed, you can remake the Tristar Division. You have no other choice apart from this.”

Zhu Changsheng's mouth was filled with bitterness. He truly regretted what he did now. Not only did he regret revealing the secret of the ancient herb garden, he was even more remorseful—what had possessed him to accept the Ninesuns Sky Sect's poison? To become a pawn of the Ninesuns Sky Sect? However, it was difficult to dismount from a tiger. The Tristar Sect could only allow the Ninesuns Sky Sect to manipulate them as the former pleased.

Weizi Kua was actually fully aware of the Tristar Sect's sorrows. After all, the Tristar Sect had revealed the secret of the ancient herb garden, but in the end, their only sky rank herb had been snatched by Cao Jin. It was truly a little unjustified to force the Tristar Sect to bear the consequences of revealing their secret. However, Weizi Kua did not dare to meddle with Cao Jin's actions. Cao Jin had happily returned to the Ninesuns Sky Sect after taking the sky rank herb.

On the other hand, he had to think of ways to appease the Tristar Sect. When he thought carefully about this, he also felt wronged by the situation.

……

An explosive news rocked the entire Myriad Domain after three days.

The Tristar Sect announced that they were disbanding. From then onwards, the name of the Tristar Sect would be removed from the Myriad Domain! This shocking news seemed to spread like wildfire throughout the entire area in an instant. The other

five great sects considered what misfortunes had previously fallen on the Tristar Sect, and added that to the news of their disbandment. On top of that, there was also the assault on the Regal Pill Palace as a result of the leak regarding the ancient herb garden. When all of these were put together, the other five great sects immediately understood that the traitor who revealed the secret of the ancient herb garden must have been the Tristar Sect.

With this, tumultuous waves began to ebb and flow within the Myriad Domain.

The Grand Cathedral immediately sent out messages to the other great sects, gathering them to massacre the Tristar Sect as punishment for their betrayal. But by the time they hurried to the sect, they discovered that the Tristar Sect had already become ruins. The members of the Tristar Sect had disappeared without a trace, and not even the hint of a shadow was in sight. It was as though the hundred thousand disciples of the Tristar Sect had suddenly evaporated from this world.

Chapter 616: Partitioning The Tristar Sect

The aggrieved Great Cathedral was patently furious that the Tristar Sect had revealed the secret. However, after searching through the wasteland where the sect had stood for a few days, they were unable to find any leads.

"This Tristar Sect must have been too afraid of facing the wrath of the Myriad Domain so they hid themselves," Honored Master Tian Ming of the Dark North Sect sighed.

Palace Head Dan Chi looked upon the Tristar Sect's ruins, a pensive look on his face. He had a nagging feeling that there was something amiss about this whole situation. Everything had been fine, so why had the Tristar Sect revealed the secret? This didn't make common sense at all. However, every member of the Tristar Sect had vanished, so he wasn't at liberty to say anything now. After all, his prime suspect previously had been the Sacred Sword Palace. From what happened now, it was the Tristar Sect who were the true traitors, and they had already incurred the wrath of the heavens.

Xiang Wentian of the Great Cathedral thundered, "The Tristar Sect must have disbanded in order to evade heavenly judgment!"

Everyone was well aware of this by now. But they were still completely helpless about the fact that the members of the Tristar Sect had made up their mind to disappear.

"I suggest that we discuss what to do with the Tristar Sect's

territory.” Wang Jianyu of the Sacred Sword Palace smiled faintly.

“Yes. Since the Tristar Sect has disbanded, their territory is now without an owner. Therefore, we should allow the civilians who were governed by the Tristar Sect to continue enjoying the protection from a large sect so that they can live on without fear.” These words sounded incredibly grandiose and dignified, but to put it plainly, they meant to partition the land and snatch up resources.

Xiang Wentian nodded. “It is imperative that we do not let that huge plot of land governed by the Tristar Sect become a plot of loose sand. It’s just... how should we divide the territory? Does anyone have any good suggestions?”

“Is there a need to ask? The five great sects should just divide this land equally,” Sect Head Wei Wuying of the Walkabout Sect spoke up. What he was most afraid of was that the Great Cathedral would once again be unreasonable and snatch half the land away. If it became like that, the other four sects could only share the remaining half.

“Indeed, splitting it evenly would be better,” Wang Jianyu laughed. Clearly, he didn’t wish for the Great Cathedral to be the sole benefactor either.

“My Dark North Sect has no objections with splitting evenly,” Honored Master Tian Ming replied.

Naturally, the remaining sect, the Regal Pill Palace, would not

have any objections. Dan Chi wasn't too concerned about the Tristar Sect's territory. What he was more curious about was the Tristar Sect's motive for revealing the secret. Astute as he was, he had a nagging sensation that something was wrong with the entire situation.

The Great Cathedral had initially intended to take half the territory and leave the remaining half for the other four sects to share. However, the other sects besides the Regal Pill Palace were all clearly determined to share the pie evenly. If the Great Cathedral exhibited extraordinarily bad table manners, they would enrage everyone here. The Myriad Domain was now officially in dangerous waters starting today. If there was internal strife, then the domain might collapse even without an enemy invasion.

The sects began to discuss how to split the territory immediately after that. Since they were each taking a fair share, the process was straightforward. The territory would be cut into fifths along with various spirit power resources and resources, with each sect taking their own share. After the partition, Xiang Wentian announced, "From today onwards, the Tristar Sect will no longer exist. The Myriad Domain will also not acknowledge the Tristar Sect. Even if they come back and seek to start over, they will still be considered the traitors of the Myriad Domain. They are the shame of our domain and we will tolerate them no longer!"

"That's right. Exposing the secrets of the Myriad Domain means that they have become the public enemy! The Tristar Sect is no longer worthy to be a part of the Myriad Domain!" Wei Wuying also agreed.

The opinions of the five sects regarding this matter were aligned. Since they had just partitioned up the Tristar Sect's land, they also had to find some dignified-sounding reason to do so in order to appease the people. By plastering the title of traitor on the Tristar Sect, the sects could divide up their territory and block their means of revival, all the while sounding completely justified and righteous.

Instead of nit-picking at the problem, Dan Chi replied, "Everyone, since the Tristar Sect has disbanded in an attempt to escape heavenly judgment, they must be plotting something. Has anyone considered this problem?"

"Dan Chi, what do you think?" Honored Master Tian Ming had always been on good terms with Dan Chi and knew that the palace head was a very resourceful person.

"Indeed, Dan Chi, you're smart and forward-looking, so share your thoughts with us. At any rate, the Tristar Sect has been expelled so no one will fault you for saying something wrong," Xiang Wentian also encouraged.

Wang Jianyu only smiled coldly without saying anything. He always felt that Dan Chi only pandered to the crowds and sought attention due to his enmity with Dan Chi. Wei Wuying also smiled slightly, but he wanted to hear any wise opinions Dan Chi might have.

"When my Regal Pill Palace was assaulted by the Ninesuns Sky Sect last time, our opponent demanded the locations of our sky rank herbs and Longevity Pill. Hence, I'm certain that the Tristar

Sect must have leaked our secrets to the Ninesuns Sky Sect. The Ninesuns Sky Sect has always eyed the Myriad Domain like a tiger watching its prey. Everyone, think carefully, if the Tristar Sect wasn't in cahoots with the Ninesuns Sky Sect, what reason would they have to gamble on the future of the their sect?" Dan Chi's speech caused the expressions of everyone present to take a drastic turn.

"Dan Chi, you're sure the person from last time was a member of the Ninesuns Sky Sect?" Xiang Wentian could not help but ask, obviously sensing how precarious matters were.

"As certain as I can be. After the assault, I inquired after the state of the Upper Eight Regions through my contacts. The enemy who attacked our Regal Pill Palace was one of the ten great disciples of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, Cao Jin, a cultivator at peak sage realm!" Dan Chi still thought about the battle that day with traces of lingering fear in his heart.

In the face of the overwhelming power a first-rate sect exuded, the sects of the Myriad Domain were as insignificant as ever. The unification of the Myriad Domain truly seemed an extraordinarily insurmountable task.

"Ten great disciples? Peak sage realm?" Everyone present sucked in a breath of cold air. This Ninesuns Sky Sect was truly willing to go all out for their aims!

Honored Master Tian Ming muttered to himself and sighed, "Just what does the Ninesuns Sky Sect see in our Myriad Domain? If we're talking about things of value that we have, the Great

Crimson Region looted everything in the great destruction of the Myriad Empire six or seven hundred years ago. Just what is the Ninesuns Sky Sect planning that they have set their sights on us for so long?”

Wei Wuying laughed coldly, “Who the hell knows what they’re planning? They wouldn’t even spare a tiny place like the sixteen kingdom alliance. I really doubt that there’s even anything that good in our Myriad Domain? How could they set their sights on even a wasteland like the sixteen kingdoms?”

With that being said, the sect who found the Ninesuns Sect most repulsive wasn’t the Regal Pill Palace, nor was it the other sects. Instead, it was the Great Cathedral because they were the greatest amongst the sects in the Myriad Domain. Since they were the greatest, they naturally didn’t wish for a greater power to appear. In their own territory, they naturally hoped that they could be the tiger of the land. They didn’t want some passing dragon to eye their territory.

Wang Jianyu suddenly snorted derisively. “Actually, in my opinion, isn’t a certain someone exaggerating matters?”

“Old Wang, who’re you speaking of?” Wei Wuying clearly knew that Wang Jianyu was referring to Palace Head Dan Chi, but didn’t want to intentionally fan the flames of discourse.

“Who else could it be? Even my Sacred Sword Palace admits that we would not be able to defend against one of the ten great disciples of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, a peak sage realm cultivator. Since when has the Regal Pill Palace become so strong? Not only

are they safe and sound, they even managed to drive off one of the Ninesuns Sky Sect's ten great disciples?" Wang Jianyu found this very peculiar, and a bewildered smile made its way to his face.

The others all looked towards Palace Dan Chi with curiosity etched on their faces, clearly somewhat doubtful of this matter. Palace Head Dan Chi maintained his calm expression and did not explain anything. "I have only spoken the truth. Believe it or not, that's up to you."

Dan Chi had no intention of explaining anything. It would be an arduous and thankless task. Honored Master Tian Ming nodded in support, "I believe that old friend Dan Chi would not speak nonsense."

Xiang Wentian also more or less understood Dan Chi's character. When he saw Dan Chi act this way, he was also more inclined to believe Dan Chi. However, instead of complicating this problem any further, he asked, "Old brother Dan Chi, why don't you tell us first how the Tristar Sect and Ninesuns Sky Sect are related?"

Dan Chi nodded. "I am ninety percent certain that the reason why the Tristar Sect exposed our secret must have something to do with the Ninesuns Sky Sect. Only, the question that remains is, was the Tristar Sect coerced into it by the Ninesuns Sky Sect? Or were they in cahoots from the very beginning?"

These were the only two possibilities.

Xiang Wentian thought for a long time before sighing, "This

matter can only be resolved if we find the remnants of the Tristar Sect. If they were coerced into it, they might be just the first of many. The next target might be each of us."

"Yes. In my opinion, they colluded with the Ninesuns Sky Sect from long ago. The Tristar Sect was originally only a fifth rank sect and only rose abruptly in power a few hundred years ago. Their rise was abnormally fast. Isn't this a bit ridiculous?" Wei Wuying questioned.

Unusually, Dan Chi actually agreed with Wei Wuying's perspective. "I've considered things carefully, and combined things with what I know what happened when my Regal Pill Palace allied ourselves with the Precious Tree Sect. Judging from Tristar Sect's Zhu Changsheng's behavior that day, both his words and actions indicated that he intentionally set up my Regal Pill Palace to tussle with the inspector from the Ninesuns Sky Sect. Now that I think about it, it's very possible that the Tristar Sect has been colluding with the Ninesuns Sky Sect all this time."

Xiang Wentian's expression was grave as he nodded and replied, "If the Tristar Sect has long since colluded with the Ninesuns Sky Sect, that proves that the Ninesuns Sky Sect has set their sights on the Myriad Domain for a long time now." When he spoke of this, Xiang Wentian's tone grew even more contemplative as he wondered to himself, "Just what is this Ninesuns Sky Sect planning? Why does this old man feel as though there's an enormous conspiracy behind all this?"

It was obvious that the Sky Sect coveted the area, but the sect heads present had no reason why and what for. This kind of

unknown paranoia caused the Myriad Domain's future to be clouded. The Myriad Domain was truly too weak compared to the Ninesuns Sky Sect, so weak that they could not withstand even one of the Ninesuns Sky Sect's fingers crushing down on them.

To put things bluntly, the Ninesuns Sky Sect only needed to mobilize youths like the ten great disciples to completely level the Myriad Domain without needing to call upon their senior executives. Although they had just divided the Tristar Sect's territory, an enormous pressure weighed down on their hearts the moment each sect thought about the Ninesuns Sky Sect. All of them were fourth rank sects whose words were taken as law in their own territory. Moreover, each of them harbored dreams of domination. None of them wished to be ruled by the Ninesuns Sky Sect, much less than be a couple of pawns on the Ninesuns Sky Sect's chessboard! Hence, the five fourth rank sects of the Myriad Domain faced the Ninesuns Sky Sect with deeply conflicted feelings.

Surprisingly, the members of the Tristar Sect seemed to really have disappeared completely in the next half year. Their territory and resources have been completed taken and divided up, but not a single member stood out to protest. It was as though they had completely perished from the heavenly judgment.

……

The remaining powers of the Tristar Sect had concealed themselves in a certain hidden area of the Myriad Domain.

The ones who remained were those who had resolved themselves

to follow the Ninesuns Sky Sect. As for those who did not wish to surrender and pay allegiance to the Sky Sect, or those who would rather become rogue cultivators, they no longer existed on this earth.

Chapter 617: Ninth Level Origin Realm

“Envoy Weizi, as of today, our Tristar Sect no longer exists, our territory is divided and our resources raided. It can be said that we possess nothing. Just... just when will this set up of yours be complete?” Zhu Changsheng grumbled like a nagging wife. He’d recently been living a rat’s life, hiding hither and thither everyday. It was really difficult for him to continue remaining calm.

Weizi Kua smiled faintly, “It should be finished soon. How long until the Myriad Grand Ceremony?”

“Myriad Grand Ceremony? There should be about nine months left. Could it be, the Sky Sect’s plans are... are to suppress the five great sects during the Myriad Grand Ceremony?” Zhu Changsheng’s face was filled with doubt.

Weizi Kua shook his head casually. “It would be too boring if the plan was that simple. Sigh, the Ninesuns Sky Sect had originally raised your Tristar Sect with plans of obtaining insider cooperation from you. Who’d have thought... that our plans would lag behind present circumstances. But that’s fine. When the time comes, you’ll still be able to stand out and represent the Myriad Domain. Division Master Zhu, relax, your sacrifice has been noted by the Sky Sect. When the time comes, your reward will definitely be greater than your present loss!”

Zhu Changsheng’s mood turned despondent instead. “Envoy Weizi, there’s only you and me here. Can’t you give me even a little hint? Moreover, in my opinion, if you’re just seeking to suppress the five great sects, why do it at the Myriad Grand Ceremony? I

keep thinking that if that was your Sky Sect's plan, the plan would be far too simple. Moreover, you wouldn't need to wait that long."

Weizi Kua's tone turned grave. "Do you think so little of the Sky Sect's intellect? Whatever ideas you have, do you think the Sky Sect hasn't thought of them?"

"Then... then just what kind of plan is it?" Zhu Changsheng decided to smash everything and ask until the matter was clear.

Weizi Kua sighed, "Division Master Zhu, it wasn't time to tell you yet, but since you've asked, I'll reveal a little bit. This is only between you and me. The other members of the Tristar Sect have no need to know. Too many chefs spoil the broth, if our secret is revealed, neither you nor I can bear the burden of the consequences."

Zhu Changsheng responded gravely. "Don't worry, Envoy Weizi. Am I, Zhu Changsheng, the kind of person who cannot recognize the weight of a matter?"

"Alright. The Sky Sect has settled on the day of the Myriad Grand Ceremony. The reason for that is because that ceremony holds special meaning for the Myriad Domain. Even until today, every sect in the Myriad Domain has remained unresigned to the reality that their domain has declined. In their hearts, their dreams of rebuilding of the glorious Myriad Empire have never been shattered. Does Division Master Zhu agree with me on this?"

Zhu Changsheng nodded. "It's true. Although no sect has said it,

I reckon that ambitions of rebuilding their glorious era are all on their minds."

"In order to rebuild the glories of yesteryear, what do you think the Myriad Domain lacks the most?" Weizi Kua smiled as he asked.

"Lacks the most?" Zhu Changsheng laughed ruefully. "To tell the truth, too many things are lacking. Firstly, heavyweights who can shoulder the area. Without some emperor realm heavyweights, rebuilding the glorious era is naught but a dream. Actually, after the Great Scarlet Mid Region's assault a few hundred years ago more or less pillaged every valuable resource of the Myriad Empire. Hence, as of now, the Myriad Domain is at the very bottom in terms of resources amongst the Lower Regions. Another thing would be our number of young geniuses waiting in the wings. Although each sect is doing their best to nurture geniuses, their numbers and aptitude is a far cry from what they had been at the peak of our glory..."

In the end, they lacked heavyweights, resources and talent.

Weizi Kua replied with a smile, "Everything you said can be detected by a discerning eye. But you've missed the most important point."

"Oh? Then, please educate me." Zhu Changsheng was rather curious since he'd thought that he presented a well-rounded argument.

"To return the Myriad Domain to its former glory, the most

important is to re-establish the empire, re-establish a royal family. Let me ask you, in the current Myriad Domain, which sect fits the bill the most and possesses the most resources?" Weizi Kua returned his question.

"In terms of power, the Great Cathedral is top. But they're only stronger by a hair. They don't have the absolute power to rule." Zhu Changsheng said subconsciously.

"That's right. Then what the Myriad Domain lacks now are talents and qualifications. There is no one who possesses more qualifications than the others."

Zhu Changhsheng nodded. It was true that none of the various sects of the Myriad Domain possessed absolute power to make their words the law. As of now, if one sect spoke of re-establishing an imperial regime, it would be simply impossible to persuade the other sects to follow.

"We definitely lack qualifications. But, how is this related to your plan?" Zhu Changsheng asked.

"I'll tell you all of this slowly. Since you lack qualifications, then we will provide this qualification. I heard that when Myriad Domain was destroyed by the Great Scarlet Mid Region, the two most important tokens, the Imperial Jade Seal and the Dragon Seal were lost without a trace. The Great Scarlet Mid Region searched everywhere but could not recover them. There is such a thing, no?" Weizi Kua was completely at ease.

Zhu Changsheng nodded. “Yes, there is.”

“Then, if these two things showed up during the Myriad Grand Ceremony, will the people of the Great Scarlet Mid Region possibly just sit back and watch?” There was something sinister lurking in Weizi Kua’s words.

“The Great Scarlet Mid Region has seemed to stop interfering with the Myriad Domain’s matters in recent centuries,” Zhu Changsheng replied.

“The reason they haven’t interfered is because they feel that the Myriad Domain will never rise again. The domain never be a threat to their power again. If the Imperial Jade Seal and Dragon Seal show up again, someone will certainly talk about rebuilding the Myriad Empire. If that happens, will the Great Scarlet Mid Region still ignore the Myriad Domain then?”

Zhu Changsheng was left speechless. The Great Scarlet Mid Region wasn’t afraid of the Myriad Domain but they didn’t want their enemy to rise from the ashes again. The best way was to severe every possibility of revenge at its roots. Zhu Changsheng could vaguely guess at the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s plans. To put it plainly, they were planning to incite the Great Scarlet mid Region into once again butting heads with the Myriad Domain, after which they would step in and collect their profits.

In that case, not only could they berate the Great Scarlet Mid Region in the name of justice, they could also establish a presence in the Myriad Domain under the righteous flag of assistance.

Zhu Changsheng laughed ruefully, “Such a painstakingly-crafted plan could have been put into action a few hundred years ago when the Great Scarlet Mid Region first ransacked the Myriad Empire.”

“Wrong! That event happened too fast. The Sky Sect didn’t have time to respond. In addition, the Sky Sect was entangled with several other powers and could not spare any remaining energy to interfere. And the Great Scarlet Mid Region destroyed the Myriad Empire in the name of revenge. Their cause was justified so the Sky Sect could not blame anyone. But if the Great Scarlet Mid Region invaded again several hundred years later for no proper reason, that would be encroachment. This nature would be different. There would sufficient reason for the Sky Sect to interfere then.”

Zhu Changsheng had been spontaneously enlightened as he suddenly understood the details of the plan. To put it plainly, in this plan, not only the Tristar Sect, but also the various sects of the Myriad Domain and even the Great Scarlet Mid Region had become the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s pawns. The Sky Sect had woven a marvelous web using the threads of malice between the Great Scarlet Mid Region and the Myriad Domain.

It had to be said that this plan was not only subtle but also guaranteed to work.

The Great Scarlet Mid Region didn’t need any preparations because the moment they knew of the reappearance of the Imperial Jade Seal and Dragon Seal in the Myriad Domain, they would definitely involve themselves. They would not allow the

Myriad Domain to rise and start again.

The Sky Sect had chosen the Myriad Grand Ceremony as the core of this plan. The grandiose Myriad Grand Ceremony commemorated the Myriad Empire and reminisced its glorious age. It paid homage to the Myriad Empire and relived its wondrous history. This was a provocation for the Great Scarlet Mid Region. If the Great Scarlet Mid Region had not looked down on the sects of the Myriad Domain, they would have invaded long ago.

Once the Great Scarlet Mid Region discovered the reappearance of the Imperial Jade Seal and Dragon Seal, wouldn't they be bound to suspect that Myriad Domain harbored goals of revival? In that case, it'd be a wonder if they didn't come interfere in the Myriad Domain then.

Although Zhu Changhsheng understood the overall plan, there was still a point of confusion for him. "Envoy Weizi, the so-called Imperial Jade Seal and Dragon Seal, have they already fallen into the Sky Sect's hands?"

Weizi Kua laughed raucously before he shook his head. "How could it have fallen into the Sky Sect's hands?"

"But... but then, aren't these two items the heart of the plan? When the Myriad Grand Ceremony comes, aren't these two items going to resurface?"

"Objects are inanimate, but humans are not. Those two things might have long since disappeared from this world. Since the

original objects haven't been seen for hundreds of years, it's not difficult to create two identical copies. What these two objects represent is far more important than their actual use. To put it plainly, we want to use the meaning behind these two objects. As for whether they are real or fake, that's secondary."

Zhu Changsheng was dumbfounded. He finally understood why the Ninesuns Sky Sect was this calm. Wasn't it quite easy to create two duplicates?

……

Another half year has passed within the sacred grounds of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

Jiang Chen had gained so much from his daily cultivation that he felt completely immersed in his training. Although he'd been trapped here for over a year, Jiang Chen seemed to forget about his surroundings the moment he entered a cultivation mindset. He might desire to leave this place with all his heart, but cultivating in this place made Jiang Chen feel like a fish in water.

In another half a year, his power had once again surged through another break through.

Ninth level origin realm!

Two months ago, Jiang Chen had once again transcended the natural order to step into the ninth level origin realm. In the two

months since he'd broken through, Jiang Chen had been working his hardest to join the ranks of peak ninth level origin realm. As of today, he had already caught up to Shen Qinghong in terms of pure martial ability, a mere half step away from sage realm.

However, although they were both at the peak of ninth level sage realm, Jiang Chen was far superior to Shen Qinghong in terms of both combat ability and knowledge of the dao. Through this roughly two years of cultivation in the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, Jiang Chen had experienced an explosive growth in his combat ability.

His arts had been reinforced in every way. The treasures he'd received had also continuously opened up new avenues of power. As of today, Jiang Chen could face even Ding Tong head on without fear if the latter was still alive, to speak nothing of first level sage realm cultivators like Wang Han.

Even if he couldn't triumph in victory, he certainly wouldn't be defeated. His chances of victory should be fifty-fifty. Even if Jiang Chen might not be a match for sky sage realm experts, he could definitely cut a graceful escape path.

"I still have nine months to break through to sage realm, receive the inheritance and master the key of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's overall formation. Then, I can leave this place and return to the Regal Pill Palace... I must, must make it in time for the Myriad Grand Ceremony." Jiang Chen had been working hard towards this goal for two years. He had a nagging premonition that something enormous would happen at this time's Myriad Grand Ceremony!

Chapter 618: Breaking Through All Three Outer Formations

Jiang Chen grew ever closer to his goal of the tower of inheritance as he set foot into ninth level origin realm. He'd been studying the three formations over the past two months as he'd be able to face the tower directly as long as he broke through the third formation. This last formation was called the "Great Dream of Spring and Autumn Formation".

There were three formations to the tower of inheritance, the first of the "Minor Artifice Formation", one of illusion; the second "Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven" was one that sought to kill; and the third "Great Dream of Spring and Autumn Formation" was one of death.

A formation of death didn't meant that it was an unattended formation with no one in charge, but that there were nine paths that led to death within, and one to life.

If one didn't find the only way out of the formation after entering it, one would be forever trapped within until death of old age. The "Great Dream of Spring and Autumn Formation" was like its name, a formation that made challengers feel like they had dreamed a great dream. When one finally awoke, they would discover that countless springs and autumns had come and gone, and they were doddering, old wrecks.

The Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had used this formation in ancient times to take down countless experts. Of course, the version in front of the tower of inheritance wasn't one at peak

condition. It was meant to test heirs to the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, so it was set for geniuses in the sage realm. Although Jiang Chen had yet to enter this realm, he felt that his current level was absolutely not less than any sage realm genius. He might even have his own advantages as well.

Jiang Chen took a deep breath in as he stood outside the formation and leapt in with gusto. The scenery in front of him immediately changed as he did so. There were ten enormous pillars reaching for the sky in front of him, with many ancient glyphs and characters carved on them. There was a faint golden gaze shimmering over each of them, giving one an exceedingly historic and simple feeling.

He observed all of them through the God's Eye and discovered that all the carvings on them were different! "Mm? These are cultivation methods?"

There was a method carved on each pillar, and the level of each pillar was quite high. The ten pillars formed a perfect circle, and Jiang Chen stood in the midst of the circle. There were also ten passageways between the ten pillars.

"It looks like the ten pillars correspond to the nine possibilities of death and only one of life in the formation. This means that there's only one of these passageways that I can take, and all the others lead to certain death?"

Jiang Chen didn't make any careless moves in the heat of the moment. He believed that since this was a test, there would be hints as well. The formation wasn't set up for enemies, in which

no clues would be left at all. Its purpose wasn't to kill, but to test those who were here. Therefore, it was up to how observant Jiang Chen was.

His mind settled as his thoughts traveled here, and he sat down cross-legged, examining each pillar with the God's Eye. At first glance, the methods on the pillars all seemed to have their unique points, and they seemed to be on similar levels. The differences between them didn't seem that great.

"If there are hints in this formation, then they must lay within the methods. But where is the crux of the problem?" Jiang Chen was in no hurry as he began a careful study. Since he couldn't identify the issue with human eyes, he decided to try each of the methods.

A month later...

A ripple of disturbance suddenly travelled through Jiang Chen's consciousness, as if a needle had slightly pricked him. He knew that this wasn't an external stimulus, but an innate sense of rejection from his consciousness.

"What's going on?" Jiang Chen suddenly came to himself as he broke out into a cold sweat. His expression changed even more as he slightly perused what had happened before.

"Frightening, too frightening! I actually lost myself unknowingly in the formation! These methods have the ability to lure one in. It was a good thing that a sliver of rejection formed in my

consciousness. If I'd really sunk and lost myself in the cultivation, not knowing the passing of the seasons outside, then it would truly be like a great dream, and I'd be a doddering old wreck at the end of my lifespan when I finally awoke."

Jiang Chen suddenly realized that this method was all smoke and mirrors. Although there was an exceedingly high temptation in training it, one was destined to not actually achieve anything with it. There wasn't anything tangible from this technique at all apart from losing oneself in it.

Even cultivating with it for a hundred years would cause one to wake up with a handful of dross. There would be nothing at all when one woke up apart from an aged body and halted training.

Sweat poured out over Jiang Chen's body when his thoughts travelled here. He had already been quite careful and tried each method one by one, wanting to find the clues, but he'd still nearly lost himself! If it wasn't for his training in Psychic's Head and the enormous strength of his consciousness, he likely would've lost himself within and been unable to wake.

He might've woken up three or five hundred years later, halted in the origin realm and past the prime period for cultivation. He would be unable to raise his strength any more and would slowly live out his days until they were no more. His heart palpitating with fright, Jiang Chen immediately summoned the Goldbiter Rat King. "Ole Gold, keep an eye out for me. Wake up me if I don't come to within three days."

Since Jiang Chen knew that there was something amiss with the

pillars, he had a strategy to deal with them in turn. The Goldbiter Rats had seen their strength increase markedly since their baptism in the wood spirit spring. Their power in their lineage had continuously awoken and their strength increase in leaps and bounds. They were now the equivalent of a human first level sage realm, and listened to everything Jiang Chen said these days.

Progress was swift since Jiang Chen had a plan of attack, and he made a play on all of the pillars. He finally discovered on the seventh pillar that the method on this pillar wasn't illusion, that it was completely real. However, he didn't lose his composure in his delight. He carefully tried all of the remaining pillars before finally confirming his findings.

Since he had located the difference, this meant that he had found the clue. He entered the passageway next to the seventh pillar and used the method on the pillar to easily find the exit t the formation. The "Great Dream of Spring and Autumn Formation", success!

Jiang Chen found it a bit hard to believe when he walked out of the formation. There hadn't been any blood or gore involved breaking through this formation, but it was far more frightening than the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven!

Although danger had lurked in every corner of that formation, Jiang Chen had had a proper plan to deal with it all. In the Great Dream of Spring and Autumn Formation however, he had unwittingly fallen into its trap. if it wasn't for his own power awakening to the fact that something was amiss, he might not have been able to extra himself.

There was no formation disk to this particular formation, nor were there any other presents. Yet, Jiang Chen wasn't depressed as the tower of inheritance was right in front of him now!

The tower didn't look that eye-catching as it was only three stories high. However, Jiang Chen wasn't of the mind to go charging right into it. The three formations outside had just been small tests. Jiang Chen believed that even greater tests lay within if he wanted to obtain the tower's inheritance.

The owner of this place had said that one had to be at least sage realm to try, so Jiang Chen didn't want to do things haphazardly. The formations on the outside had been fine, but since the tower had to do with the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect legacy, it would not be as gentle as the three formations on the outside. Fatal danger might very well lurk behind every corner of the tower!

Thus, Jiang Chen decided to enter the tower of inheritance only after his power had broken through to the sage realm.

……

The outskirts of some forbidden area in the Ninesuns Sky Sect.

Cao Jin had been standing outside of a residence for a while and finally seemed to make up his mind on a difficult decision. He raised his hand and threw a message glyph into the residence.

A slight crack formed in the restrictions outside the residence after a short while as a short, bald-headed young man walked it, wreathed with insincere smiles. “Oh my, look what the wind’s blown in today? Senior brother Cao? To think that I, Wu Heng, would have such an honor as a visit from a great disciple?”

The fatty voiced pretty words, but he didn’t set foot outside his residence, an obvious display of wariness against Cao Jin.

Cao Jin smiled remotely. “Don’t be such a coward, Wu Heng. You have nothing that I’d use any method possible to obtain. There’s no need to be so afraid.”

Cao Jin was quite observant and had naturally identified a few problems. Wu Heng had yet to set foot outside his residence, obviously afraid that Cao Jin would do something against him. What a minor character!

Wu Heng chuckled and rubbed his head, but didn’t deny anything. He leered strangely, “Can’t blame me senior brother Cao! The environment of our Sky Sect is harsh and ruthless. I might have died a hundred times over if I hadn’t been more careful. And, I’m not a narcissistic person. What might one of the great disciples want with a fatty like me?”

Cao Jin burst out laughing. “Why can’t it be something good?”

Wu Heng cackled. “This fatty doesn’t believe that senior brother Cao would think of a small character like me if there was anything good. All the true disciples have lofty visions, not to mention of the

ten great disciples like senior brother Cao."

"Alright." Cao Jin spread out his hands. "Cut the chatter. Apart from a body full of fat, what about you would tempt anyone? I'm here this time to talk about working together."

"Working together?" The fatty was a suspicious person by nature, and his first thought upon hearing that one of the ten great disciples wanted to work with him was, is this a trap?

"Senior brother Cao, do you swear you're not trying to trap me somehow?" Fatty Wu stared carefully at Cao Jin, trying to figure out what this fellow was up to.

"Paranoid guy." Cao Jin furrowed his brows. "I'll be frank, I'm looking at your talents in formation. We don't have many geniuses in this area. You count amongst the top three in the younger generation."

Fatty Wu smirked. "Even if I'm in the top three, there are still ones who are stronger than me in front!"

Cao Jin responded faintly, "Those who are stronger than you are all true disciples who rank higher than me. What's the point of going to them?"

Fatty Wu kept smirking as he knew that Cao Jin spoke the truth. Fatty Wu wasn't the top in the younger generation when it came to martial or pill dao, but he was absolutely in the top three when it

came to formations. In fact, he even thought that he was the strongest formation master in the younger generation. It was just that he was very adept at hiding his strength. He was deathly afraid of having too strong a reputation and eliciting displeasure from the two great disciples. This was why he was happy with the title of “third best in the younger generation”. Honestly speaking, Wu Heng felt confident he wouldn’t lose to those two, and might even be better than them!

Chapter 619: An Unrepentant Cao Jin

The fatty was cautious by nature because this was his way of survival. Thus, even though Cao Jin had said thus, the fatty still didn't express anything and had his trademark superficial clinging to his face, appearing completely harmless to the world. Cao Jin knew that Wu Heng was the sort who wouldn't make a move unless it was one that was completely assured, just like a hunter wouldn't loose a falcon until he spotted the hare. Cao Jin smiled faintly and said nothing more, making an earth rank spirit herb appear in his hand with a flip.

"Fatty Wu, I've never liked to waste words. I want to go to someplace, but I need to borrow your skills in formations. This is the deposit, take it." Cao Jin threw the earth rank spirit herb down at the fatty's feet.

Fatty Wu chuckled but didn't reach out to take it. He flicked a glance at the herb at his feet, finally picking it up after careful consideration and elimination of danger. A slight smile appeared on his face as a sliver of greed flashed through his almost imperceptible eyes. Although he was quite shocked at how generous Cao Jin had been, he didn't display it outwardly.

The fatty smiled mischievously as he tossed the earth rank spirit herb up and down in his hand. "Senior brother Cao, why do I feel like there's to be a heavy price for this earth rank spirit herb?"

Cao Jin smiled indifferently and replied, "You can reject it if you think the price is too high. There aren't too many formation geniuses in the sect, but there are still some. I'll even take another

step back and say that it's fine even if I can't find a formation genius from the sect to help me. The only reason I came to you was because we're from the same sect. It's not like I don't have backups to choose from."

It would be false to say that Wu Heng was not moved in the face of this earth rank spirit herb. Moreover, Cao Jin had said this was just a deposit. In other words, there would be more remuneration later on. To add on to that, he was a cautious person at heart. Wu Heng didn't want to offend Cao Jin, one of the sect's ten great disciples.

"Senior brother Cao, since you think so highly of this fatty, then let's discuss this in detail in my residence," The fatty entered his residence with a flash of his body.

Cao Jin was skilled in arts and hence fearless as he followed the fatty in. Entering the cave also removed the possibility that others might hear them.

"Senior brother Cao, can you tell me the details now?" Wu Heng chuckled.

"I've found an interesting place when visiting the Myriad Domain this time. But that place is protected by a formation and is usually very difficult to enter. I have some understanding of formations, but while I was there, I couldn't find any ways to break it. Junior brother Wu, you're a great master at formations. Consider this stalk of earth rank herb as payment for asking you to accompany me to that place. If we enter that place, then I'll take sixty percent of our gains and you'll take twenty."

“What about the remaining twenty?” Fatty Wu’s round eyes spun.

“The remaining twenty percent will be left for junior brother Shi Zhen.”

“Oh? Junior brother Shi Zhen, he’s a second rank pill king. I’ve heard he’s going to try for the examination to be certified to be a third rank pill king soon.” Wu Heng was a little surprised.

“That’s right. Only with my martial prowess, your talent in formations and junior brother Shi Zhen’s aptitude for pill dao, there will be hope,” Cao Jin smiled faintly.

“Since we’ll be working together, why should senior brother Cao receive sixty percent?” Wu Heng’s signature smile still hung on his face even as he asked that question.

“Does this even need to be asked?” Cao Jin’s brow furrowed.

“Eh…” Fatty Wu opened and closed his mouth but didn’t continue asking. Instead he changed the question, “It sounds like a good prospect but how do I know if that place is worth going? Are there any dangers?”

“I’ll paying you a stalk of earth rank spirit herb as deposit. You tell me if it’s worth it.” Cao Jin asked indifferently.

“The earth rank spirit herb is good, but I need to be alive to enjoy it.” Fatty Wu smiled selfishly. “Senior brother Cao knows what a death-fearing coward this fatty is. I will not take such dangerous risk regarding without a sufficient payoff.”

Cao Jin nodded slightly. He stared at Fatty Wu for a few seconds before suddenly extending his hand. “Since it’s like that, give that earth rank spirit herb back to me. Pretend that I’ve never come to you.”

Cao Jin abruptly stood up. This seemed to affect Fatty Wu instead as he hurriedly laughed in reply, “Senior brother Cao, let’s talk over this nicely alright? Since you want your junior brother to put in effort, you’ve got to give me some hints.”

“I won’t say anything else. I’ll just tell you that sky rank spirit herbs appeared in that place not long ago.”

“What?” Fatty Wu suddenly leapt to his feet. “Sky rank spirit herbs?”

There wasn’t a trace of emotion on Cao Jin’s face as he nodded remotely.

“This… Fine, I’ll go. But if there’s really any profit, senior brother Cao will take half. I’ll split the remaining half with senior brother Shi Zhen.”

In the end, it was still a problem with the split of the profits. Wu

Heng wasn't a person who'd wake up early for nothing. Cao Jin thought for a brief moment before nodding. "I can do that."

"Wonderful. Such decisive thinking, as expected of one of the ten great disciples." Fatty Wu laughed raucously and wrapped in a fawning note in things as well.

"When should we set off?" Wu Heng had become extremely motivated in a flash. He could not helped but be moved by sky rank spirit herbs. He was only a sage realm expert who usually used true saint rank spirit herbs. Only emperor realm experts were qualified to dip into earth rank spirit herbs, and what more of sky rank spirit herbs?

"The sooner the better. What preparations do you need to make?" Cao Jin asked.

Wu Heng thought for a instant before replying, "Give me three days to prepare. I need three days to get some things ready to break through the formation."

Cao Jin nodded then stared meaningfully at Wu Heng, "Junior brother Wu, I trust that I don't have to remind you what you need to be careful of during our cooperation?"

Wu Heng smiled. "If Senior brother Cao cannot trust me, then we can swear heavenly oaths before we set off. We can work together sincerely with these oaths."

Cao Jin might have been the one warning Wu Heng, but in reality, wasn't it Wu Heng who was also afraid that Cao Jin would betray them after he got what he wanted? After all, working together with a top tier genius like Cao Jin was akin to scheming with a tiger. There was always the possibility that Cao Jin would burn the bridge after crossing the river. Hence, Wu Heng still felt that swearing a heavenly oath would be the safest option.

"We don't have to wait until we set off. Let's swear it now." Cao Jin usually did things very thoroughly. He certainly didn't want Wu Heng to reveal this secret the moment he walked away. The two of them swore their oaths on the spot and agreed to depart three days later.

After three days, second rank pill king Shi Zhen met up with Cao Jin and the two of them came to Wu Heng's cave together. Before the three of them set off, they swore another round of heavenly oaths.

"Senior brother Cao, can you stop keeping us in suspense now?" The scholarly second rank pill king, Shi Zhen, spoke up before Wu Heng had the chance to speak.

Cao Jin smiled leisurely. "It's not that I want to keep you in suspense, but that this matter is related to many things. Everyone has heard of Mt. Rippling Mirage in the Myriad Domain, no?"

Wu Heng and Shi Zhen glanced at each other before shaking their heads. Clearly, as disciples of a first rate sect in the Upper Eight Regions, they weren't too interested in the lower regions. Although the Ninesuns Sky Sect's plans involved the Myriad

Domain, these plans weren't relevant to most people. They naturally wouldn't care for matters irrelevant to them.

Cao Jin wasn't surprised to see the two shake their heads. He explained, "On my trip to the Myriad Domain, I happened to see the various sects emerge from Mt. Rippling Mirage. Every sect that had entered had received sky rank spirit herbs!"

"Every sect?" Shi Zhen could not help but ask hoarsely as he sucked in a breath of cold air. As a second rank pill king, he was naturally more aware of the value of the sky rank spirit herbs. Even in the Upper Eight Regions, sky rank spirit herbs more or less didn't exist outside of a few special areas. Areas able to produce sky rank spirit grass were all remote, ancient places that were incredibly difficult to find, or even ruins left behind from ancient times.

"That Mt. Rippling Mirage, could it be be an ancient ruin? Shi Zhen was moved.

"I don't know if it's an ancient ruin. Anyways, according to the report I received, the sects extracted a total of twelve stalks of sky rank spirit herbs from the mountain!"

"What?" Shi Zhen was even more startled. "They harvested twelve stalks of sky rank spirit herbs all at once? How... how is this possible?"

Even in the Upper Eight Regions, this was something difficult to see even once a century. It was very rare to find a cluster of sky

rank spirit herbs. At least, in the recent century, no one in the Upper Eight Regions had heard of such a thing. Of course, the Upper Eight Regions were vast and unbounded. Maybe such a thing had happened, but news of it had been suppressed by various higher powers. Nevertheless, one thing was certain, there definitely had not been a case in which twelve stalks of sky rank spirit herbs had appeared at one time in the recent history of the Ninesuns Sky Sect.

"Senior brother Cao, can it be that your information is wrong?" Fatty Wu could not help but ask. He found this matter too hard to believe.

"My report is one hundred percent accurate. It's definitely not false," Cao Jin's tone was assured. Please, the Tristar Sect had nearly been destroyed for the sake of this information, so how could their information be false? Moreover, he had extorted the Tristar Sect's sky rank spirit herb from the grasp of their sect head as well. With that genuine sky rank spirit herb, Cao Jin would naturally not suspect their information as false.

"But if that place really has sky rank spirit herbs, those sects have already swept the whole place clean. There shouldn't be any left, right?" Fatty Wu raised another doubt.

"That Mt. Rippling Mirage also contains an enormous ancient herb garden. They might not have cleared the area in such a short amount of time. Moreover, places able to produce sky rank spirit herbs might contain fortuitous chances for us. Perhaps if we're lucky, we might discover an ancient ruin and receive some inheritance that could even surpass the value of sky rank spirit

herbs?”

However, Fatty Wu replied, “These are just guesses. So many people have entered that place. I think they must have more or less taken everything good in there. Why spend so much effort breaking into that restricted area when we can just take them from the Myriad Domain?”

His idea was coincidentally the same as Cao Jin’s initial idea.

Only, Cao Jin had extinguished this line of thought after his suffering at the Regal Pill Palace. Once they exposed their identities, they’d derail the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s plans, to say nothing of whether or not they were able to seize the herbs. Even if they held high positions in the sect, they definitely wouldn’t escape punishment. Thus, after careful consideration, Cao Jin decided that entering the restricted area of Mt. Rippling Mirage was the more attractive option.

Shi Zhen also supported Fatty Wu’s idea. “That’s right, Senior Brother Cao, I think it’ll be better if we demand for the herbs from the Myriad Domain’s sects directly.”

Cao Jin smiled coldly. “If things were so simple, why the hell do you two think I sought the two of you out? The Sky Sect’s plans involve the Myriad Domain. If we rob them in broad daylight, we’ll be directly disrupting the sect’s plans. Do you two think you have the capacity to challenge the sect’s plans?”

The two fell silent. They didn’t have that kind of courage at all.

Chapter 620: A Storm Brews Again Over Mt. Rippling Mirage

Cao Jin wasn't surprised when he saw that the two lacked fighting spirit. Instead, he chuckled softly and tossed out another piece of important news. "Even if the two of you didn't gain anything from Mt. Rippling Mirage, there's one more thing that we can be absolutely certain about."

"What?"

Cao Jin smiled triumphantly, "There is another person in Mt. Rippling Mirage who possesses five stalks of sky rank herbs, more than a hundred earth rank herbs and even a few thousand stalks of Sage Fledgling Grass."

When Zhu Changsheng had initially revealed the secret of the ancient herb garden, he'd emphasized Jiang Chen, especially how the disciple had extorted half of each sect's spirit herbs by taking advantage of the Miasma antidote. In addition, the way Elder Tan Lang had exaggerated Jiang Chen's feats had left a very deep impression on Cao Jin. What was more, Zhu Changsheng had reminded him that Jiang Chen had been the one who had beheaded the owner of the azure phoenix constitution, Long Juxue. That had caused the third ranked of the ten great disciples, Yong Xingyun, to lose his cultivation furnace and had affected him to the point where he still had not progressed in his Dragon Phoenix Sword. Moreover, the second rate genius Ding Tong, that the Sky Sect had sent to the Myriad Domain, had likely died at Jiang Chen's hands. Since so much had happened, it was impossible for Cao Jin to forget who Jiang Chen was.

Cao Jin had also reflected on those events carefully after he'd lost at the Regal Pill Palace. He was a little regretful that he'd been so rash. He suspected that Jiang Chen had not emerged from Mt. Rippling Mirage not because he couldn't, but rather because he didn't want to. After all, if he emerged, he would have to split his sky and earth rank herbs with his sect. Cao Jin judged people using himself as a barometer. He thought that Jiang Chen chose to remain on Mt. Rippling Mirage as a form of insurance because that way, he would not have to share his sky and earth rank herbs with his sect.

In all fairness, Cao Jin felt that his deductions were fairly reasonable because he was speculating about Jiang Chen with the mindset of a petty, vile character. And if his deductions proved correct, Jiang Chen had to have at least five sky rank herbs and a hundred earth rank herbs on him. In addition, the members of the Sacred Sword Palace had also verified Jiang Chen to be in possession of several thousand stalks of Sage Fledgling Grass! Besides these, this Jiang Chen had also refined the Longevity Pill. In other words, the Longevity Pill recipe was in his head.

A person so laden with treasure had remained in Mt. Rippling Mirage! Even if Cao Jin made no other gains during this trip into the mountain, just capturing Jiang Chen alone would net him an enormous profit. He hadn't been planning to speak of Jiang Chen, but when he saw that these two had no motivation to fight, he could only reveal this matter to light a fire in them.

Second rank pill king Shi Zhen muttered, "Senior brother Cao, you're not just making things up to persuade us to go, are you? A single person has pocketed five stalks of sky rank herbs? Aren't

there only a total of twelve stalks?”

“That’s right. Who could have so much face as to take almost half of that?” Fatty Wu was also doubtful.

“I’m a hundred percent sure of this. I swear on my character that I’m not lying to you. This person also knows how to refine pills. He’s already refined a Longevity Pill that extended the life of a sage realm elder by five hundred years.”

With this, Shi Zhen lost his cool, “Extended by five hundred years? Longevity Pill? Senior brother Cao, forgive my bluntness but this… this is…”

If the members of the Tristar Sect had not vowed so solemnly, Cao Jin would not have believed it either. But the Tristar Sect definitely wouldn’t have risked the destruction of their sect on a lie. Hence, Cao Jin strongly believed that their information couldn’t be false. The senses of an expert were also telling him that this matter was likely to be true.

“Junior brother Shi Zhen, I’ve already said what I can. Make your decision. At worst, I’ll invite another genius,” Cao Jin sounded somewhat displeased. He’d already gone against his usual code of conduct by explaining so much to these two disciples who were completely inferior to him, yet these two were still jabbering nonstop. He was naturally rather upset with this situation.

Shi Zhen spoke up without hesitation, “I’ll go.”

It was clear that the description of the Longevity Pill had turned this second rank pill king a little crazy.

Cao Jin nodded at Shi Zhen's reply. "Junior brother Shi Zhen, the existence of the Longevity Pill is absolutely true. The one who received the pill was the Sect Head of the Great Cathedral, Xiang Wentian. That old man had apparently less than five hundred years to live and his cultivation was about to scatter to the winds. But after he took the Longevity Pill, the effects were nearly instantaneous. Time itself seemed reversed—he looked several hundred years younger. This was something that the Tristar Sect saw with their own eyes. There's no possibility for it to be fake."

Shi Zhen's lips trembled slightly. His eyes glowed as he breathed, "Senior brother Cao, promise me. If we get our hands on this Longevity Pill recipe, I must receive a copy."

Cao Jin smiled calmly, "Naturally."

Wu Heng replied hastily, "My martial prowess is average, but still, this Longevity Pill should be split by the rules. I won't ask for much, just that I receive twenty-five percent of the benefits from this Longevity Pill."

Cao Jin glanced at Wu Heng before he said, "Twenty percent for you. Forty percent each for junior brother Shi Zhen and myself."

Wu Heng opened and closed his mouth, but did not argue further. After the three had settled the matter, they didn't dally, choosing to set off immediately.

The three maintained a low profile along the way, only entering the Myriad Domain after a month's journey. They played by the rules and their plan, arriving at the outskirts of Mt. Rippling Mirage without alerting anyone.

Mt. Rippling Mirage had been the imperial medicine garden left behind by Myriad Empire. Therefore, it was remote but not difficult to find. The three people entered the main hall of the mountain before examining their surroundings.

"Judging from this place, no one has come here for nearly two years," Fatty Wu said after he completed his survey.

Cao Jin nodded, "The people of the Myriad Domain all believe that the outskirts of Mt. Rippling Mirage are closed off to all, with the restrictions lifting only once every thirty years. It's impossible to lift them before that cycle is up. I guess the next time someone comes will be the next Pill Battles."

Fatty Wu nodded in agreement as he walked out of the main hall, arriving at the exterior of the restricted area. Cao Jin and Shi Zhen stood behind the fatty without a word. In terms of formation techniques, Wu Heng held the greatest right to speak, so they naturally would not want to disrupt his line of thought.

Fatty Wu finally lowered his gaze after looking around for half an hour.

"How is it?" Cao Jin hurriedly asked.

“This formation is far from simple.” As a genius on formations in a first rate sect, Wu Heng had seen various kinds of intricate formations. “If I’m guessing correctly, this should be an ancient formation,” Fatty Wu muttered.

Cao Jin was delighted. “Then, you’re saying that this place is really an ancient ruin?”

Wu Heng’s tone was grave. “I can sense from its presence that it’s definitely ancient. The formation is extremely complicated and protects a large area. There are almost no flaws. I wonder what kind of genius its creator was for this ancient formation to have lasted until today while still retaining such strong defensive abilities?”

“Junior brother Wu, you’ve spoken so much but you’ve veered off topic. Can you break this formation or not?” Shi Zhen asked with displeasure.

Wu Heng murmured, “There’s no possibility that I can break the formation. However, I do have a formation shattering technique that gives me a twenty to thirty percent chance of penetrating this formation. That would allow me to enter the interior of the mountain.”

“Formation shattering technique?” Cao Jin perked up as he heard this.

“Yes, the formation shattering technique is a remarkable ancient

art, and I've only scratched the surface with my cultivation. It's said that formation experts in the past could refine treasures that could directly penetrate all restrictions and formations, but these kinds of treasures are beyond rare. There are also some experts who research formation shattering techniques. These techniques rely on finding the weakest link in the formation, tearing a gap there, and passing through."

"Then, junior brother Wu can open a crack through this formation?"

Wu Heng didn't give his word. "I only have a twenty to thirty percent chance, and that only because this formation has weathered countless eons since the ancient era. Otherwise, even the heavyweight formation masters of the sect could not possibly break this formation, much less me."

"It's that powerful?" Cao Jin was moved.

"Which ancient formation isn't powerful? If it wasn't powerful, how could it have persisted for so long without collapsing?"

Cao Jin and Shi Zhen both nodded in turn.

Shi Zhen hurriedly replied, "Since it's like that, then let's see junior brother Wu display his might."

Wu Heng didn't protest. Since everyone was cooperating, he'd be looked down on if he refused to show a few cards. He would also

lose any right to speak from then on.

He circled the outside of the formation before choosing a position and making some preparations. He turned his head to Cao Jin and Shi Zhen. “Senior brothers, there’s only a twenty to thirty percent chance of success. If this fails, you can’t blame me. But if it succeeds, we have at most the span of a few breaths. The moment you see me rush in, you must follow on my heels. Once time is up, the formation will naturally recover.”

Cao Jin and Shi Zhen both nodded again.

Wu Heng crushed a talisman in one hand, shattering it. He made a string of rapid hand seals before his hand slashed downwards sharply with a battle axe.

Boom!

The exterior of the formation rippled rapidly like illusionary water. Faint cracks appeared on its surface. However, the cracks only stayed for an instant before the surface swiftly returned to its formerly pristine state.

Wu Heng’s face fell. He shook his head with a rueful smile. “Just one move away, just a little bit more. I cracked the surface, but the cracks weren’t enough to let us through. My battle axe doesn’t seem to possess the necessary quality.”

Cao Jin furrowed his brows. “You’re saying that the problem

wasn't with your technique, but that your battle axe itself wasn't strong enough?"

"The technique was flawless," Wu Heng sighed. "If the final cut had been two or three times stronger, I'd definitely have broken through."

Cao Jin nodded before he took out an object—the Moonshatter Awl he'd initially used against the Regal Pill Palace.

"Fatty, this Moonshatter Awl is an emperor rank treasure that specializes in breaking formations. How does it compare to your battle axe?"

Fatty Wu's face was instantly flushed with wild glee at the sight of the Moonshatter Awl. "The Moonshatter Awl? Senior brother Cao, you're seriously pampered! This Moonshatter Awl is a godly formation breaking treasure. Why didn't you say anything earlier? With this Moonshatter Awl, I have at least an eighty percent chance of breaking through!"

"Then do it." Cao Jin didn't like to waste words.

Wu Heng nodded and began to build up momentum without further ado. He shattered another talisman in his hand, the light rays travelling towards the formation.

His figure shot outwards in a beautiful arc, the Moonshatter Awl carving a stunning line through the air.

Pffft—

A huge hole was torn in the void of the formation.

“Go!”

Three shadows seemed to react simultaneously as they raced into the formation. The moment the three shadows entered, the illusion-like restrictive formation wavered slightly as it once again regained its original form.

……

Within the sacred grounds of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, Jiang Chen sat cross-legged on the floor. Inner energy circulated rapidly within his body, suffusing it with resplendent light. He had reached the crucial step in assailing the sage realm. Once he crossed this step, he would be completely free of the shackles of the origin realm and have successfully stepped into the sage ream.

He’d spent nearly two entire years in the sacred grounds of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect in preparation for this moment. In these two years, he had only one goal in mind—reach the sage realm, receive the inheritance and leave this place! And today, after enduring so much pain and struggle, he’d finally reached the most important step!

Chapter 621: Haggling

If the origin realm's nascent soul was analogous to forming a tree from spirit essence, then the sage realm was equivalent to forming an entire forest of similar trees. Thus, stepping into the sage realm was the equivalent of a single tree growing into a whole forest. Jiang Chen cycled his qi through his body, forming a connection between the surroundings and himself. He drew on and strengthened that connection till he'd become one with the heavens and the earth. With Jiang Chen's qualifications and talent, stepping into the sage realm from the origin realm was but a matter of time. There were no major obstacles in the way.

Jiang Chen had not forgotten about the scene he'd caused when he'd broken through to the origin realm during the alliance ceremony between the Precious Tree Sect and the Regal Pill Palace. He'd spontaneously broken through to the origin realm after comprehending the dao beneath the Precious Tree and caused a stunning heavenly phenomenon to appear. Everyone present at the Precious Tree Sect was shocked and speechless in the face of such an awe-inspiring display.

Fortunately, this time around he was safely in the sacred grounds of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, so no one would be alarmed even if a terrifying phenomenon did materialize.

……

Within Mt. Rippling Mirage.

Three figures were lingering over a small hill. None other than the three who had forcefully broken into Mt. Rippling Mirage by cracking its formation, they'd immediately sensed that the mountain range was a completely separate world.

Cao Jin was highest in the air, looking into the distance with an abstruse look in his eyes.

The second rank pill king, Shi Zhen, was probing in all directions and could not help but sigh when he noticed a few areas. Fatty Wu Heng, on the other hand, was systematically checking his surroundings for hidden formations.

After Cao Jin had spent some time gazing into the distance, he drifted down and asked Fatty Wu Heng, "Well? Are there any hidden attack formations?"

Wu Heng shook his head, "There aren't many attack formations here. Along the way, I noticed some transportation matrixes scattered here and there, but as the main formation is closed, these transportation matrixes can't be activated. We'll have to forcefully break out when we want to leave."

Cao Jin nodded and turned to look at Shi Zhen, "Junior brother Shi Zhen, this Mt. Rippling Mirage contains the Divine Befuddlement Miasma. It'll be up to you to detect it beforehand."

"Rest assured, I've made my preparations."

Inviting Shi Zhen on this trip had been to offset any of Mt. Rippling Mirage's sudden situations. Armed with the Tristar Sect's knowledge, Cao Jin had made thorough preparations for everything inside this mountain range. Wu Heng was in charge of breaking formations while Shi Zhen was to deal with the problem of the Miasma.

Mt. Rippling Mirage covered an extensive area, but the trio took their time. They were in no hurry to leave. Along the way, Shi Zhen would give lamenting sighs, "The spirit seeds still remain, but the spirit herbs have all been harvested. It seems this Mt. Rippling Mirage really does have some good things."

Shi Zhen was a second level Pill King and had seen many valuable items before. However, some of species of herbs in Mt. Rippling Mirage still surprised him. "I never expected that there would be such a good place in the Myriad Domain."

The three of them launched an exhaustive search within Mt. Rippling Mirage. They occasionally came across spirit herbs, but they were all of the true saint rank. Cao Jin was very generous and allowed Shi Zhen and Wu Heng to divide the true saint herbs amongst themselves. He really wasn't interested in them unless there were a large amount of them, like a thousand stalks of Sage Fledging Grass.

Mt. Rippling Mirage was far too large for the three groups from the six sects to completely sweep the place clean. Thus, the three of them discovered many nooks and crannies that were missed, obtaining quite the harvest of spirit herbs. Eventually, all of them had earth rank spirit herbs in their possession.

About half a month later, they had searched through all of Mt. Rippling Mirage, leaving no corner untouched by their consciousness. However, the person who they wanted most to find, Jiang Chen, seemed to have disappeared without a trace.

On this day, the three of them stood before a large waterfall. Cao Jin had an excited but serious expression on his face, “According to the Tristar Sect’s information, Mt. Rippling Mirage contains a mountain within a mountain. The location where we are now can only be considered the main mountain. There is also an ancient herb garden inside that opens every three thousand years. The entrance to that garden should be near these waterfalls.”

“Around here?” Shi Zhen looked up at the large waterfall, awed by those dreamy curtains of water. However, as a second level pill king, he was still very vigilant. After inspecting the surroundings without finding anything, he turned to Cao Jin. “Senior brother Cao, there isn’t any Miasma in this area.”

Cao Jin nodded and glanced towards Wu Heng, “Junior brother Wu, how confident are you?”

Wu Heng’s face was solemn, “This formation is many times stronger than the outer formation. It’s virtually impossible to break through this formation with my ability.”

“Not even with the formation shattering technique?”

“If I was an emperor realm expert, then I would have a 40%

chance of creating a gap large enough for us to enter with the formation shattering technique."

"This requires emperor realm level strength?" Shi Zhen's disappointment was evident.

"Mm, this formation is from ancient times. Furthermore, for whatever reason, this formation is currently in a relatively weak state. If this formation was in its peak state, then I'm afraid even an emperor realm expert wouldn't be able to crack it."

Wu Heng's understanding and ability with formations was certainly deep enough to notice that Mt. Rippling Mirage's overall formation was currently in a partially lifted state due to Jiang Chen's intrusion. However, even though he'd noticed that, the formation blocking the way to the ancient herb garden was incomparable to the outer formation – its defenses was extremely high.

"So our steps come to a halt here? We can't enter that ancient herb garden?" Cao Jin couldn't bring himself to accept that outcome. He knew that Jiang Chen had not left Mt. Rippling Mirage. Since Jiang Chen wasn't in the main mountain area, then he must be in the ancient herb garden. Thus, they would be able to find Jiang Chen if they entered the ancient herb garden. By finding Jiang Chen, those sky rank herbs, earth rank herbs and the Longevity Pill recipe would all be at his fingertips. Naturally, Cao Jin wasn't willing to be stymied at this last step.

Wu Heng stared at the waterfall, his eyes focused, and did not immediately answer Cao Jin. A complicated look appeared in his

eyes, as if he had made a difficult decision. He suddenly said, “Senior brother Cao, the formation shattering technique can be simultaneously deployed by three people. If three people were to use the technique in unison, the power would increase by at least fivefold.”

“Three people in unison?” Cao Jin’s eyes lit up, “The power can be increased fivefold?”

Shi Zhen’s eyes also glowed.

Wu Heng nodded, “However, this technique is an ancient art that I only discovered after paying a great price while I was out adventuring. In the Ninesuns Sky Sect, I alone possess this art.”

Cao Jin and Shi Zhen immediately understood Wu Heng’s words – he wanted to haggle. After all, it was reasonable to expect that sharing an exclusive technique would come at a price. Cao Jing smiled faintly, “What are your conditions?”

Shi Zhen also looked at Wu Heng. He knew that Wu Heng wanted to renegotiate the distribution of benefits. The fatty scratched his bald head and adopted a completely harmless smile. “Both of you will benefit endlessly if I pass this formation shattering technique onto you. So first of all, I would like both of you to swear to never pass this technique onto others.”

“Naturally.” Cao Jin and Shi Zhen did not argue with that condition, nodding quickly.

“Second naturally involves the distribution of benefits. I paid a great price in order to obtain this formation shattering technique. Therefore, if that Jiang Chen has five sky rank herbs, I’ll take two, Senior Brother Cao Jing takes two and Senior Brother Shi Zhen takes one. As for earth rank herbs, Senior Brother Cao will get five portions, I’ll take three portions, and Senior Brother Shi Zhen receives two portions. Any other valuables will also be divided up according to this ratio.”

Aside from the sky rank herb allocation, Cao Jing did not disagree with this distribution method as he would still receive his original half of the resources. However, the remaining half that was originally divided equally between Wu Heng and Shi Zhen had now shifted to Fatty Wu taking three portions and leaving Shi Zhen only two portions.

“The distribution method was set a long time ago. Fatty Wu, are you trying to take advantage of the situation to hike up the price?” Shi Zhen was naturally unhappy.

“Senior Brother Shi Zhen, you can’t put it like that. The original agreement between the three of us was for each of us to do their part. I’ve already done my part. I didn’t nitpick or haggle when we were breaking through the outer formation, right? Now, this formation can’t be broken. But passing on my formation shattering technique isn’t within our agreement. Since it’s not part of our original agreement, I would take a loss by passing on the technique. It’s not unreasonable for me to want some kind of compensation for eating this loss, right?” Fatty Wu’s argument was bolstered by a tone full of conviction.

Cao Jin would only lose out on one sky rank herb, but he didn't want to set a precedent. If Fatty Wu could dicker about his technique now, then maybe Shi Zhen would haggle over curing the Miasma once they entered the ancient herb garden. A lot of future trouble would come from this one instance.

"Fatty, don't try to take a mile after gaining an inch." Cao Jin said in a frosty tone.

Fatty Wu chuckled wryly, "We can forget about it if both of you don't agree with my suggestion. Anyways, I've already done my part. If you want me to teach you the formation shattering technique for free... well, that's impossible."

Shi Zhen complained angrily, "Fatty, we're all from the same sect. If you keep splitting hairs like this, how are we supposed to cooperate?"

Fatty Wu wasn't someone who was ever willing to suffer a loss. It was impossible for him to teach them the technique for free. However, he saw that Cao Jing and Shi Zhen weren't willing to compromise and sneered, "Don't try to oversimplify the situation. I can agree to not changing the distribution method. Instead, you two can take out a technique in exchange. Senior brother Cao, teach me your "Milky Way Point". Senior brother Shi Zhen, you can use your unique "Seven Blossoms Fire Control" method in exchange." Since the distribution method wasn't open for alteration, Fatty Wu took a step back and wanted to trade art for art.

Cao Jin and Shi Zhen looked at each other, hesitated for a

second, but finally nodded. “Then it’s decided. We’ll trade art for art. However, everyone must swear a heavenly oath not to pass on these arts to anyone else.”

The three of them began their transaction and were all happy after achieving their goals.

Although the formation shattering technique was profound, it wasn’t difficult for them to learn it given their respective levels of talent. Cao Jin and Shi Zhen had mastered the essentials after roughly five days.

Chapter 622: Finally Entering The Sage Realm

Jiang Chen continuously circulated his energy within the forbidden area of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. Multiple currents of origin power coursed through his body like vast armies in one direction, as if numerous rivers and creeks converging on the ocean. He felt the internal dimension of the purple manor within his dantian continuously increase and grow.

Three distinct flower-shaped illusions began to congeal above his head, becoming clearer by the moment. Jiang Chen knew that he'd reached the critical moment for breaking through to the sage realm. "Let's do this in one move, go!"

There was only one thought left in Jiang Chen's mind, to rush forward with all his might. He was currently rowing against the current in a canoe and had to maintain his current momentum. The origin power within his body was akin to a flood dragon struggling up an enormous waterfall, continuously battering against the various shackles within his body.

Wham! Bam!

Great rumbling noises sounded from the the purple manor within Jiang Chen's dantian, as if it had come from a deep abyss. Jiang Chen's bones and meridians shone gold as they resonated with the energy wrapping around them, creating a harmonized chorus.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen felt his body relax as the origin realm shackles in his body shattered like a great glass dome.

Crack!

No different than glass, the shackles shattered into shards and were disintegrated into particles by the origin power surging through them. The origin power within him shot into the skies in a magnificent column, rising through the air like a vigorous dragon or tiger. At that instant, the three flowers over his head became as clear as could be, as if they were lanterns flaring to life.

Coalesce the three flowers, and break through to the sage realm!

The sage realm was broken into three levels: mortal, earth, and sky sage. Entrance into each level would be accompanied by natural phenomena. In the mortal sage realm, the natural phenomena to note was the three flowers that would coalesce over the cultivator's head. Entering the earth sage realm would beget golden lotuses that cover the ground, and the sky sage realm would usher in a rain of flowers from immortals.

However, when Jiang Chen broke through to the sage realm, all of the origin energy in his body shot towards the clouds, rending the skies and earth open. The skies seemed to be bisected by an enormous blade as light itself was divided in twain, a clear line marking the delineation of black and white. Multi-hued clouds rushed furiously towards the void, as if desperate to fill a vacuum.

The heavenly phenomena that had appeared in the Precious Tree

Sect had once again made its appearance, and worse, it was three to five times stronger this time! Luckily, this area completely enclosed the breadth of the phenomena as rainbows started forming, reflecting off each other in the sky. Light flashed, and darkness roiled, competing for attention as they formed various divine forms.

"I'd thought that what had happened in the origin realm was an accident, but who knew that the disturbance upon setting foot in the sage realm would be even greater. It's a good thing that I'm ensconced in the forbidden area of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. If I'd been in the Regal Pill Palace, it's likely everyone would've connected it to me."

Once could be explained as accident, but twice was never an accident. It was impossible for for natural phenomena to just so happen to appear every time he broke through. In the instant he did, the seal reappeared in the universe of his consciousness, materializing in a patch of empty space. Nine small water droplets made a ring of stars, forming a strange seal in a marvelous chain. This seal seemed to thrum with exceedingly frightening power, as if sealing off some sort of great terror.

When Jiang Chen had broken through to the origin realm last time, he'd detected this seal and had attempted to investigate it, only to come up empty handed. He'd also accidentally touched the seal last time, triggering the heavenly phenomena. He'd been quite careful this time, but had triggered an even more frightening phenomenon. It looked like each breakthrough to a new realm would be perceived by the seal, which in turn would trigger these phenomena. They weren't triggered because Jiang Chen had sought it out. This time however, the seal was noticeably clearer.

Contrary to when he'd entered the origin realm, he could now clearly sense the existence of the seal.

Last time, his consciousness hadn't dared draw near to the seal. And now that he'd broken through to the sage realm, although Jiang Chen's consciousness still felt as if needles were being jabbed into his mind, it wasn't as bad as when he was in the origin realm.

"It looks like my consciousness has continuously improved with my strength, and I've grown used to the seal." Jiang Chen had come to the conclusion that his consciousness was being subconsciously steered by the seal as his mind hovered around it, sensing it. It was being steered to the vast expanses of the heavens of his past life, back to that ancient era. The memories of his past life spilled over as if an avalanche had finally been freed, and so Jiang Chen hastily stopped his explorations.

Wham!

The seal made from the nine beads slammed shut and Jiang Chen's consciousness recovered its usual serenity.

"The vast myriad worlds..." It was as if lightning had struck Jiang Chen as he stood dumbly. He was unable to speak for the longest time. He was finally certain, as of this moment, that his father had been the one to arrange for his reincarnation into this world. If not his father, there was no one else who would seal such a powerful strength into his consciousness.

Although Jiang Chen didn't know what exactly had been sealed

within, he firmly believed that no one else other than his father was even capable of leaving such an extraordinarily strong seal in his consciousness.

"Father..." Jiang Chen thought back to his past life; how the Celestial Emperor had sheltered and harbored him, how the heavens had shattered in his past life and order collapsed...

All of a sudden, Jiang Chen felt the stirrings of an explosive power starting from deep within his chest. He acutely felt its desire to burst into this world.

"Sage realm! This is just the beginning! I must continue to improve and make sure my efforts aren't in vain. One day, I will undo that seal, and see what father left behind in my mind! One day, I will carve my path back to the heavens and find my father!" It took him a great deal of effort at that point, but Jiang Chen managed to calm himself down, and see about finding his inner peace again.

.....

Cao Jin and Shi Zhen had picked up the formation shattering technique quickly, and had gotten to the point of practicing together for the last couple of days. They'd convened in front of the great waterfall in Mt. Rippling Mirage and were prepared to use the Moonshatter Awl to attack the formation. The three of them together could increase the force behind the attack by a multiple of ten. Although it might not be enough to break open the formation, Wu Heng had made his calculations and felt that he still had a certain amount of assurance in ripping open the formation

enough to let them pass.

"Watch my hand seals, everyone. It's time to put everything we have to the test." He had taken the role of conductor for this task. Three hand seals flashed, causing a silver light to flash. The moment the silver light appeared, he roared, "Now!"

The three of them held nothing back, working cooperatively to channel an incredible amount of power into the Moonshatter Awl. The resulting thick laser of silver light crashed onto the waterfall with an earth shattering impact.

Wham bam bam!

The waterfall didn't even shudder, but a faint trace appeared on its mirror-like surface.

No?

"Keep at it!" Wu Heng knew that breaking through the formation with a single blow was nothing more than a pipe dream. Their only hope lay in a continuous assault. So, the three of them didn't stop as they continued to fire off attacks in sequence.

Suddenly, the water curtain of the waterfall seemed to slow for an instant. From there, the water flowing down the waterfall began to reverse, and the length of the sky suddenly sported an enormous tear. Clouds had already begun to spiral around the epicenter of the phenomena. The entirety of Mt. Rippling Mirage

seemed to have been awakened by a mysterious power as numerous life forms poked their heads out in curiosity. They bore silent witness as the heavens and earth shook.

Natural phenomena!

Cao Jin instantly stopped his attacks as he looked solemnly at the horizon. The cloud layers were all snaking through the sky as an uncountable number of birds and beasts called and roared together. Rainbows danced through the air as a general atmosphere of auspicious prosperity settled in the air. Divine figures could be vaguely made out, slipping in and out of various forms.

“How… how can this be?” Shi Zhen was stunned as a hint of fear appeared in his eyes. “Is this because of our attacks?”

Fatty Wu had originally thought the the formation had elicited the phenomena as well, but there was nothing out of the ordinary around the formation. He shook his head with an exceedingly ugly expression, “It’s not because of the formation.”

Cao Jin’s face had already darkened immensely. He was well read and widely versed, and naturally recognized this as the natural phenomena brought about from an expert breaking through. However, even someone in the emperor realm breaking through to a Titled Great Emperor would have such a tremendous momentum.

“Could it be that a Titled Emperor has been acknowledged by the

heavenly dao and become a legendary empyrean expert?!" Cao Jin murmured to himself, but his words were loud enough to stun Wu Heng and Shi Zhen. A Titled Emperor breaking through? They weren't certain if there was even an empyrean expert in the Upper Eight Regions, but one may be hiding in a mere Myriad Domain? If there really was one, then they were no different than ants in front of that existence. Perhaps the other's consciousness had already locked onto them. To act so unreservedly in such an honored one's territory, weren't they courting death?

So therefore, even Cao Jin's face was filled with wariness. It felt that a great catastrophe was descending on them. The phenomena lasted for a full half hour before slowly dissipating, and the three stood where they were without moving, doing their best to imitate stone sculptures. They didn't dare do anything as they were deathly afraid of offending the concealed empyrean expert, resulting in a fatal blow. If it really was an empyrean expert, he would be able to kill them with one thought.

It wasn't until the phenomena had dissipated to the point where they couldn't sense it that the three of them looked at each other, cold sweat drenching them.

"It's... disappeared?" Shi Zhen stammered. "Senior brother Cao, was that really a Titled Great Emperor breaking through to the empyrean level?"

Cao Jin was now a bit uncertain as well. If that was truly the case, the three of them would've been discovered a long time ago. However, his instincts hadn't warned him of any danger even now.

“Was it a misconception, and the phenomena wasn’t triggered by an expert going through a tribulation?” Fatty Wu felt that they’d been quite lucky. If it had been such an expert, he felt that the three of them would have long been dust by now.

Cao Jin cautiously sent his consciousness out and then nodded. “It shouldn’t have been such an expert breaking through. Otherwise, we would’ve felt an even stronger aura from the heavens. It’s impossible for an empyrean cultivator to not have released even the slightest aura. It looks like this phenomena was triggered from within the mountain and not from a cultivator. If this is an ancient ruin from the ancient times, it’s impossible for anyone or anything in there to have remained alive until now!”

“Then... do we continue?” Wu Heng looked at the formation. If we continue our attacks, we’ll be able to tear open a rip in the formation in half a day!”

Cao Jin thought momentarily and spoke decisively. “Fortune favors the bold. We must continue our attacks to enter the ancient herb garden. We’ll leave immediately once we find Jiang Chen!”

Chapter 623: Challenging The Tower Of Inheritance

Jiang Chen had completed all his preparations. He stood beneath the foot of the tower of inheritance, ready to begin. He would challenge the tower, receive the inheritance, and leave the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's sacred grounds. Those goals were foremost in his mind as he entered the tower.

Entering the tower was no different than entering another independent world. Enshrined within was a statue, a likeness of one of the ancestors from the Ancestor Cliff. The statue seemed to embody wisdom, a gentle smile on its face as one hand formed a mudra. Jiang Chen walked to the center of the floor and examined the surrounding walls. Various tadpole-like runes were etched into the walls. As he inspected them, they began to unfurl from the walls, wriggling in the air like they'd obtained life of their own.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen discovered that the area had been locked down. The entire tower was now completely isolated from the outside world, and the door he entered through had vanished without a trace. The floor began to vibrate and rumble beneath him. Looking down, he discovered that he had inadvertently been standing in the center of a circle. If one took a step back, one would recognize the circle radiating out to form an enormous turntable, which was then divided into eighths.

A voice sounded out from the ancestor statue at this time –

"Successor, welcome to the tower of inheritance. By entering this tower, you've proven that you've reached the initial requirements

of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect with respect to strength, comprehension and affinity. Whether you can become the successor of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's heritage will depend on your performance here and now.

"This is the first floor of the tower – the Floor of Wisdom. The turntable beneath your feet will turn three times, with each turn heralding a test question for a total of three questions. One correct answer will grant you the right to enter the second floor. Answering two questions correctly will grant you the right to enter the third floor. If you answer all three questions correctly, not only will you be granted access to the two upper floors, you will also receive this floor's heritage."

As the voice faded, the turntable under Jiang Chen's feet started to rumble again, turning. One of the grids of the turntable suddenly started glowing with a pale golden light. Accompanying the golden light, a question popped up on the grid. Jiang Chen couldn't help but smile when he saw this question.

The topic of this question wasn't the least bit unfamiliar to him. Interestingly though, it was related to the library's journals. More accurately speaking, it was about what was written down in those journals. The question didn't have anything to do with formations, nor did it relate to the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's inheritance. To be frank, it was simply trivia about daily life.

However, Jiang Chen was erudite and well-read. Coupled with the fact that he had diligently read through all the journals, this question was no problem for him. He used his consciousness to transmit his answer into that grid.

Rumble...

The golden light gradually dimmed and the question in that grid slowly faded away. A golden light arced directly into the ancestor statue. As the golden light drilled into the statue's forehead, a crack suddenly appeared, revealing an open eye.

The turntable once again began to turn beneath Jiang Chen's feet, bring the next question to the fore. The subject matter was still limited to the contents of the library, but instead of coming from one of the journals, it came from one of the library's books. This question was actually about an anecdote related to formations and didn't have much to do with the study of the formation itself. Jiang Chen once again transmitted his answer according to his memories.

The second grid's question also slowly faded and another golden light arced into the ancestor statue. This time however, the light shot into the left eye of the statue. As Jiang Chen watched this wondrous scene, he formed a vague speculation. This Floor of Wisdom's purpose was to test wisdom, not martial ability. In fact, Jiang Chen had already guessed the hidden purpose of this test. It was a test of the successor's sincerity.

If the successor was not sincere and lacked the patience to read through all of the journals and books in the library, instead directly making for the three formations, then they would have no hope of inheriting anything even if they did enter the tower of inheritance. But if the successor was able to keep their composure and diligently read all the books, then this first floor's test would

naturally pose no difficulty. Thinking of this, Jiang Chen couldn't help but admire the tower's designers. Everything was interconnected, forming chains of cause and effect.

Thinking back to his experience at Ancestors' Cliff, Jiang Chen realized how ingenious the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's inheritance assessment really was. This floor's test in particular meant that a grasping and avaricious person with little interest in those books would ultimately receive nothing.

Once they'd been stymied on this floor, then they would likely remain stuck in the tower until their death. Jiang Chen exclaimed in admiration and also sighed with relief. He felt fortunate that he was diligent enough to read through all the books once. If he hadn't done so, then he might have been stuck here at his wits' end. After all, one wouldn't be able to return to the library to look for answers once they entered the tower. As Jiang Chen was woolgathering, the third question made its appearance.

This question was even more interesting. It asked Jiang Chen what he would do if he became the successor to the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect and enemies had come knocking at the door. Would he firmly meet the enemy head-on or prioritize safety to perpetuate the sect's lineage? This question somewhat troubled Jiang Chen. Normally, a sect should prioritize passing on the torch. However, the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect was different. In order to fight against the invasion of foreign enemies, the whole sect had ended up pulling out all the stops. This sort of spirit that dismissed death wasn't something a common sect could compare themselves to.

In particular, those rows upon rows of tombstones in that vast sprawling cemetery had left an immense impact on Jiang Chen. He pondered for a moment, and felt that the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect was the type that would rather forgo all paths of retreat than ever compromise with their enemies. They would rather die for justice then live in humiliation. This was the character of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

Thinking of this, Jiang Chen seemed to have found the answer. He made his choice – resolutely fight head-on. Sure enough, this answer was correct and another golden light shot into the ancestor statue's right eye.

As the three golden lights shot into the ancestor statue, it suddenly seemed to come to life and a sonorous voice spoke slowly, "Successor, congratulations on passing the first floor's test. Not only are you granted access to the second and third floors, you will also receive the inheritance of this floor."

As the voice faded, a dark grid suddenly appeared on the turntable under Jiang Chen's feet. A box coalesced in the center of the dark grid and slowly floated over to Jiang Chen. There was a book inside the box, labeled "The Heart of Formations". This book was clearly an outline of the methodology involved in all of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect formations. Jiang Chen naturally did not refuse the book. Though he had also researched formations in his past life, he was not as confident in formations compared to pill dao. He knew quite a bit about the dao of formations, but he lacked a systematic understanding of them. "The Heart of Formations" would certainly remedy this shortcoming to a point. Furthermore, since it was part of the inheritance, Jiang Chen naturally did not have a reason to refuse.

As Jiang Chen accepted the book, the turntable underneath suddenly exerted a force that sent Jiang Chen straight to the second floor. Jiang Chen was only able to glimpse a flash of light before he abruptly appeared in the second floor of the tower. The second floor of the tower of inheritance was very different than the first floor. If the first floor was dedicated to wisdom, then this second floor could only be described as the embodiment of killing intent. Jiang Chen felt as if he had suddenly entered a killing field from hell. The surrounding walls looked as they were floating oceans of blood, giving off a ghastly ambience.

Ping ping ping.

Jiang Chen suddenly heard a crisp sound, akin to numerous beads dropping onto the ground. The contrast of those crisp sounds in such an environment lent them a sinister touch. Jiang Chen gazed deeper into the floor, and discovered an ancestor statue rising from the sea of blood ahead of him.

That ancestor statue had a chain of rosary beads in hand that seemed to have spontaneously broken. The golden rosary beads fell to the ground, scattering across the floor with brittle sounding pops. Jiang Chen's heart suddenly sank as he blurted out, "Soldiers from beans?"

Each bead flashed as they struck the ground. Twelve golden armored warriors suddenly appeared in front of Jiang Chen. Each one was armed and their combined killing intent was like a physical weight that descended on the are.

“Kill!”

A low roar sounded out as an armored warrior wielding a battleaxe strode forward, striking down with his weapon. Jiang Chen was quick to note that the warrior coming towards him with vigorous steps was at the sage realm level. He didn’t dodge, instead activating his Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods, erupting with a ninety meter tall golden aura.

Bam!

As that giant battleaxe crashed into the thirty feet tall golden aura, it was as if the axe had struck a firm, yet flexible wall. Although the axe left a three meter deep scar in the aura, it was ultimately unable to break through. In response, Jiang Chen chuckled and struck back with a domineering bare fist. The golden giant was blown back by Jiang Chen’s punch and quickly transformed into a shadowy golden light. The shadowy golden light didn’t stay long, congealing back into a pale golden bead that rolled on the ground.

Jiang Chen’s confidence greatly increased. Since setting foot into the sage realm, the defense of his indomitable golden body from the Nine Transformations had undergone a qualitative upgrade. This battleaxe warrior was only a puppet formed from a rosary bead and not a true martial cultivator. Frankly speaking, even a real flesh and blood martial cultivator in the sage realm was no longer capable of relying solely on a physical attack to break through Jiang Chen’s golden body. However, Jiang Chen’s actions in sending a golden warrior flying seemed to have annoyed the other armored puppets.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

Five golden warriors rushed towards him, each from a different angle, and wielding a variety of swords and spears.

Jiang Chen growled, “Invincible to Gods and Demons!”

The aura of his golden body inflated by another thirty percent, as if it was an enormous balloon. The five attacks were ultimately unsuccessful, only penetrating nine or so meters into the aura. Jiang Chen smashed them all back relying on nothing but his fists and feet. These armored warriors were merely soulless puppets whose attack power lay in their initial charge. Once they failed to break Jiang Chen’s defense, these puppets simply did not have the time to launch a second attack or muster a defense before being sent flying by Jiang Chen.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

Another three golden warriors quickly shot forth. This time, Jiang Chen did not dare grandstand anymore. These new three warriors had an aura comparable to earth sage realm experts. He didn’t dare to disregard them even though he knew he would only need to endure a single blow from each.

Chapter 624: For Everything That Exists, There Exists Its Counter

Since breaking through to the sage realm, Jiang Chen had entered new heights, whether in terms of martial cultivation, battle capability, or his arts and techniques. Even facing three golden-armored warriors who boasted of strength equivalent to the earth sage realm wasn't enough to faze him. He simultaneously circulated his golden body to its limit and called upon the Lotus. Hundreds of vines writhed around him, setting up an impenetrable barricade.

The three earth sage realm warriors far exceeded the five warriors at the human sage realm. Although Jiang Chen had the Lotus restraining them, the three warriors that charged at him had enough momentum behind them to launch their attacks from beyond the Lotus' barricade. However, it came at a price. The strength behind their attacks had greatly diminished.

Yet when they crashed into the golden aura, that one hundred and twenty meter tall aura around Jiang Chen exploded outward like an enormous, golden bubble!

Although the aura had been destroyed, Jiang Chen's physical body's defensive capability wasn't inferior to the golden aura. With the aura ablating part of the three attacks, his body alone withstood the remainder of the attacks without trouble.

Jiang Chen didn't remain passive either, punching out in quick succession. As each punch landed on the three warriors, they were blown away. Each one transformed into clouds of golden light and

returned to their bead forms. There were only three warriors left to face now, and they had already surrounded Jiang Chen in a triangle formation. These three were even stronger than the last, reaching sky sage realm strength!

"Come on then!" Jiang Chen was fully confident in his skills, and boldly challenged them. He didn't panic when facing the three sky sage realm warriors. If he'd met them in real life, he would've retreated without another word. He wouldn't have fought them head on. At his current level, he was fairly confident in facing a sky sage realm cultivator. But to battle three at the same time was courting death! Jiang Chen wasn't the foolhardy sort. But this challenge had a set of unique circumstances. The warriors were puppets, and they only had the strength to launch a single blow. All he had to do was last through a single strike.

Even so, Jiang Chen didn't dare treat that blow lightly. The only thing he could rely on was pure ability. There were no tricks to be played here; this was the tower of inheritance, and the rules were made by that existence. Even if Jiang Chen wanted to escape, there was no place to escape to. The only thing he could do was to face the challenge head on.

He activated the Golden Body again and summoned the magnetic golden mountain. The Lotus roared fiercely to life, erecting an even stronger defense around him. Jiang Chen was using almost all of his trump cards at the moment. The only one he was holding back was Long Xiaoxuan. It wasn't that he didn't want to summon the dragon, but that he was worried that the rules within the tower would reject all living beings apart from the inheritor. Therefore, he'd rather go at it alone than summon Long Xiaoxuan. If the rules rejected any other living beings and activated, they

might kill him along with Long Xiaoxuan.

Although Long Xiaoxuan was a true dragon, he had yet to grow into his full strength. He would be the same as Jiang Chen in front of the overpowering formations of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, just a piece of meat for others to carve up as they would.

“The tests of the second level need to be conquered through force alright. It looks like the warnings of the residence’s owner were right. Attempting the tower requires a minimum cultivation level of the sage realm. Even with all my trump cards, I likely would’ve stopped at this level had I rashly barged into the tower of inheritance.” Jiang Chen locked gazes with the final three golden-armored warriors. All of a sudden, they all blurred into motion at the same time!

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

“Well met!” Jiang Chen wasn’t afraid at all as he gestured, sending three magnetic storms to meet them head-on. The magnetic golden mountain expanded explosively under his control, emitting a powerful magnetic power and protecting the air over Jiang Chen’s head.

Bam bam bam!

The three streaks of golden light tore through the Lotus’ restraints with an unbridled, tyrannical momentum. However, even having broken through the Lotus’ siege, the Lotus wasn’t so passive as to just let them pass without challenge. It chased after

the attackers and sought to restrain them again.

However, the warriors were all puppet warriors of the metal attribute. Their weapons and affinities were a natural counter to the vines of the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice. Whoosh whoosh whoosh! Countless vines were continuously hacked into pieces, decorating the air with wriggling severed vines. Although the warriors were fierce, their speed was still affected by the Lotus' actions.

By the time they'd made their way to the second round of defenses, Jiang Chen's magnetic storms were waiting for them. As wild as the warriors' attacks were, their momentum decreased another degree as they strove to break through the magnetic storms. When they'd finally broken through and was about to attack Jiang Chen's Golden Body, that was when the magnetic golden mountain crushed them mercilessly!

Crack crack crack!

The three streaks of golden light were mercilessly extinguished. Like a candle flame blown out by a fierce wind.

Wham wham wham!

The three lights returned to their bead forms and rolled off into the distance. The warriors possessed the metal attribute, and the magnetic golden mountain was a metal treasure. Its power was far in excess of the three beads. Thus it was natural that it would firmly suppress the warriors.

“Hoo!” Jiang Chen breathed out lightly. He hadn’t thought things would be so easy after the magnetic golden mountain made an appearance. He hadn’t needed to attack at all before beating the golden-armored warriors back to their original form.

“For everything that exists, there exists its counter. This saying is true alright!” If Jiang Chen had been forced to rely on his own strength to fend off the three sky sage puppets, he would’ve been hard-pressed even if he had gone all out. But the magnetic golden mountain had neatly countered the warriors, crushing them with ease. This had been out of Jiang Chen’s expectations.

The twelve beads suddenly rolled towards each other, as if alive, forming a circle of rosary beads again. The seas of blood around him vanished in the next instant, revealing the original appearance of the tower. So the seas of blood were an illusion as well!

The ancestor statue glared ferociously at Jiang Chen, the rosary hanging in midair.

“Congratulations inheritor, you have passed the level of slaughter. This ring of Soldier Rosary Beads is the reward for your success. Go to the third level! The third level is where the true legacy of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect awaits.”

A blinding light appeared in the second level as the voice faded, enclosing Jiang Chen within. Jiang Chen’s figure disappeared into the void as he was brought to the third level. He took a cautious look around and noticed that its design wasn’t much different

from the first level. There was only a few additional hints of desolation on this level.

There was an ancestor statue standing in the middle of the level. Weighty and dignified, it imparted a boundless feeling of awe. If the statue on the first level could be described as benevolent and amiable, and the statue on the second level brimmed with killing intent, then this one on the third level was the personification of unparalleled magnificence. Jiang Chen knew that this was the end of the tower, and that the majority of the sect's inheritance would be found on this level. He couldn't stop his emotions from fluctuating.

He'd spent two years here waiting for this day!

"Calm yourself. This is the last trial and I can't have all my efforts go to waste at the last second." Jiang Chen warned himself silently. But what was the trial of this level? He looked around curiously but didn't see anything. He'd triggered the trials very quickly in the first two levels, but where was the test on this level?

He focused his attentions and looked around, but still didn't run into any hints. "There were tests everywhere in the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, I can't become numb and overconfident. If I'd been greedy and touched the ancestor statues, I would've been sent to a formation of sure death. If I hadn't perused the books and journals in the library, I would've failed the first level of wisdom. If I hadn't listened to the warning and come in before I had reached the sage realm, I would've failed the test on the second level of slaughter..."

Jiang Chen traced through all that had happened since he'd entered the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. He discovered that it was quite apparent what the sect looked for with regard to the qualities of its inheritor—honest and sincere, conscientious yet bold, and one with unperturbed composure.

Thus, when Jiang Chen's thoughts traveled here, he remained where he was without moving. He didn't take a step in any direction. Rather, he studied the ground at his feet and stood in the same place.

It was at this moment that the statue suddenly shot out beams of splendor from its finger. The radiance sank into the ground as the layers of the earth began to peel back like it was a newly sprouting bamboo shoot. Jiang Chen suddenly recognized the pattern. The vast floor had turned into an enormous checkerboard!

This composition!

He was taken aback as he gazed at the checkerboard. Many pieces had been placed on both sides, but what was most exceedingly rare was that Jiang Chen had actually seen such a composition problem before. Not in this life, but on a divine level in his past life! As opposed to saying this was a composition for checkers, one might as well call it a battle simulation. He'd seen this before, and its name came easily to him— the Slaughter of Immortals.

It had been named such because even immortals and gods would be hard-pressed to even salvage this particular composition. More importantly, it'd been derived from an actual battle. Once someone managed to recreate this situation on the battlefield, even

gods and immortals would fall. Whether in terms of checkers or actual battle, this composition was exceedingly difficult to solve.

Jiang Chen lost his train of thought as he stared at the composition before him. The inheritance of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect was the Slaughter of Immortals?

What does this mean? Jiang Chen sank deep into thought. “Do they mean for me to solve this?” Countless thoughts flashed through his mind as he stared absentmindedly at it. The various memories from his past life about various compositions continued to awaken and pass through his mind.

Chapter 625: The Three Treasures Of Inheritance

Jiang Chen hadn't been able to solve this "Slaughter of Immortals" setup in his past life, but that didn't mean a solution didn't exist for it. He had seen someone come up with a solution before, and that person had been his father, the Celestial Emperor.

The Celestial Emperor had sat across from one of his most trusted subjects that day and used a board to simulate solutions to this particular problem a countless number of times. In the end, the Emperor had displayed stunning wisdom and come up with an incredible method to solve it. Jiang Chen had sighed with absolute amazement as he watched from the side.

This matter had left a deep impression on Jiang Chen. And now that he was seeing it again, he felt a great sense of kinship. Delving into the memories of his father in his past life made a warm feeling rise in Jiang Chen's heart.

"It looks like it's thanks to father's blessings that I ran into this composition on the Divine Abyss Continent. Who other than one with father's intelligence could solve this?" Jiang Chen's heart was overflowing with gratitude. Who would've known that his father would reach over from the beyond to help him? Jiang Chen no longer hesitated and began to solve the situation on the checkerboard.

He discovered that the tower seemed to be controlling the game through an unknown power. Each step it made was all very formulaic, very much like rote memorization, following the

sequence that he had seen so long ago. This made things even easier for Jiang Chen; his opponent wasn't even alive. He held a great advantage when it was a formation program controlling everything. After all, there wouldn't be any unexpected changes. Since the other rigorously followed the sequence, Jiang Chen didn't need to simulate any possible changes to the solution. He just followed his father's steps and reacted accordingly.

Roughly an hour later, Jiang Chen broke through the composition through sheer memory. The moment he did so, the surroundings in front of him suddenly lightened as a pathway opened up, letting Jiang Chen proceed directly through the center of the board. As the bridge rose into existence, the checkerboard around it suddenly disappeared to reveal an empty void, like a black hole, leaving only the bridge spanning the distance between the two sides.

Cold sweat ran down Jiang Chen's back as he watched it all happen. If he hadn't sat down at the checkerboard just now and instead tried to barge through, there was no doubt that he'd have been swallowed by the space rift formed by the black hole. The tower of inheritance is filled with traps alright!

In the instant that Jiang Chen stepped foot off the bridge, all the restrictions in front of him vanished, replaced by clouds of light that gathered around the feet of the ancestor statue.

"Congratulations, inheritor, for the fact that you have made it here makes you the most ideal to inherit the sect's legacy. The Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect will surely grow great again in your hands. Although this checkers composition looked like a mere

game, it is actually a battle formation that we often use to defend against strong enemies who are foreign to the area. The many sects and races of the Divine Abyss Continent have faced multiple setbacks in the face of this formation. Whoever can solve this formation that takes shape here in the form of a game of checkers, only they hide within them the hope of destroying the battle formations that the enemies of outer regions are accustomed to using…”

Jiang Chen finally understood the meaning of the trial on the third level. The test of this level was pinpointed at the battle formations that were often used by foreign enemies! In his past life, it was a common sight to use a game of checkers to simulate a battle on that level, but who would’ve thought that the Divine Abyss Continent would have this level of accomplishment as well! In that moment, Jiang Chen was filled with admiration for the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

“The three items of inheritance from my Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect can be found within these three balls of light. The first is the Crimson Heaven Medallion. This is the medallion of the sect and our ultimate token. No matter how far away our disciples may be scattered or how far back their legacy goes, seeing this medallion is as if seeing a forefather of the sect.

“The second is the Crimson Heaven Formation Flag. This flag is one of our greatest treasures, and to possess this flag is to be able to kill enemies with a flip of your hand, summoning the winds and rain as you please. This treasure is one of the rocks we’ve been able to establish and maintain the sect upon.

“The third is the ultimate legacy—the Crimson Heaven Formation Disk. Refining this formation disk will allow you to not only simulate the ten great formations of the sect, but also allow you to control the land of the entire sect as well.”

Jiang Chen’s heart raced; this was exactly what he’d wanted to hear! This disk was the ultimate treasure of the sect. Not only could it simulate the ten great formations of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, but it could also manipulate the sect’s territory as well. He’d be able to come and go as he pleased! Jiang Chen was delighted at the rewards. However, he wasn’t the sort to forget himself after receiving some benefits. He knew that since he’d inherited the sect’s legacy, then the person in front of him was his senior and forefather. The three clouds filled with treasure there hadn’t been placed like such without a reason behind it.

Jiang Chen immediately bowed before the treasures. “With the ancestors of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect as witness in front of me, I, Jiang Chen, do hereby inherit the legacy of the sect today. I will surely rebuild the sect in the future, revive the sect’s formations, and inherit the sect’s spirit…”

Jiang Chen looked at the treasures only after he’d completed all this. The Crimson Heaven Medallion was a token of the sect. Since he had inherited the sect’s legacy, he couldn’t reject it and so carefully put it away. There were eighteen formation flags, and Jiang Chen played with them for a bit, noticing that there were two sets of flags-one primary and one secondary.

The primary flags had been made out of wondrous materials that was noticeably of excellent quality. In Jiang Chen’s eyes, the

expert who had used the primary flags had definitely been an empyrean expert who had surpassed the level of Titled Great Emperor.

The secondary flags were relatively weaker, but they were still an utmost treasure in the eyes of the current Divine Abyss Continent. Even the Upper Eight Regions might not have been able to bring out such a set of flags. Nevertheless, he put them all away with a lack of fanfare. With these flags, he felt that he would be greatly aided in setting up formations in the future, as if a tiger gaining wings.

The third item, and also the greatest—the Crimson Heaven Formation Disk. It wasn't big, about the size of two palms, but the materials used in its creation startled Jiang Chen. Each one surpassed the secular planes and had reached the divine levels!

Even though they weren't at a supreme divine level, Jiang Chen believed that ordinary empyrean cultivators would never have been able to refine this formation disk! He held the forefather of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect in even higher regard now. Someone capable of refining this disk was certainly no ordinary character.

"Hehe, what a pity that with my current strength, this formation disk won't be put to full use in my hands. Even if I refine it, I wouldn't be able to generate the ten great formations of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. Even if I managed to somehow squeeze them out, the formations wouldn't reach their full potential. It'd be similar to me failing to draw a tiger, and drawing a dog instead." Jiang Chen was very cognizant of his level of

strength and knew that although the formation disk was wonderful and he could refine it with his current strength in the sage realm, he was far from being able to use it fully.

"From observing this formation disk, I might be able to call upon one or two of the formations when I'm in the emperor realm, but I'd be able to deploy them at only twenty or thirty percent of their maximum strength. As for now, I wouldn't be able to deploy even ten percent of its strength. It'd be a waste of a treasure instead."

Jiang Chen decided that he would indeed refine the formation disk, but refrain from using it under any circumstances. He sat down without hesitation and began to start the refining process. It wasn't entirely complicated, just one that involved erasing the original consciousness left on the disk and then putting his own imprint on it. This was a simple matter for Jiang Chen's current level of consciousness.

He succeeded in removing the vestiges of the other consciousness on the disk in roughly three days, and branded his own mark onto it. Finally, the disk was now his own treasure, bound only to him. Although he was still incapable of summoning the ten great formations, the formations of the sect were now completely under his control. However, the great formation of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect was exceedingly complicated, with layers, interlocking segments, and roughly a thousand large and small formations. Although Jiang Chen had refined the disk, he still needed quite some time to digest it all.

It was a good thing that Jiang Chen's consciousness was abnormally strong, so he only spent another half month after

refining the disk to thoroughly grasp all of the large and small formations within the sect. Now all of them answered to a mere thought.

Jiang Chen breathed out with a comfortable sigh after he'd completed his study. He was now certain that he could leave. After two years, he was anxious to return to his people. "Who would've thought that a single curious thought two years ago would confine me to this place until now? But it's not as if this venture has been unfruitful."

Jiang Chen didn't regret entering the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. Although he'd been trapped for two years, he'd gained much. The forbidden area of the sect as well as the outskirts of Mt. Rippling Mirage were now all under his control. This was quite the wondrous feeling. "Mm, these formations had been exquisitely designed. The fact that the ancient herb garden opens once every three thousand years is actually a product of that strict and ingenious design, taking into account the appearance of sky rank and earth rank spirit herbs. The dao of formations is a great one indeed!"

The more Jiang Chen understood formations, the more he sighed with amazement.

"Hmm?" His consciousness suddenly shifted. He'd felt some ripples of disturbance more than once while he'd mentally patrolled the various formations. Since the formations were under his control, there shouldn't have been any ripples. The presence of ripples meant that the formations were operating. Normally speaking, they wouldn't activate unless someone blundered into

them.

“What going on?” Can it be that the Regal Pill Palace is forcefully breaking through the formations in order to save me?

However, he quickly discarded that thought. The formations around Mt. Rippling Mirage weren’t something that anyone on the level of the Myriad Domain could break through. If they could, they wouldn’t have wasted the effort to hold Pill Battles every thirty years. They could just break through!

So if it wasn’t, who was it? Was it something that lived in Mt. Rippling Mirage? Jiang Chen’s curiosity was now fully roused.

Chapter 626: Who's The Prey?

Since the formations that covered the entire Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect were now under Jiang Chen's control, he only needed to inspect them closely to find the problematic areas. His first sweep covered the interior of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. His consciousness first swept through the tower of inheritance, then the cavern, Ancestor Cliff, the cenotaph... There were no problems with the ruins within the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

Jiang Chen's consciousness swept outward to explore the three platforms of the altar in the outskirts of the ancient herb garden. He finally understood the purpose of the three platforms. Clearly, each level corresponded to one of the three ancestors, and thus, the three legacies. He continued to expand his consciousness beyond those altars; there were no problems around the lake. As he used his consciousness to examine every possible area, he didn't find any fluctuations in the formation in the interior of the ancient herb garden either.

Jiang Chen's consciousness continued to spread outwards when suddenly—

It came to a stop, locking onto the entrance to the ancient herb garden, in front of that great waterfall. Three figures were at the entrance to the great waterfall, furiously attacking the Rippling Mirage Great Formation around the exterior of that waterfall.

"Who's this?" Jiang Chen used the formation to investigate these newcomers, keeping his consciousness concealed. All of them were

similarly unfamiliar, but each possessed terrifying potential. Jiang Chen could feel a startling power and presence emanating from the blue browed youth in particular. He had never even seen this kind of mighty pressure in the Myriad Domain, not even from Sect Head Xiang Wentian of the Great Cathedral.

"They, they, they're not from the Myriad Domain, are they?" Jiang Chen was greatly taken aback. He'd suddenly realized that the power radiating from the three people was slightly similar to that of Ding Tong's. It wasn't just Ding Tong, but it was also akin to the Ninesuns Sky Sect members he'd met back in the Precious Tree Sect.

"Disciples of the Ninesuns Sky Sect?" Jiang Chen slightly strengthened his consciousness, quickly recognizing the background of these three people.

"Why have they come here?" Jiang Chen's brain was momentarily filled with questions but he immediately realized that the Tristar Sect must have exposed the secret.

Initially, everyone had sworn heavenly oaths before entering the ancient herb garden. Jiang Chen had known for a while now that the Tristar Sect was colluding with the Ninesuns Sky Sect. Hence, he had even specifically reminded Elder Yun Nie to close off the Tristar Sect's loophole. Common sense dictated that the Tristar Sect would not reveal the secret for fear of suffering the tragedy of a heavenly tribulation. But when he saw these three disciples of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, Jiang Chen had a hunch that the Tristar Sect had already revealed everything!

Although he didn't know what method the Tristar Sect had used to evade heavenly judgment, Jiang Chen was almost entirely certain that only the Tristar Sect had enough motive to reveal this matter. Moreover, from the situation, they'd probably only revealed it to the Ninesuns Sky Sect. Otherwise, there wouldn't just be these three knocking at the doorstep.

Although Jiang Chen's consciousness had become very powerful, he still couldn't cover the entirety of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's outskirts. Even though he'd spotted the three enemies, he couldn't hear what they were saying. However, Jiang Chen immediately came up with a countermeasure.

He descended from the tower and walked out of the cavern, returning to the area around the altar. Through the transportation formation on the altar, he returned to the altar in the ancient herb garden. Then, he released a pack of Goldbiter Rats, instructing them, "Go, scout the area."

The Goldbiter Rats had already been trained to become Jiang Chen's eyes and ears. They quickly confirmed the reason behind the group's arrival. As expected, these three were from the Ninesuns Sky Sect. The one in charge of shattering the formation hadn't actually broken through the formation. Instead, it seemed he'd used some special method to create a temporary crack in the formation.

Jiang Chen had naturally heard of this kind of formation splitting art. Who'd have expected that this disciple of the Ninesuns Sky Sect would know such a high-level technique? He actually impressed Jiang Chen. "As expected of disciples from the

Upper Eight Regions. Bringing this kind of technique to the Myriad Domain is truly overkill. To be able to crack this ancient formation, even temporarily, he rather has some skill."

Although Jiang Chen hated the insufferably arrogant Ninesuns Sky Sect, he knew that offending members of a first rate sect would have severe consequences. Even that Ding Tong, who was only a second rate disciple of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, had been difficult to face. None of these three people were weaker than Ding Tong. That blue browed youth, in particular, possessed a deep and immeasurable power. Jiang Chen had a suspicion that, even if his strength was not yet of the emperor realm, he would be fairly close.

Even if Jiang Chen summoned Long Xiaoxuan, there would still only be a fifty percent chance to win over these three enemies. Moreover, Long Xiaoxuan was one of the cards that he definitely couldn't reveal to the world. Once he was exposed, there would be no end of problems. Hence, Jiang Chen sank into momentary contemplation. What was a surefire way to chase these three away?

If it had been the Jiang Chen of two years ago, there was no way he would've bothered to make a plan after catching sight of them. The first and only course of action would've been retreat. Even then, whether he would be able to successfully do so would be another question entirely. But, after two years of rigorous training, his abilities had risen to another level, along with his confidence. Moreover, Mt. Rippling Mirage was now his territory. The combination was enough for Jiang Chen to feel that he had a serious chance in the upcoming fight.

“These three probably want to enter to kill me. Then, I will allow them to enter.” Jiang Chen could see that if any one of these three used the formation splitting technique, none by themselves could create a crack. But the three of them had cooperated to assault the formation continuously for many days. It was very possible that their efforts would bear fruit soon.

“Men die for wealth, while birds die for food. It looks like even the disciples of the Ninesuns Sky Sect couldn’t help their greed when they heard of the ancient herb garden.” Jiang Chen sneered silently when he saw the insanity gripping the three.

However, at the same time, a sense of sorrow surfaced in his heart. With things as they were now, the cons of the ancient herb garden appearing ultimately outweighed the pros. The Tristar Sect’s exposure of the secret would bring great calamity to the Myriad Domain. From today onwards, the Myriad Domain might not know any more peace!.

On the other hand, Mt. Rippling Mirage was now under his control. Without the right token, no one else could enter the restricted grounds of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. They could at most reach the altar. But, Jiang Chen still did not wish for outsiders to continuously intrude into this mountain. Although Mt. Rippling Mirage was only the outer restricted area of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, it was still part of the sect’s territory. And now, it had even become Jiang Chen’s personal territory.

Anyone who ventured inside without an invitation should die!

Jiang Chen took a moment to plan his course of action and came up with the general gist of a plan. When it really came down to things, there was still some time until the Myriad Grand Ceremony, so he wasn't in the greatest of hurry to leave. These three had used a formation shattering technique to enter the ancient herb garden with the intention to kill him and plunder his sky rank herbs. Jiang Chen's lips curved into a cold smile. "Kill me? It seems they think of me, Jiang Chen, as some kind of prey to be eaten. When they enter the ancient herb garden, we shall see just who the real prey is."

He began to make preparations as he spoke. Although this was his territory, Jiang Chen didn't dare to be careless. None of these three were the benevolent sort. The only enemies of this level that Jiang Chen had faced before were Ding Tong and Elder Chen of the Sacred Sword Palace. Moreover, Jiang Chen had only defeated them after summoning Long Xiaoxuan. Even the weakest of these three people were at least on par with Ding Tong. And that blue browed youth was more than equal to the combined strength of five Ding Tongs. Jiang Chen had no reason to underestimate this kind of opponent.

Fortunately, it looked like he still had a day or two before these three people cracked the formation. Two days of preparation were enough for Jiang Chen to make many arrangements. "If those three people can use the formation shattering technique, there must be a formation master among them. No wonder they dared to trespass into Mt. Rippling Mirage!"

But even a formation master ultimately could not compete with the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's formations.

“Even with the combined efforts of three people, they still need a lot of time to create a sizable crack. I’ll only need to eliminate one of them after they enter to make it so that they can’t use that formation splitting technique anymore. Then, they won’t be able to leave this place until the formation opens. During that time, they’ll be no different from turtles in a jar, waiting to be slaughtered…” Jiang Chen smiled slightly and disappeared with a flicker of his shadow.

……

Two days later, Fatty Wu Hen stood in front of the great waterfall. His forehead was beading over with perspiration but he was unusually excited, “Soon, soon. Everyone, work hard and put in all your effort!”

Boom!

Although the Rippling Mirage Great Formation was powerful, given that it had lasted from the ancient era, its defensive power had degraded to less than a third of its peak. As such, the combined continuous efforts of the three had finally allowed them to create a crack in the formation. At the sight of gaping void, the three went wild with glee, rushing in at full speed. As if they were standing at the gates of heaven, they fought to be first through the void.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh.

Three shadows rapidly flew in before the formation on the great waterfall snapped shut with crash. Clearly, although the three had

cracked the formation, it lasted but for a split second. Nonetheless, the three were in high spirits right now. After spending so much time and effort, they had finally entered.

"Mm, there's so much spirit energy in this place. It's significantly different from the outside. It seems that this is indeed the ancient herb garden you've mentioned, Senior brother Cao," Shi Zhen clucked his tongue in wonder after surveying his surroundings. He casually pocketed a stalk of a true saint spirit herb. "I hadn't imagined that true saint spirit herbs would sprout everywhere here. It seems that this ancient herb garden is truly deserving of its name!"

Cao Jin clearly did not intend to simply pluck some true saint spirit herbs after entering this place. With a wave of his hand, he gathered the other two close to him, "The two of you, we'll have more than enough time to pluck all the spirit herbs from this place after. Our top priority right is to find Jiang Chen. But there's something I must tell you guys first—we might not be able to find Jiang Chen on this trip."

"What?" Fatty Wu and Shi Zhen's expressions instantly shifted. "Senior Brother Cao, what do you mean? We've already come this far and you're saying that we might not find Jiang Chen?"

"Don't panic. Initially, the Tristar Sect's report said that one of the elders of the Sacred Sword Sect had also not made his way out. It's very likely that he stayed behind to kill Jiang Chen. Hence, whether it's Jiang Chen or that Sacred Sword Palace elder, we cannot let them slip away. If the elder killed Jiang Chen, it's very possible that Jiang Chen's treasures fell into his hands."

After the other two heard this, both of them replied, “As long as the treasures exist, that’s fine. A mere elder of a fourth rank sect isn’t worth worrying over.”

Cao Jin nodded. “Even so, the three of us shouldn’t split up too far in case we stay long enough for catastrophe to strike. After all, if these ancient ruins have any strange traps, we can at least take care of each other by staying together.”

Even someone as powerful as Cao Jin was being extremely cautious. The other two had no reason to be conceited about their abilities and nodded one after another.

Chapter 627: Destroying One First

It had to be said that although Cao Jin looked extremely haughty, he was actually extremely cautious. He knew how to properly read the situation and grasp the timing to leave when things take a turn for the worse. He had received enough information from the Tristar Sect to know that there shouldn't be any more threats apart from the Miasma when he entered the ancient herb garden. Yet, he still maintained his cautiousness, taking the attitude of a lion exerting its full power to capture a small rabbit. As they were also affected by Cao Jin's line of thought, Wu Heng and Shi Zhen also did not dare to let down their guard.

Although they also felt that neither Jiang Chen nor that Sacred Sword Palace elder posed a threat to them, they were prepared for anything that might come. All three people spread their consciousness into a cone and began to sweep every corner of the ancient herb garden.

The ancient herb garden wasn't even a tenth of the size of the main mountain in Mt. Rippling Mirage. The three people's consciousness were very powerful, especially Cao Jin, whose consciousness could cover a startling amount of space.

The three found many clues after roughly three hours of searching. However, all of them had been left behind at the start by members of the major sects. But those people had already left, so they didn't provide much by way of information. However, Shi Zhen was somewhat despondent because along the way, he spied the telltale signs that many stalks of earth rank spirit herbs had been plucked. This made him want to pound his chest and stamp his feet with annoyance. "Senior brother Cao, look at this..." A

sense of urgency suddenly entered Shi Zhen's voice. "These are the remains of Sage Fledgling Grass. This must have been a large patch of Sage Fledgling Grass!"

"How much?" Cao Jin breathed. Several hundred stalks of Sage Fledgling Grass would sound like sweet music to his ears.

"Judging by the area, I feel like there should have been several thousand, perhaps even tens of thousands!" Shi Zhen's breathing also quickened. So many stalks of Sage Fledgling Grass—even for the Ninesuns Sky Sect, this was still a startling amount of wealth!

Cao Jin raised a blue brow and muttered, "So, what the Sacred Sword Palace said about Jiang Chen receiving several thousand stalks of Sage Fledgling Grass was most likely true?"

"True or not, wouldn't we know everything once we capture that brat?" Fatty Wu sneered. The three people glanced at one another, setting off once again.

They soon came face to face with a tall cliff. Shi Zhen suddenly raised his hand as surprise flashed in his eyes.

"What is it?" Fatty Wu furrowed his brows.

"There should be highly ranked spirit herbs here." As a second rank pill king, Shi Zhen's judgment regarding this area far surpassed Cao Jin and Wu Heng's.

“How high?”

Shi Zhen’s gaze zeroed on the patch of tall cliffs before he nodded, “I’ll go check.”

Cao Jin and Wu Heng both frowned, clearly displeased with Shi Zhen’s actions.

Shi Ye smiled indifferently. “Relax, just deduct whatever I get from when we divide our gains later.”

Cao Jin and Wu Heng glanced at each other. At any rate, they’d have to split whatever they gained from Jiang Chen when they found that brat later. No matter what Shi Zhen found now, they could just deduct it from his share later.

“Be careful,” Cao Jin reminded them.

Shi Zhen nodded and retrieved a medicine hoe with one hand. He shrouded himself in flowing light before soaring towards the clifftop. Sage realm experts were equipped with the ability to fly. Shi Zhen had obviously learnt some kind of special flight technique. His body traveled through the air like a large bird, arriving in front of the cliff face in the blink of an eye.

The cliff was covered in shrubs and greenery. Shi Zhen expanded his consciousness and inspected his surroundings. Suddenly, his eyes fell upon a bush about fifty meters to his right.

“Sky rank spirit herb, Sundevourer Ganoderma?!” Shi Zhen was delighted. Never had he imagined that there would actually be a stalk of sky rank spirit herb hidden here! Moreover, this Sundevourer Ganoderma was no ordinary sky rank spirit herb!

But, why had no one from the Myriad Domain plucked such an obvious stalk of a sky rank spirit herb? Just as Shi Zhen was about to step forward to harvest it, he stopped dead in his steps.

He felt that the appearance of this sky rank spirit grass was somewhat suspicious. Could this be a trap? Shi Zhen was not an impulsive person. The more he thought about this, the less he was in a hurry to harvest it. Instead, he scoured the location, circling the area around the sky rank spirit herb repeatedly to figure out if the herb was real.

It was clear that this sky rank spirit herb could not be more genuine. Its concentrated spirit energy was very lifelike and could not possibly have been generated by an illusion. As Shi Zhen hesitated, Wu Heng called out from below, “Senior brother Shi Zhen, time is of the essence. What are you dithering for?”

Cao Jin also asked, “Junior brother Shi Zhen, what do you see?”

Shi Zhen stepped forward to check under their urgings and chuckled, “Caution prevents blunders. I’m only checking if there are any traps in this area.”

Shi Zhen no longer hesitated after that. After thinking carefully, had he perhaps been too cautious? Cao Jin and Wu Heng were just

below him after all, and while he was not overwhelmingly powerful, there was still no need for him to tiptoe around mere denizens of the Myriad Domain.

An elder of Sacred Sword Palace? He was just only earth sage realm. And Jiang Chen had been reported to be only an origin realm cultivator. As Shi Zhen thought about this, he instantly regained his confidence. He leapt in front of the Sundevourer Ganoderma. With a swing of his medicine hoe, he prepared to pluck the herb—

When the scenery suddenly changed before his eyes.

“Careful, junior brother Shi Zhen!”

Although the scenery before his eyes had changed, that Sundevourer Ganoderma remained in its original spot. Shi Zhen ignored everything else as his medicine hoe danced, digging at the roots of the herb. At that precise moment, the cliff face surrounding the spirit herb abruptly erupted with countless vines, twisting around Shi Zhen without warning. Shi Zhen had been completely engrossed in the Sundevourer Ganoderma. How would he have expected this to happen?

He suddenly felt a cold draft on his neck.

Whoosh! Shi Zhen’s head shot upwards. His body however, fell into the dense shrubbery with a plop.

It was at this moment that Cao Jin and Wu Heng hastily arrived. When they saw Shi Zhen's head land on the ground, their expressions changed drastically.

Cao Jin shouted lowly, "Smoke and mirrors and tricks! Who's there?!"

Suddenly, Cao Jin's Moonshatter Awl lashed out at a patch of space. With a ray of blinding light, countless talismans fluttered to the ground. Their surroundings returned to normal in the next instant, unmarred except for Shi Zhen's corpse, which hung from a large tree not far from them.

Wu Heng's expression was dark. "Senior brother Cao, this is the work of an expert formation master. Just now, senior brother Shi Zhen must have been snared in a formation technique. He must have been caught off guard..."

Cao Jin furrowed his blue brows. His gaze was frosty as he surveyed the area, trying to spot the formation master in the shadows. But no matter how he probed with his consciousness, he couldn't find a thing.

"Formation master!" Cao Jin fumed between gritted teeth. "Since when did the Myriad Domain have a formation master? Wu Heng, since Shi Zhen has been lost, you and me, our plans will..."

Wu Heng's heart was also filled with shocked rage, but also a trace of relief. At least the corpse hadn't been him. Moreover, with Shi Zhen's death, there was now one less person to divide the

spoils with. “Senior brother Cao, senior brother Shi Zhen previously refined a pill to defeat the Miasma here. His loss won’t affect the big picture that much.”

This was the truth. Shi Zhen’s cultivation and martial prowess was undoubtedly the weakest among the three. His value lay in handling the Miasma. Nevertheless, Cao Jin still felt depressed. He didn’t know if the pill that Shi Zhen had refined was effective or not, but with things how they were right now, he could only push forward. Luckily, they knew the rough location of the Divine Befuddlement Miasma from the Tristar Sect’s reports. As long as they crossed the lake carefully, they shouldn’t need to worry overmuch.

However, what worried Cao Jin at the moment was, just who was this mystery enemy? Was it that elder of the Sacred Sword Palace or Jiang Chen of the Regal Pill Palace? No matter who it was, this person would not be an easy opponent. He was fortunate that he had Wu Heng with him, a person similarly adept at formations.

Patting Wu Heng’s shoulder, he said, “Junior brother Wu, our enemy is very cunning and obviously has had time to prepare. The facts that his advanced preparations were for us and junior brother Shi Zhen’s overconfidence were why this tragic murder happened.”

Wu Heng nodded, “Senior brother Cao has no need to worry. We won’t fall for this kind of formation usage a second time. What’s there to be afraid of as long as we’re a bit more careful?”

This was the truth. All three of them had previously taken the

attitude of a hunter hunting prey. They had all believed that they were hunting Jiang Chen down. Never had it occurred to them that they could be the prey instead. It was precisely because they had been too aggressive that they had failed to consider the perspective of the prey and had thus been tricked. But now, both Cao Jin and Wu Heng were aware that their opponent was not someone who would simply sit and await his death.

Although Shi Zhen's death had shaken them and even caused them to panic temporarily, they only took a few moments to calm down. Shi Zhen might have been lost, but that was not necessarily a bad thing. At least they could confirm that there was someone here in this ancient herb garden. Whether it was Jiang Chen or the elder from the Sacred Sword Palace didn't matter to Cao Jin and Wu Heng. What was important was the numerous sky and earth rank spirit herbs! Moreover, Shi Zhen's loss meant that there was one less person to split their gains with, so that was just as well.

As the two people steeled themselves, the upbringing of a large sect's disciples displayed itself. They plowed onwards without even touching Shi Zhen's corpse. Clearly, they were extremely cautious. The enemy might have laid a trap on Shi Zhen's body, and it would be bad if they were infected by some kind of poison.

"Junior brother Wu, I guess that this person should be Jiang Chen, not Elder Chen of the Sacred Sword Palace," Cao Jin sent a silent message Wu Heng.

"How makes you say that?" Wu Heng remained unsure.

"Simple. If it was Elder Chen, he wouldn't be able to combat the

Divine Befuddlement Miasma without the pill. As long as Jiang Chen escaped to an area infused with the miasma, there's nothing Elder Chen can do. It's already been two years since the Myriad Domain's sects left this area. If this person is still alive, this proves that he must be Jiang Chen instead of Elder Chen." Cao Jin's deductions made a lot of sense.

"It's even better if it's Jiang Chen. Even if an origin realm cultivator learnt a few dirty tricks, just how much trouble can he stir up for us?" Wu Heng replied.

However, Cao Jin reminded him, "Don't underestimate our enemy. He's already killed Ding Tong. The fact that he could ensnare Shi Zhen in an insidious trap means that we have been too careless thus far. You musn't underestimate him. I didn't think... that there would be a person from the Myriad Domain who could surprise even me!"

With a quick gesture, he rapidly set off in a certain direction with Wu Heng. Clearly, Cao Jin had captured various traces through careful investigation.

Chapter 628: Toyed By The Formation

When two sage realm cultivators reached their maximum speed, the distance they could cover was quite stunning. However, Cao Jin came to a sudden stop with a quick gesture.

“What is it, senior brother Cao?” Fatty Wu knew of Cao Jin’s strength. By now he’d already positioned himself as Cao Jin’s right hand man. Cao Jin was the conductor of all of their operations.

“I sense something’s wrong nearby. Stay on your guard.” As a peak ninth level sage realm expert, Cao Jin’s instincts were far superior to Wu Heng’s.

With his level of cultivation, the only time Cao Jin had been rebuffed was when he’d encountered the mysterious Miss Huang’er. Under normal circumstances, he should’ve been able to trample everyone in the Myriad Domain with his cultivation.

“Look over there!” Cao Jin arched a blue eyebrow as his eyes locked onto a bush beside the road.

The duo carefully approached the bush while preparing themselves for action. They would attack at full force the second they encountered even the slightest hint of resistance. They parted the bush, and found a corpse hidden behind it. More accurately speaking, it was Ding Tong’s corpse!

“Ding Tong?!” Fatty Wu cried out involuntarily. They both knew that Ding Tong was already dead, but they didn’t imagine that he

would die in such a place! With a wave of his hand, Cao Jing kept Fatty Wu away while pointing at Ding Tong's corpse from afar.

Pfft!

Struck by the finger's force, Ding Tong's corpse abruptly transformed into a wisp of green smoke and vanished completely.

"A crude smokescreen!" Cao Jin sneered before he raised his voice and yelled, "The same trick is worthless once you use it more than a few times, you scoundrel. I know you're nearby. I may spare your life if you come out now like a good boy, but if I have to catch you, I'll make you wish that you were dead!"

While he spoke, Cao Jin fully activated his eye arts and began searching the area. He'd obviously trained extensively in them, and a faint purple light sparkled stunningly in his eyes, continuously expanding outwards. Fatty Wu cooperated fully as well and started to make his preparations as well. However, his expression suddenly changed. A quick look around and he noticed that the ground beneath them had changed. Not only that, everything their eyes rested on had turned into yellow sand!

How could this be?

Cao Jin's eyes shifted slightly and he asked lowly, "Another formation?"

Fatty Wu nodded with a tight expression on his face. "A

formation indeed, and an exceedingly sophisticated one at that. Senior brother Cao, I feel that we've irritated those within the mountain. The level of this formation isn't something that belongs to the Myriad Domain!"

These words also made Cao Jin start. "Someone within the mountain? Who could there be? How would the Myriad Domain sects dare enter if there was anyone here?"

Fatty Wu was also baffled. "I don't know why, but this formation feels quite sophisticated, almost on par with our Ninesuns Sky Sect."

Cao Jin snorted coldly. "We could crack open even the Rippling Mirage formation. How would this one here stump you or I?"

Fatty Wu nodded, "Right, and we have the formation splitting technique as well!"

This technique was a rare art, and even an expert like Cao Jin from the Sky Sect wouldn't know how to utilize it either. It had been Fatty Wu who'd been lucky enough to learn this ancient art. The two were about to erupt into action when several arrows descended upon them.

Cao Jin didn't grow angry when he saw this, but rather smiled instead. He caught all four of the arrows with a grandiose flourish of his sleeve. His mouth twitched as he restored his previous confidence. "Junior brother Wu, deploy the formation splitting technique, I'll cover for you!"

The two split up their roles clearly.

“Alright!” Fatty Wu didn’t tarry and flung out a rune. He locked onto the edge of the formation amidst the light and struck out fiercely.

In the next moment...

The scene in front of them suddenly changed as the mounds of yellow sound turned into nothing, and then was replaced by an expanse of fiery ocean. The two discovered that their new surroundings had become a sea of lava. Fire dragons spat out gouts of flame from the sea of lava. The heat wave that hit them face first caused the two some difficulties in breathing.

“How can this be?” Cao Jin frowned.

Fatty Wu also felt quite depressed. “Senior brother Cao, this seems to be a live formation, unlike the dead ones on the outskirts of the mountain. The formation splitting technique is quite useful for a dead formation, but it’s tough to grasp if someone is actively controlling the formation.”

When it came to formations, a live formation was much more threatening than a dead one. A live formation could change and adapt at any time. When it shifts without warning, one wouldn’t be able to fully grasp the edges of the formation. How could they cast the formation splitting technique then?

Although Cao Jin wasn't a formation master, he still understood the theory. He knew that the fault of this matter didn't lie with Fatty Wu. It also wasn't the time to blame his teammate. He nodded, "Don't be depressed, feel it out slowly. The opponent has resorted to using a formation to deal with us, which proves that his strength is below yours and mine. The arrows just now also prove this point."

"Don't worry, senior brother Cao. Although this formation is strong, I will find its boundary without a doubt. As soon as I do so, I'll definitely be able to open a crack in it unless there's a special restriction on this formation that forbids the option of using the formation splitting technique."

"Just be careful. I'll cover for you, so don't worry about it attacking you." Cao Jin knew that his skill in formations was far below that of Fatty Wu's and thus wouldn't venture any ideas. However, it was a simple matter to protect Fatty Wu from being attacked by the formation. In actuality, Cao Jin had no fear in facing this formation, even if he wanted to break through it by force. However, Fatty Wu was just an earth sage realm cultivator. The power in the formation wasn't enough to hurt Cao Jin, but was more than enough to kill Fatty Wu. Although Cao Jin didn't have a deep relationship with Fatty Wu, he didn't want another one of his teammates to die at this moment!

If another one died, he would be alone. Although he wasn't afraid, his mental state would certainly be affected. This hidden opponent was obviously skilled in formations, so Fatty Wu's value was obvious. He truly had stunning potential in the area of formations and was able to quickly grasp the edge of the formation

again. “Over here, senior brother Cao!”

Fatty Wu tried the formation splitting technique again and shouted out softly, “Break!”

Yet, as soon as he spoke the word, the formation changed again to a wintry field of ice and snow. Every direction was covered in ice, as flakes of snow drifted through the air. A world of winter had seemingly descended upon the two.

“F*ck!” Fatty Wu couldn’t help but curse. He’d finally found the edge of the formation again, but the opponent had shifted the formation just as he was about to break through it!

“Senior brother Cao, this fellow is toying with us!” He huffed and puffed. Although he was a crafty, shrewd person, he couldn’t help but feel his anger rouse at the repeated setbacks.

It was rather Cao Jin who was calm and cold, “Be calm, the more he does thus, the more this proves that he’s afraid of us.”

Fatty Wu thought for a moment and felt that to be true. He nodded. “Then I’ll study this formation a bit more and see what’s going on.”

He was about to walk forward when all of the layers of ice in this world of winter shattered into icicles and rose into the air. The sky gleamed with the jagged edges of ice for a moment, and with nary a sign, they began to shoot towards the duo. Cao Jin laughed coldly

as he traced an arc with one hand, forming a dome-shaped protective circle that enclosed him and Fatty Wu.

Pfft pfft pfft pfft!

Countless icicles crashed onto the shield but only penetrated a meter in, their momentum expended against the protective dome.

“Break!” Cao Jin spread out his hands and sent a gust of wind billowing out, swallowing all of the countless icicles and shredding them apart, sending them drifting to the ground as icy dust.

“Senior brother Cao is so amazing!” Fatty Wu exclaimed in admiration.

Cao Jin spread out his hands. “Keep working at the formation!”

……

Jiang Chen was also quite saddened as he manipulated the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven in the shadows. Although he was giving it his all to activate the disk, he was constrained by the abilities of his own body and so could only summon the lowest level formation. The Slaughter Formation at this level could possibly entrap the fatty, but was obviously insufficient in handling the blue browed youth.

“Is this blue browed youth the Yong Xingyun that Ding Tong spoke of? Only one of the ten great disciples would have this kind

of ability!" Although Jiang Chen was slightly saddened, he wasn't dejected. After all, he'd been able to use the Minor Artifice Formation earlier to kill one of them. Now that he was repeating the same trick, it was tough to get the same results when his opponents were prepared. He took his failure to kill an enemy in stride. He was merely using the formation to feel out their methods so that he could know the enemy as well as he knew himself. "Of the two, the blue browed youth is stronger, but the fatty is the formation master. If I can get rid of the fatty, the blue browed youth will be all alone and therefore much easier to take out."

Jiang Chen also knew that it would be much easier to handle them if the two were separated. The power of his formation was greatly decreased when they were together. And of course, although Jiang Chen had the formation disk, he could only call upon the easiest level of formation. There were three levels, and Jiang Chen had just come into possession of the disk. It was difficult for him to call upon the second level.

"Sigh, I'd have much more confidence in facing off against these two if I could activate the medium level of the formation. If I could activate the advanced level, I could kill them within seconds!"

Jiang Chen knew he was only daydreaming about the most advanced level. He wouldn't be able to unleash it before his strength reached sky sage level. Even then, the amount of spirit stones needed at that level was astonishing.

Each time Jiang Chen switched up the formation, it would distract the fatty just as he was about to make his move. This irked

the fatty to no end, but what could he do? However, Jiang Chen also knew that it wasn't a very sustainable tactic. There were only seven changes to the Ancient Formation of Slaughter. If he started the cycle over again, it would be easy for the opponent to grasp the core of the formation. For someone who knew the formation splitting technique, it would be easy for them to open a passage through this level of formation.

Thus, he had to use the next stage of his plan. If nothing else, Jiang Chen was a determined person, and when he knew that the formation wouldn't be able to hold his opponent, he immediately moved onto the next step. He had to at least get rid of one of them first no matter what!

Chapter 629: Divide And Conquer

Fatty Wu suddenly grinned. “Senior brother Cao, the opponent’s formation is already repeating itself. This can only mean that there aren’t any more tricks to this formation.”

Cao Jin was delighted to hear this. “So he’s exhausted his bag of tricks! Junior brother Wu, now it’s up to you!”

Fatty Wu was in great spirits. He’d been wary of this formation before since it had a couple of variations, and each variation had its own unique dangers. It was more than enough to bring a great deal of pressure on the fatty’s shoulders, but his saving grace was that even though the formation was powerful and complicated, it was still only deployed at a basic level. Fatty Wu understood that this was a limit of the formation brought about by the low cultivation level of the formation master. If the formation master’s cultivation had been higher, then it would’ve been easy enough to confine and kill the two of them within this marvelous formation. Just as he mustered all his attention and energy to execute the formation splitting technique, the formation was suddenly taken down.

Whoosh!

The formation’s disappearance caused the scenery to return to what it was originally. The two stood by the path once again, weeds obscuring the path ahead of them as dense forest crowded in from each side.

Fatty Wu’s face flickered through a variety of expressions as he

looked around. He frowned, “Senior brother Cao, I was wondering why this fellow could swap through formation changes so quickly. It looks like he might not be a formation master after all.”

“What do you mean?” Cao Jin didn’t understand this sudden declaration.

“There are no vestiges of a formation setup in the surroundings. A strong formation would always leave some traces in the surroundings, or at least some spirit energy residue. There’s no evidence at all to be found here.”

“You mean to say…” Cao Jin suddenly thought of something as his expression flickered.

“This kid must’ve used up a seriously large portion of his good luck and gotten his hands on a strong formation disk, but doesn’t really know how to use it. It would explain why the formation he could deploy wasn’t too high a level. But, a formation disk!” A look of greed gleamed in Fatty Wu’s eyes. To a formation master, a formation disk was even more enticing than sky rank herbs. With the fatty’s experience in formations, how would he not be able to understand that this wasn’t a formation that had been set up by hand, but one that had been projected by a formation disk?

Setting up a formation by hand required time and formation flags. A foundation had to be laid, and that would leave visible traces in the surroundings. Once the formation was destroyed, there would always be some glyph remnants still present in the air.

But the fatty hadn't sensed a single fragment.

What did that mean? It meant that the one who'd set the formation up hadn't done so through any particularly impressive methods, but had just used a formation disk to summon the entire thing. There were many advantages to a formation disk; it was quick, easy and very convenient. But the complexity of the formation deployed didn't necessarily indicate a corresponding level of skill behind the one deploying it.

"Senior brother Cao, you can have Shi Zhen's share. I only want my own and this disk." Fatty Wu took a deep breath and once more revisited the terms of dividing up the loot.

Cao Jin thought momentarily and felt that he didn't have much use for a mere formation disk. He nodded, "We're agreed."

The two suddenly felt an enormous pressure descend on their heads as they spoke. They lifted their heads, and saw an enormous mountain crashing down on them!"

"Get back!" Despite his great surprise, Cao Jin didn't panic. He raised his hand, and the mountain ground to a stop, arrested by his bare hand. As light shone from his hand, Cao Jin called upon his reserves of strength and actually lifted it up!

But it seemed that his efforts wouldn't fully pan out, as the mountain once again descended down on Cao Jin again. This was Jiang Chen's golden magnetic mountain, and the very embodiment of domineering strength. Even earth sage realm

cultivators wouldn't be able to withstand this blow. But Cao Jin was Cao Jin, he wasn't at the peak of sage realm for nothing. His bare hand alone was enough to hold back the mountain, no matter how many times it crashed down on him. However, although he put up a fierce resistance and was now itching to blow the mountain to smithereens, he couldn't shave off the slightest shard from the mountain no matter how much strength he used.

"This mountain is a bit odd!" Cao Jin was slightly surprised, because even someone as strong as him could feel a force of attraction acting on him whenever this mountain crashed down on him. There was an odd magnetic power to it, making it so that his return blows could never reach the core of the mountain. However, Jiang Chen's aim wasn't Cao Jin. He was well aware that it would be difficult to try and crush Cao Jin to death with the magnetic golden mountain. His goal was to just keep Cao Jin preoccupied.

The true target of his butcher's knife was the fatty! The fatty had been relegated to the outskirts by the titanic size of the mountain. When he saw how preoccupied Cao Jin was by the mountain, he guessed that the enemy wanted to separate him and Cao Jin. However, the fatty was bold and confident in his skills, unafraid of anything. He activated some of the talismans in his hand and set down some defensive formations around him.

Fatties were usually quite afraid of death, and often had many ways to protect their lives. This was also why the fatty was so persistent in studying formations. Formations would usually offer one more chances to save their lives when one's strength wasn't up to par. It was at this time that the fatty suddenly heard some small sounds. He was already feeling like there was an enemy behind

every bush and tree to begin with, so he hurriedly looked around every which way.

He suddenly saw a few bead-like items roll to his feet. Fatty Wu's heart spasmed as he had an exceedingly bad premonition about this turn of events. Golden light abruptly flashed from the beads as they all turned into exceedingly sturdy golden-armored warriors. The warriors were wholly unreasonable, brandishing their weapons without another word and started charging at Fatty Wu.

He saw the six warriors that lead the vanguard at the human sage realm, but he was confident that his formations would be able to handle them. However, three earth sage realm warriors followed closely on their heels. This caused some panic to surge in his heart. He threw out multiple talismans in a row, trying to keep the earth sage level attacks from reaching him. And yet, he tragically discovered that that wasn't even the end after he'd beaten the warriors, this wasn't the end of things!

There were three more sky sage realm warriors right behind them! Their momentum and strength weren't on par with Cao Jin, but more than enough to take out the fatty when they acted together. Not to mention that there were a large number of earth sage and human sage golden-armored warriors as well! In his urgency, Fatty Wu kept crying out for help, "Help me, senior brother Cao!"

Cao Jin punched out with both fists when he heard the fatty's call, elegantly evading the magnetic golden mountain to take long strides towards the fatty. When the warriors saw Cao Jin arrive, the six human sage realm warriors leapt over to restrain Cao Jin.

A series of continuous solid punches that connected precisely with its intended targets sent all of the warriors flying with a dominating air. The caveat here though, was that Jiang Chen was manipulating them. When he'd met the warriors in the tower, they'd only had the strength for a single blow. But now that the "Soldier Rosary Beads" were in Jiang Chen's hands and had been refined by him, he could decide how to use them with a mere thought. Under his control, the warriors came pouncing over without fear just after they were sent flying.

On the other side, Fatty Wu was howling with pain and agony. Trying to fight three sky sage warriors at the same time had landed him in perilously hot water very quickly. Jiang Chen seized the opportunity to once again summon the magnetic golden mountain. This time, he didn't send it towards Cao Jin, but smashed it down on Fatty Wu with all his strength.

Fatty Wu was in a panicked mess already, and the magnetic golden mountain was the straw that broke the camel's back as it came crashing down on him. Under an expanding golden light, a ghastly scream echoed in the air as a pile of bloody flesh took the place of the little fatty..

Jiang Chen was delighted to see that he'd done away with Fatty Wu and formed a quick hand seal, putting away the magnetic golden mountain and the Soldier Rosary Beads. At the same time, he activated the formation disk of the Minor Artifice Formation with his consciousness to summon it. Jiang Chen knew that it was impossible to confine Cao Jin with the formation; he knew the formation splitting technique as well. All Jiang Chen wanted to do was to slow Cao Jin down and give himself a chance to retreat with

ease.

He also knew that although he was first level sage realm, there was a great gap between him and the Cao Jin who sat at peak sage realm. Jiang Chen knew that he would have no chance winning a face to face encounter. He wasn't belittling himself; he was well aware of his many advantages, but there was still a gap between him and a top disciple of a first rank sect. To say nothing of anything else, the other would have treasures like a monsoon rain, and the resources he'd been able to make use of to date were at least ten times or a hundred times in excess of what had been available to Jiang Chen. That a genius of a first rank sect could train to this level was absolutely an indicator of the favor and attention showered on him. This wasn't something that Jiang Chen could measure up to. Therefore, he wasn't at all self conscious in the face of this gap.

A tempestuous fury, an everburning anger the likes he had never felt before rose in Cao Jin's heart when he saw Fatty Wu being crushed to death in front of him. He'd never thought that the two peers that he'd invited would die right in front of him. This was clear evidence that even if the opponent wasn't strong, his tricks and methods were endless. It was extremely difficult for one to defend themselves!

"Jiang Chen! I know it's you! I'll scatter your ashes to the wind!" Cao Jin struck out savagely with the Moonshatter Awl, creating a small crack in the Minor Artifice Formation. He blasted through the crack in search of Jiang Chen's presence, and tracked him down to the banks of the lake about an hour later.

Jiang Chen was leisurely standing on the side, watching an infuriated and raging Cao Jin. There were hints of mockery and jeering visible on his relaxed face.

"Jiang Chen!" Cao Jin's eyes were about to shoot fire. As one of the ten great disciples of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, he'd never lost his composure to such a state.

Jiang Chen, however, smiled faintly. "It looks like the Tristar Sect is a loyal dog after all. They'd rather have their sect be destroyed just so they could point their masters here."

Cao Jin stared fixedly at Jiang Chen, subjugating his anger and calming himself with effort. It was apparent that Cao Jin didn't view Jiang Chen as an ordinary opponent anymore. No matter Jiang Chen's level of cultivation, it was obvious from all that had happened that he was a strong rival and had to be treated with full attention. "Jiang Chen, hand over the spirit herbs and the pill recipe for the Longevity Pill. If you do so, this Cao from the Cao family could possibly spare you."

Jiang Chen laughed instead. "Cao family? Your surname is Cao? So you're not that Yong Xingyun?"

"You know Yong Xingyun?" Cao Jin started slightly and then immediately guessed at something. He smiled coldly. "You were the one who killed Ding Tong alright! Good, very good! A mere Myriad Domain cultivator dared kill three Sky Sect disciples! Jiang Chen, I have to admit that you've got some balls!"

Chapter 630: Victory In Numbers, Who's Afraid Of Who?

Jiang Chen didn't treat these words as a compliment at all. He was well aware of the frightening killing intent that hid behind Cao Jin's words. This was an opponent dangerous enough to threaten his life, and the most frightening enemy he'd met since reincarnating. If he could kill this opponent today, that'd mean he had enough power to travel to the Upper Eight Regions and search for his father Jiang Feng.

Jiang Chen had only spent a short amount of time with his father in this life, but he'd felt the same fatherly love from Jiang Feng as he did from the Celestial Emperor. Adding to that his memories and emotions from his past life, although Jiang Chen's feelings towards Jiang Feng weren't as deep as his for the Celestial Emperor, they weren't too far off.

Jiang Chen looked at Cao Jin with narrowed eyes, inwardly at solemn attention. This Cao Jin was a top genius of the Sky Sect alright; his demeanor and bearing was vastly different from the top geniuses in the Myriad Domain. He looked arrogant and insufferably cocky, but he never lost his reason. Even when he faced Jiang Chen, someone noticeably inferior to him, Cao Jin still gave his opponent the full weight of his attention. The focus with which he treated Jiang Chen left no openings to exploit. This was indeed the mindset of a lion using its full power to secure even a rabbit!

Jiang Chen was most on guard against an opponent who didn't take anything for granted. If it'd been an opponent with eyes at the

top of his head, who'd constantly dismissed Jiang Chen, then that would've created an opportunity for Jiang Chen. But an opponent who didn't dismiss him at all left him with no choice other than to bring forth everything.

"Cao, tell me your name. I don't kill nameless people." Jiang Chen probed.

Cao Jin smiled remotely. "Spare me the crude provocation. My name is Cao Jin, one of the ten great disciples of the Ninesuns Sky Sect. I've already looted the Regal Pill Palace before coming here. What Palace Head Dan Chi, what Elder Yun Nie, every insect there was utterly pathetic. Jiang Chen, I hope you don't disappoint me too."

What?

Jiang Chen's heart shook when he heard this and his eyes narrowed into a glare. However, he soon calmed down as the corner of his mouth twitched. He smiled faintly. "Cao Jin, don't put on a front. If you had truly gone to loot the Regal Pill Palace, you would've known long ago that I handed over the sky and earth rank spirit herbs to the sect. What are you doing here then?"

Indeed, Cao Jin's face froze over when he heard this. "You gave it all to the sect?"

Jiang Chen could tell from his reaction that he'd pulled one over Cao Jin. He smiled, "You fancy yourself clever, do you? Looks like you didn't get anything from your visit to the Regal Pill Palace, if

you really even went there.”

Jiang Chen was actually completely right. Cao Jin’s expression turned even uglier. His trip to the Regal Pill Palace had been a complete humiliation. However, he was quick to adapt, as he laughed coldly, “Jiang Chen, you’re going to die today no matter what you say and where the spirit herbs are.”

Jiang Chen laughed leisurely. “Is that so? Come kill me then.”

He activated the Cicada Wing and sped towards the center of the lake. When Cao Jin saw Jiang Chen do so, he knew that the latter wanted to use the terrain and the Miasma on the island. But what would he fear now that things had developed thus? He swallowed the pill that Shi Zhen had prepared beforehand, fully primed all the defenses he had and sped towards the island. He was determined to kill Jiang Chen this time!

The two of them landed on the island, one after another.

“Not running away anymore?” Cao Jin also landed when he saw Jiang Chen come to a halt, slowing down a few hundred meters away from him.

“Why should I run away?” Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

“Hahaha…” Cao Jin couldn’t help but burst out laughing. “Why do you need to run? Do you think you have a reason not to run?”

“Yes.” Jiang Chen nodded nonchalantly. “This is my territory, and whoever enters must die.”

If it wasn’t for him understanding Jiang Chen’s strength and having witnessed Jiang Chen’s methods, Cao Jin might’ve actually been scared. But since he had already grasped his opponent, he was thoroughly confident in himself. He’d been a bit dejected previously because Jiang Chen had attacked from the shadows while they had stood in the light. They’d been restricted at every step and Jiang Chen had thoroughly calculated their moves. Now that Jiang Chen was in the light, Cao Jin had nothing to fear, not with his strength. That formation disk of Jiang Chen’s was of no threat at all.

If there was anything Cao Jin was worried about now, it was the matter of exiting rather than Jiang Chen. He’d been able to come in because of the formation splitting technique that the three had executed together. Now that Wu Heng and Shi Zheng had perished, this had become the biggest issue he needed to solve.

But after he took out Jiang Chen and plundered all his treasures, what was so bad about training here for a decade or so? The task at hand was still to kill Jiang Chen! He guessed that Jiang Chen had lured him here because the former was viewing the Miasma as a trump card. “Jiang Chen, if you think the Miasma here can affect me, then you’re simply too naive.”

Cao Jin had scanned himself just now and noticed that the pill Shi Zhen had concocted was very effective. His defenses were also fully active, so it too was actively rejecting the invasion of the Miasma to a certain extent. He had identified the Miasma because

he wanted to impact Jiang Chen's morale. Indeed, Jiang Chen's expression changed drastically when he casually mentioned it.

"Cao... you, you can handle even the Miasma?"

Cao snorted coldly when he saw how Jiang Chen's expression had changed and stared at his opponent in a sinister fashion. "This is your last chance, hand over the spirit herbs and the Longevity Pill recipe. I can promise that I'll let you live if you do so. I even won't make trouble for your Regal Pill Palace."

A hint of hesitation appeared in Jiang Chen's eyes. His face had drained of all color. "Why should I believe you?"

Cao Jin took a step closer, bellowing, "Do you have any other choice?" He flared his aura as he spoke, the presence of a peak sage realm roiling outwards and crushing down on Jiang Chen.

A complicated gaze appeared in Jiang Chen's eyes. A hint of a cruel smile appeared on Cao Jin's lips as he suddenly snapped his fingers.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh!

Six streaks of golden light flashed through the air, taking up positions around Jiang Chen. Once the light dimmed, six silver talismans floated in the air. The runes on each of them broke apart, reassembling to become six sparkling, golden wolves. Each of them had long flowing fur, and the dimmed golden radiance

seemed to become a shield, giving onlookers a feeling of extreme ferocity and savagery.

Awrooo! Awrooo!

The six enormous wolves threw their heads back and howled to the skies, rattling Jiang Chen's ear drums and piercing deep into his soul. It was as if the howls had the power to rip one's very soul apart.

"Jiang Chen, you're too naive!" Cao Jin laughed heartily. "You killed two of my peers right in front of me! Do you think I'd still let you live?!"

"Then... all that was just to distract me just now?" Jiang Chen frowned.

Cao Jin smiled. "What else do you think? How would I know if you'd played any other tricks if I didn't distract you? But even if you have any tricks left, you won't be able to use them anymore. You, a mere first level sage realm, have no future but becoming a chewtoy after being surrounded by my six golden wolverines!"

Cao Jin had been distracting Jiang Chen earlier because he'd wanted to set Jiang Chen at ease, and also because he was also using his consciousness to probe the surrounding terrain, just in case Jiang Chen was up to anything. After he was done with the sweep, Cao Jin made the first move in trapping Jiang Chen with the six wolves. Everything was in his grasp now, and he didn't need to act anymore.

Jiang Chen suddenly smiled. “What a coincidence.”

“What coincidence?” Cao Jin’s tone was cold.

“Well, you said you were distracting me just now, but the same went for me. It looks like we really don’t trust each other.” Jiang Chen’s tone was casual as the hint of a leisurely smile flashed through his eyes. “You want to win by numbers? Bring it on!”

He made a hand seal and summoned the Millionditch Stone Nest. Several hundred thousand Goldbiter Rats surged out furiously, instantly filling every square inch of empty space with hair-raising momentum. There were rats even beneath Cao Jin’s feet.

The six wolverines were individually at earth saint rank, a cultivation level even higher than the Rat King! But as strong as they were, they were only six, whereas there were hundreds of thousands of Goldbiter Rats. In addition, the element that the rats were least afraid of were spirit creatures of the metal attribute.

The Goldbiter Rats’ reputation of being able to destroy anything wasn’t an empty boast. Even divine level experts could only retreat when they ran into a pack of ravaging Goldbiter Rats. If they set their sights on something, there would nothing left of them except cracked bones. The Goldbiter Kingrats in particular were a race that could devour even the heavens!

Cao Jin had been delighting in his cleverness just now, exulting in the feeling of a plot well sprung. Who would’ve thought that

Jiang Chen's trembling voice and crestfallen expression were just playing along with Cao Jin! This meant that Jiang Chen knew from the beginning that Cao Jin had a way to take care of the Miasma. Just as he was probing out Jiang Chen, so had Jiang Chen been doing the same to him.

The six wolverines scurried around in all directions, sending countless Goldbiter Rats flying through the air from the wind formed by the motion of the claws, filling the air with blood and fur scraps. However, when the Goldbiter Rats grew enraged, they were the sort to go berserk. The six wolverines had thoroughly enraged the Goldbiter Rats, particularly since Jiang Chen had promised them that they could have all of the flesh and blood of the wolverines. The six creatures weren't illusions made from glyphs, but spirit creatures with real flesh and blood. It was just that they'd been sealed by the runes as Cao Jin's contracted creatures.

These earth sage realm spirit creatures were nothing more than a feast for the Goldbiter Rats, so the latter became even wilder after receiving Jiang Chen's promise. No matter how the wolverines dashed to and fro, there were countless Goldbiter Rats who fearlessly leaped up to entangle them. Having evolved a few times, there were many saint realm rats amongst them, so they wouldn't necessarily die with a single blow from the wolverines' sharp claws.

The battle had become ever crazier.

Chapter 631: The Battle That Caused Cao Jin To Have A Mental Breakdown

Cao Jin had an ugly expression on his face when he saw the veritable flood of Goldbiter Rats carpet the ground. They were so numerous that every square inch within ten meters was completely covered. He knew that he was in great trouble now. As strong as the six wolverines were, his first thought when confronted by so many Goldbiter Rats was that they were done for.

"You have a lot of trump cards, don't you, Jiang Chen?" Cao Jin's face was dark as he lifted his gaze to stare at Jiang Chen. It wasn't until right then that Cao Jin realized he'd still underestimated Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen seemed to have no end to the cards he could pull out, and worse, they were completely unpredictable! The six wolverines had been one of two major trump cards that he had held to use against Jiang Chen. He had hardened his heart to take Jiang Chen down, and had immediately slapped it down as soon as they faced off. But who would've known that his first trump card would be of no help at all, but rather end up being wasted instead! Cao Jin was rocked by astonishment as well as a growing anger.

"As one of the ten great disciples of the Sky Sect, Cao, you too have quite a few trump cards at your disposal, hmm? What else do you have? I'll give you a chance to use them all." Jiang Chen smiled faintly. He wasn't the slightest bit afraid even though he was facing off against Cao Jin. Instead, the will to battle burned ever more brightly. Cao Jin did have another trump card left, but he didn't want to use it lightly now. The loss of his first trump card still more or less affected him.

He sneered and burst upwards like lightning, giving a long whistle. “Why do I need to use a trump card against a mere petty thief like you? My usual techniques are enough to kill you!”

He pointed down at Jiang Chen as he spoke, and the heavens shone with a radiant splendor as they violently surged towards Jiang Chen. This was one of the trademark techniques of the Sky Sect, the “Milky Way Point”! It was as stunning as the celestial heavens, and the point as if a shooting star.

Jiang Chen was a bit surprised by this technique, but a somewhat strange smile crossed his face in the next instant. Of all things, he hadn’t expected such a coincidence! The “Milky Way Point” was actually identical to the “Supernova Point” he practiced, but the mysteries and changes encompassed within Cao Jin’s strike was noticeably less complex than the “Supernova Point”. This also meant to say that it was very likely that Cao Jin’s method was the novice version of the “Supernova Point”.

Jiang Chen sidestepped, easily evading the attack. Since he was familiar with the technique, he knew exactly what the enemy’s next move was. Cao Jin’s “Milky Way Point” was indeed bedazzling and very domineering, but much to his chagrin, his most vaunted technique seemed to be completely useless! He didn’t even hit a hint of Jiang Chen’s shadow, let alone striking down his enemy!

How… how was this possible?

Even the supremely confident Cao Jin felt that things had gone all too awry. Everything had taken a queer turn since meeting

Jiang Chen. His best technique, one of the ultimate arts of the Sky Sect, was something that Cao Jin had always relied on to kill enemies, and it had never failed him before. In fact, he'd sent many of the Regal Pill Palace elders flying with a single point when he had shown up at the sect. But now it seemed ineffective against a minor disciple from the same sect!

What the hell is this?!

It almost seemed as though Jiang Chen had practiced his technique before since he seemed to be able to anticipate every one of Cao Jin's moves. No matter how Cao Jin tried to switch up his rhythm to execute his "Milky Way Point" to its utmost power, it was all for naught. Jiang Chen was always able to anticipate his next step. How was this a fight to the death? This was more like a martial spar between peers!

"Tsk tsk, Cao, the Ninesuns Sky Sect is a first ranked sect at the end of the day, no? These little unorthodox tricks are all you've learned? It's not enough to even scratch an itch!" Jiang Chen could see that Cao Jin's dao heart had been slightly affected. After all, it was just one bizarre occurrence after anothe. As resolute as Cao Jin's mentality was, it was impossible for him to be completely unaffected by this point.

Cao Jin grew incensed as he grabbed at the air, and an ancient sword with an exceedingly keen edge appeared in his hand. "Jiang Chen, your death is a worthy one as you've forced me to bring out my weapon!"

Cao Jin was thoroughly enraged now. His sword moved through

the air like water, leaving scars in the air like a whip of stars as they layered and intersected with each to form a net that roiled towards Jiang Chen.

What seemed like a simple stroke was actually one that'd condensed many complex notions and embodied an exceedingly strong intent. "Jiang Chen, do you think you're on the same level as me just by using a few tricks as a first level sage realm? I'll use the truth to let you know just how ludicrous your thoughts are!"

Cao Jin's sword technique wasn't flashy at all, but every seemingly careless stroke had great meaning behind it. Every single move and strike came together to form a marvelous sword formation.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

The air around them was quickly filling with Cao Jin's furious sword intent. This prickly intent wasn't just the demonstration of the dao of swords anymore, but encompassed even the very meaning of this profound technique within them. The space was fully enclosed by Cao Jin's cutting sword intent before long.

Rumble.

The technique contracted violently, eviscerating at least a million Goldbiter Rats, leaving behind nothing but ground flesh and bloodied gore across the ground. Cao Jin laughed coldly as he sheathed his longsword. It was obvious that he felt that it was impossible for Jiang Chen to survive his "Sword Ocean Cover",

even if the latter had bones and tendons made of iron. However, he didn't know which bloody pile was Jiang Chen out of the numerous ones in this area. After a careful look around, he started rummaging through the mess in search of Jiang Chen's storage ring.

However, he didn't find it no matter where he looked!

"How is that possible?" Cao Jin was baffled. "Blood and flesh are reduced to nothing under the cover of the 'Sword Ocean Cover', so there should be a storage ring somewhere here."

His ears twitched at this moment as he suddenly swept his arm backwards, snatching a few arrows out of the air. "Mm? Not dead yet?"

Cao Jin was flabbergasted. He'd seen with his own eyes just now how the raging "Sword Ocean cover" had enclosed Jiang Chen! He's not dead? How's that possible?

"Cao, you're much better than that Ding Tong." Jiang Chen's voice sounded from the void.

Cao Jin regarded his surroundings as he fully opened up his consciousness, but still couldn't locate Jiang Chen's precise location. This made him feel vaguely uncomfortable. His consciousness was at the peak of the sage realm, with a corresponding level of power. How could he not sense where Jiang Chen was? How strong was Jiang Chen's consciousness? He was still hesitating when a golden mountain came crushing down on

him. When Cao Jin noticed it, he immediately remembered when Jiang Chen had used it to preoccupy him and taken advantage of the distraction to kill Fatty Wu.

"Repeating the same trick! Get the hell away!" Cao Jin viciously flung a punch out to send the magnetic golden mountain flying away. However, since Jiang Chen was manipulating the mountain, it only skidded back a few meters before it came hurtling back towards Cao Jin again. At the same time, twelve beads rolled towards him and transformed into twelve balls of golden light, shifting into twelve golden-armored warriors who charged towards Cao Jin.

The battle had already developed to the point where both of them were holding nothing back. There wasn't a need to hide anything anymore. Of the twelve golden-armored warriors, three were of the sky sage realm, three earth sage, and six mortal sage realm. Their combat ability was certainly nothing to scoff at. However, Cao Jin's potential was also very stunning given his ability to cultivate to the level of the ten great disciples. He was wholly unafraid of this kind of attack and met them head on with his fists and kicks.

He slowly defeated the twelve golden-armored warriors. If it wasn't for the fact that they were puppets, those warriors with the lower cultivation level might've been reduced to bloody messes already. Jiang Chen sighed with admiration from his vantage point in the shadows. He had to admit that Cao Jin was the strongest and most difficult to handle opponent that he'd met so far in his life. He'd deployed almost all of his trump cards and had made use of countless schemes, but still had yet to take this person down. He hadn't even caused any tangible injury to Cao Jin!

“Cao is a source of trouble alright. If I don’t kill him, I’ll be constantly plagued with trouble when I leave this area.” Jiang Chen knew that he had become the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s hated enemy. If he didn’t kill Cao Jin today, he would be visited by endless harassment in the future. It was a good thing that his plan had yet to come to an end.

Just as the magnetic golden mountain was slamming itself against Cao Jin without pause, countless lotuses had arranged themselves in a radius of thirty some meters around him. Although Cao Jin was being attacked by the magnetic golden mountain and the twelve golden-armored warriors, he still had enough attention to spare for his surroundings. He knew that Jiang Chen would certainly have kept a few tricks up his sleeve.

Indeed, there was suddenly a violent trembling beneath his feet as numerous ice lotus vines erupted from the ground, shooting furiously towards Cao Jin like innumerable tentacles.

“What the hell?!” Cao Jin was almost numb to Jiang Chen’s ever-changing techniques. It was a good thing that his own strength possessed an overwhelming advantage, so no matter what tricks Jiang Chen brought out, Cao Jin felt that he could solidly stand his ground in the face of it all. He’d be able to handle it all in the end!

Therefore, when he saw these countless vines snarling towards him, Cao Jin swept his sword in an arc and severed them. But in that moment, the magnetic golden mountain once again came hurtling down on his head. Resigned, he could only raise his fist and slam it into the magnetic golden mountain again. But at that

exact moment, the twelve golden-armored warriors furiously pounced on him, and the vines beneath his feet split the earth like spring bamboo after a rain shower.

Even an expert like Cao Jin couldn't maintain a perfect defense in the face of a simultaneous attack from the sky, the ground, and below the ground. "Jiang Chen!!" Cao Jin threw his head back and howled to the skies, thoroughly enraged by his opponent's shameless methods. However, there was nothing he could do about it. Jiang Chen did indeed have more tricks up his sleeve than Cao Jin.

Bam!

As quick-witted and responsive as Cao Jin was, the furious stream of attacks was enough to tie up his defenses. A sky sage warrior managed to deal him a vicious blow in the back. Even though this blow wasn't fatal, it still caused the blood in his chest to froth to the point where he almost spat it out in a bloody mouthful. This solid blow hadn't been an easy one to withstand. Cao Jin had never once been forced to such a disgraceful state since he'd made his debut in the world. Even when he'd been defeated by that mysterious expert that day in the Regal Pill Palace, he hadn't ended up like this either. That had also been at the hands of an emperor realm cultivator, so he hadn't felt it to be an embarrassing matter.

But now, his opponent today was a mere ant of the first level sage realm! This really frustrated Cao Jin to the point where he wanted to spit blood!

Chapter 632: Cao Jin Dying With Everlasting Regret

“Jiang Chen, you coward! Do you dare reveal yourself and meet me head-on?” Cao Jin was at the height of his rage. Although an attack on this level wasn’t life-threatening, it was still maddening to be humiliated by an ant like Jiang Chen.

Whoosh!

Jiang Chen’s figure suddenly halted in midair about a hundred meters away.

“Meet you head-on?” One could clearly see the hints of mockery in his smile. “Cao, you’re at peak sage realm and want me to fight you in single combat. Should I call you naive or am I the idiotic one?”

Jiang Chen wasn’t the sort who blindly followed established rules. Even if he’d met a mortal sage or earth sage realm cultivator, he felt that he would be able to take them on in battle. But Cao Jin was one step away from emperor realm. Jiang Chen wasn’t so overconfident to think that he could go toe to toe with such an opponent. He wasn’t a typical hotheaded youth who could be provoked with one line. He only acknowledged one point, that any method was a good method as long as it defeated the opponent.

Jiang Chen wasn’t so much of a fool as to face off against one of the ten great disciples of the Sky Sect with his cultivation of a mere first level sage realm. The resources and treatment he’d enjoyed in

this life was less than one hundredth of what his opponent had had thus far. If it wasn't for his memories from his past life, the difference between him and Cao Jin was that of heaven and earth due to the circumstances of their births. It was because of this point that Jiang Chen had the right to fight Cao Jin. He'd never do something so brainless as to give up his only advantage and go toe to toe with his opponent.

By this time, the Goldbiter Rats had defeated the six wolverines. Cao Jin watched it happen with his own eyes, but was in no condition to help his contracted spirit beasts. He was already completely preoccupied with the attacks from the three entities. Although his life wasn't in danger at the moment, the situation was far too precarious for him to free a hand to help the six wolverines. His mind wasn't on them either.

He'd split out part of his consciousness to try and lock onto Jiang Chen's position. He'd decided this time that he would completely take out Jiang Chen, even if he ended up a bit injured for his troubles. His Sword Ocean Cover previously hadn't locked onto Jiang Chen's consciousness, which had allowed the latter to escape through using some smoke and mirrors technique. Cao Jin wasn't going to allow that to happen again when Jiang Chen's true body revealed itself this time.

"I must hit him with one fatal blow this time!" Cao Jin clenched his fist, holding another talisman inside. This was his other trump card, the Apocalyptic Darklightning Rune!

This rune could erupt forth with dark lightning capable of destroying the world, unstoppable in its might. If Jiang Chen was

targeted by this rune, he'd be unable to run to anywhere within a radius of fifty kilometers. The bolt of lightning was akin to a thunderstorm, denying all chances of escaping.

"The Apocalyptic Darklightning Rune is my final ace. I'll have to rely on my own techniques if I still can't kill Jiang Chen. Unfortunately, I'm unable to even draw close to him in the face of all his tricks!" Cao Jin knew that this was his last chance. He locked on with his consciousness—

In a burst of speed, Cao Jin employed some fancy footwork to evade the attack from the vines and punched upwards to blast the magnetic golden mountain away. In return, he took some blows from the golden-armored warriors in his back.

Bambambam!

Using the momentum from the blows, he shot forward, once again locking on with his consciousness. His chance was here! He opened his hand and activated the Apocalyptic Darklightning Rune.

"Die!" Cao Jin grimaced as the light from the rune flashed, causing the skies and earth to darken.

Rumble.

Countless streaks of darklightning descended from the skies in the next instant. Darklightning wasn't ordinary lightning. It was

said to be the accumulated vengeful thoughts of the underworld, ascending to the clouds thanks to the power of reincarnation and condensing to form darklightning. Darklightning was wrathful and fiendish, sinister beyond comparison. When struck, endless malicious intent would entangle around its target and quickly reduce the victim to a skeleton.

"A thunder rune?" Jiang Chen started when he saw Cao Jin's ace, but it was his next move that stunned Cao Jin in return. Jiang Chen raised both hands up and adopted a welcoming posture, as if very much welcoming the darklightning's arrival!

Just as Cao Jin was standing there, stunned, the magnetic golden mountain above him came crashing down viciously again. It was a good thing that his reflexes were fast enough to allow him to push upwards with both hands, arresting the mountain in its tracks. He was about to push it away when the twelve golden-armored warriors pounced fearlessly. Some wrapped themselves around his head, others around his legs, and more around his waist. Countless vines surged upwards furiously at the same time and entwined around his body, trussing him up in the blink of an eye.

Cao Jin was immensely enraged as he shouted loudly, "Get away!"

Rumble!

He struggled free of all of the vines as the force of his shout fragmented them into small pieces. The golden-armored warriors however, weren't alive and so didn't know the meaning of fear. They came back for another round after being shrugged off. Since

Cao Jin's hands were preoccupied with the magnetic golden mountain, he could only use his shoulders and knees to attack. This undoubtedly hampered his movements.

This was when something astonishing happened. The lightning descended, but—

Just as they were about to reach Jiang Chen, some mysterious power seemed to halt their attack, causing them to disappear into the void. It was as if there was a miraculous black hole on Jiang Chen that could swallow the darklightning!

Cao Jin felt like an iron weight had just crashed into his chest. His eyes witnessed everything, but his mind refused to make sense of it. He had been able to bear the loss of the six wolverines to the Goldbiter Rats, but this ace of the Apocalyptic Darklightning Rune was something that could kill even an ordinary emperor realm cultivator once they were caught by it! And yet they hadn't even scratched Jiang Chen. It was more as if he'd absorbed them all.

Cao Jin was utterly stunned senseless by this bizarre scene. He almost wondered if Jiang Chen was a ghost or a demon at this point! Was he immortal? Was any sort of attack effective on him? Although he was just first level sage realm, Cao Jin had the misconception in that instant that it was impossible to beat Jiang Chen!

Jiang Chen retracted his hands as the smile on his face widened. His posture was as relaxed as though he was enjoying the spring wind. He looked at Cao Jin, "Cao, looks like you've used another trump card!"

Cao Jin opened and closed his mouth, having the feeling of wanting to cry but being unable to.

“Jiang Chen... I swear I’ll kill you!!” He had almost completely lost his mind in the depths of his rage.

“What a coincidence, that’s what I want to say to you!” Jiang Chen suddenly smiled and snapped his fingers. In the next moment, the scene changed.

Cao Jin was still hesitating when he felt the air constrict around him. Layers of strange walls in the air appeared in the next instant, and no matter how he charged at them, Cao Jin would only rebound.

“What’s going on?” Cao Jin was really panicking now. He’d been nonplussed when his aces had failed just now, but not to the point of panicking. Now, not only was he a bit frantic, he was even a bit afraid. Matters had completely gone out of hand, and he was now locked in a storage space, like he’d been confined to an independent jail in space in this area! He was unable to break through no matter how he charged at it.

“Is this a formation?” Cao Jin was startled and thought that he’d met with a formation again. He took out the Moonshatter Awl. He attacked the air fiercely with the formation splitting technique, but realized that this cage in the air was no formation at all. The formation splitting technique had no effect.

“This isn’t a formation?!” Cao Jin was even more frightened and screamed out. “Jiang Chen, you devious little prick! What trick are you up to now?”

Jiang Chen laughed leisurely and looked at the struggles of a caged beast. He knew that Cao Jin would be unable to escape this time. He immediately brought out the magnetic golden mountain, activated the Soldier Rosary Beads, and furiously smashed towards Cao Jin. He also called out at the same time, “Do it, Brother Long!”

There was a violent trembling in the air as a true dragon appeared in the sky in the next instant, materializing in a mysterious manner.

“Dragon? True dragon?!” Cao Jin’s reaction was the same as Ding Tong and Elder Chen’s, reacting like they’d seen a ghost. As strong as he was, his heart sank when he saw a true dragon from the ancient times. Although he felt that this dragon was likely a young one, even the weakest of dragons were still a real dragon!

Dragons were by nature a fighting race, and one of the most superior bloodlines from the ancient times. Their combat ability and potential were practically innate, and even the weakest of them would be a supreme genius in the human race. Not to mention that Cao Jin had discovered by now that it was this dragon’s domain that was restraining him!

Amongst the humans, only the emperor realm cultivators could deploy their own sphere of influence, their domain. However, this dragon seemed to be able to do so having yet to enter the emperor realm! It was apparent from this just how great this race’s

potential was!

Cao Jin so greatly regretted his actions now. He finally understood that Jiang Chen had been deploying all sorts of smoke and mirrors with him, but his final ace was this true dragon! If he'd summoned this dragon immediately, then Cao Jin would've recognized his inevitable defeat and ran. But Jiang Chen had put on the act that they were evenly matched, making Cao Jin think that he could handle his opponent and thus hadn't wanted to run away at all. He'd become gradually numb to all of Jiang Chen's actions, resulting his current predicament of being locked in the dragon's domain.

There were no words to describe Cao Jin's regret, but there was nothing he could do in the face of the dragon's domain, even with all the arts and techniques available to him. Under Long Xiaoxuan and Jiang Chen's continued assault, Cao Jin was thoroughly beaten like a dog fallen into water. His eyes were still full of everlasting regret in the very moment that the last breath left his lungs.

Long Xiaoxuan however, picked up his body unceremoniously and crunched it a few times. Cao Jin's equipment kept falling out, such as the Ocean Cover Sword, Moonshatter Awl, and multiple richly stocked storage rings. This was an unexpected windfall for Jiang Chen. Shi Zhen and Fatty Wu storage rings also naturally made their way into his hands.

Chapter 633: Jiang Chen's Departure

There were quite a few nice things in Cao Jin's storage ring. Apart from the two emperor level spirit equipment of the Ocean Cover Sword and the Moonshatter Awl, there were many more precious items. Multiple martial techniques, all sorts of pills, and quite a few talismans. There was even a sky rank spirit herb and a few earth rank spirit herbs!

Jiang Chen wasn't that enthused about the martial techniques since he had all sorts of divine systems already in his mind, so he could tailor any sort of technique he cared to practice for himself. As for the pills, although the pills of a first rank sect were quite good, they weren't to the point where they would cause Jiang Chen to drool over them. It was rather the sky and earth rank spirit herbs that had given Jiang Chen an unexpected delight. Of course, what he liked most were the dozen or so talismans.

They were all different types; some for attacking, some for movement, and some for defense. Although there weren't any as incredible as the Apocalyptic Darklightning Rune, the level of these talismans weren't that low either. Jiang Chen unceremoniously put them all away. These would become vital tools in his arsenal when he faced off against enemies in the future.

As for the fatty's storage ring, it greatly depressed Jiang Chen. The fatty had come prepared, so his storage ring was empty. There was almost nothing of any value. Jiang Chen was so irritated after finding out that he almost threw it away. The second rank pill king he'd killed off first had had the same thoughts as the fatty. His storage ring was almost empty as well because he'd been afraid some accident would happen. His ring only contained some of the

spirit herbs he'd harvested since entering the mountain, apart from his identity medallion as second rank pill king.

"It looks like these two were also on their guard against Cao. They didn't bring any of their treasures with them." Jiang Chen identified the crux of the problem after a brief moment.

He wasn't overly excited about doing away with the three invading Sky Sect disciples. Matters wouldn't end because they'd perished, and in fact might even worsen things from here on. The instant the Tristar Sect had revealed the secret, the Myriad Domain was destined to no longer enjoy peace. Destroying these three might've just added fuel to the flames. However, Jiang Chen had had no other recourse. These three would've killed him had he not killed them. Jiang Chen wouldn't have disregarded his personal safety out of consideration for the Myriad Domain, not to mention that the Sky Sect's designs on the Myriad Domain wouldn't stop just because Jiang Chen refrained from killing these three.

"That these three could enter the forbidden area means that the formation on the outskirts of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect has really declined in power since ancient times. Otherwise, it would be exceedingly difficult for even an emperor realm expert to forcefully crack open a rift in that formation."

According to the notes in the sect's journals, the formation on the outskirts could defend against Great Titled Emperors at the very least. Only empyrean cultivators would be able to break through the formation on the outskirts. But now it looked like the various blockages in the spirit veins powering the formation,

formed as the aeons passed, had still affected the formation's power in the end. Before Jiang Chen had seen those notes, he'd thought this formation was everlasting and enduring.

Using the three Sky Sect disciples as a standard, Jiang Chen understood that the formation on the outskirts was at less than a tenth of its peak form, possibly even less than one twentieth. But, it wasn't beyond repair. As long as he could unclog the spirit veins beneath the formation and repair the fragmented parts, the formation could still return to its peak condition. However, it wasn't something that could be accomplished in one night, and Jiang Chen naturally had no time to attend to it now.

Besides, the three fellows had only barged into the ancient herb garden, such had been their limits. This was only the very outskirts of the ruins of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. Its true heart would only reveal itself after going through the formation on the altar. Even Great Titled Emperors would have almost no hope of barging in, much less these three young disciples.

Jiang Chen still decided to leave the mountain and return to the Regal Pill Palace for a look. Having been absent for two years, he really was impatient to go back.

……

In a secret location of the Ninesuns Sky Sect. Tens of thousands of soul lamps dotted the room.

They all belonged to the most important personages of the Sky

Sect. The highest of them were naturally the heavyweights of the sect, such as the sect head, elders, manor heads, high level inspectors, and the division heads of the larger divisions. The soul lamps of the young geniuses were located to the right. The elders' lamps were tinged green, and the young geniuses, a red hue.

This location was one of the forbidden zones of the Sky Sect. Entrance into this location required a special medallion, and those in charge were higher level administrators.

On this day, the patrolling administrator suddenly heard a sharp crack as a red soul lamp shattered. Whenever this forbidding sound rang out, it meant that one of the sect had perished. Those who could have a lantern here were all important people in the sect. They were either heavyweights or geniuses, the present and future of the sect. Therefore, every lamp being taken care of here was very important.

When the administrator heard the lamp shatter, his heart jumped and he took a hasty look at the name on the shattered lamp. It was Shi Zhen.

"Shi Zhen? Second rank pill king Shi Zhen?" The administrator's heart spasmed. When it came to Shi Zhen, he was at most a psuedo first-rate genius in terms of martial dao, but absolutely the pinnacle when it came to pill dao. It was why he had the right to place his soul lamp here, and in a position closer to the front at that. The further ahead one's placement was, the higher their position.

The administrator sighed when he saw Shi Zhen's soul lamp

shatter. Sigh, a second rank pill king! Such a young pill king absolutely had the ability to ascend to sixth, even seventh rank pill king! The heavens envy the talented. What a pity for Shi Zhen.

Although he was surprised, the administrator wasn't in a hurry to make a report. He planned on notifying his superiors only when his shift was over. After all, although Shi Zhen's position wasn't low, it wasn't to the point where the sect had to tremble because he'd perished. As a Sky Sect disciple, it was a common thing for one or two to be lost when they travelled about outside. No one usually minded if their status wasn't too high up.

Half an hour passed, and another crisp shattering sound rang out. The administrator's heart spasmed again. What's going on? What kind of day is this? Why are there two lamps shattering on the same day?

It was a very rare occurrence for two lamps to shatter on the same day. This would only happen if the sect was at war, but the sect hadn't declared war on anyone recently. The administrator scrambled for a look and saw that it was formation genius Wu Zheng who'd fallen.

"Wu Zheng? That fat head with the big ears? Wait, this kid is more cowardly than a rat, and more cautious than a fox, how could he..."

The administrator almost wondered by now if a mistake had been made. Fatty Wu Zheng was like a turtle, and usually kept his head and limbs inside his shell.

“Odd, so odd. A pill dao genius and a formation genius. Am I seeing ghosts?” The administrator murmured to himself, his expression growing ugly as he wondered if he should make an early report. After all, it was a bit out of the ordinary for two geniuses to perish in one day.

However, he immediately discarded this thought. After all, he had a great responsibility to look after the soul lamps, and it was a great taboo to leave his station for no reason. “Forget it, the life and death of these two aren’t enough to affect the sect’s fortunes. There’s no need to overreact. Perhaps it’s just a coincidence?”

After much waffling, the administrator held fast to his decision to make the report after his shift was over. However, the stunning matters still weren’t over with. Just as he’d regained his calm, another soul lamp shattered with a crisp sound.

The lamp that shattered this time caused the administrator to leap straight up in the air. It was one in the first row of the young geniuses! When he took a closer look, he saw that it was one that was ranked ninth!

“Cao Jin? Cao Jin of the ten great disciples?” The administrator couldn’t remain calm anymore. He’d realized that something major had happened. Three young disciples had perished within a day. He could overlook the first two, but the third was no trifling character. He was one of the ten great disciples! Someone perishing on this level would absolutely send ripples throughout the entire sect.

After all, there were more than a million young geniuses. Those who could emerge from their countless number to make it into the top ten were incredible, whether in terms of potential or fortune. It was absolutely a grave matter that a genius of that sort had fallen, not to mention that Cao Jin had a venerated master. He was the personal disciple of Elder Chen Lei, one of the four venerated elders of the Sky Sect. The four venerated elders were second only to the sect head, the grand inspector, and on par with the vice sect heads. That such a personage had finally raised a disciple who ranked in the top ten, but had now perished for seemingly no reason—the administrator felt horrified at the very thought. He didn't even know how to make the report.

However, he knew that he couldn't drag this matter out. The longer he did, the more trouble he'd be in. And so, he didn't hesitate and instructed one of his men, "Keep watch over this place, I'm making a trip to headquarters."

……

"What?! Say that again!" Elder Chen Lei almost thought something had gone wrong with his ears when he heard the administrator's report.

"I… I… this subordinate was keeping watch over the soul lamps and saw that… Sir Cao Jin's soul lamp had shattered." The administrator's teeth were chattering in the face of Elder Chen Lei's terrifying aura.

Elder Chen Lei surged to his feet . A look that seemed like it would devour everything shot out of his eyes as he grabbed the

administrator, flying towards where the soul lamps were kept.

Fifteen minutes later, Elder Chen Lei's enraged howl reverberated throughout the entire sect. Various heads poked out of residences, as members of the sect began to wonder. Exactly what incredible thing had happened in their sect?

Chapter 634: Conflict In The Regal Pill Palace

News of Cao Jin perishing instantly traveled through the Sky Sect. Even ordinary elders had to make way in front of one of the ten great disciples, because for those people, becoming a powerhouse in the sect was only a matter of a few decades. If no accidents happened, they would always end in a position higher than an elder.

“Investigate this closely! Whoever supplies valuable information will be awarded a hundred thousand saint spirit stones and one thousand Heroic Sage Pills!” Elder Chen Lei was enraged beyond measure after he confirmed that Cao Jin had perished and immediately promised a heavy reward.

The Sky Sect was extremely large and spread out, with over tens of millions of disciples. Elder Chen Lei had many personal disciples, but Cao Jin was undoubtedly the one he was most proud of. He had bestowed the Moonshatter Awl, Ocean Cover Sword, and Apocalyptic Darklightning Rune onto Cao Jin after all. It could be seen from this just how much Elder Chen Lei spoiled Cao Jin.

Elder Chen Lei was more than a thousand years, and had two disciples whose cultivation had surpassed the emperor level. However, they were ones he’d taken in hundreds of years ago. They had all formed their own factions now, their wings fully grown, and were sect heavyweights in their own right. However, Elder Chen Lei was still most satisfied with Cao Jin because the latter was so young with much untapped potential. He was already half step emperor realm at his young age. His potential was

obviously not something that an initial emperor realm cultivator of several hundred years of age could compare to.

Elder Chen Lei had also always practiced a laissez-faire philosophy when it came to his disciples. He didn't overly discipline them and didn't even really restrict their movements. Thus, he wasn't very clear on Cao Jin's latest adventures.

This was actually the attitude that most in the Sky Sect held as well; very few would ever ask about the matters of others. Therefore, no one responded immediately with any valuable intelligence when Elder Chen Lei's reward was announced. This meant that no one knew where Cao Jin had perished.

This both infuriated and shocked Elder Chen Lei. He'd always felt that someone who had free rein would have more ambition and vision. But who knew that Cao Jin had been given so much freedom that Elder Chen Lei didn't even know where he'd died!

The elder immediately summoned all his subordinates and disciples, howling at them, "Investigate this!! Get to the bottom of this even if you have to overturn the heavens and earth!"

Elder Chen Lei clenched his teeth as boundless killing intent overflowed from his his eyes. As an expert of eighth level emperor realm, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the entire sect trembled when he was enraged. There were very few who had an eighth level emperor realm cultivation, after all.

……

Jiang Chen was able to control the formations at his whim after refining the Crimson Heaven formation disk, and could naturally come and go as he would. There was still a bit of time until the Myriad Grand Ceremony, so he took a detour to take a look at Mt. Rippling Mirage before he departed. Two years of time had passed, just like that, and his heart naturally filled with emotion. However, Jiang Chen knew that he would be back.

The two wyverns had actually wanted to leave with Jiang Chen, but he'd felt that that would be too conspicuous, so he left them within the mountain.

Since entering the sage realm, not only had Jiang Chen's own strength grown immensely, but so had the Cicada Wing art. It was now very suitable to use for flight. It only took him a few days to arrive in Regal Pill Palace territory. But with his cautious nature, he didn't hurry back to the Regal Pill Palace, but dressed up as a wandering cultivator.

Since the Tristar Sect had revealed the secret, Jiang Chen had no idea what the current situation in the Myriad Domain was and naturally wouldn't make any move lightly. But it looked like the region was calm for now. There didn't seem to be any drums of war beating just yet.

……

The Regal Pill Palace had returned to normal after Cao Jin's disturbance. However, because of the Tristar Sect revealing the

secret, the entire Myriad Domain had sunk into a bizarre fear, the feeling that disaster was coiled and just waiting to strike.

Although Palace Head Dan Chi often stepped forward to boost morale, this emotion more or less lingered and spread. It was a good thing that the Regal Pill Palace wasn't entirely without good news. There were only a few days left until Myriad Grand Ceremony, and second genius Jun Mobai also broke through to the sage realm, right behind Shen Qinghong. This was an undoubted boost to Myriad Domain morale that two geniuses had broken through, one after another.

However, as the Ceremony drew near, the other sects all secretly put forth their strongest efforts as well. They weren't willing to be left behind as the Regal Pill Palace continuously reported their good news. On the Sacred Sword Palace side, Wang Han broke through to second level sage realm and managed to keep his fierce momentum all the way to peak second level sage realm, just one small step away from third level sage realm. The Great Cathedral was even more ridiculous. Their top geniuses Xiang Qin and Yue Baize all broke through to third level sage realm, and Xiang Qin must've eaten some sort of heaven defying item as he looked poised to breaking through to the earth sage realm! This left all the other sects speechless. Xiang Qin was so young, yet already showed signs of breaking through to fourth level sage realm. This alone made the top geniuses of other sects pale in comparison.

"Sigh, it looks like all the other sects have made good use of the vast amounts of earth rank spirit herbs that they received." Palace Head Dan Chi sighed lightly.

Now that the Tristar Sect had revealed the secret of the ancient herb garden, everyone in the Myriad Domain knew of this matter. So there was no compulsion to keep it a secret anymore.

Elder Yun Nie sighed. “The Great Cathedral has always been extraordinarily strong. They’ve gained much this time and have come out ahead.”

“It’s a pity that the only person I favored to challenge the order of the Myriad Domain, Jiang Chen, was unable to emerge from Mt. Rippling Mirage. Of all the plans we’d made, that was the one development we overlooked.” Palace Head Dan Chi was still full of regret when speaking of Jiang Chen even today, two years after the fact. Elder Yun Nie had spent so much time with Jiang Chen that he too quite valued the boy. He also felt extremely depressed.

Elder Lian Cheng however, laughed coldly. “He brought it down on himself! If he’d left with Yun Nie and the others, he might not have gone through all that then.”

Some of the other elders were also thinking this, but they weren’t at liberty to say it. Elder Lian Cheng was in fine spirits now because his disciple Shen Qinghong had broken through to the sage realm, cementing his position as first amongst the younger generation. Without Jiang Chen, there was no one to block his glory. Elder Lian Cheng was naturally happy to see this unfold.

“Alright, more than two years have passed since that incident. We should look forward. Palace Head, what is the goal of our Regal Pill Palace in the Myriad Grand Ceremony this time?” It was

Forefather Qi, the junior brother of the previous palace head, who spoke up.

Dan Chi didn't dare hide anything in front of the forefather and said solemnly, "We can only do our best this time. Shen Qinghong and Jun Mobai have broken through, but the geniuses of the other sects are quite stunning as well. Setting the Great Cathedral aside, those of the Sacred Sword Palace are our death rivals. I'm worried that they'll seek public retribution for private wrongs. As for Wang Han's strength, the younger generation of our Regal Pill Palace..."

Dan Chi didn't finish his words, but everyone knew his meaning.

Elder Lian Cheng however, was openly displeased. "Palace Head, although Wang Han is strong, Shen Qinghong has broken through to the sage realm and isn't necessarily that much worse than him. When one engages in a serious spar, one has to have the momentum and courage to fight for victory. If we start cowering before the battle, how will our Regal Pill Palace rise above all the sects?"

Elder Lian Cheng's mentality had undergone a slight shift since Shen Qinghong had broken through to the sage realm. The most important thing was that he had been sorely injured after Cao Jin had visited last time, and his mindset had been affected as well. He felt that he'd been purposely kept out of the loop for the ancient herb garden and left to wallow in his ignorance. Due to all of these reasons, Elder Lian Cheng now had a belly full of anger towards Dan Chi and Yun Nie.

Although information about the ancient herb garden had been

restricted due to the heavenly oath, that clearly hadn't passed through Elder Lian Cheng's mind. He felt that he'd been ostracized by Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie. He hadn't received a single spirit herb stalk out of so many! He was naturally infuriated.

Dan Chi flicked a noncommittal glance at Elder Lian Cheng. "Stubborn blindness is not the way forward for cultivators of our generation. If Elder Lian Cheng had gone to Mt. Rippling Mirage, you would've known how much hostility the Sacred Sword Palace bears towards the Regal Pill Palace. Wang Han hates our sect with a passion."

Elder Lian Cheng snorted coldly again. "Wang Han has just broken through the sage realm not long ago, why is he able to ascend to the second level and even come close to third level? This is because his sect values him enough to willingly expend resources on him! Our sect has sky and earth rank spirit herbs far in excess of the Sacred Sword Palace. I don't understand why we still refuse to use resources on our geniuses?!"

Not only were these words a precursor to a tantrum, but they were also interrogative. Elder Yun Nie couldn't help but speak up, "Brother Lian Cheng, this is a bit out of line, isn't it? Of the two sky rank herbs we received, one went to the palace head and the other went to me. No one had any objections to this. As for the earth rank spirit herbs, we obtained 45 of them and already split them up! Brother Lian Cheng, you took two yourself, isn't this right?"

Although 45 stalks seemed plenty, there were many senior executives in the Regal Pill Palace as well. Two going to each one

meant that many of the elders wouldn't get any, even if distribution was limited to one each. As for the younger generation, they'd reached a consensus of not distributing any for the time being.

After all, only those in the sage realm and above had the right to receive earth rank spirit herbs in the ancient herb garden. Shen Qinghong and the others hadn't gotten any either. Out of consideration for this, it was reasonable that the younger generation didn't get any. After all, there wasn't enough to go around in the older generation, so why would the younger generation be satisfied first?

However, it would've been better had Elder Yun Nie not said this. Elder Lian Cheng grew incensed when he heard this. "Hmph! Are there only two sky rank spirit herbs? 45 earth rank spirit herbs? I've heard that Jiang Chen gave you half his spirit herbs when he left, so there are three sky rank spirit herbs, hundreds of earth rank, and almost three thousand blades of Sage Fledgling Grass!"

So this was what Elder Lian Chen was most put out about. Elder Yun Nie didn't hide anything. "Jiang Chen gifted these to the sect, and it wouldn't be good if we split it up before he emerges. Therefore, this all goes to the public domain and no one has the right to divvy it up. It belongs to the sect."

"Since it's in the public domain, why can't people who need it, such as Shen Qinghong, use them?" Elder Lian Cheng pressed further.

"Shen Qinghong is one of your disciples. Since you've received

earth rank spirit herbs, why don't you give one to him? Not to mention that having just broken through to the sage realm, it's too early for him to use earth rank spirit herbs. His ability to use them isn't in question, but it would just be a waste. He'll be able to use them sooner or later, so why the rush now?" There was sense in Elder Yun Nie's words.

Chapter 635: Return To Regal Pill Palace

In reality, what Elder Yin Nie said made a lot of sense. Forget Shen Qinghong, even if he were to use an earth rank spirit herb himself, he wouldn't be able to fully absorb its effects either. After all, earth rank spirit herbs were made for emperor realm cultivators. It was considered a lavish expenditure beyond one's rank if even a sage realm expert used it. While the effects would be splendid, wasn't it a waste if one could only absorb ten percent of such a good spirit herb? Right now, Shen Qinghong was only at the first level sage realm. If he were to use an earth rank spirit herb, he would at best absorb ten percent of it and raise his cultivation by one level. What was the meaning in that?

One could certainly use earth rank spirit herbs, but not in such a wasteful way. After all, there was a finite amount of earth rank spirit herbs. What was the difference between using it this way and just completely wasting it?

However, in Elder Lian Cheng's eyes, Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie were purposefully limiting and suppressing Shen Qinghong. The elder had only obtained two earth rank spirit herbs himself. He was naturally unwilling to give one to Shen Qinghong. Therefore, Elder Lian Cheng's goal was earth rank spirit herbs that'd been labelled for public use. The reason he was making such a fuss was because he was targeting the pool of public spirit herbs. He wasn't just aiming for the earth rank spirit herbs. He was also aiming for the sky rank ones as well.

Jiang Chen had left behind three sky rank spirit herbs for the sect. Earlier, Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie had split up the two that the sect had obtained amongst themselves. The reason

for this distribution was because one of them was a palace head, and the other person was the Herbal Hall Hallmaster, who'd accomplished a great merit in the ancient herb garden. Therefore, they deserved their share, whether one looked at it from the standpoint of reason or sentiment. However, a further three sky rank spirit herbs had been provided by Jiang Chen. If it was a contribution by Jiang Chen to the sect, then why couldn't it be shared amongst the rest?

"Forefather Qi, Elder Hu, both of you are people of great virtue and prestige in the sect. I, Lian Cheng, feel that this is quite unfair to the two of you. Are the two forefathers of the sect not qualified to obtain even one sky rank spirit herb?" Elder Lian Cheng adopted a flattering tone as he turned to them.

He was obviously voicing words they wished to hear while plotting for himself too. Forefather Qi and Elder Hu held incredible status in Regal Pill Palace. After the two elders had gotten their share, then would come Elder Lian Cheng's turn. Coincidentally, there were only three sky rank spirit herbs in the public domain. After the two elders had taken one spirit herb each, only one would be left. No matter how one looked at it, it should go to Elder Lian Cheng.

Elder Lian Cheng had previously been injured by Cao Jin, and he'd fixated on the feeling that he'd been wounded for the sect's sake. He believed that he had toiled hard and performed a valuable service for the sect, so there was no reason he should fail to obtain a sky rank spirit herb! If Elder Yun Nie could receive a sky rank spirit herb, then Elder Lian Cheng should also have one too! He would feel quite put out otherwise.

Forefather Qi and Elder Hu exchanged glances with each other. They would be lying to themselves if they said they weren't tempted.

"Dan Chi, since this is for public use, then us old fellows should have first priority to use them no matter what. A sky rank spirit herb is something that one only encounters serendipitously, so in my opinion, why don't we..." As the former palace head's junior brother, Forefather Qi was someone who even Dan Chi had to call senior uncle. He was a person of great virtue and prestige, and his words were weighty in their own right.

"Senior uncle, the agreement regarding the public spirit herbs is a matter of public accord. There are two reasons why I haven't distributed them. One is because Jiang Chen's location remains a mystery. It would be doing him a disservice if we give away his spoils of war without careful consideration. Two, the method of distribution isn't an easy choice to make. If we distributed all three sky rank spirit herbs beforehand, then the youngsters below us wouldn't any hope at all. It is a bit unfair to them."

In reality, Forefather Qi knew that Dan Chi was a man who lacked selfish motives. That was why Forefather Qi had no intention of targeting the palace head and didn't shame him after these words. "Dan Chi, you are now the palace head. As the head, your word is law. I am old, and while I do have great use for a sky rank spirit herb, I am happy to leave it for the young geniuses as well."

On the other hand, Elder Hu said, "That is not the case, ole brother. The situation in the Myriad Domain is currently quite

complex, so I believe that us old fellows should continue to increase our strength. An increase in our strength will affect the sect's fate more in critical moments than our young disciples'."

"Elder Hu's words make sense. After the previous incident, I too believe that our young disciples are still incapable of standing on their own for now," Elder Lian Cheng latched onto the elder's words. He'd seemed to unintentionally bring up the previous incident, obviously wanting to emphasize the fact that he had gotten hurt for the sect's sake, and had rendered a valuable service for the sect.

Elder Yun Nie suddenly smiled, "Since everyone wants a share of the sky rank spirit herbs, I happen to have the perfect method that will be the best compromise."

"What method is it?" Elder Hu's eyes lit up.

"There are three sky rank spirit herbs left. Forefather Qi is a person of great virtue and prestige, and the eldest senior of the sect. Naturally, he deserves a sky rank spirit herb. There are no objections to this. As for the remaining two sky rank spirit herb, we can distribute one to the most influential elder based on status and prestige. The final one shall be offered as a reward to the genius with the most talented performance during the Myriad Grand Ceremony. This way, both the elder and younger generation are not neglected. This is the perfect method to satisfy both worlds."

Elder Hu laughed heartily when Elder Yun Nie finished, "This method is wonderful. I agree!"

Palace Head Dan Chi was also laughing on the inside. Elder Yun Nie's plan had a clear purpose. It perfectly cut off Elder Lian Cheng's attempt to obtain a sky rank spirit herb. The elder had kicked up such a fuss for a sky rank spirit herb, but it just so happened that he wouldn't get one through this distribution method. Since two of the sky rank spirit herbs were to be split amongst influential elders, Forefather Qi would acquire one without a doubt. As for the last remaining sky rank spirit herb, Elder Hu was even more qualified than Elder Lian Cheng. This meant that Elder Lian Cheng wouldn't get a single sky rank spirit herb despite having argued until he was blue in the face.

If you think you're capable, then go compete with Elder Hu for the spirit herb!

Forefather Qi cast a meaningful glance at Yun Nie and was inwardly impressed with the latter's quick wittedness. This method might appear fair, but in reality it had split apart the tacit understanding between Elder Hu and Elder Lian Cheng. Originally, the two elders had joined forces to obtain a sky rank spirit herb each for themselves. However, this suggestion had put Elder Hu and Elder Lian Cheng in direct conflict for one sky rank spirit herb instead.

This way, the unspoken alliance between the duo had naturally fallen apart.

Most importantly, Elder Yun Nie's suggestion appeared to be the epitome of objectivity and selflessness. It was a suggestion that took care of his old comrades and encouraged the youngsters as

well. It was a perfect method that satisfied both sides. No one could criticize it.

Elder Lian Cheng pondered for a moment and immediately deduced Elder Yun Nie's intentions. His expression instantly sank. "Elder Yun Nie, what do you mean by this? Are you targeting me on purpose?" Elder Lian Cheng couldn't quite maintain his facade as his expression turned dark.

Elder Yun Nie was absolutely innocent, "What do you mean, Elder Lian Cheng?"

Forefather Qi smiled and interjected before Elder Lian Cheng could respond, "In my opinion, this suggestion is worth considering. The seniors should take precedence, and the youngsters shouldn't be neglected either."

Elder Lian Cheng didn't dare refute Forefather Qi's words.

Palace Head Dan Chi nodded, "If there are no objections, then the decision is made. Forefather Qi and Elder Hu are the two most qualified forefathers of the sect. They will both obtain a sky rank spirit herb each. The last sky rank spirit herb will be put up as the reward for the Myriad Grand Ceremony. Any Regal Pill Palace disciple who obtains the best result shall obtain this sky rank spirit herb."

Forefather Qi smoothed things over while laughing, "Don't be dejected, Lian Cheng. Your Shen Qinghong is the top talent among the younger generation. In my opinion, this sky rank spirit herb

would most likely fall into your faction."

Elder Lian Cheng opened his mouth, but wasn't sure what to say. If he argued any further, then it would mean that he planned to fight for the sky rank spirit herb against his own direct disciple Shen Qinghong.

"Alright, let us end things here today." Palace Head Dan Chi adjourned the meeting with a wave of his hand.

Elder Hu was all smiles as he chatted with Forefather Qi. He was naturally happy since he'd obtained the sky rank spirit herb he wanted, and thought that both Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie had given him much face. As for Elder Lian Cheng, Elder Hu naturally wouldn't care what the former was thinking.

Just as Palace Head Dan Chi was about to return to his residence, a ray of light suddenly flashed into his hand and landed on his palm. It was a message glyph.

Palace Head Dan Chi opened it for a look. At first he was unconcerned, but a rapt expression instantly appeared on his face after he read its contents. The message glyph was actually from Jiang Chen! Jiang Chen! He's emerged from Mt. Rippling Mirage?

Palace Head Dan Chi exited a side door of the sect's formation at a certain corner of the Regal Pill Palace and was greeted by a sight for sore eyes, Jiang Chen, the boy he had not seen for two years.

“Well met, Palace Head.”

“Haha, Jiang Chen! I knew it! You were no average person, and a mere Mt. Rippling Mirage wasn’t enough to hold you. It would appear that my predictions are very much accurate!” Palace Head Dan Chi was absolutely overjoyed. Today was the happiest day of his life in the past two years.

“Palace Head, has news of the Tristar Sect’s betrayal and surrender to the Ninesuns Sky Sect already been exposed?”

“Have they truly flocked to Ninesuns Sky Sect’s banner?” Dan Chi had deduced this earlier, but had had no evidence in the end to prove his theory.

“It’s absolutely true. I learned of it just a few days after I entered Mt. Rippling Mirage. I’d simply refrained from saying so because it is a matter of the utmost importance. Tristar Sect’s Ding Tong pursued and attempted to kill me the day I entered Mt. Rippling Mirage. That kid was in fact a disciple sent by the Ninesuns Sky Sect into the Myriad Domain to set up their plans. Not only have Ninesuns Sky Sect set their eyes on the Myriad Domain, this wasn’t a plan that’d only sprung up a couple of years ago. They’ve likely prepared for this for a very long time.” Jiang Chen knew how important this matter was, so he had to report it in full to the palace head.

“Let’s head inside first before discussing anything further.” Dan Chi came to solemn attention inwardly, but didn’t panic.

He carefully asked about the relevant details once they'd returned to his residence. Jiang Chen told Dan Chi everything he'd learned from Ding Tong and some of the evidence he had discovered. Now that things had reached this point, Jiang Chen didn't even conceal the matter of Cao Jin.

"You're speaking of Cao Jin, that blue browed youngster?" Dan Chi's expression changed considerably upon hearing this. "Did... did he entered the forbidden area of Mt. Rippling Mirage?"

"You know about him, Palace Head?" Jiang Chen remembered Cao Jin claiming that he had came by Regal Pill Palace before. Was that actually the truth?

"Not only do I know him, I've even fought against him once. This kid's strength is unfathomable, and I barely managed to take a blow from him. If I wasn't aided by a benefactor, I do not know if I could even block three moves from him." Dan Chi had bowed to no one in his life, but to this day he couldn't help but feel less capable than he would've liked when thinking of Cao Jin, even though the palace head was currently at seventh level sage realm.

Dan Chi immediately reiterated the story of the disturbance that Cao Jin had caused.

A mysterious cloaked person? A beautiful figure abruptly flashed across Jiang Chen's mind. He couldn't help but think, could that have been her? Jiang Chen might not have witnessed it with his own eyes, but the first thought that crossed his mind had to do with that mysterious Miss Huang'er.

Chapter 636: Rumors From Ancient Times

Jiang Chen had his own speculations, but he didn't lay them bare. In fact, Dan Chi was the one who stared at Jiang Chen with surprise in his eyes, "Jiang Chen, you said that that blue-browed young man entered Mt. Rippling Mirage. In that case you... how... did you..."

Jiang Chen had only said that Cao Jin had entered Mt. Rippling Mirage, but the disciple hadn't said that he'd killed Cao Jin. After all, that was much too outlandish. Dan Chi was extremely curious. With that blue-browed young man's strength and the fact that he'd entered Mt. Rippling Mirage to chase and hunt Jiang Chen down, Jiang Chen had still been able to escape at leisure? Not to mention that the Mt. Rippling Mirage's restrictive formation was completely intractable.

At this point, Jiang Chen understood that there were some things he could no longer keep secret. He immediately confessed in full to Dan Chi about the inheritance of Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, but he didn't admit that he was the one who'd killed Cao Jin. Instead, he arranged the story such that Cao Jin had accidentally barged into the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's formation and had been killed by the formation. He wasn't afraid of letting the palace head know that the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's inheritance was already in his hands.

That being said, he still couldn't reveal the secret that Long Xiaoxuan had killed Cao Jin. After all, the bloodline of true dragons was a critical matter. As for the inheritance of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, Jiang Chen had given it a lot of consideration. He thought that it was fine if he revealed it to Palace

Head Dan Chi.

Surprisingly, Palace Head Dan Chi wore a solemn look on his face, and fell into a long silence after Jiang Chen finished his explanation. It was only a long time later that the palace head muttered with wonderment, “So, the rumors from ancient times are actually real! The Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect... the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect!”

“What rumors from ancient times?” Jiang Chen asked in surprise. He hadn’t heard of any rumors from ancient times when gallivanting around the Myriad Domain. There were no such records amongst the Regal Pill Palace’s records either.

He couldn’t help but feel a little curious when he heard Palace Head Dan Chi muttering. Jiang Chen was extremely interested in the history behind the Divine Abyss Continent. While this continent appeared separate from his previous life, there always seemed to be this vague connection between the two of them. He just couldn’t seem to find the connection between the two together with the information and intelligence he currently possessed. That was why he couldn’t help but investigate every time he heard the words ‘rumors from ancient times’.

“Jiang Chen, do you still remember what I said back when the Regal Pill Palace formed an alliance with the Precious Tree Sect? I said that the Myriad Domain would soon fall into chaos in the next ten years, and that an era of chaos might descend upon the entire Divine Abyss Continent”

Of course Jiang Chen remembered that. Back then, Dan Chi had

brought up the general situation of the Myriad Domain and placed a lot of hope on him. Dan Chi had said then that he'd simulated the Myriad Domain's future countless times. However, Jiang Chen was the only odd factor in the equation that the palace head hadn't been able to puzzle out.

Back then, Dan Chi had stated clearly that Jiang Chen might be the only person who could solve this predicament.

"Palace Head, what does all this have to do with the rumors from ancient times?" Personally, Jiang Chen was more concerned about the rumors.

"Jiang Chen, I don't know much about the rumors from ancient times either. I've only heard some scattered bits when I was exploring the Upper Eight Regions.

"It is rumored that there were countless sects and experts on Divine Abyss Continent during ancient times. Amongst them, some powerful ancient sects possessed large groups of experts who'd transcended the level of a Titled Great Emperor." Palace Head Dan Chi himself didn't know what the level beyond Titled Great Emperor was called.

Jiang Chen added it in for him, "Empyrean expert."

"Empyrean expert?" Palace Head Dan Chi's eyes lit up, "How do you know this, Jiang Chen?"

“I learned this from the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.” In reality, Jiang Chen had known of it a long time ago from the memories of his past life. All secular planes had their own ways to differentiate between the boundaries between martial arts, but when someone exceeded the limits of the mundane and broke through the void, they would be recognized by the heavenly laws and be given a unified title of “empyrean expert”.

“Empyrean expert, empyrean expert...” Palace Head Dan Chi muttered a couple of times in fascination and awe. “In the ancient times, empyrean experts ruled this land, and the Divine Abyss Continent was far stronger than it was now. The Divine Abyss Continent back then was likely in its final era. However, that era had came to an abrupt stop. Due to a disorder in the orbit of the celestial bodies, the Divine Abyss Continent and multiple other planes overlapped with one another in areas that allowed for teleportation. This allowed many alien races who were much more powerful to invade through these regions.”

Palace Head Dan Chi paused for a moment before smiling ruefully, “Although the disorder of the heavens’ orbit only lasted for a year, it was enough for countless alien races to invade the Divine Abyss Continent. They clashed furiously against the indigenous forces of the Divine Abyss Continent. Their goal was to take over the Continent and enslave every living being. No one knew how many months and years this protracted war lasted. In fact... no one even knew what the final outcome was. It was as if the history of that time had been utterly obliterated after that enormous battle. To this day, that part of the history is blank, and no records of that time can be found anywhere. It was as if history itself had been separated by a great chasm.”

Palace Head Dan Chi sighed, “Of course, these are just the rumors I heard in passing. There is no way for me to confirm whether that is truly the truth. The Myriad Domain’s status is too low, and no valuable clues can be found at all.”

Although the amount of information Dan Chi provided was pitifully small, Jiang Chen was more of a mind to believe it as real. This was because the records of Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect matched the scattered bits of information Palace Head Dan Chi had found. The text and diagrams on the stone walls and journals of Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect both mentioned the invasion of powerful enemies from beyond the region. These powerful enemies from beyond the region should be the alien races mentioned by Palace Head Dan Chi.

“Palace Head, could it be that these invaders are the ancient demon race?” Jiang Chen asked curiously.

Dan Chi nodded, “Correct. After the ancient times, those invaders were all collectively known as the ancient demon race. In reality, there was more than one race who invaded the Divine Abyss Continent, but we simply call them collectively as demons.”

Jiang Chen remembered that the term ‘ancient demons’ had appeared more than once in the Myriad Domain. In fact, the sixteen kingdom alliance had always been considered to be at the cusp of where the demons were sealed. It was just that these rumors had never been validated before.

“Jiang Chen, the fact that you discovered the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect’s inheritance proves that you are a man of great

fortune. However, you must keep this information a secret, just as I will not reveal this to a third person. This matter is of the utmost importance. Who knows, perhaps the forbidden land of Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect may be the Regal Pill Palace's safeguard in the future." Dan Chi was more joyful than surprised in regards to the revelation of Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

"Palace Head, do the Ninesuns Sky Sect's arrangements share any connection with these ancient sects?" Jiang Chen asked curiously.

Dan Chi thought for a moment, but contrary to Jiang Chen's expectations, he responded, "Who knows how many forbidden areas on the level of Mt. Rippling Mirage exist on the Divine Abyss Continent? There are also numerous ancient ruins much superior than Mt. Rippling Mirage in the Upper Eight Regions. These ancient ruins exist in even the sixteen kingdom alliance. We can see from this that there are many such ancient ruins that'd survived the ancient era. But how would they know which ancient ruin contains an ancient sect's inheritance?"

It made sense to Jiang Chen. Back at Skylaurel Kingdom, even the likes of him had obtained the inheritance of the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice at the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt. He had also obtained the magnetic golden mountain back at the trials of the sixteen kingdom alliance. Ultimately, he was simply picking up scraps left behind by other cultivators. If he could pick up such scraps from even such small places, it was clear that there were countless ancient ruins on the Divine Abyss Continent, as many as the hairs on an ox.

Of course, if it hadn't been for Jiang Chen being uncommon, a

normal person would find it very difficult to stumble across ‘scraps’ like the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice and the magnetic golden mountain. But no matter what the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s intentions were, their great ambition and designs on the Myriad Domain had been made abundantly clear.

“Jiang Chen, it would appear that the Ninesuns Sky Sect is confident in their ability to swallow the Myriad Domain. Even a sect like the Tristar Sect has fallen under their sway. I’m worried that they might have some kind of conspiracy set up during this Myriad Grand Ceremony. Therefore, the Myriad Grand Ceremony may very well be a turning point for the Myriad Domain.”

“You think so too, Palace Head?” Jiang Chen was surprised. The reason he had left Mt. Rippling Mirage so urgently was because he’d been driven by a powerful hunch. He had the niggling feeling that something of great import would happen during the Myriad Grand Ceremony. He thought that it was just his intuition alone, but he didn’t think that the palace head had thought the same as well.

Palace Head Dan Chi’s gaze was laden with weight, “I’m not the only one who has felt this. It is likely that all the great leaders of the Myriad Domain and those who are even slightly sensitive have had a similar premonition. I’m guessing that every sect will be making some sort of preparation of their own. I am worried that many sects will buckle beneath the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s aggression, and our Regal Pill Palace may very well be the only one who stands in defiance against them.”

It was possible that such a thing might happen. However, Jiang

Chen thought that Ninesuns Sky Secy might not even accept the compromise offered by the sects of the Myriad Domain. It was obvious that the Ninesuns Sky Sect saw value in Myriad Domain as a territory, not as a forces. After all, even the strongest sect in the Myriad Domain, Great Cathedral was just average. Even a hundred Great Cathedrals couldn't compare to one Ninesuns Sky Sect.

"What is your plan, sect master?" Jiang Chen knew that Dan Chi had his own ambitions, and his own plan. However, there was nothing Palace Head Dan Chi could do against the giant that was Ninesuns Sky Sect in a short period of time, no matter how shrewd he was.

"Jiang Chen, you've known about my thoughts and aspirations for a long time now. However, I'm in no hurry to build my kingdom overnight either. If there is truly nothing that can be done, I will not be so foolish as to try and smash an egg against a rock. The best way is none other to break up the Regal Pill Palace temporarily and bide our time. If ten years is insufficient, then we wait a hundred years. If a hundred years is insufficient, then we wait five hundred years... As long as our legacy remains, it is only a matter of time until we recover our homeland and unify the Myriad Domain!" Dan Chi's eyes shone with the light of resolution. It was a light filled with grave, determined intelligence.

It was obvious that Dan Chi would never agree to bend his knee and submit to Ninesuns Sky Sect. The second he did so, the spirit of the sect would break along with him. A sect could be dissolved, but as long as the kindling of their spirit hadn't extinguished yet, then the sect would still be alive. Similarly, even if a sect hadn't yet been destroyed, if their legacy was extinguished, then it was no different than them being destroyed.

A sect's inheritance wasn't determined by the integrity of its territory or the number of its disciples. It was determined by whether its spirit was still alive. In this regard, the spirits of both the Regal Pill Palace and Precious Tree Sect were well and alive, despite their relative strengths. Just like the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, although they had died out completely, their powerful spirit had continued to shine for eons. Jiang Chen had been inspired by that powerful mentality the moment he entered the forbidden land of Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. This was the power of a legacy. This type of strength was stronger than a fist, and more reliable than a weapon!

Chapter 637: The Young Master Has Ascended To The Sage Realm?

One had to say, although Palace Head Dan Chi's strength was nothing more than a wisp of smoke in front of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, his ambitions and magnanimity, as well as vision, were all things that were worthy of Jiang Chen's admiration. It was a true achievement for a sect head to be such a martyr, even temporarily. Only those who could be so resolute and decisive held the truest hope of reaching the stars they aim for.

"Palace Head, although the Sky Sect is strong, they still pale in comparison to the ancient sects. I trust that if the Sky Sect purposefully suppresses the Myriad Domain, it will be reviled beneath the heavens. Even if it is capable of consolidating its power in short order, it will not be able to hold onto that power for long." Although Jiang Chen didn't know what the Sky Sect's plans were, he believed that the Divine Abyss Continent wasn't a place where they could simply could dictate order. What he was most worried about wasn't the Sky Sect, but the legendary ancient demon race. Moreover, his worries weren't without ground.

He'd once returned to his old home, the territory of Jiang Han, in the Eastern Kingdom. He'd run into an odd event on its lands, discovered by his younger cousin Jiang Yu. The spirit herbs on a certain patch of land had ripened overnight. This matter had left a deep impression on Jiang Chen, and he'd sent men to investigate. Although the investigation hadn't been very thorough, it was enough to indicate various types of strange sealing power hidden in that area.

Jiang Chen had been weak back then, so he hadn't looked deeply into the matter. However, even then he'd been able to conclude that it was a gravely ill portent. So now that he thought back on it, it was quite possible that the sixteen kingdom alliance was a place where the demons were sealed.

Looking at it more closely, it was now apparent to him that the omen was quite frightening. If it took shape, it was possible that even the Myriad Domain, much less the Eastern Kingdom, would not be able to bear the results. In addition, Jiang Chen had bumped into a spirit creature called Mang Qi in the Boundless Catacombs when undergoing the Hidden Dragon Trials in the Eastern Kingdom. That had also been a strange place.

It looked like Mang Qi had been sealed there since ancient times, but it was still alive. How many years had passed since then? If Mang Qi was merely a first level spirit realm creature, how could it live for so long? The lifespans of spirit creatures were longer than humans, but not to such a ridiculous extent!

If he thought about it carefully, the Boundless Catacombs that Mang Qi had resided in were also full of peculiarities. Jiang Chen could almost be certain now that the spirit creature's display of power back then had just been the barest tip of the iceberg. Its true strength was absolutely not that simple. A spirit realm creature from the ancient times would never be able to survive the ravages of time to live until now. Even the king of tortoises wouldn't live for so long. It seemed that the Eastern Kingdom had truly hidden many bizarre riddles. Back then, his ability only in the true qi realm, Jiang Chen only had a shallow understanding of most things and hadn't delved deeply into them. With what he knew now, a careful appraisal of the events had revealed all the

inexplicably bizarre points. Jiang Chen naturally wouldn't forget that he had a promise with Mang Qi that he would try to save it from its seal, "The Great Formation of Myriad Souls Confinement".

"The Great Formation of Myriad Souls Confinement?" Jiang Chen's eyelid suddenly twitched as he remembered something.

Palace Head Dan Chi started when he saw Jiang Chen's strange action. However, Jiang Chen didn't say anything as he grabbed at his head with both hands, thinking furiously. He hadn't had much of an impression when Mang Qi had first mentioned the "Great Formation of Myriad Souls Confinement". But now that it had crossed his mind once again, he remembered that the journals of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had mentioned this formation. They'd spoken of an exceedingly strong sealing formation that the sect hadn't been able to set up by its own strength alone. The notes had said that the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had combined efforts from a few other formation sects to set up a "Great Formation of Myriad Souls Confinement". As he connected the dots, Jiang Chen suddenly felt sweat pour down his back.

"Can it be... can it be that Mang Qi is one of the ancient demons..." Jiang Chen felt that he'd plunged into an icy cavern. He really did feel a cold draft on his back. He'd made a heavenly oath that he'd help Mang Qi break free! If that spirit creature was really of the ancient demon race... then hadn't he been tricked by Mang Qi?!

However, Mang Qi had also sworn that if Jiang Chen helped it break out of its shackles, it would recognize Jiang Chen as its

master and listen to the boy's bidding. He too had sworn a heavenly oath.

The more Jiang Chen thought, the more of a headache he had. However, with things the way they were now, there wasn't much point to thinking too much about this now. His current level of strength wasn't enough to evoke more than a lazy swat from the Ninesuns Sky Sect, much less the ancient demon tribes.

"Palace Head, we need to make quite a few preparations in advance of the Myriad Grand Ceremony." Jiang Chen brought the topic back to the upcoming event.

"Mm. The Grand Ceremony is in half a month. I'll make some preparations during this time. Jiang Chen, you'll be the focus of attention. Don't reveal yourself for now, let's make our decisions accordingly later."

Jiang Chen's status was exceedingly awkward at the moment. Those of the six great sects would be holding a certain prejudice against him because of what'd happened in the ancient pill garden. Jiang Chen's name had also entered into the Sky Sect's vision time and time again. Perhaps that sect already had their eyes set on Jiang Chen. Thus, Palace Head Dan Chi didn't want Jiang Chen to easily expose himself.

Jiang Chen wasn't much interested in the Myriad Grand Ceremony. However, there was a martial sparring aspect to it in which the winners could enter the Paramount Realm. He was really looking forward to the realm.

The Paramount Realm was where the emperor realm cultivators in Myriad Domain history released the essence of their lives in their last moments, leaving behind the purest essence of their martial dao. Such a place would have traces of the cultivator's martial spirit. It would be a fortuitous occurrence to any cultivator who could inherit the martial dao comprehension of an emperor realm cultivator. Jiang Chen naturally wanted to go try his luck.

Although he had the memories of his past life, there was much Jiang Chen didn't understand about this world's experts. Since he had the opportunity to understand them further, Jiang Chen didn't want to pass it up! The two agreed in the end that if no other mishaps arose, Jiang Chen would participate in the Myriad Grand Ceremony.

"Jiang Chen, the sect has been arguing nonstop the past couple of days over the sky rank spirit herbs that you've gifted to the sect. Let's not announce your return just yet, I'm afraid Elder Lian Cheng will want the sky rank spirit herbs in your possession." Although Palace Head Dan Chi knew that Jiang Chen wasn't necessarily afraid of Elder Lian Cheng, he still didn't want the two to erupt in open hostilities out of consideration for the sect.

It didn't matter to Jiang Chen either way, and he smiled. "I'll return to my residence and then make a trip to senior sister Bi'er's residence. I promised to help cure her father's poison three years ago. Who would've thought that this matter would drag on until now!"

"Haha, good! A man's word is worth its weight in gold." Dan Chi

looked admiringly at Jiang Chen and clapped his disciple's shoulder. "Go on back first!"

Jiang Chen rose to take his leave. When he reached the mouth of the Rosy Valley, he had no other recourse but to pretend that he was Mu Gaoqi to fool the guards. They didn't take a close look at him either, just seeing a figure flash by in front of them.

"Eh, was that senior brother Mu Gaoqi just now?"

"I think so, but when did senior brother Mu Gaoqi become so fast?"

"I think it's weird too. I heard that senior brother Mu Gaoqi is in closed door cultivation, attempting to assail the sky origin realm. Are the rumors false?" The guards chattered at each other as they were completely baffled by the situation. If Mu Gaoqi was in closed door cultivation, why would he appear at the mouth of the Valley?

When it came to Mu Gaoqi, the guards' tone were full of respect and reverence. They weren't talking about the cowardly and shrinking Mu Gaoqi of yesteryear, but a true top genius of the sect. The sect had fully excavated Mu Gaoqi's potential as an innate wood constitution, and had tailored a cultivation path for him to greatly enhance his martial dao level.

Over the past two years, his innate wood constitution had been aptly developed and he'd bounded from third level origin realm to the point of trying for the sky origin realm. His rate of improvement was the most furious one in the Regal Pill Palace in

the last two years.

Equally crazed was Tang Hong of the Precious Tree Sect. After undergoing a baptism in the wood spirit spring and receiving many benefits from Jiang Chen, his already strong potential had once again taken a large step forward. Add his decidedly mad bent when training to the mix and he too had made large strides forward to peak fifth level origin realm in the past two years. His cultivation level was catching up to Lordmaster Ye Chonglou!

However, Ye Chonglou was different from Tang Hong. Although both had been baptized in the wood spirit spring, Jiang Chen had gifted dragon blood and crystals to Ye Chonglou. The latter's miraculous rate of improvement had been because he'd refined the dragon blood. On the other hand, Tang Hong had made it to the fifth level origin realm purely on the basis of excavated potential. This kind of cultivation speed was one that even the best geniuses in the Regal Pill Palace might be hard pressed to match.

When Jiang Chen arrived at the entrance to his residence and saw everything in order, his heart settled with relief. Over the past two years, he'd been most afraid that something might've happened at home.

Thankfully, everything was still peaceful.

Huang'er was playing the "Ethereal Soothing Melody" within the residence when her strings of her qin suddenly vibrated. A trace of delight flashed through her clear eyes as she dampened the strings with both hands, then ran out barefoot. "Sir Jiang?"

Jiang Chen smiled to see Huang'er walk out barefoot. "Miss Huang'er, your 'Ethereal Soothing Melody' has truly reached the peak of an ethereal realm after two years."

Huang'er laughed softly, "You're finally back."

Figures began to dash out from the residence one by one. It was first Ye Chonglou, then Gouyu and Xuetong, then all the other personal guards... everyone was delighted to see Jiang Chen.

"Jiang Chen, you... you..." Ye Chonglou stared at Jiang Chen, surprise brimming from his eyes. "Your cultivation..."

"Congratulations to Sir Jiang for ascending to the sage realm." Huang'er smiled charmingly.

Everyone was stunned, and then was immediately overcome with joy. It'd been two years since they'd seen the young master, but now that they had, he was already in the sage realm! One had to the know that even the most exemplary genius, Shen Qinghong, had only broken through to the sage realm in the past two years. Jiang Chen had only entered the Rosy Valley three years ago, and had only been first level origin realm then. But now, three years later, he was of the sage realm!

Chapter 638: Dispelling The Divine Befuddlement Miasma, Senior Sister Reveals Her Thoughts

Ye Chonglou was at the peak of fifth level origin realm. Gouyu and Xue Tong were both at fourth level, and the rest were both at peak of second level origin realm. Tang Hong was now an earth origin realm genius of the Rosy Valley, also at peak fifth level origin realm and was one of the more preeminent geniuses in the valley. However, Tang Hong had his own residence, and so didn't live with Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen was quite satisfied with everyone's improvement. It'd only been three years after all, so it was very difficult already to improve themselves to this degree.

"Ah yes, Lordmaster, I'd like to speak privately with you." Jiang Chen said to Ye Chonglou after greeting everyone. Ye Chonglou knew that it wouldn't be a small matter if Jiang Chen was taking such precautions, so he quickly walked out with Jiang Chen.

"Jiang Chen, is something important about to happen?" Although the lordmaster didn't normally set foot outside the residence, he was still very sensitive to the developments of the greater picture.

Jiang Chen nodded. "It's very possible that some notable matters will happen. The Tristar Sect is colluding with the Ninesuns Sky Sect. I anticipate that disaster will soon descend upon the Myriad Domain. The scale and strength of this disaster may be large

enough that a fourth rank sect such as the Regal Pill Palace may not be able to remain steadfast in its face. Therefore, for the sake of the future of the Precious Tree Sect, I have to recommend that the lordmaster take Tang Hong and the others back to the Precious Tree Sect right away."

"Right now?" Ye Chonglou was a bit surprised. "Are we in that much of a hurry? Tang Hong would still like to participate in the Myriad Grand Ceremony and vie for a placement on the Myriad Hidden Dragon ranking!"

"There's no meaning in that anymore." Jiang Chen waved his hands. "In fact, it's still up in the air whether or not the ceremony can be successfully held."

"Things are that serious?"

"They might be even more serious than I'm describing. Palace Head Dan Chi is already prepared to dissolve the Regal Pill Palace at any time."

Ye Chonglou's expression instantly darkened as his tone turned grave, "Then it looks like the situation is at its worst." He was an altogether decisive person. "Alright, then I'll immediately go find Tang Hong and the others to take them back to the Precious Tree Sect. If the greater picture has reached this point, we'll temporarily disband the Precious Tree Sect as well."

To a certain extent, the Precious Tree Sect was the same kind of sect as the Regal Pill Palace. It was the sort that held the mentality

of passing down their legacy of spirit through the ages. They would never bend their knee to enemies and be enslaved by others.

Jiang Chen nodded. “It’d be best to dissolve the sect immediately if you hear of anything and leave the Myriad Domain. No matter how troubled the times ahead may be, we will still meet again as long as we are all alive.”

Ye Chonglou patted Jiang Chen’s shoulder. “Jiang Chen, the luckiest thing I’ve ever encountered in my life, and my proudest, is getting to know you. Don’t worry, although my strength is humble, I’ve long since anticipated that there would be great changes in the Myriad Domain. To that end, I’ve made many preparations beforehand. Although they won’t affect the Myriad Domain as a whole, I’ve been able to design a few escape routes.”

“Ah. When does the lordmaster plan on departing?”

“Tomorrow.” Ye Chonglou was very firm. “I will take my leave from Palace Head Dan Chi tomorrow.”

Jiang Chen gifted another batch of Origin Fostering Pills to the elder. “Lordmaster, take these upper rank Origin Fostering Pills with you. You and Tang Hong will be able to use them for a long time.

“Also, here’s an Origin Doubling Pill for you. You’ll be able to rise a level without conditions after ascending to sixth level origin realm, and you’ll be able to assail seventh level origin realm in a short amount of time.” Jiang Chen took out a million upper rank

origin spirit stones as well. “Here’s also a million spirit stones that I gained in the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles. It should be enough for the next couple of decades of use.”

Ye Chonglou felt a bit abashed and he sighed, “Jiang Chen, I’ve been benefiting from you all along. I am truly ashamed.”

“Please don’t speak this way, lordmaster. If it wasn’t for you taking care of me in the Skylaurel Kingdom, there wouldn’t be the Jiang Chen of today either.”

Ye Chonglou didn’t stand on ceremony with Jiang Chen and accepted everything. “Jiang Chen, as long as the Precious Tree Sect has you, the sect will undoubtedly one day be revived even if it is destroyed.” His voice thrummed with emotion.

“Oh right, Lordmaster, how is your Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon after it assimilated the bloodline of a true dragon?”

Ye Chonglou responded joyfully, “The Phoenix-Dragon is a descendent of the dragons alright! It absorbed the true dragon bloodline even better than I did. Its cultivation level has long since broken through the human sky origin realm. In my opinion, right now, it has more right than me to assail the sage realm.”

“The sage realm won’t be a problem after the baptism in the wood spirit spring. The lordmaster has great hope of making it to the sage realm.” Jiang Chen continued, “On another note, Tang Hong’s potential is excellent and I hope that the Precious Tree Sect will show him preferential treatment. If he can develop fully into

his strength, his accomplishments in the future will be unfathomable."

Even geniuses in small places have potential, but they simply lacked the resources to excavate it from youth. The differences between them and geniuses in large territories wasn't in innate potential, but the amount of support and resources received during their development. This point was particularly noticeable for Tang Hong. After receiving large amounts of resources from Jiang Chen upon joining the Regal Pill Palace, the rate of his cultivation had improved ferociously, even faster than some Regal Pill Palace geniuses. From Jiang Chen's perspective, if Tang Hong had received Cao Jin's level of treatment, then his current accomplishments might even be on par with Cao Jin.

Xue Tong walked in after Ye Chonglou had finished speaking. "Young master, Miss Bi'er has sent over cultivation resources again."

"What do you mean?" Jiang Chen started. Did Ling Bi'er know he was back? That was impossible.

"Ever since she returned from Mt. Rippling Mirage, Miss Bi'er has sent over cultivation resources every month and has taken great care of us. Some fellows came by a few times to start trouble in front of the residence, but Miss Bi'er soon taught them a lesson."

Jiang Chen smiled and felt a certain empathy with Ling Bi'er's desire to save her father. He'd owed the other a promise for three years now. It was high time to make good on it. He waved his

hand, “I’m going out.”

Ling Bi’er was standing outside the residence, her frozen bearing at great odds with the rest of the surroundings. Even after three years, the ruthless blade of time had left no discernable marks on her. She was still as pure as water and detached as frost. However, her figure seemed to be a bit thinner and her charming face a tad skinnier.

It was usually Gouyu greeting Ling Bi’er, but this time the former hadn’t, instead sending Xue Tong notify Jiang Chen. After all, she’d come on time every month for the past three years, regardless of rain or shine to deliver cultivation materials. Gouyu had wanted to rebuff her in the beginning, but Ling Bi’er didn’t pester them or make any explanations. She merely put the items down and turned to leave.

Gouyu’s heart wasn’t made of rock or iron. She was slowly touched over the years by Ling Bi’er’s quiet, caring ways. Although they hadn’t exchanged many words over the past three years, only a look or a small gesture was needed to communicate between women, just as the fall of one leaf is enough to indicate autumn’s arrival. Gouyu was certain that one like an icy mountain such as Ling Bi’er was only extending her affections to them because of someone else.

Gouyu’s reaction to this had slowly melted from her initial rejection to hesitant acceptance. She now both admired and respected Ling Bi’er. To be able to continue steadfastly in this fashion for three years, no matter what her motives were, it was worthy of Gouyu’s respect.

When Ling Bi’er heard the footsteps, she was about to put her items down and leave, when she suddenly wavered. A look of disbelief shot out of those clear eyes.

Jiang Chen?

Indeed, the one who entered her sight this time was the familiar face that had always marked her dreams, and the one she’d thought about for a thousand days and nights.

Their eyes unexpectedly met. It was as if the last thousand days and nights hadn’t happened at all, as if time itself had been rewritten. Seemingly, she had only just left his residence yesterday, and had merely come again today.

“Have you been well, senior sister Bi’er?” Jiang Chen smiled leisurely.

Ling Bi’er suddenly whirled around and strode quickly in the other direction. After putting some distance between them, she couldn’t hold it in anymore, leaning on a nearby tree to quietly sob. She was a strong girl and naturally didn’t want Jiang Chen to see her crying.

After a while, she heard Jiang Chen’s footsteps coming from the distance and hurriedly composed herself, wiping her face clear of tears and adjusting her emotions. She knew that Jiang Chen had purposefully made his footsteps sound loudly from far away, likely to remind her that he was coming. When she thought about how a

man with such a heroic air as him was so conscientious as well, Ling Bi'er couldn't feel help but feel a surge of sweetness in her heart.

"Senior sister Bi'er, my promise to you is late by three years. How is your father? Let's go take a look."

Ling Bi'er knew that Jiang Chen was afraid she'd feel awkward and was proactively mentioning her father to distract her. The two walked side by side and soon arrived at Ling Bi'er's residence. It was a good thing that Ling Hui'er was absent, so they were fortunately spared her antics. Jiang Chen walked up to Ling Su's bed to see that his eyes were greatly sunken in. At first glance, he was all skin and bones.

"Thankfully I'm not too late. Senior sister, where are the spirit herbs?"

Ling Bi'er took out the four spirit herbs they had prepared in advance. Now that Jiang Chen had entered the sage realm, the strength of his consciousness had greatly improved. He was much more confident in curing this Miasma when compared to three years ago. It could even be said that he was now absolutely assured of success.

Yet even so, it took him seven days and seven nights before he finished thoroughly cleansing the Miasma from Ling Su's mind. When he dragged himself out of the room with footsteps that spoke of exhaustion, he was greeted with the sight of an anxious Ling Bi'er.

“Senior sister, your father’s Miasma has dragged on for too long. It wouldn’t have been so complex to cure if it’d been just when he’d been poisoned.”

“Junior brother, then…”

“He’s completely fine. He’ll return to his usual self after a few days of rest and recovery.” Jiang Chen smiled easily.

Ling Bi’er swayed where she stood, and hastily reached out a hand to support herself, barely managing to keep her composure. Her lips vibrated slightly, tears welling up in her beautiful eyes. “Junior brother, thank you, thank you! I once swore an oath that I would serve whoever cured my father. In the future…” She bit her lip lightly and gathered up her courage to say, “I… I won’t refuse anything that junior brother wants me to do in the future.”

With Ling Bi’er’s personality, it was already an enormous act of courage that she could voice such words.

Chapter 639: Upgrade To The Nine Gates Incineration Formation

A rumor had begun to run rampant within the Myriad Domain as of late. Moreover, the rumor had a proverbial face to attached to it, which was why those who heard it couldn't help but look favorably on its authenticity. The rumor went that two treasures of the Myriad Empire had mysteriously disappeared when the nation had met its demise. Not even the Great Scarlet Mid Region, the force who had crushed the Myriad Empire, had been able to discover those two treasures. It was said that the day these two national treasures appeared once more would be the day the Myriad Domain was revived.

Meanwhile, another rumor spoke of an expert, skilled in divination and calculation, who predicted that the two treasures, the Imperial Jade Seal and the Guardian Dragon Seal, would appear during this upcoming Myriad Grand Ceremony. Although this rumor wasn't widespread, everyone amongst the six great sects of Myriad Domain had heard about it one or another. The rumor was very much like a cat's claw, scratching against the hearts of the various sect heavyweights; an indescribable itch that simply wouldn't go away.

The attraction that these two treasures had was undeniable. Obtaining these two treasures symbolized the ownership of the inheritance tokens of the Myriad Empire. Obtaining them meant grasping the right to unify the Myriad Domain under one rule. Nearly every top sect in the Myriad Domain shared a similar ambition in this regard.

Who didn’t wish to unify and rule the Myriad Domain as its master?

Who didn’t wish to recreate the Myriad Empire’s glory and bring about eternal supremacy?

The benefits were obvious in terms of the increase in status and the monopoly of resources. Any ambitious expert would seek to gather all these for themselves. Palace Head Dan Chi was no exception.

Although danger lay in wait on all sides for the Myriad Grand Ceremony this time, and a devastating storm seemed ripe to descend upon the region, opportunities always coexisted with risk.

Jiang Chen had kept an unusually low profile upon his return from Mt. Rippling Mirage. After sending those from Precious Tree Sect off and curing Ling Su’s Divine Befuddlement Miasma, he no longer had any concerns he needed to take care of. However, it didn’t mean that he was idle. On his way back from Ling Bi’er’s, Jiang Chen had decided to further perfect his Nine Gates Incineration Formation. It certainly had plenty of room to improve. Back then, Jiang Chen could only allow the formation to display fifty to sixty percent of its maximum strength. At best, it could defend against a sky sage realm expert.

“I don’t know what misfortune will strike the Myriad Grand Ceremony. This formation should be improved for when I am absent from the sect.” Jiang Chen didn’t lack for wealth at the moment. Previously, he’d only had several tens of thousands of upper rank origin spirit stones that he could spare. But now, he

literally had tens of millions in his pocket, from the various harvests he'd had. He wasn't short on spirit stones for formations at all. Not to mention that he also had the two sets of formation flags from the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. These two sets were the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's trump cards. Since the primary and secondary flag could be used separately, Jiang Chen took out the secondary set for his use.

He was of the mind to make his designs grander. Therefore, he decided to use the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's formation flag to construct the Nine Gates Incineration Formation.

The base of the formation had been constructed a long time ago. Switching to a more powerful formation flag would no doubt strengthen it further. Thanks to the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, Jiang Chen now had a decent grasp on some of the profound mysteries of formations. Using that, he managed to improve the Nine Gates Incineration Formation further. He used almost a million spirit stones to upgrade it.

Each detail and step required to upgrade the formation was done to perfection. After spending a full four days on the task, Jiang Chen was finally done upgrading the Nine Gates Incineration Formation. After the formation had been improved, it was instantly ten times more sophisticated than it was before.

"Not even the formation splitting art executed by Cao Jin's group of three can find a gap in a formation at this level!" Since Jiang Chen knew of the formation splitting art, he had purposely designed his formation to counter it. He closed all the loopholes he could find in this formation.

Besides, the only reason the trio had managed to enter Mt. Rippling Mirage was because the outer formation of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had been massively weakened over the years. Many flaws had appeared on the formation itself, and the spirit veins beneath it had been blocked. In reality, their success hadn't been due to the trio's strength at all. If it were otherwise, not even three emperor realm experts would have been able to cut through the ancient formation with their arts.

Of course, Mt. Rippling Mirage was just one part of the outer ring of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. It was obvious that the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect hadn't bothered to make its outer formation overly complicated. In addition, the sect had to leave a glimmer of hope to its inheritor. If they built the outer formation to be impervious to everything, then how would their inheritor manage to enter? In the end, Mt. Rippling Mirage was just a part of Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's outer formations. It wasn't the core of the sect's formation. The forbidden area of inheritance beyond the altar was the true core of Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's formation. It was those formations that were the real proof of the sect's true strength.

If Jiang Chen hadn't had the sect's keepsake, he wouldn't have even gleaned hints of how the formation operated, much less enter it. Considering the breadth of his experience Jiang Chen possessed during his previous life, the fact that even he hadn't been able to puzzle out how the formation worked showed just how much effort Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had put into their inner core formations. The setup of Ancestor's Cliff and the tower of inheritance had been closely intertwined with each other. In comparison, Mt. Rippling Mirage's formation could only be considered trivial at best. It hadn't been built to completely seal

the path from the outside at all.

Jiang Chen walked around the formation several times and felt relatively satisfied with his handiwork. “I haven’t spent three years in the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect in vain. My ability in formations has reached a different level of proficiency, and I can use formations a lot more flexibly than I used to. An ordinary first level emperor realm expert should not be able to break through this formation.”

Satisfied, Jiang Chen created jade formation tokens. This time however, he refined only three tokens. He kept one for himself, one for Gouyu, and was planning on giving Huang’er the last.

However, when Jiang Chen came to pass the jade token to Huang’er, she said, “Sir Jiang, I’ve heard that the Myriad Grand Ceremony is an extremely grand proceeding. Huang’er wishes to follow you and broaden her horizons. Is that acceptable?”

Jiang Chen stared blankly at Huang’er for a moment. Then he remembered that she was likely fraught with boredom after cooped up inside the residence for several years. Being cooped up all the time would not do well for her illness either. After thinking for a moment, Jiang Chen nodded, “It is good for Miss Huang’er to travel and divert your boredom if you are feeling stifled. However, the Myriad Grand Ceremony this time is particularly dangerous…”

Huang’er smiled charmingly, “No, no, I am not afraid. If anything happens to me, then only Huang’er is to blame. I guarantee that Elder Shun will not make trouble for you, hee hee.”

Jiang Chen wasn't afraid that Elder Shun would trouble him. Rather, he was missing that old fellow a little. Many years had passed by already. He wondered if Elder Shun had found the Requiem Wood yet. Although Huang'er's condition was very stable right now, the Generation Binding Curse would still exist as a hidden threat after a decade or two. The curse couldn't be eradicated completely without the Requiem Wood, and thus Huang'er's condition at present couldn't be considered good.

Huang'er was an incredibly intelligent and understanding person. She immediately guessed that Jiang Chen was worrying about her illness when she saw the slightly odd look on his face.

"Sir Jiang, all life and death are ruled by fate. Thanks to your skillful treatment, Huang'er has never lived an easier life than these last three years. I am satisfied with this already." Huang'er's attitude was incredibly optimistic. She actually consoled Jiang Chen instead. Jiang Chen was seldom impressed by anyone, but he greatly admired Huang'er's optimistic and magnanimous temperament.

Of the many women he'd come to be acquainted with, Gouyu was bold and vigorous, Dan Fei quiet and elegant, Ling Bi'er reserved as ice, and Ling Hui'er cute and innocent. Last but not least, Wen Ziqi was cultured and refined. However, no one could compare to Miss Huang'er in terms of unearthly manner and magnanimous bearing.

Miss Huan'er seemed to carry the bearing of a well-mannered noble lady since birth. Her words and actions were ever perfectly

appropriate and gracious. What was even rarer was her innate kindness and lack of competitiveness. Jiang Chen wasn't familiar with Huang'er's true identity, but he could guess that her birth was anything but common. In fact, she might just be greater than his imagination.

Since Huang'er was now going to the Myriad Grand Ceremony, Jiang Chen had no choice but to give Xue Tong the last formation token. He instructed him carefully on how to use it. Thankfully, Xue Tong was an extremely reliable person. He would memorize anything Jiang Chen said in his heart and execute them strictly to the letter. Out of all of Jiang Chen's personal guards, Xue Tong's ability to execute matters was unparalleled among them all.

Looking at the time, Jiang Chen noted that there were still a few days left before the beginning of the Myriad Grand Ceremony. Therefore, he took the opportunity to enter closed door cultivation for several days and refine some pills.

He had two to three thousand blades of Sage Fledgling Grass in his possession right now. Every Sage Fledgling Grass could be used to refine a cauldron of Heroic Sage Pills. In the best case scenario, one refining would result in seven to eight Heroic Sage Pills; in the worst case, perhaps five to six pills. The overall production value was quite high.

Jiang Chen took the opportunity to refine over one hundred Heroic Sage Pills. Ever since he'd ascended to the sage realm, his demand for pills had grown with each passing day.

No matter how superior Jiang Chen's memories from his

previous life, cultivation was still ultimately attained through the accumulation of countless resources. No theoretical knowledge could replace this truth.

Apart from the Heroic Sage Pills, Jiang Chen also refined a cauldron of Longevity Pills. This time however, he successfully refined a total of five Longevity Pills. Four of the five pills were middle rank products, but the last one was actually of upper rank quality. Adding these to the three Longevity Pills he had left, Jiang Chen had a total of eight Longevity Pills.

“The empyrean expert level pill masters of ancient times were all wealthy beyond imagination. Pill refining is truly a skill that creates wealth.” Jiang Chen couldn’t help but sigh ruefully. The Longevity Pill he’d sold – a lower rank pill no less – at the auction last time had netted him over tens of millions of spirit stones. If he were to auction these middle and upper rank pills again, the prices would only be far greater than before.

The last time Jiang Chen had refined the Longevity Pill, he’d taken a total of seven days to succeed. However, he was only at earth origin realm at the time, and the strength of his consciousness at the time was far inferior to his present level. This time, the amount of time Jiang Chen spent to refine the Longevity Pill didn’t even reach half the amount of time he spent last time. The amount of consciousness he exhausted was also far less than last time. Almost every aspect of Jiang Chen had greatly benefited as his cultivation and level of consciousness increased.

Jiang Chen had heard of Elder Yun Nie’s multiple attempts to refine the Longevity Pill. He hadn’t succeeded even a single time.

Jiang Chen could understand why. After all, a pill wasn't something that could be refined just because one had a recipe. This was particularly true for an extremely complicated pill like the Longevity Pill. There were a lot of things that needed to be taken into consideration. It was unlikely that Elder Yun Nie would discover a path to success without ten to twenty years of research.

Naturally, Jiang Chen remembered that the Regal Pill Palace had promised the Dark North Sect's Honored Master Tian Ming a Longevity Pill. Therefore, Jiang Chen took three Longevity Pills – one lower rank pill and two middle rank pills – and delivered them to Palace Head Dan Chi.

Chapter 640: Setting Out For The Myriad Grand Ceremony

Three Longevity Pills? Palace Head Dan Chi was stunned when he saw what Jiang Chen had brought out. “Jiang Chen, you refined all of this?”

Jiang Chen smiled and didn’t deny anything. “I’m afraid that Honored Master Tian Ming will come asking for the pills again this time at the ceremony. We can’t keep delaying the matter of making good on our promise.”

The look in Palace Head Dan Chi’s eyes was complicated as he gave a long sigh. His eyes remained fixed on Jiang Chen. “Those with ability can accomplish anything! Jiang Chen, it is the Regal Pill Palace’s greatest fortune to have you. If I take a moment to think back, although I have a few achievements to my name since becoming the palace head, mostly due to my ambitions, they’ve had a relatively minor impact on the greater picture over the past decade. But the most important thing I’ve done since becoming Palace Head is bringing you from the Precious Tree Sect to the Regal Pill Palace.”

With how the situation had developed, Dan Chi had to admit that all he’d done for the Regal Pill Palace had indeed greatly improved the sect’s standing in martial dao and immensely decreased the gap between the Regal Pill Palace and the other four sects. But the fortunes of a sect wasn’t something that could be changed by the careful planning and execution of a few decades. And yet the current situation of the Myriad Domain was so precarious that there was no more time left for Dan Chi to realize his goals and

ambitions.

This was what depressed Dan Chi the most. He had so many thoughts, plans, and ambitions.

However—

With the current changes in the greater picture, there wasn't enough time for him to realize them! Everything he had now was nothing more than a rock thrown into a lake when chaos inevitably descends. It would raise some ripples when thrown in, but nothing after it sank. It wouldn't give rise to any waves at all. Now that he thought about it, the only thing he could be thankful for was the discovery of a group of young geniuses for the Regal Pill Palace. Jiang Chen for instance, and Mu Gaoqi. When it came to Shen Qinghong or Jun Mobai, Dan Chi still didn't think much of them even though they'd broken through to the sage realm. There was too great a cultivation gap between them and their peers in the Myriad Domain, and they had much further to go to be compared to Dan Chi.

One had to know that at their age, Dan Chi had been poised to break through to the earth sage realm, and he'd been nominated to be the next palace head. His peers at that time in the various other sects had been dallying around the middle management tiers of their sects, with very few making it to an elder level. Yet Dan Chi had already guided the Regal Pill Palace for a few decades.

Whether it was compared to their peers in the Regal Pill Palace or in other sects, Shen Qinghong and Jun Mobai had nothing to boast about by breaking through to the sage realm after thirty years old.

The earth sage realm would be a dividing line, as would the sky sage realm. Even Dan Chi, with his heaven defying potential, had spent a few decades in the mortal sage realm. He'd only broken through to the sky sage realm in the past two years due to some fortuitous circumstances. Elder Shun's pointers for one, and the benefits brought about by earth rank spirit herbs. Those had been critical. If it wasn't for those, he would've needed another five to ten years to break through to the sky sage realm. Therefore, Shen Qinghong and Jun Mobai's results didn't put him in an optimistic frame of mind.

On the other hand, Jiang Chen and Mu Gaoqi were different, particularly Jiang Chen. When he'd first entered the Regal Pill Palace, he'd only been at first level origin realm. Now three years later, he'd taken an enormous leap forward and was now first level sage realm. This kind of speed of improvement would've left even Dan Chi in the dust back in the day. It'd be one thing if he only had a heaven defying cultivation speed, but his ability to challenge opponents levels higher than him was even more perverse!

He'd been able to render a ninth level origin realm opponent helpless when he'd been only at earth origin realm. Jiang Chen had been at ease even when facing off against a first level sage realm opponent! Although he hadn't mentioned how he'd thrown off Elder Chen's pursuit, it went without saying that Jiang chen had somehow killed Elder Chen! It was apparent from this just how stunning this boy's potential was. As for being able to take down someone like Cao Jin, Dan Chi didn't even dare think too deeply about it. He was now certain that the terrifying phenomenon he'd seen that day in the Precious Tree Sect had been from Jiang Chen breaking through to the origin realm. Otherwise, there would've been no reason for such stunning phenomena to

appear without reason in a mere sixteen kingdoms alliance.

Dan Chi was now very much aware that Jiang Chen must be a genius who'd inherited the fortune of the heavens and earth. Even the Sky Sect wouldn't be able to suppress him. The Regal Pill Palace wasn't qualified to contain someone of such fortune. Dan Chi didn't treat Jiang Chen as a mere disciple anymore, but as a potential who could impact the future of the entire Divine Abyss Continent! Of course, Dan Chi didn't mention any of this to anyone, even those he was closest to in the sect.

Heaven's secrets were not to be spoken of.

No matter what, the stronger Jiang Chen was, the more likely it was that the Regal Pill Palace would have to make use of his strength. No matter where his future lay, the legacy of the Regal Pill Palace wouldn't perish as long as Jiang Chen lived. Therefore, Dan Chi firmly believed that it wouldn't matter even if the Regal Pill Palace was disbanded. Its fortunes wouldn't dissipate as long as Jiang Chen still survived. This was why he'd told Jiang Chen his thoughts of temporarily disbanding the sect. Dan Chi had wanted to see what Jiang Chen's thoughts were. If Jiang Chen agreed, then Dan Chi would feel that his move was the right one to make.

As he thought about Jiang Chen, so did he think about Mu Gaoqi. Compared to Jiang Chen, the latter's light was a bit more subdued, but with his innate wood constitution, he would absolutely grow into a powerhouse that would impact the sect's fortunes for the next millennia. With Mu Gaoqi's potential, he'd grow into someone who would be able to shoulder the sect in a hundred or two hundred years, even without Jiang Chen. He'd be able to lead

the Regal Pill Palace into the ranks of the third rank sects!

However, what was different about the two was that while Mu Gaoqi's future could be estimated, what Jiang Chen would bring to the sect was something that even Palace Head Dan Chi couldn't fathom. Jiang Chen's potential was simply too strong, so strong that he'd be able to affect the entire chessboard of the Divine Abyss Continent.

"Palace Head, Elder Yun Nie has come to visit." Elder Yun Nie came to visit as Jiang Chen and Dan Chi chatted.

"Haha, good timing! I haven't told Elder Yun Nie that you're back yet. His concern for you isn't any lesser than mine." Dan Chi waved his hand at Jiang Chen. "Your return can set his heart at ease."

Elder Yun Nie seemed to be a bit thinner after three years. It was apparent that the pressure on his shoulders had been quite a burden over the years. Apart from the Longevity Pill, he was also preoccupied with the matter of the sky and earth rank spirit herb distribution.

"Oh? You have guests, Palace Head?" Elder Yun Nie tossed out an offhand comment when he glimpsed two shadows through the door. He immediately froze afterwards as the door opened to reveal Jiang Chen. "You... Jiang Chen?"

Jiang Chen rose to bow. "Greetings to Elder Yun Nie."

Elder Yun Nie rubbed his eyes, shock writ all over his face. “It’s really you? Am… I dreaming?”

“Haha, Yun Nie, this is the biggest piece of good news that our Regal Pill Palace has received in the past three years. Jiang Chen actually returned a few days ago, and I’d planned on telling you before we set out for the Myriad Grand Ceremony.” Palace Head Dan Chi smiled.

Elder Yun Nie was delighted. “That’s absolutely wonderful!”

Palace Head Dan Chi summarized what had happened to Jiang Chen, and Elder Yun Nie’s face also flitted through a variety of expressions when Cao Jin was mentioned. He also greatly worried on Jiang Chen’s behalf.

“Good, fantastic! Jiang Chen, with your potential and fortune, you would outshine even the top genius of a first rank sect, much less the Myriad Domain. The heavens are smiling upon the Regal Pill Palace!” Elder Yun Nie sighed.

When Palace Head Dan Chi brought out the three Longevity Pills, the sight left Elder Yun Nie completely flabbergasted and unable to speak. He looked at Jiang Chen, commendation and anticipation in his eyes.

So what if the Myriad Domain was in a precarious situation and its future shrouded with uncertainty?

As long as the sect had geniuses like Jiang Chen and Mu Gaoqi, they would rise again even if all the various forces in the Myriad Domain perished tomorrow.

"Ah yes Palace Head, I came to ask if the list for the Myriad Grand Ceremony has been decided upon yet? Now that things in the region are shifting, I think that it's best we prepare." Elder Yun Nie recommended.

"I've already decided on the names, Yun Nie. We'll only bring Shen Qinghong, Jun Mobai, Ling Bi'er, Nie Chong, and... Jiang Chen this time. I will lead with Elder Lian Cheng, you and Forefather Qi, Elder Hu will be in charge of protecting the sect."

Dan Chi wanted to travel light this time and take less people with him. Elder Yun Nie had come this time to actually speak on Mu Gaoqi's behalf. He had entered a critical moment at this time, and there was no need to give up on his closed door cultivation for the ceremony. Even if he was successful in making it to the sky origin realm, it would be very difficult for him to obtain a high ranking amongst the young geniuses. Therefore, it was better if he stayed behind.

When he saw that Palace Head Dan Chi hadn't named Mu Gaoqi, Elder Yun Nie nodded. "That is just as well. It will be easier to respond if anything happens if we take fewer with us. Ah, Palace Head, what are your thoughts on the rumors of the Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal?"

Dan Chi spread out his hands. "Rumors are rumors. Although I am tempted, we have no guarantee of making a play for these two

items. Therefore, let's leave it to fate."

Elder Yun Nie thought for a moment and felt that this made a great deal of sense. Jiang Chen didn't interrupt when he heard of this new topic. He wasn't interested in the two treasures that signified power and authority, but the Paramount Realm.

Elder Yun Nie took his leave after the three chatted some more. They'd come to an agreement that the Longevity Pill would still be announced under Elder Yun Nie's name, but they would reveal only one for now to sell to Honored Master Tian Ming. No one knew what would happen in the upcoming uncertainty, so there was no need to share the news of the rest of the pills.

Three days later, the Regal Pill Palace retinue for the Myriad Grand Ceremony officially set out. Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Lian Cheng brought the group along, with only five young geniuses and a few elders and followers from the Hall of Might. Roughly thirty in number, Huang'er traveled with them as Jiang Chen's follower.

Chapter 641: Tragic Ruins

Because Jiang Chen hadn't revealed his identity yet, he was still seen as Mu Gaoqi to others. However, it also left those very same people wondering why "Mu Gaoqi" was part of the group. Everyone recognized his potential, and he had indeed accomplished meritorious deeds in the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles. But, hadn't he only recently assailed the sky origin realm? At best, that would put him at seventh level origin realm, no? How could he represent the Regal Pill Palace at such an occasion with that sort of cultivation level?

In the Rosy Valley, there were more than twenty geniuses who were eighth level origin realm and above, and a good handful of ninth level origin realm and above. But none of those had been brought along instead of Mu Gaoqi.

Everyone felt that this was Elder Yun Nie using his connections to sneak him in through the backdoor. However, no matter how they questioned things internally, no one could speak of their suspicions. After all, Mu Gaoqi's potential was obvious for all to see. Who dared offend him? Offending him was to offend a future heavyweight of the Regal Pill Palace. The potential of an innate wood constitution meant that he would be able to affect the sect's fortunes for a thousand years to come. It was likely that even the palace head would have to treat him with due respect and consideration in a hundred years.

The Regal Pill Palace hadn't had a pill king appear in the last couple hundred years. Even the most exemplary Elder Yun Nie was still one step away from taking those exams. Mu Gaoqi on the other hand, was estimated to have the potential of a seventh rank

pill king. This kind of potential would make him immensely popular even in a first rank sect. Therefore, apart from Elder Lian Cheng, who sported a darkened expression on the way, the others had no objections. They even laughed and chatted with “Mu Gaoqi”, occasionally displaying an act of brotherly love between fellow disciples. Everyone was well aware that they had to look differently at him now.

Mu Gaoqi was an existence they couldn’t afford to offend, so why bother being standoffish? They should instead try to build good relations with him as early as possible. Even Shen Qinghong became much more outgoing after breaking through to the sage realm. He was quite close with “Mu Gaoqi” and frequently gave him cultivation pointers. All of this greatly tired out the fake Mu Gaoqi. It wasn’t hard for Jiang Chen to pretend to be Mu Gaoqi. He only had to conceal his sage realm presence and no one would be the wiser. However, it was a lot more difficult to pretend to be an ignorant little boy and accept martial dao pointers from Shen Qinghong. Thankfully, Ling Bi’er stepped in to save Jiang Chen.

Only Ling Bi’er was aware that the “Mu Gaoqi” in front of her was an imposter, and that he was Jiang Chen instead. Whenever anyone found an excuse to approach Mu Gaoqi with great enthusiasm, she would always find another pill dao topic to discuss at length with Mu Gaoqi. Beauties came first, so the others didn’t have much to say about that. This helped out Jiang Chen greatly, and coincidentally turned into a scene that Elder Lian Cheng wanted to see the least. He was a bit depressed because Shen Qinghong seemed to be escaping from his grasp lately.

Shen Qinghong’s personality had changed greatly ever since breaking through to the sage realm. Some changes were good, but

whenever Elder Lian Cheng complained about Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie suppressing him, Shen Qinghong would always dismiss it with a laugh and voice the opinion that the two were likely not targeting the honored master, but doing so out of consideration for the sect. Although these words were meant to comfort Elder Lian Cheng, they instead grated on his ears. You're my top disciple, alright? Why do you sound like you're making excuses for Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie? Were you brainwashed during this trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage?

The change in his best disciple further threw Elder Lian Cheng's mentality off kilter. It was as if someone had stolen something from him, particularly as he'd continuously hinted at Shen Qinghong this time that he had to display a better performance. Setting aside the other geniuses in the Myriad Domain, Shen Qinghong had to at least firmly suppress the younger generation of the Regal Pill Palace. This was the only way in which Elder Lian Cheng would be able to obtain that remaining sky rank spirit herb.

Although he kept hinting that he wanted Shen Qinghong to take the sky rank spirit herb and present it to his master, his disciple's responses always left that little bit to be desired. This further displeased Elder Lian Cheng. He felt that Shen Qinghong's wings had filled out and was no longer heeding his words. Now that he saw Shen Qinghong laughing and chatting with Elder Yun Nie's disciple, he was even more unhappy.

Although Palace Head Dan Chi vaguely detected some awkwardness in the latter, he pretended he didn't know anything. He knew that emotions were running a bit high in Elder Lian Cheng, but it was something he would have to come to terms with himself. Others were unable to help him with what he was

grappling with.

……

The Grand Myriad Ceremony was held in the ruins of the Myriad Empire. To be frank, the ceremony that happened once every thirty years was a memorial ceremony. They would honor the past glories of the Myriad Empire and remember the experts who had perished in that disaster. They were also reminding the geniuses of the Myriad Domain to never forget the humiliation of the Myriad Domain.

In short, a brainwashing ceremony.

However, there was great value for such a ceremony. That part of their history was indeed a humiliation for the Myriad Domain. Only through finding courage after this period of shame would there be a future for the Myriad Domain.

Even though the ancient site of the Myriad Empire was nothing more than ruins after a couple hundred years, the sheer prosperity of the Empire in its heyday was still obvious. Every corner and detail of the ruins was testament to the glories of yesteryear, and how impressive the Myriad Empire had once been. However, time washes even the sturdiest bulwark away.

Even the strongest empires and most glorious histories were but wisps of smoke after several hundred years.

As Jiang Chen followed the group traipsing through the ruins, he sensed the devastating atmosphere that seemed to linger around them. He couldn't help but reflect, "The Great Scarlet Mid Region is entirely domineering alright. This was basically pulling the Myriad Empire up by the roots! Not only did they destroy the entire royal family, they also slaughtered all cultivators above sky sage realm." In Jiang Chen's eyes, this matter didn't seem as simple as a mere sacred maiden of their area being defiled, even though this had been publicly touted as the region's excuse for invading the Myriad Empire. From what Jiang Chen had heard from Palace Head Dan Chi, combined with what he saw in front of him, Jiang Chen felt that things shouldn't have been so dire if it'd just been the matter of one sacred maiden.

Perhaps the Great Scarlet Mid Region had long since had ulterior motives, and their sacred maiden being defiled was just an excuse. After all, the Myriad Domain bordered the Great Scarlet and was also very strong. At that time, they were also showing an upward trend. How would the Great Scarlet allow competitors to coexist peacefully next to them? Therefore, from Jiang Chen's perspective, the Great Scarlet destroying the Myriad Domain was very likely a power grab, and not about defending their sacred maiden's honor.

Jiang Chen didn't believe that the royal descendants of the Myriad Domain would've been so idiotic as to be unable to identify the sacred maiden of a neighboring region.

"Eh? What's that?" A disturbance suddenly started within the Regal Pill Palace crowd as one of the followers pointed ahead, struck by fright.

There were two structures in the distance, wreathed by mist. As the group looked over, their hearts spasmed. Even Jiang Chen felt a wave of discomfort.

Of the two buildings, the one on the left was made of human skulls and rose several meters into the air, the skulls piled on top of each other to form a high tower. Various restrictions floated around the tower, appearing quite sinister and frightening. The one on the right also rose several meters into the air, but this one was made of various hacked off limbs. They were stacked together in an orderly manner to form a tall tower, also with strong restrictions around them.

Dan Chi sighed lightly when he saw the towers. “These are the towers of bones and bodies that the Great Scarlet Mid Region built from the corpses of Myriad Empire royalty in order to display their might and strength. They’ve erected these to warn the descendants in the Myriad Domain.”

“They were this ruthless and dominating?” Shen Qinghong was immensely taken aback. It was the first time the young folks had participated in the Myriad Grand Ceremony, so it was naturally their first time seeing such a frightening scene.

Elder Lian Cheng snorted coldly. “The strong reign as kings. The Great Scarlet Mid Region is strong and had a righteous excuse. They could naturally do as they wish.”

Palace Head Dan Chi followed up solemnly, “Take a good look; this is the shame of the Myriad Domain. As a member of the region, you all should never forget this humiliation. Just as Elder

Lian Cheng has said, the strong can do as they like. If you fall behind, you can only passively accept this. How would any of us be willing to fall behind and forever be subject to beatings?”

One had to say, these two towers were more convincing than any amount of blood stirring words. Any cultivator made of flesh and blood would feel their blood froth and boil at seeing such shaming architecture and be greatly affected by them.

“This is only the first, there’s also Bloodlight River further on, as well as Petrified Infant Forest and Petrified Women Forest...” Dan Chi’s tone was heavy as he spoke of those. It was rather easy to understand Bloodlight River. Surely it was the river of accumulated blood from those who’d died that shone redly.

“What’s Petrified Infant Forest?” Someone was curious.

“You’ll know when you go further inside.” Dan Chi waved his hand.

They continued to pick through the ruins and arrived at the moat that surrounded the Myriad Empire’s imperial city.

“Do you see this river? The water within this river turned red after that disaster, and has yet to run cleanly even after hundreds of years. To this day, it’s known as Bloodlight River.”

As the group crossed the moat’s bridge, an incredibly strong scent of blood invaded their noses, along with a peculiar sense. As

soon as they sensed it, everyone's chest was compressed as scenes from that slaughter hundreds of years ago rose unbidden in their minds; the disaster that had been straight from the depths of hell...

It was as if they could still hear the howls and sobs of agony from the Myriad Empire's royalty and the violent roars from the enemy, as well as the ear piercing sounds of clashing weapons...

"Everyone keep a tight leash on your consciousness. This sense of blood is very terrifying. It will give rise to all sorts of illusions through the restrictions. If you let it, it'll impact your morale and eat away at your mind!" Dan Chi hurriedly reminded everyone.

Jiang Chen's hairs also stood on end as he watched Bloodlight River flow through the ruins. An unspeakable sense of disgust and hate grew for the Great Scarlet Mid Region's mercilessness. This was the height of villainy if the region had exacted such a price just because a sacred maiden had been violated.

Chapter 642: The Cocky Sacred Sword Palace

It wasn't until everyone crossed the bridge and was a few hundred meters away that the sense of blood faded to a barely perceptible level.

"Be mentally prepared; the palace is up ahead, and there are even more ghastly sights inside..." Dan Chi reminded everyone, his tone somber.

The so-called palace was also ruins, but some of the half shattered walls and the outlines of the crumbled structures demarcated where the palace began. The group threaded their way through the ruins and saw a spacious platform extend in front of them with something on it. But when they drew closer, their hearts pounded as their stomachs roiled and threatened to expel their contents.

The scene in front of them could no longer be described as ghastly. It was the the epitome of ruthlessness and showed a utter lack of human nature!

The platform was filled with sculptures, starting with infants to the left. The oldest were barely seven, eight years old, while the youngest seemed not even old enough to walk. These babies had obviously been alive, and once made of flesh and blood. It seemed like they had been drenched in molten metal, and directly cast into sculptures. Some of the infants lacked heads, others limbs, and still others slashed open so that their guts spilled out. None had been given an easy death.

To the right were the women. Every single one was naked, and the molten liquid had been poured over their heads first. Every cruel sight imaginable had been inflicted on them. The molten metal had captured every detail of the harrowing expression on their faces, giving silent voice to the horrifying torture they'd been exposed to be before they'd died.

"Animals! Absolutely filth, what barbaric animals!" Even the young folks couldn't help but curse loudly when they saw this scene. With his memories of two lives, even Jiang Chen had the urge to go on a rampage. While it wasn't unheard of to destroy a kingdom or slaughter a clan in the world of martial dao, this went far beyond the realm of the acceptable.

But even if one were to kill or take revenge, there was no need to do so in such a cruel manner. The towers of bones and corpses, Bloodlight River, and all these sculptures... this was no longer something that could be put under the purview of the word "revenge". Although Jiang Chen hadn't met anyone from the Great Scarlet Mid Region till date, he could absolutely imagine how tyrannical and brutal they were from the ruins of the Myriad Empire. It was so appalling that it was a rare tragedy on earth.

Exhibiting one's strength in such a brutal and merciless fashion was truly uncommon in the world of martial dao.

"Why haven't we destroyed them? So they can rest in peace?" Ling Bi'er asked in a low voice.

“Destroy them?” Elder Lian Cheng snorted coldly. “You’re too naive. Every one of those restrictions contain methods unique to the Great Scarlet Mid Region. They’ll strike back as soon as you touch them. Not only that, but those of Great Scarlet will also know at first light if you did. They left a warning that they wouldn’t mind coming back for another round of slaughter if these things were destroyed. And…”

“And what?”

“They said that if they come again, there won’t be any cultivators left in the Myriad Domain able to reach origin realm when they leave.” Elder Lian Cheng’s facial muscles twitched slightly when his words left his mouth. He was obviously very wary of the Great Scarlet Mid Region as well.

Palace Head Dan Chi walked up and waved his hand. “Alright, let’s not talk more about this for now. I expect that the other sects have already arrived. Let’s convene at the altar first.”

The altar was located within the Myriad Empire’s imperial ancestral temple, just a slight distance from the atrocity of the statues. The others were all too willing to leave such a depressing area, so they all followed Dan Chi. As the temple that honored the ancestors of the Myriad Empire royals, it naturally hadn’t been left intact. It too was a destroyed mess. But this was where the remembrance and memorial would be held.

When the Regal Pill Palace arrived, they noticed that the Dark North Sect and the Great Cathedral had already arrived.

“You’re here too, ole brother Dan Chi?” Honored Master Tian Ming was slightly startled when he saw how few the Regal Pill Palace had brought.

“You’re here early, ole brother Tian Ming.” Dan Chi greeted him warmly.

Those of the Great Cathedral all had solemn expressions on their faces as they looked over at the Regal Pill Palace. Xiang Wentian merely nodded his head at Dan Chi from afar. It was apparent that everyone’s emotions were quite complex when they came here. No one was in the mood for small talk.

“Are the other sects not here yet?” Dan Chi looked around.

“The Walkabout Sect should be here soon, I’m not sure about the Sacred Sword Palace. The sects below us should also be on their way.”

Apart from the traditional attendance from the six great sects, some of the fifth rank and sixth rank sects would also come pay their respects. It was just that it’d always been the six great sects who held sway on everything. Now that the Tristar Sect was destroyed and its territory carved up, they were now the five great sects.

The Walkabout Sect group arrived as they spoke. They had brought roughly two hundred with them, just like the Great Cathedral and the Dark North Sect. So when they saw how few the

Regal Pill Palace had brought, Walkabout Sect Head Wei Wuying smiled, “Ole brother Dan Chi, your Regal Pill Palace is keeping quite a low profile this time.”

Dan Chi smiled faintly, “It’s a remembrance and memorial ceremony. There’s nothing untoward in bringing a small group.

Wei Wuying chuckled, not saying anything else. Yet, from the distance was a particularly proud snort, “I say that it’s not about a low profile, but rather that you’re scared out of your mind by the Ninesuns Sky Sect, hmm?”

Everyone knew without having to think that the Sacred Sword Palace had arrived, thanks to this voice and tone. Only the Sacred Sword Palace would act like mad dogs whenever it concerned the Regal Pill Palace. They had to lunge forward for a bite no matter what. And indeed, Wang Jianyu appeared, a large sword slung across his back, taking large strides over to the group. Behind him came a great number of the Sacred Sword Palace senior executives and genius disciples. They outnumbered even the Great Cathedral! It looked like they were determined to shine at the ceremony this time.

“Wang Jianyu, is your zodiac sign a dog? You just can’t resist going in for a bite whenever you see my Regal Pill Palace, hmm?” Palace Head Dan Chi fired right back.

It was obvious that the conflict between the two wasn’t something that could be mediated anymore. The other three sects didn’t say anything, especially the Great Cathedral and the Walkabout Sect. It looked like they’d made up their minds to

watch the show.

Wang Jianyu halted not too far in front of Dan Chi, a cocky expression on his face as he swept his eyes over the latter. He then looked behind the palace head with a hint of mockery. “Dan Chi, it looks like you’re not much of a palace head either. You don’t have enough charisma at all! Why else would you have shown up with so few people, and these crab and shrimp-like minor character at that?”

This description deeply infuriated the geniuses behind Dan Chi, particularly Shen Qinghong. He roared, “If my Regal Pill Palace are crab and shrimp, what does that make your Sacred Sword Palace? The fish that eat the trash off the ocean floor?”

“Blasphemy!” Wang Han was behind Wang Jianyu and took the opportunity to stride forward, looking sideways at Shen Qinghong. “Shen Qinghong, who was the cowardly turtle at Mt. Rippling Mirage last time? What, do you think you’re something after breaking through to the sage realm?”

Wang Han’s aura blashed outward as he spoke, so strong that it seemed to be an enormous sword that’d just revealed its sheen and blatantly crashing down on Shen Qinghong. Although Shen Qinghong had broken through to the sage realm, there was still a difference between him and Wang Han at peak second level sage realm. He instantly felt like the very air had been filled with the edges of a blade as this aura expanded to cover him. However, he wasn’t in the sage realm for nothing, so even though he felt it slightly difficult to bear up in the face of this aura, he wasn’t being crushed by it.

The two geniuses had already started facing off privately when Dan Chi waved his hand lazily, breaking off this competition in the shadows. He said faintly, “Qinghong, this is the ancestral temple of the Myriad Empire. Don’t act rashly here.”

Wang Han didn’t continue when he saw Dan Chi interfering, but he also didn’t forget to take a shot at Shen Qinghong, “Shen Qinghong, I forgot to congratulate you. Without that vermin Jiang Chen, you’re truly the first genius in the Regal Pill Palace. But as for your strength…” he drawled out his words. “I still stick to what I said before, your name isn’t on the list of the preeminent geniuses in the Myriad Domain!”

Wang Han had used these words in the Pill Battles to provoke Shen Qinghong. At that time, he and Zhu Feiyang were all first level sage realm, and Shen Qinghong was one step away. Now that Shen Qinghong was in the sage realm, Wang Han had reached the peak of second level, still firmly ahead of Shen Qinghong. Therefore, he fell back on his old tricks and attacked Shen Qinghong verbally, wanting to crack his confidence and his dao heart. As the top geniuses of their respective sects, they’d inherited the grudges of the previous generations. As the future leader of the Sacred Sword Palace, Wang Han was more than happy to take hits at the Regal Pill Palace.

Ling Bi’er, on the other hand, couldn’t listen any further. She furrowed her brows “Wang Han, this is the imperial ancestral temple. You seemed to be displaying your might and power at an inappropriate location. If you’re so talented, then go to the Great Scarlet Mid Region and wash away the shame of the Myriad Domain! You’re throwing around your weight quite well in a

small, dispirited place like this.”

A sinister smile flashed through Wang Han’s eyes as he swept his glance over Ling Bi’er’s face and chest. He smiled leisurely, “I’ve often heard that the first beauty of the Regal Pill Palace is pure and innocent. Looks like that’s all talk. I saw you being quite close with that vermin Jiang last time. Now that his life has been cut short, are you planning on shifting your attentions elsewhere?”

Jiang Chen had been planning on being low key and just observing the situation with his appearance as Mu Gaoqi. He hadn’t been bothered to pay any attention to Wang Han hopping up and down. But, he could no longer sit idly anymore now that the other was mouthing off about “that vermin Jiang Chen” and disrespecting Ling Bi’er. He walked forward and looked dispassionately at Wang Han. “Wang Han, you seemed to have lost quite a bit of face in last time’s trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage. What, do you feel like you hadn’t lost enough face?”

Mu Gaoqi?

Even the other two geniuses amongst the four great Regal Pill Palace geniuses, Jun Mobai and Nie Chong, didn’t dare stand out to defend Ling Bi’er at this time. But a cowardly Mu Gaoqi had dared to? Even Shen Qinghong was startled, much less Jun Mobai and Nie Chong. They thought this to be unbelievable.

Wang Han was even more baffled as he looked at “Mu Gaoqi”. He rather thought he was hearing things. He had a slight impression of Mu Gaoqi, but only that this fellow was Jiang Chen’s follower. And a cowardly and timid one at that. An ant dares rebut me to my

face? Wang Han's astonishment suddenly transformed into boundless fury.

Chapter 643: Alliance Proposal

His tone rapidly dropping, Wang Han stared straight at Jiang Chen. “It looks like I’m too easy to talk to normally, hmm? Even a stray cat or dog like you dares throw its weight around in front of me?”

It was apparent that Wang Han also hadn’t realized that Mu Gaoqi was the person he hated with a fiery passion—Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen laughed easily, “Wang Han, who doesn’t know how to talk big? Looks like you’ve forgotten when you had to slap yourself?”

One didn’t have to reveal someone’s shortcomings when cursing at them, just like it was entirely possible to humiliate someone without denying them face. Jiang Chen’s words were more effective than any variant of curse word he could come up with. When Wang Han had targeted Jiang Chen back then, he’d ended up being mocked in return and had to slap himself in the end. He’d always viewed this occurrence as a great humiliation. It was both a taboo topic and open wound for him.

With Jiang Chen bringing up those old matters, those who’d witnessed it back then couldn’t help but feel smiles creep up their faces. Although they hid them well, someone as perceptive as Wang Han still felt enormously humiliated. He grew so angry that all of the hairs on his body started to rise.

“Kid, you... you’re called Mu Gaoqi right? Innate wood constitution, right?” Wang Han’s tone had dropped to a new low as he stared at Jiang Chen like a viper homing in on its prey.

Jiang Chen felt a bit apologetic. Gaoqi ah Gaoqi, don't blame your brother for making enemies for you, alright? His expression wooden, Jiang Chen responded noncommittally, "So what if I am?"

"So what if you are? Wang Hang spoke through gritted teeth. "I once said that in the world of martial dao, pill dao is nothing but a side dish. You were glorious without parallel in Mt. Rippling Mirage, but martial dao is king in the Great Myriad Ceremony. Kid, I hope you can still talk this tough after you meet me in the ring!"

Now that they had erupted into open hostility, Wang Han didn't bother concealing his murderous intent at all.

"Martial dao is king, hmm? Those in the know recognize you for what you are, a minor character in the Sacred Sword Palace. Those who don't would actually think you're the true inner disciple of some first rank sect." Jiang Chen was completely contemptuous of Wang Han's threats.

Jiang Chen had heard too many similar threats since the first time they'd met in Mt. Rippling Mirage. Wang Han in particular had voiced his promises of violence four or five times. It was just that with Jiang Chen's current level of cultivation, he wouldn't be afraid even if he faced off with Wang Jianyu of eighth level sage realm, much less Wang Han.

You think you're strong? You're cocky? Was he stronger or more

arrogant than Cao Jin? No one was surprised that Wang Han was throwing his weight around, but everyone's impression of Mu Gaoqi was that he was a notable little sheep. When had this kid developed such personality? Was boldness something that was contagious? Jiang Chen's strength and his ways had left a deep impression on those of the six great sects on Mt. Rippling Mirage, and now that they saw Mu Gaoqi acting thus, they were all reminded of Jiang Chen.

Mu Gaoqi was Jiang Chen's follower from the beginning, but had he also inherited Jiang Chen's style since Jiang Chen hadn't emerged from Mt. Rippling Mirage? The usually quick-witted Wang Han, the one who'd jeered the Regal Pill Palace geniuses into speechlessness just moments ago, was now flushing a purple-red in his rage by the unknown Mu Gaoqi.

Wang Jianyu sneered when he saw this charade, "Dan Chi, your Regal Pill Palace spends most of their time cultivating verbals arts, doesn't it? All of them are so sharp-tongued, but these little unorthodox methods are all just jokes at the Myriad Grand Ceremony."

Dan Chi said noncommittally, "It sounds like your Sacred Sword Palace wishes to dominate the ceremony this year? I'll await your results with bated breath." He turned around to lightly admonish his people, "Alright, this is the ancestral temple; there's no need for verbal sparring." He then smiled at Honored Master Tian Ming. "Ole brother Tian Ming, the Longevity Pill that we promised you in Mt. Rippling Mirage has finally been refined. My apologies for the wait."

Delight blossomed on Honored Master Tian Ming's face after a stunned moment. "What? It's been refined?"

The Regal Pill Palace hadn't taken out any Longevity Pills over the past few years, making the Myriad Domain feel that only Jiang Chen, and no one else, had the ability to refine the Longevity Pill in the Regal Pill Palace. Everyone gave this matter solemn attention when they heard, complex looks appearing in their eyes.

Tian Ming had readied the price for the pill and carried it on him every moment for all these years as he waited for the pill to appear. Those assembled watched them complete the transaction with complicated emotions. The other second and third rate sects of the Myriad Domain all arrived at this time.

"Alright, the hour for the ceremony to commence is arriving. Prepare yourselves, everyone!" Xiang Wentian of the Great Cathedral announced.

The Great Cathedral was the first sect of the Myriad Domain and the strongest, so none of the other sects objected when he started things off. In reality, everyone knew that the remembrance and memorial ceremony was just a formality. After hundreds of years, it was unrealistic to expect everyone to still have deep feelings for the Myriad Empire royal family. As opposed to remembering the royals, one might as well say that this was more about honoring the glorious history of the Myriad Domain.

The procedure for the ceremony was extremely complex, and the process full of grave pomp. There were numerous large and small sects in the Myriad Domain, and more than a hundred with the

right to be present here. With several thousand people gathered, it lent a very solemn air to the entire proceedings. It took two hours before everything wrapped up.

"Everyone, there is a tradition of a martial arts segment at the end of every Myriad Grand Ceremony. I have something to announce before that segment kicks off." Xiang Wentian's tone was determined. "The Tristar Sect betrayed the Myriad Domain and has already been struck from our list of brothers. There is no more Tristar Sect from now on. Even if they rise from the ashes, they will forever be traitors to us, and everyone should condemn them. Because of this, I must remind everyone that what the Myriad Domain is to us. It is our mother, and as such, we must be loyal to it. Whoever becomes a traitor will be nailed to the pillar of shame of our region for all generations to come!"

The Great Cathedral had always been domineering, but its loyalty to the Myriad Domain wasn't any less than that of the Regal Pill Palace. Xiang Wentian's gaze was flint hard as he expanded his consciousness to cover the entire gathering, shocking all those present. Xiang Wentian's cultivation level was at peak of ninth level sage realm! He had the right to assail the emperor realm! The changes of turning back time that the Longevity Pill had brought Xiang Wentian were simply too stunning. It had turned a decrepit old man who'd been on the verge of losing his cultivation into one glowing with the vigor of youth, enabling him to take another step further in his cultivation and earn the right to potentially ascend even higher!

"Can it be that after hundreds of years, an emperor realm cultivator will finally appear in the Myriad Domain again?" Everyone felt great emotion surge in their hearts. One had to know

that since the empire had fallen, and all sky sage realm cultivators in the Myriad Domain had been slaughtered, another emperor realm cultivator hadn't appeared for the last six hundred years. If Xiang Wentian could break through to the emperor realm, it would mark a new page in the Myriad Domain's history.

Honored Master Tian Ming in particular was feeling quite fervent. He was the second oldest present, and although he wasn't in as much of a hurry as Xiang Wentian, he itched to swallow the Longevity Pill immediately and refine it when he saw the stunning changes in Xiang Wentian.

"Alright, let's head to the Rings then!"

The Myriad Rings were an emblematic structure of the Myriad Domain. But of course, they too were lying half in ruins at the moment. Even so, that didn't present much of an issue to use for martial competitions.

Every Myriad Grand Ceremony would hold the martial competition here, and a new Myriad Hidden Dragons Ranking would be generated each time. The competition for a spot on the rankings was exceedingly fierce at each ceremony, because there was a direct correlation between one's ranking and the quotas for entering the Paramount Realm. There were a hundred slots available, and only a hundred names on the Hidden Dragons Ranking.

Therefore, earning a spot on the rankings would bestow one the right to enter the Paramount Realm. This was the final resting place of the many emperor realm cultivators in Myriad Domain

history, and it contained the countless martial dao reflections of those experts, their martial dao essences, and even essences of life. It was full of fortuitous occurrences and held great temptation for the young disciples.

This was also why that even though all the sects had guessed that some unexpected happenings might occur during the ceremony, they had still brought large numbers of geniuses to attend. They were all aiming for the Paramount Realm. Therefore, the Regal Pill Palace stood out in a very bizarre way by only bringing a few young disciples. Even the fifth rank sects had showed up with more disciples than the Regal Pill Palace.

“Everyone, I’m sure you’ve heard a few rumors lately in regard to the Myriad Empire’s Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal. Regardless of the veracity of those rumors, we should face them with courage.” Xiang Wentian stood at a high vantage point as he looked over the assembly resolutely. “The betrayal from the Tristar Sect and the fact that unknown forces are stirring to action means that the survival of our Myriad Domain is at a critical moment. Therefore, I call upon everyone to set aside our own ambitions and unite together. If the Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal really do reveal themselves, then that means the fortunes of our Myriad Domain have yet to decline. As long as we unite, we’ll be able to withstand the strongest enemies and the most difficult situations.” Although Xiang Wentian didn’t voice it clearly, it was obvious that he was already styling the Great Cathedral as the leader of the Myriad Domain.

Jiang Chen didn’t think there was anything untoward about this, and even rather admired Xiang Wentian for his speech. It took courage to step forward at a time like this. Even Palace Head Dan

Chi was ready for the worst case scenario in disbanding the sect. No matter what their considerations were, the Great Cathedral's bravery in standing out and sounding a call to action at a time like this was commendable.

"Heh heh, why don't you speak plainly, old brother Xiang?" Wang Jianyu suddenly spoke up. "I rather think the appearance of these two treasures is a bit amiss."

"Indeed, Brother Xiang, tell us if you have any thoughts so we can all think about them." Wei Wuying of the Walkabout Sect piped up as well.

Xiang Wentian looked at Dan Chi and Honored Master Tian Ming, nodding when he saw that the two weren't protesting. "Alright, then I'll cut to the chase. I propose that us Myriad Domain sects make use of this time's ceremony to swear oaths of blood to make it through these difficult times together."

"An alliance?" Wang Jianyu bursted out laughing. "There have been many alliances since old, but how many of them have actually succeeded? Not to mention, who's the alliance head of this following? Who gives the orders? Everyone has their own thoughts. I don't think that this alliance has a chance of holding."

"Indeed, everyone has their own desires. I too think an alliance isn't very reliable." Wei Wuying shook his head.

"Tian Ming, what do you think?" Xiang Wentian looked at Honored Master Tian Ming.

The old sect head had the personality of a nice guy, so he smiled, “I can accept an alliance as long as it benefits the Myriad Domain.”

Old fox! Everyone cursed inwardly.

“What about you, ole brother Dan Chi?” Xiang Wentian then looked at Dan Chi.

Dan Chi thought for a moment before speaking, “We can consider such an action, but this covers too much without specifics. For instance, will everyone truly unite as one when enemies invade, and fight back valiantly without fear of death? What if the enemy seeks to take us down one by one, will other sects support the ones that’ve been attacked with their full force? An alliance is a good thing, but I’m afraid of a situation in which everyone will still keep to their own after the alliance is made. At that point, there’s not much of a point in creating this alliance.”

Dan Chi’s question was a practical one, and one that quite precisely described the current situation of the Myriad Domain.

Chapter 644: The Great Scarlet Mid Region

In a rare moment of agreement, Wei Wuying nodded, concurring with Dan Chi. “Palace Head Dan Chi’s words are exceedingly right. Everyone now knows that the Ninesuns Sky Sect is covetously eyeing our Myriad Domain, but even so, I don’t believe that they’ll dare openly invade us. After all, they’re not the only first rank sect in the Upper Eight Realms. But if they use the strategy of defeating us one by one, like how they infiltrated the Tristar Sect, then it would be exceedingly difficult to defend against them.”

Honored Master Tian Ming also nodded. “Those words make sense. Who would’ve thought that the Tristar Sect was secretly being controlled by the Sky Sect? To put it bluntly, it’s hard for any of the sects here to guarantee that there are no eyes and ears of opposing forces present in any of us. It will be difficult to hold fast to an alliance.”

Xiang Wentian didn’t grow angry when he saw that everyone was against his idea. It seemed to be well within his expectations. He smiled confidently, not speaking until everyone was done. “All of what you speak of makes great sense. I ask you another question, could these situations have occurred when the Myriad Empire was strong?”

When the Myriad Empire was at its strongest, the power of the empire ranked far above all the sects. Imperial power controlled the entire region, and none of the sects dared ignore any of the commands it issued. It could be said that to hear their edict was to obey. Any word from the Myriad Empire royal family was virgin gold and solid rock, and all powers beneath it had to answer the call without the slightest delay. That was because the Myriad

Empire had been the weathervane of the Myriad Domain, and the ruler of it all.

With a liege and centralized power, everyone naturally knew where they should sink their efforts. Even if they had their own personal ambitions, no one dared openly do anything that would ruin the greater picture. The world of martial dao was one in which the strong were worshipped and the weak flocked to the strong, after all.

With a strong Myriad Domain, the various powers under the Myriad Empire's banner had also benefitted as well. That was why the Myriad Empire had then created the most glorious era in Myriad Domain history. This was why later descendants honored them in remembrance and why everyone still held that time in memory with pride. At the heart of it all was one word—strength. They had grown so strong that the Great Scarlet Mid Region neighboring them had grown uneasy. This strength naturally had the ability to make all the sects in the Myriad Domain submit wholeheartedly to them. Thus, the developments that Dan Chi had spoken of wouldn't have happened in the time of the Myriad Empire.

Xiang Wentian smiled faintly, "I trust everyone is familiar with the history of the Myriad Empire. Only a strong empire and a strong core power will be able to lead the Myriad Domain into ever stronger heights. Therefore, an alliance is only the first step. The future of the Myriad Domain still lies in rebuilding the Myriad Empire and reforging our days of glory!" Xiang Wentian finally voiced his true intentions—rebuilding the Myriad Empire!

This was the childhood dream of every cultivator in the Myriad Domain. This was also the goal that the various sects in the Myriad Domain had all been silently working towards. However, they all had an unspoken accord and no one had ever voiced these words before. Yet Xiang Wentian had finally broken that accord today, and said it openly at such a gathering. This also meant that the status quo had been broken, and the situation of the five fourth rank sects in the Myriad Domain would very possibly be upended after today. Was the Great Cathedral finally showing its fangs after biding its time for so many years?

The heavyweights of the other sects all had complicated expressions on their faces for a moment. Honored Master Tian Min, Wei Wuying, Dan Chi, and Wang Jianyu all stared solemnly at Xiang Wentian. The second and third rate sects didn't even dare breathe loudly. It was apparent that they knew this was an arena solely reserved for the heavyweight sects. They could only go with the flow, and had no right to speak at all.

Wang Jianyu was the first to step out. "Ole brother Xiang, how difficult will it be to rebuild the Myriad Empire? Do you think the Great Scarlet will allow us to do so easily?"

"I ask you only this, is everyone content to forever see the Myriad Domain below others, dominated and underfoot? Do we have to live out our days in fear? Depending on the favor of others?"

"That's true, but the problem isn't that. Isn't it too early to speak of rebuilding the empire? Who will be in charge of doing so? The Great Cathedral?" Wang Jianyu was just as hotly ambitious as any other sect head. He naturally wasn't willing for the Great

Cathedral to take the reins of power.

"Whoever shall obtain the Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal will be put in charge." Xiang Wentian flicked a faint glance at Wang Jianyu. "Younger brother Wang, do you have some personal ambitions in mind, what with all the objections you're bringing to the table?"

Wang Jianyu spoke coldly, "And does elder brother Xiang not have any plans in mind?"

Xiang Wentian laughed. "Everyone has their own goals in mind, which is why I proposed that whoever obtains the national treasures shall be in charge of rebuilding the empire."

"And so I wonder where they are." Wang Jianyu snorted coldly.

"Since rumors about them have appeared, we must treat them seriously. Whoever has the greatest fortune will obtain them. Wang Jianyu, you've always believed yourself the favored son of heaven. Why are you so lacking in confidence?"

"Elder brother Xiang, it may be that all of us discovers the treasures at the same time when they appear. Who do they belong to then?" Honored Master Tian Ming smiled.

"It's simple, we'll settle it by force then. In the Myriad Grand Ceremony, the strong are revered. Whichever genius can obtain the top slot in the ranking shall win the two treasures for their

sect. That sect head will be in charge of rebuilding the empire, and the other sects must support them wholeheartedly."

Settle it by force?

The other sects all smiled ruefully. If it came down to martial strength, the Great Cathedral naturally had the advantage as the strongest sect. Whether it was Xiang Qin or Yue Baize, they were almost invincible amongst the younger generation in the Myriad Domain. They were double insurance for the Great Cathedral!

"Elder brother Xiang, what a nice plan, hmm!" Wang Jianyu snorted coldly.

Xiang Wentian responded lightly, "You don't need to be sarcastic, Wang Jianyu. We still need strength to execute some matters, no matter how difficult they may be. If the Myriad Domain maintains its status quo as a pile of loose sand, then we'll become someone's vassals in less than thirty years. At that time, our family, our descendants, and generations thereof will be enslaved and be lower than any others. Do any of you want this to develop?"

These weren't words of an alarmist. Even the slowest person could see now that the Myriad Domain was indeed in a perilous situation.

Xiang Wentian spread out his hands. "My Great Cathedral doesn't want to make unilateral pronouncements either. We can vote to decide if we want to rebuild the empire. The fate of the

Myriad Domain will affect everyone here, so all sects should have voting rights."

Wang Jianyu wasn't actually against rebuilding the Myriad Empire, he was just against the Great Cathedral holding all the power.

"Right, let's take a vote!"

"The fate of the Myriad Domain should be decided as a group!" The various smaller sects also started speaking up.

Palace Head Dan Chi was highly in favor of rebuilding, but he felt that now wasn't the proper time for such a thing. In addition, he'd always viewed rebuilding the empire as his duty to bear. Now that he saw the Great Cathedral steal a march on him, but the Regal Pill Palace not having enough power yet to contest it, he couldn't help but be a bit dejected. Even so, he didn't lose his sense of reason.

"Palace Head, we have no need to object. The Great Cathedral has come prepared, but has obviously chosen a bad timing. We just need to sit still and observe what happens." Jiang Chen hadn't spoken all along, but chose this time to pass along a silent message to Dan Chi at this time. Jiang Chen could understand the Great Cathedral's ambitions. He was also rather admiring of the Great Cathedral's courage. However, it was an obvious misstep to talk about rebuilding the empire at this time. Right now, the Great Cathedral couldn't fend off external enemies such as the Ninesuns Sky Sect, nor could they unite the fourth rank sects within the Myriad Domain under their rule.

Just as Jiang Chen had anticipated, the Great Cathedral had done their homework this time. The majority of the fifth rank and sixth rank sects actually supported them rebuilding the Myriad Empire! Only the Sacred Sword Palace, the Walkabout Sect, and the small sects who were closer to them voted against. The Regal Pill Palace and the Dark North Sect both abstained from the vote. In this way, seventy to eighty percent of the sects were in support of rebuilding the empire. It appeared that the Great Cathedral was acting in accordance with public consensus.

"What say you, younger brother Wang and Wei?" Xiang Wentian looked at Wang Jianyu and Wei Wuying with narrowed eyes.

"Hmph, the Great Cathedral obviously came prepared. What else can I say? Since elder brother Xiang has the ability to rebuild the empire, my Sacred Sword Palace will be awaiting those developments then." Wang Jianyu harrumphed coolly.

Wei Wuying smiled ruefully, "Since this is something that the people want, my Walkabout Sect has nothing to say either. If the Great Cathedral can indeed obtain the Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal, then we will absolutely support you."

……

Just as the Myriad Grand Ceremony had gotten underway in full force, the neighboring Great Scarlet royal family had summoned a few of its largest powers for a meeting. The Great Scarlet emperor was sitting loftily on a dragon seat, emanating an imposing and

regal demeanor. He was an extreme expert of sixth level emperor realm, capable of summoning the wind and rains with a flip of his hand. He had great power in the Great Scarlet Mid Region.

The sects who had been summoned this time were all the largest sects in the region. There were three third rank sects, and almost twenty fourth rank sects in attendance.

“Everyone, we’ve received some news lately that the Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal of the old Myriad Empire will reappear soon. Although that empire has been destroyed, the pathetic ants of the Myriad Domain still haven’t changed their nature and still cling onto the glory of their Myriad Empire. As long as their hopes of rising from the ashes remain, they still remain a threat to us.” The emperor spoke.

“Your Majesty, a mere Myriad Domain is just a dancing clown. We can send out our armies and arrive on the border with but a single command from Your Majesty. Within ten days, we can raze the Myriad Domain to the ground.” The one speaking was a third rank sect head. Although his strength wasn’t on par with the emperor, he was very close.

“Your Majesty, why worry about small things like these? It’s said that the strongest sect of the Myriad Domain has reached but ninth level sage realm. This kind of strength isn’t worthy worrying about at all!”

“Brother Meng, you speak incorrectly. The centipede can go on wriggling even when he’s already dead. Even though the Myriad Domain may not amount to much now, they still hold some

ceremony every thirty years as a propaganda for hate against our Great Scarlet. In my opinion, they'll likely forget what pain is once their wounds heal. We need to teach them a lesson again."

"Hey, what are we all arguing about? His Majesty must have a plan; we have been summoned here for a reason. Let's listen to his words." It was apparent that the emperor had great authority in the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Everyone grew silent, looking up at the emperor and waiting for the imperial order.

Chapter 645: Hotly Ambitious

The emperor smiled slightly. “The Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal are objects that provide an air of legitimacy for the Myriad Domain. If they appear, they can’t be allowed to end up in the hands of the various sects, or they’ll have enough of an excuse to rebuild the empire. We had an appropriate excuse when we invaded last time, but we don’t have a good excuse to place our army on their borders this time.”

Although there were a great number of factions in the Divine Abyss Continent, there was still the greater picture to consider. The Great Scarlet Mid Region couldn’t openly deploy their armies on the border of another region for no reason. The other regions wouldn’t sit idly by if that happened.

“Your Majesty, we can absolutely find a reason if we don’t have one. Didn’t we leave behind multiple restrictions in the Myriad Domain? We can destroy those restrictions and then blame it on their sects, pinning the crime of disrespect on them. Wouldn’t that be an easy thing to accomplish?”

In reality, Great Scarlet had purposefully left behind the towers of bones and corpses, Bloodlight River, and Petrified Infant Forest to set the stage for a future invasion of the Myriad Domain. The Great Scarlet emperor nodded with a slight smile. “That is doable, but we don’t plan on sending forth a large army this time. The third rank sects don’t even need to participate.”

There were three third rank sects in the Great Scarlet Mid Region, and any one of them was strong enough to annihilate the

combined force of all the sects in the Myriad Domain. The fourth rank sect heavyweights were delighted to hear this. This meant that the emperor was giving them a chance to prove themselves!

The strength of a Great Scarlet fourth rank sect wasn't something that the fourth rank sects of the Myriad Domain could compare to. Each one had at least one or two emperor realm cultivators holding down the fort. It was only because there were three third rank sects in the Great Scarlet Mid Region already that the fourth rank sects were unable to advance further. After all, the quota for high level sects in each region was limited. The fourth rank sect heavyweights were delighted to hear their emperor's words and rose to their feet.

"Your Majesty, the Qitian Sect requests to do battle."

"Your Majesty, my Bamboo Sect requests to do battle."

"Your Majesty..."

"Your Majesty!"

The fourth rank sects all clamored loudly for attention, afraid that someone else would steal a march on them. Everyone knew that this was a rare opportunity. Not only could they accomplish a meritorious deed for the emperor, they could also go to the Myriad Domain and loot to their heart's delight. Who knew how much they could gain in terms of resources? The benefits were plain to see.

Although the Myriad Domain was in decline, that was only in regard to their talent. They still had all the resources that they had formerly. Although they'd been greatly injured in the disaster six hundred years ago, this period of time had also enabled them to recover roughly seventy percent of their resources, even if their martial strength was less than thirty percent of their peak. Being able to go to the Myriad Domain again to raid and loot meant an unprecedented chance to strike it rich.

A slight smile clung to the lips of the Great Scarlet emperor, a smile that embodied within it the wisdom of controlling everything. He raised his hands lightly and pressed them down. The heavyweights of the four sects all quieted down and returned to their seats, the very picture of docility.

"We know of your desire to do battle. However, this fight will be different from the one six hundred years ago. We had a good pretext for war last time, one no one could refute. However, even if we find an excuse this time, we must make good use of it. There must be no question of our legitimacy. Do you all understand?"

The Great Scarlet royal family had personally lead the armies six hundred years ago. This time, the Myriad Domain was only at thirty percent of its peak strength. There was no need to use a butcher knife to kill a chicken and create such a fuss.

"For the operation this time, the restrictions are key, but the most critical items are the Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal. This two items are relevant to the Myriad Empire and thus a continuation of the war of that time. We have sufficient reason to make our move as long as it has to do with the Myriad Empire,

understood?”

The fourth rank sect heavyweights all nodded, finally understanding what the emperor meant. Legitimacy was of utmost importance. They had to find a proper, righteous excuse before beating someone.

The Great Scarlet emperor waved his hand and began sounding off, “Qitian Sect, Bamboo Sect, Golden Glyph Sect, Zither Sect—the four of you shall travel to the Myriad Empire ruins and suppress the ceremony!”

“Four Quadrant Sect, Cloud and Wind Palace—you two shall go destroy the Great Cathedral.”

“Mystic Fire Sect, Nine Waves Sect—you two shall go suppress the Dark North Sect.”

“Thunder Note Hall, Great Roc Sect—you two shall go suppress the Regal Pill Palace.”

“Ice Spirit Sect, Desolate Oceans Faction—you two shall go cleanse all of the fifth rank sects in the Myriad Domain.” The empire had named sixteen fourth rank sects in the blink of an eye. Four would head to the ceremony, the other ten would team up in duos to the five fourth rank sects in the Myriad Domain, with the remaining two were tasked to manage all of the remaining fifth rank sects in the region. The ones who had been named all stood up to receive their orders. However, the two fourth rank sects sitting at the very front had yet to be called on. Their sect heads

were feeling quite mystified.

Great Scarlet's emperor soon locked his gaze on them. "Dragonslayers and Flowing Sands Sect, you shall go to Mt. Rippling Mirage. However, I will send a confidante with you; you two must listen to his commands."

The two sect heads hastily stood up to receive their orders.

"Everyone, I'm sure you've heard of the rumors of the Myriad Domain ancient herb garden. Apart from handing over the sky rank spirit herbs that you obtain on this trip, you can take care of all other gains yourselves. There is no need to hand them over." The Great Scarlet emperor was well aware of the principle of giving his subjects a taste of something sweet in order to get them to act wholeheartedly. Everyone was delighted to hear these words.

The Great Scarlet emperor suddenly recalled something, "Oh right, if there is such a thing as a Longevity Pill recipe, you must investigate it thoroughly and present the recipe to us."

The Longevity Pill could extend life by five hundred years. It was easy to predict the value of a pill like this. The Great Scarlet emperor even felt that if the pill recipe truly did exist, its value was even higher than sky rank spirit herbs!

The two sects in charge of the Regal Pill Palace were the Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect. The two sect heads once again stood up and guaranteed, "Be at ease, Your Majesty. We will find this

recipe even if we need to dig three meters into the ground."

The Great Scarlet emperor smiled faintly, "Rumors state that the Regal Pill Palace also has many sky rank spirit herbs in their possession. Your burden is more onerous, and so you must investigate more thoroughly."

"We will attend to this with all our might and not disappoint Your Majesty!" The two sect heads slapped their chests, affirming their promise.

The Great Scarlet emperor turned his gaze towards the Dragonslayers and Flowing Sands Sect. "On your trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage, look for a young man named Jiang Chen. According to my intelligence, he remains yet in Mt. Rippling Mirage. Not only does he possess a few sky rank spirit herbs, he's the only one thus far who's successfully refined the Longevity Pill. I want him alive, not dead."

"Be at ease, Your Majesty, a mere Regal Pill Palace disciple will be simple to capture. To be favored by His Majesty is this kid's fortune!'

The Great Scarlet emperor smiled faintly as more than a dozen medallions shot out, landing in each sect head's hand. His tone was regal and filled with power, "One month. I only give you one month. If you don't complete the mission in a month, then you have no need to return to see us."

"Understood!" The sect heads nodded. Although a month wasn't

long, the mission didn't appear too difficult to everyone. A Myriad Domain on the decline and so many fourth rank sects setting out at once—it was akin to a lion launching an attack on a rabbit.

The fourth rank sects of the Great Scarlet Mid Region were stronger than their Myriad Domain counterparts to begin with. The so-called fourth rank secs of the Myriad Domain were still affected by that disaster six hundred years ago, and their strength was still less than half of their peak. To send two Great Scarlet fourth rank sects to each Myriad Domain fourth rank sect was complete overkill, and nothing less than a dominating display of strength. In addition, all of the sects had sent representatives to the Grand Myriad Ceremony, and had left less than half of their total strength in the sects. Putting all the factors together, the already large gap in this competition of strength had just turned into an overwhelming difference.

The Great Scarlet emperor nodded with satisfaction when he saw the various sect heads brimming with confidence and flair. "Alright, time is of the essence. You all can go back to summon your people and make quick work of this mission."

"Understood!"

When the sect heads of all the fourth rank sects had left the room, the Great Scarlet emperor smiled faintly and looked at the heavyweights of the three third rank sects who yet remained. "The third rank sects are the pillars of my Great Scarlet Mid Region. There is no need to use a butcher's knife for cows to kill chickens. The situation around our region is rather complicated, and we need you three to defend our territory and support the empire's

fortunes. The burden on you is a hundred times heavier than them!”

The Great Scarlet emperor naturally needed to reassure the third rank sects some, having left them out of the operation this time, so that they wouldn’t develop feelings of estrangement. After all, some thoughts would still arise given that he’d set the third rank sects aside and had only deployed the fourth rank sects. “Due to your contribution to the Myriad Domain mission this time, each of you will receive one sky rank spirit herb from the harvest.”

As a hero of the times, the Great Scarlet emperor was well versed in the art of ruling. The heavy reward of a sky rank spirit herb each instantly quelled the grumblings in the hearts of the third rank sects. It actually left them slightly guilty, being rewarded like this without having put forth effort. Still, who wouldn’t be delighted at being able to receive a sky rank spirit herb for free? Although they might be able to loot other treasures in the Myriad Domain, what was any of it worth when compared to a sky rank spirit herb?

……

Back at the Myriad Grand Ceremony, the new Myriad Hidden Dragon rankings had been erected and was just waiting to be filled with names. The rules of the martial competition segment had been announced as well.

There were several hundred young geniuses participating this year, and roughly two hundred from fourth rank sects alone. The Regal Pill Palace stood out in this regard, as their participants were

heavily outnumbered by the other fourth rank sects'.

According to the rules, the fourth rank sect geniuses were seeded candidates. The ones from other sects weren't, and they would be participating in the first round of eliminations. After the first round, winning non-seeded participants would face off with seeded candidates, with the winners moving on. This meant that fourth rank sect disciples didn't need to participate in the first round, and the seeded candidates wouldn't meet each other in the second round. They would only clash together in the third round.

Chapter 646: Huang'er, Bi'er, And The Lingering Affections Of Young Women

Naturally, all the rules were forever advantageous to the strong and disadvantageous to the weak. The ceremony's martial arts segment was no exception. Difference in strength meant difference in levels, and difference in levels meant difference in treatment.

This knockout competition's first priority was to protect the interests of the fourth rank sect geniuses. Any disciple who didn't belong to a fourth rank sect would not be qualified to become a seeded candidate, no matter how talented they were. Moreover, there were differences even amongst fourth rank sect disciples. All geniuses above the sage realm were categorized as first seeds. Ninth level origin realm cultivators were categorized as second seeds, and anyone beneath ninth level origin realm were all categorized as third seeds.

This was to protect the first seeds from running into each other before reaching the final twenty participants.

While this rule appeared to be unfair at first glance, it was also the most common and popular rule in martial arts competitions. It also made a certain degree of sense. After all, everyone in the world of martial arts pursued strength. Therefore, it was only natural that those who had great strength and talent would be given better treatment than others.

Jiang Chen was currently assuming the false identity of Mu Gaoqi. Naturally, he found it inconvenient to present himself at his true level when he was masquerading as Mu Gaoqi. As a result, he

was categorized as a third seed. Of course, Jiang Chen didn't need to participate in the first round of competition as the disciple of a fourth rank sect.

The several hundred geniuses who didn't belong to fourth rank sects began fighting intensely against one another to obtain a spot for themselves. Jiang Chen observed the first round contest for a brief moment. Even though the participating geniuses all hailed from second or third rate sects, it quickly became apparent that even fifth or sixth rank sects were not lacking in geniuses. This was especially true for the roughly thirty fifth rank sects.

Every one of these sects contained a number of origin realm experts, and some of them had even reached the ninth level origin realm. There were at least twenty to thirty cultivators who had reached the eighth level origin realm. Cultivators at the seventh level origin realm were practically everywhere. Of course, most of these fifth or sixth rank sect youngsters were at the sixth level origin realm. After all, these second rate sects in Myriad Domain didn't even come close to possessing the same amount of resources, talents and supplies that a fourth rank sect did.

After observing the competition for a while, Jiang Chen believed that there were indeed a small group of people among these second and third rate sect geniuses who genuinely possessed the ability to fight for a spot on the rankings.

The Myriad Domain Hidden Dragon Trials would only rank the top hundred candidates. Jiang Chen estimated that these second and third rate sects would take up to a fifth of the available slots. "It would appear that Palace Head Dan Chi's analysis is correct. No

one below seventh level origin realm has any chance to gain a place on the rankings."

Back when Palace Head Dan Chi had formed an alliance with the Precious Tree Sect, he already mentioned the Myriad Grand Ceremony and the Paramount Realm to Jiang Chen. At the time, he told Jiang Chen that only those who had cultivated to the seventh level of origin realm could guarantee themselves a spot in the Myriad Domain Hidden Dragon rankings. Jiang Chen made a quick calculation. He would be able to enter the top 100 and secure himself a spot in the Myriad Domain Hidden Dragon Trials as long as he could survive three rounds of battle. He didn't need to participate in the first round of battle. Which meant that he could guarantee himself a spot in the rankings as long as he could defeat his opponents in the second and third round of battle.

Regal Pill Palace's Shen Qinghong and Jun Mobai were all sage realm geniuses. Naturally, they were categorized as first seeds. Ling Bi'er and Nie Chong were both at the peak of the ninth level origin realm. They were categorized as second seeds. There was no doubt that these four were guaranteed spots on the Myriad Domain Hidden Dragon ranking. Therefore, the only thing they were competing for was a higher placement. It was rather because everyone thought Jiang Chen was Mu Gaoqi that they were all doubtful of his chances to earn a placement at all.

The disciples of all fourth rank sects were all scattered throughout the audience. It was obvious that those of the Sacred Sword Palace were aiming for the Regal Pill Palace. With Wang Han as their leader, the geniuses of the Sacred Sword Palace sat on the opposite side of the Regal Pill Palace's disciples. They all looked aggressive and murderous, and continuously flared their auras to

exert pressure on the Regal Pill Palace disciples. This was especially true in Wang Han's case. His hatred for 'Mu Gaoqi' right now was second only to his hatred for Jiang Chen, because he was ridiculed by 'Mu Gaoqi' earlier. Even his hatred for Shen Qinghong had been moved to third place.

"Mu Gaoqi..." Wang Han's chilly eyes locked onto Jiang Chen's figure from afar. His murderous intent was overflowing, and he didn't bother concealing a whit of it.

Countless formless murderous intent attacked Jiang Chen continuously, like an unending army. Wang Hang's intent to strut around and show off his might was quite obvious. However, no matter how hard he pushed his sage level aura towards Mu Gaoqi, his efforts always disappeared like a rock sinking into the sea without a trace. This result greatly surprised Wang Han.

The Regal Pill Palace was an enemy sect. Naturally, the Sacred Sword Palace had researched the enemy disciples inside and out. This was especially true for Mu Gaoqi since he was known to posses an innate wood spirit constitution. The Sacred Sword Palace had appraised Mu Gaoqi several times, and come to the conclusion that he was a pill dao genius of average martial dao potential, timid personality, and an unstable realm of consciousness. It was exactly because Mu Gaoqi was such a person in Wang Han's mind that he'd continuously attacked the other in secret with his sage level aura.

His intentions were obvious. He wanted to wholly destroy Mu Gaoqi's consciousness and fighting will. In fact, he wanted Mu Gaoqi to have a mental breakdown. If a pill dao genius' consciousness crumbled, then his so-called talent in pill dao might

as well be nothing. Plans always appeared ideal in one's mind, but reality in execution greatly surprised Wang Han. He exerted his powerful consciousness without letting up, but not only did Mu Gaoqi's consciousness fail to crumble under pressure, he wasn't even frowning from stress. It was as if the disciple hadn't even noticed his sage level aura.

"How is that possible? Since when did this Mu Gaoqi become so powerful?" Wang Han didn't believe for a second that Mu Gaoqi had changed. He observed Mu Gaoqi with cool eyes for a brief moment.

Wang Han came to a certain preliminary conclusion, "Hmph. It would appear that the Regal Pill Palace is aware that Mu Gaoqi's martial cultivation is lacking. That's why they've sent an expert to disguise himself as Mu Gaoqi's subordinate to protect him. If this expert isn't a master in disguise, then why else would he need to wrap himself in a cloak in broad daylight?"

As a matter of fact, Huang'er had been sitting obediently besides Jiang Chen all this time. She seemed to be disinterested in the battles happening on the arena. However, her mysterious attire caused Wang Han to misunderstand her as an expert sent by the Regal Pill Palace to protect Mu Gaoqi.

This was the first time Huang'er was associating with Jiang Chen in such close proximity. Although Jiang Chen had disguised himself as Mu Gaoqi and hidden his own aura, Huang'er could feel the sense of security Jiang Chen normally gave her all the same. In the past, the scent of a youth of the opposite gender had only filled Huang'er with repulsion. But Jiang Chen was so much different

from others.

Huang'er's origin, breadth of her vision, the environment she lived in when she was young and the level of characters she'd previously come in contact with were countless times more sophisticated than anything seen in the Myriad Domain. However, Huang'er had never sensed such natural warmth from any other young man except Jiang Chen. He made her, a young woman who had never felt any ambiguous emotion during her twenty years of life, feel a little tipsy.

Indeed.

While it was true that Jiang Chen was born of the Eastern Kingdom and thus occupied the bottommost level of this world, the temperament he possessed couldn't be compared to anyone she'd ever seen. Huang'er hadn't thought this way when she'd first learned of Jiang Chen, and neither had Elder Shun when he first started paying attention to him. But when Jiang Chen easily and indifferently deduced that she was suffering from the Generation Binding Curse inside the Eternal Spirit Mountain, a crack appeared in the walls that Huang'er had surrounded herself with. Later on, when Jiang Chen broke through to the origin realm beneath the Precious Tree of the Rosy Dawn and triggered a natural phenomenon, the crack in her walls grew wider and wider. When they came to interact with each other every day in Rosy Valley, and she came to witness every step of Jiang Chen's swift growth, she came to recognize this young man's unique temperament from many different perspectives.

After Jiang Chen was imprisoned in Mt. Rippling Mirage for

three years, and guarding over Rosy Valley in his absence, Huang'er finally understood what she kept looking for every day.

Yes, it was this proud, lonely, and peerless figure that she was gazing upon. Even if he had disguised himself, even if he'd hidden his aura, Huang'er could, with her eyes closed, sense the unique temperament that he seemed to be born with. Blades sang and swords rang above the arena, and a soft breeze caressed her face beneath the cloak. Suddenly, Huang'er wished that this moment could last forever. She wished fervently that this faint feeling of happiness could be preserved for all time, until the seas dried up and rocks rotted.

What Generation Binding Curse? What generations of marriage? She neither wished to think on nor face them. She only wished that she could stay with this young man in this strange land until forever came, even if she never confessed her feelings to him. However, all things must end, and her feeling of happiness was broken by the approach of a beautiful figure.

Ling Bi'er's graceful and perfect figure walked over from a bit aways and sat down a foot away from Jiang Chen. "Junior brother, that Wang Han is treacherous and malevolent. You must watch out for him."

Jiang Chen replied with a calm smile on his face, "He is nothing more than a grasshopper after autumn. He won't be able to hop around much longer."

If these words had come out of Shen Qinghong or anyone else's mouth, Ling Bi'er would've felt disgusted. That was because she'd

never liked boastful men. However, Ling Bi'er thought that it only natural when the same words came out of Jiang Chen's mouth. She let out a quiet sigh on the inside when she saw the confidence that Jiang Chen brimmed with. Coldly aloof and proud as she was, for a time she'd actually felt inferior to him.

She could still remember when Jiang Chen had first entered the Regal Pill Palace, only at first level origin realm. In just four short years, he had leaped an entire realm to become a sage realm cultivator. Yet, she still stood at the peak of the origin realm. She had never been able to take that most important last step. In just the four years since his admission, Jiang Chen had accomplished a great deal in his cultivation, but she hadn't even managed to surmount a single, small step.

Ling Bi'er was seldom impressed by anyone, but Jiang Chen had won her over entirely. He had challenged the limits of her beliefs again and again with his astounding achievements. Be it his talent in pill dao or his talent in martial dao, Jiang Chen was like a deep, vast sea whose limits of potential were eternally unfathomable.

Although Ling Bi'er had long since thought of Jiang Chen as the one in her heart, her icy cool temperament was fated to warm slowly. She had so many things she wanted to say to Jiang Chen, but when the words reached her tongue, she had no idea which to say first. The sight caused a slight ripple in Huang'er's heart, but it quickly faded away into nothing. She was the wise, unmarried daughter of a noble house. While her behavior was easygoing and calm, she also possessed a pride that no one could truly understand.

Even when love was involved, even when knowing that Ling Bi'er was a powerful rival, she did not feel even a shred of jealousy. I like what I like. Why should I care for others?...

Chapter 647: Jiang Chen Confers Knowledge In Sword Dao

Wang Han, across the way, gritted his teeth in rage when he saw Jiang Chen apparently having a grand time laughing and chatting with Ling Bi'er, the beauty sitting by his side. "I'll let you strut around just a little while longer, you little shit! If you run into any Sacred Sword Palace disciples in the martial competition, I swear I'm not human if I don't carve you into ten segments!"

It was a good thing that the first rounds soon drew to a close. The results of the draw for the second round were also quickly announced. Jiang Chen's opponent for the second round was a seventh level origin realm genius from a fifth rank sect. His name was Feng Pao, and he was a genius who used the sword.

Jiang Chen had watched his performance in the first round and could sum up his opponent's performance with one word, "speed". Of all the martial methods under the heavens, only speed was something that could never be broken. Many sword dao masters wouldn't even practice more than three sword techniques over the course of their lives, but they would continuously dig deeper and deeper into them, simulating more developments, upgrading and breaking through to higher levels. They would constantly seek to ascend to greater realms of speed. As long as any martial art mystery is trained to its utmost in a certain area, that would become the hallmark of great perfection and one that was sufficient for this life.

"Speed" was the ultimate goal of many sword wielding geniuses, and it was apparent that Feng Pao was one of its loyal constituents.

“Feng Pao of the Extreme Wind Sect. Please demonstrate your learning.” Feng Pao was decisive and to the point. He didn’t waste a single word after setting foot on the stage and raising his hands in a cupped fist salute to Jiang Chen. The sword intent in his hand wavered in and out of materialization, fighting intent bursting forth with every movement.

Jiang Chen nodded slightly. “Mu Gaoqi of the Regal Pill Palace. After you.”

Feng Pao nodded lightly in return and spoke low voice, “The blade is blind; be careful.” As he spoke, the blade in his hand flashed as it drew a three foot arc of blue light, which exploded across the sky and intersected with the sunlight in the air. Numerous ripples started to form in the air around the ring.

If it wasn’t for Jiang Chen masquerading as Mu Gaoqi, he could’ve instantly killed an opponent at mere seventh level origin realm. However, he didn’t do so out of the consideration that he had no grudge with his opponent, and this Feng Pao seemed an honest fellow. Although each stroke was drenched in fighting intent, there was no killing intent to be found. Jiang Chen also knew that as a genius of a fifth rank sect, his opponent was still conscious of ‘Mu Gaoqi’s’ identity and was purposely avoiding fatal blows as they sparred. Since Feng Pao wasn’t a cruel sort, Jiang Chen naturally wanted to leave some space for his opponent.

Jiang Chen dodged and weaved, imitating a rabbit as he evaded all the ripples of sword light.

“Nice moves, again!” His opponent had become one with the sword before he’d even finished speaking, roiling towards him like a tornado. The meaning behind his technique suddenly changed into enormous waves, each one bigger than the last that cascaded down upon Jiang Chen.

And yet, one could not say that the strength of a fifth rank sect genius surpassed that of a fourth rank sect genius. Jiang Chen had once sparred with Shen Qinghong’s subordinate, Rong Zifeng, in the Regal Pill Palace. Unfortunately, Rong Zifeng was much fiercer than Feng Pao. Although Feng Pao’s comprehension of sword dao wasn’t bad, the foundations and resources of a fifth rank sect made it so that the level of his sword dao was still a bit inferior. Although he had touched the threshold of the true meaning of sword dao, he had yet to truly walk into its halls. But the fact that he was a sword fanatic was irrevocable. One could see from the meaning behind his sword that although Feng Pao had yet to really attain the truest meaning of sword dao, he still had the unstoppable momentum of moving forward.

Fast, furious, and without care for anything else.

It was obvious that this was a sword user who put his heart and soul to wield his sword. He seemed to be willing to pour his life into every stroke, just so that he would be able to give his opponent a fatal blow. Such loyalty to the sword made Jiang Chen gravely respect his opponent. Feng Pao wasn’t strong, by no means. But he was worthy of respect because his passion for sword dao had already surpassed his passion for his own life.

“Who would’ve thought that such a sword fanatic existed in the

fifth rank sects. If one so loyal to his dao can meet with a fortuitous opportunity on his path, he would certainly surpass his peers. Feng Pao is one who can be molded." Jiang Chen suddenly had the feeling of wanting to treasure this talent.

He bounced back on his toes and grabbed a shriveled branch with a smile. "Let's spar in sword dao."

Feng Pao had never underestimated nor feared any opponent. Before taking the stage, he'd known that Mu Gaoqi's reputation in pill dao was far beyond his accomplishments in martial dao. However, he didn't relax his guard because of this information. A simple exchange had been more than enough for him to immediately realize that this was an opponent whose depths he couldn't plumb. To those beneath the stage, it seemed that Feng Pao was in great spirits and had a dominating momentum as he continuously attacked his way to certain victory. "Mu Gaoqi", on the other hand, kept dodging and evading, with no ability to counter attack at all.

But in reality, Feng Pao was well aware that his opponent was completely at ease on stage. This opponent didn't use any dazzling moves or cheat with strong treasures. He only shuffled his feet around, comfortable in the charade of an intelligent man pretending to be the fool. In reality, his opponent was evading Feng Pao's powerful attacks with apparent ease.

To someone unversed in sword dao, Jiang Chen was coming off very worse for the wear in the exchange and to be honest, quite bedraggled. However, to Feng Pao, in the midst of it all, the more he fought, the more stunned he became and the more cold sweat

poured down his body. No matter how savagely the sword intent sliced and slashed, no matter how much momentum he brimmed with, the other seemed to be able to peer through everything and avoid all of his attacks with a single step. How would he be doing so so easily if ‘Mu Gaoqi’ hadn’t seen through the meaning of his sword dao?

If it’d been anyone else, their confidence would’ve been melted when faced with such a situation. But when Feng Pao discerned this, he wasn’t discouraged, but rather spurred onto greater efforts instead. He became even more motivated as he called upon his sword arts and continuously fused them into different iterations, displaying everything that he’d learned and practiced in his life.

One had to say, he was very knowledgeable in sword dao and was able to create countless variations of sword techniques and intent. And yet, all of them were still tied tightly to the essence of “speed”. Half an hour had already gone by as the two circled each other, locked in combat. The victor had already been determined in the other rings, and it looked like Jiang Chen had sunk into a difficult fight.

“Haha, senior brother Wang, I thought that kid actually had some skill to him to be able to talk thus! But he can’t even take down a mere seventh level origin realm disciple of a fifth rank sect! He’s all talk and no skills alright!” A Sacred Sword Palace decided to fawn upon Wang Han.

Wang Han stared at the ring, deep in thought, and suddenly responded, “All of you, listen up. No matter who gets that kid next, you need to use all your strength, even if you look like a lion taking

down a rabbit. If you don't kill him, the very least you need to do is take off his limbs. And then pull out that tongue of his at the end!" Unmistakable wrath radiated from Wang Han's tone.

"Understood, senior brother Wang!"

"Senior brother Wang, I don't think this kid will even make it past this round. It'd be difficult for us to take care of him if he's eliminated so early!"

Wang Han snorted coldly, not bothering to reply as his eyes remained fixed on the ring.

"Perhaps this kid is afraid that senior brother Wang will personally take him out, and so he's purposefully conceding this match!"

Everyone beneath the stage laughed uproariously. On the stage, Feng Pao was absolutely stunned. His comprehension ability was high, and he'd found it odd that he hadn't been able to defeat his opponent yet. From the very beginning, his opponent had always held back from a strong counterattack. With nothing more than a shriveled branch in Jiang Chen's hand, it looked like Feng Pao held the clear advantage, but Feng Pao was well aware that he had been long entrapped in the other's tempo. This opponent was striking only after he did, but still landed his blows faster than him! He also only used the same three techniques from beginning to end, but they kept shifting and morphing each time. Each time Feng Pao felt that he'd seen through his opponent, he would realize that he was still a small step away from grasping his opponent's intent.

There were many instances in the battle where he had the feeling that Mu Gaoqi had been on the verge of defeating him, but hadn't landed that final blow. As Feng Pao looked at the wise half smile on his opponent's face, a completely ridiculous thought suddenly struck him. Taking advantage of a brief pause in the match, he turned his attention to contemplating that thought. He's guiding me so that I follow in his rhythm! Feng Pao had an even more ludicrous thought pop into his mind all of a sudden. Is Mu Gaoqi teaching me aspects of sword dao? Like a virus, he couldn't stop that thought from spreading through his mind. Feng Pao bent his mind to the fight again, but as every clash grew ever more intense, he grew ever more certain of that thought.

Indeed, Jiang Chen was conferring sword dao to his opponent. Or to be more precise, he was teaching Feng Pao aspects of sword intent and the true meaning of sword dao. Feng Pao was able to easily grasp the concepts and once he understood Jiang Chen's intent, he swiftly sunk into Jiang Chen's tempo, feeling enormous enlightenment hovering at the edges of his fingertips. A couple of clashes later, Jiang Chen smiled slightly and tapped Feng Pao's sword aside, easily bringing the branch up to rest at the base of the latter's throat.

Feng Pao was exhausted and covered in sweat by now, but he was utterly delighted inside. He couldn't care less about the Myriad Hidden Dragon Trials at this moment; what ranking? His mind was filled with the boundless inspiration he'd received from this battle. The inspiration seemed to be as if the stars in the vast sky, leading him further and farther into the doors of sword dao. The inspiration and gains he'd made from this match alone surpassed the total accumulation his two decades of practice. As that realization flooded through him, Feng Pao bowed deeply, "I

concede.”

Jiang Chen nodded slightly. “All great daos are actually very simple. To be too greedy in sword dao is to be unable to digest all your gains properly. One gives birth to two, two gives birth to three, and three gives birth to all living beings. My moves just now shifted from one to two, two to three, and then from three to boundless forms of sword intent. But at the heart of it all, it was just a simple one, two, three.”

He sent these words silently, but they struck Feng Pao’s consciousness like a thunderclap, filling his mind. The lightning that accompanied such thunder instantly illuminated his future on the path of sword dao. He bowed deeply once again, “Many thanks for your tutelage.”

Jiang Chen nodded and didn’t say anything else. He’d only been momentarily caught up in Feng Pao’s passionate resolution for sword dao just now, and hence had used a more face-saving method to convey some true comprehension of sword dao to Feng Pao. As for how far Feng Pao could travel along his path, that was up to him.

“Mu Gaoqi triumphs and advances to the third round!”

When he saw that Mu Gaoqi had won, not only was Wang Han not displeased, but a trace of happiness even flashed through his sinister eyes. He wasn’t afraid of Mu Gaoqi ascending, but rather worried that Mu Gaoqi would be so incompetent that he wouldn’t be able to move on. How would Wang Han exact his revenge then?

“Junior brother, why did you use a withered branch against your foe just now?” Ling Bi’er looked thoughtful as she asked. She knew full well that with Jiang Chen’s strength, he had the ability to instantly defeat his enemy. Jiang Chen smiled and didn’t explain anything.

The four kings of the Regal Pill Palace had advanced easily, making his match appear all the more difficult in comparison. This made Nie Chong off on the side mutter under his breath, “We should’ve had junior brother Rong Zifeng come. Look at how difficult his second round was. Junior brother Zifeng is at least almost at ninth level origin realm.”

Shen Qinghong flicked a glance at Nie Chong, “Junior brother Nie, the palace head must have his reasons for this arrangement. You and I don’t need to comment further on it.”

It was rather Jun Mobai who remained coolly self composed off on the side. He had a meaningful little curve to his lips, as if he had something to say… but didn’t.

Chapter 648: Encountering A Genius Of The Sacred Sword Palace

For some reason, Jiang Chen suddenly felt a little ripple run through him when he saw Jun Mobai's expression. "Could it be that this Jun Mobai noticed that I'm not really Mu Gaoqi?"

Jiang Chen was slightly puzzled. If Shen Qinghong himself hadn't noticed anything amiss, then was it really possible for Jun Mobai, a cultivator who was himself a bit weaker than Shen Qinghong, to see through his disguise? That didn't seem too likely.

Jiang Chen decided not to express anything even though he noticed Jun Mobai's unusual behavior. This Jun Mobai had once attempted to recruit Jiang Chen back at Rosy Valley. However, Jiang Chen had never really been interested in his offer or Jun Mobai himself. After all, Jiang Chen couldn't shake the feeling that this seemingly elegant and honest gentleman might not necessarily be as he appeared. As the second round of competition ended, the draw for the third round began.

After the second round was over, the majority of qualified participants were now geniuses from fourth rank sects. Those geniuses who were not part of a fourth rank sect only managed to take a quarter of the seats. The third round was a critical round. Winning the third round meant securing a spot in the Myriad Domain Hidden Dragon rankings. However, after two rounds of ruthless elimination, the weaker cultivators had all been eliminated. All those who remained were the true geniuses. Therefore, the third round was fated to be a most devastating clash. The first seeds aside, everyone had an equal chance to face

each other.

Right now, almost all the candidates were praying quietly to avoid a first seed during this critical round. If they did, then the door to advancement would be firmly closed right then and there. The difference between a sage realm cultivator and an origin realm cultivator was just too great. It simply wasn't a match on the same level.

If there was one exception to the rule though, it would be Jiang Chen. His heart was as calm as a glacial pond, paying no attention to whom his next opponent might be. The first seeds didn't need to draw lots. Their names were automatically listed from the beginning. The first lot was to confirm their opponents.

All of the geniuses whose names were called during this lot wore a gloomy look on their faces. They were all patently unlucky; their next opponent was a sage realm genius. They were all extremely despondent knowing that their hopes had been completely dashed. Once the first seeds were listed, and their opponents chosen at random, the rest of the participants would have their names shuffled and selected in pairs.

On the Regal Pill Palace side's, the first person to be picked from the lot was Ling Bi'er. Her opponent was actually also a ninth level origin realm second seed from the Walkabout Sect. This battle would no doubt be desperate.

Jiang Chen's name was next to be selected. Surprisingly, his opponent was a Sacred Sword Palace genius. His name was Wang Jing, a disciple at the peak of eighth level origin realm. The Sacred

Sword Palace cheered loudly when the result of the draw was revealed. Mu Gaoqi versus Wang Jing!

"Haha, junior brother Wang Jing, it's all up to you now," a ninth level origin realm Sacred Sword Palace disciple slapped Wang Jing's shoulders heavily.

Wang Jing was a tall and muscular man who exuded a shocking amount of killing intent. "Senior brother Wang Han, should I kill him, or ruin him? Your wish is my command."

Wang Han leered sinisterly, flinging Jiang Chen a treacherous glance. The other Sacred Sword Palace disciples were also wearing odd smiles on their faces. When they looked at Mu Gaoqi, it was with a mocking look they usually reserved for prey. "Ruin him. Wouldn't it be a pity if we gave him a quick death?" Wang Han's tone was cold. "Junior brother Wang Jing, I've heard that your Whale King Sword Aura is extremely potent. Can it invade the inner manor and attack one's qi sea? The best method would be to break every meridian in this kid's body and then destroy his qi sea with your technique. This way, he will literally become useless trash!"

Wang Jing nodded. He now knew what he needed to do. He cast Jiang Chen a savage glance. How dare you contradict senior brother Wang Han, brat! You will pay a hefty price for your insolence! When the draw wrapped up, every participant began to focus their mind on the upcoming match. Other than those people who were doomed to lose the moment the lot was drawn, everyone else was eager to get started and rise above their opponents in this third round. If they could do so, they would be able to leave their

names on the rankings for this year's Myriad Domain Hidden Dragon Trials! The fifth rank sect geniuses were especially eager. To them, this was a rare opportunity to spread their name throughout the lands.

Generally, the Myriad Domain Hidden Dragon Trials ranking would be monopolized by the disciples of the fourth rank sects. No more than five slots would be left to anyone not of a fourth rank sect. However, this year's Myriad Domain Hidden Dragon Trials was different. Since the Tristar Sect had suddenly vanished from the ranks of the six great sects of the Myriad Domain, their empty slots were now up for grabs. These empty slots left behind by the Tristar Sect were equivalent to additional opportunities for these sects. Therefore, this year's Myriad Domain Hidden Dragon Trials really was a rare opportunity for the other sects.

This was especially true for the stronger fifth rank sects with even greater ambitions. They all wished that their geniuses could overperform and fully display the strength of their sect. If they performed well, then their sect's reputation would skyrocket. Perhaps they would even be in a place to replace the void left behind by the Tristar Sect. After all, every fifth rank sect wished to improve further and become a fourth rank sect. The slots had been full in the past, but now that the Tristar Sect had betrayed the Myriad Domain and left behind a fourth rank sect sized void waiting to be filled, it was only natural that these fifth rank sects would do their best to slash through their enemies and open up the path to become a fourth rank sect.

Wang Jing? A Sacred Sword Palace disciple? Jiang Chen's eyebrows lifted slightly. He naturally didn't overlook the taunting stares that were being thrown his way from the Sacred Sword

Palace. He also knew that these people saw him as nothing more than a fish on the chopping block, ready to be sliced and diced at any moment. While wearing a faint smile on his face, Jiang Chen shook his head and slowly made his way up to the ring.

However, what was strange was that no one – be it Palace Head Dan Chi or Mu Gaoqi's's subordinate – seemed to have given him any advice at all. They were all watching Mu Gaoqi walking calmly towards the arena, apparently without even a shred of worry at all. This bizarre sight surprised Wang Han just a little. Logically speaking, Mu Gaoqi was the apple of the Regal Pill Palace's eye. A martial arts competition like this, it would be completely natural for them to be worried about his safety. So why did they look rather unconcerned for Mu Gaoqi?

This didn't quite make sense no matter how one looked at it.

Wang Han might not understand what was going on, but he wasn't about to let his guard down. He turned to Wang Jing, "Junior brother Wang Jing, this Mu Gaoqi may be a little more eccentric than we first imagined. You must not underestimate him."

Wang Jing smiled easily and said, "Don't worry, senior brother Wang. The Regal Pill Palace is our sworn enemy, and thus I have kept on top of their intelligence. I am absolutely certain that I can destroy anyone in Regal Pill Palace other than the four kings of Rosy Valley!"

The four kings of Rosy Valley referred to the four most outstanding cultivators in the Regal Pill Palace; Ling Bi'er, Nie

Chong, Shen Qinghong and Jun Mobai. Ling Bi'er and Nie Chong were at peak ninth level origin realm, whereas Shen Qinghong and Jun Mobai had broken through to the sage realm. As confident as Wang Jing was in himself, he knew that he didn't have the ability to go up against these four people. However, he was absolutely confident in his ability to destroy anyone else in Regal Pill Palace.

After all, Wang Jing's Whale King Sword Aura often had an advantage against normal ninth level origin realm cultivators, even though he was only at the peak of eighth level origin realm at the moment. Confidence was extremely important in a duel of martial arts.

Although Wang Han wanted to give Wang Jing a few more words of advice, he was also afraid that he might adversely affect Wang Jing's dao heart. It would be counterproductive if he accidentally said too much and disturbed Wang Jing's mindset. He patted Wang Jing's shoulders and said, "Be neither arrogant nor impatient, and perform to your best. Watch out for the enemy's dirty tricks."

"Mm." Wang Jing was in high spirits as his tall and sturdy frame took off at a dead run towards the arena. Although this guy wasn't as ridiculously built as Tang Hong, he wasn't too far behind. His footsteps caused the floor to rumble each time they impacted the ground, seeming very much to be able to shake the earth and topple mountains. When Wang Han saw this, he waved a hand and said, "Now, let's all attend to our respective matches."

Over at Regal Pill Palace's side, some of the elders from the Hall of Might still somewhat disapproved of Mu Gaoqi's participation.

While they couldn't claim that there were countless young cultivators who were stronger than Mu Gaoqi in the Regal Pill Palace, there were still ten to twenty or so disciples who were better than him. However, none of them had been chosen for the competition because Mu Gaoqi had seemingly slid in the back door to be included. This made Elder Lian Cheng feel as disgusted as one would if they'd eaten a fly.

At first, Elder Lian Cheng thought that Palace Head Dan Chi lauding the Hall of Might as the first hall of the Regal Pill Palace since rising to power was a sign of the palace head's high regard for him. Now, it would seem that it was just an illusion. The palace head had been growing closer and closer with Herbal Hall's Elder Yun Nie as of late, and they looked very much like they were conspiring to shunt him off to the side. He was especially fed up with Mu Gaoqi's participation in the Myriad Grand Ceremony. The fact that Palace Head Dan Chi had allowed such a flagrant act of nepotism just went to show exactly how much Palace Head Dan Chi was biased towards Elder Yun Nie.

"Palace Head, is this Mu Gaoqi really... capable?" Elder Lian Cheng cast a glance at Palace Head Dan Chi, and he couldn't help but voice his thoughts, "If he's not, then maybe self preservation may be the better choice. Wouldn't it be a pity if his talent in pill dao is destroyed at the hands of a Sacred Sword Palace genius?"

Elder Lian Cheng's words were both half truths and half lies. It was undeniable that his concerns was a little insincere, but his wish to protect Mu Gaoqi's innate wood constitution was real. After all, a talent like that had the potential to bring the sect hundreds of years of fortune. It might even lead the sect towards a glorious new age. In Elder Lian Cheng's opinion, a cultivator with

great talent in pill dao should just focus on pill dao. Why bother getting involved in the battle of martial arts?

Palace Head Dan Chi simply smiled and said, “We’ll see. If he isn’t, he’ll know when to back off.”

Elder Lian Cheng didn’t bother remonstrating further, he didn’t need to invite anymore snubs. Palace Head Dan Chi clearly had no intentions of explaining further. Nevertheless, he was extremely disapproving of this on the inside. Know when to back off? So what if Mu Gaoqi knows when to back off? The Sacred Sword Palace and the Regal Pill Palace are sworn enemies. If the enemy does not know ‘when to back off’ and seeks to land a killing blow, can you guarantee that Mu Gaoqi will be able to retreat in time? What if the enemy turns berserk and destroys his dantian and qi sea? His innate wood constitution would be completely destroyed.

That being said, if the palace head himself wasn’t worried for Mu Gaoqi, naturally Elder Liang Cheng wouldn’t raise an objection. Now that he thought about it, it wasn’t a bad thing to watch Elder Yun Nie’s disciple suffer a setback. It would all be because Palace Head Dan Chi had been obstinate in sending out Mu Gaoqi to battle anyway. If any accidents occurred, the only person on the hook for an explanation was Palace Head Dan Chi.

Suddenly, Elder Lian Cheng’s grudges transformed into anticipation. It would be nice if a little accident happened to Mu Gaoqi. As the thought settled into his mind, Elder Lian Cheng immediately began to stare closely at Jiang Chen with a look of feigned seriousness. He couldn’t even be bothered to care about his direct disciple, Shen Qinghong’s match.

Chapter 649: A Bizarre Match

“Wang Jing of the Sacred Sword Palace versus Mu Gaoqi of the Regal Pill Palace!” The match officially began with the referee’s announcement.

“Kid, are you going to kneel down politely and accept death, or do you want Master Jing to torture you to death?” Wang Jing took large strides forward as his qi of peak eighth level origin realm radiated out like a whale king. Akin to tremendous waves smashing onto the coast, the aura was pure domination given form, crashing down on Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen couldn’t help but laugh. Are those of the Sacred Sword Palace always so naive? They’re always so self righteous when bullying others.

If it’d truly been Mu Gaoqi standing here today, he’d have been in for a rough time. Sadly, it was not; it was Jiang Chen. He stood with both hands clasped behind his back, proudly upright in the face of the surging wind. One didn’t know if his posture came from being scared out of his wits due to the stunning whale king qi current, or whether it came from his deep confidence in his skills. Those watching beneath the stage were all immensely startled by the situation. They’d all heard of Mu Gaoqi’s reputation, but only of his potential in pill dao. No one thought much of his potential in martial dao. Yet here he was, standing with such posture!

“Sect Head, has Mu Gaoqi been scared witless?” A Sacred Sword Palace elder asked under his breath beside Wang Jianyu.

Wang Jianyu wasn't some sort of mediocre flop. His vision was exceedingly sharp and a frown creased his face as he spoke, "This match won't be easy. Everyone's underestimated Mu Gaoqi."

"Oh?"

"Let's watch the match, there's no need for further speculation." Wang Jianyu waved his hands.

Wang Jing was a proud man, and when he saw how Mu Gaoqi stood there, unmoving in front of him, as he just accepted the whale king qi current wash over him, Wang Jing felt deeply offended. "Kid, your bravery comes from your complete lack of sense. Let's see if I don't knock some into you today!" Wang Jing rubbed his hands together as he worked himself up into a towering rage.

Multiple air currents coalesced around him to form ghastly corporeal white waves and roiled through the ring, as if an enormous whale weaving powerfully through the ocean.White capped waves churned as if whipped by a storm, instantly drowning the ring and swallowing Jiang Chen's figure.

"Ai!" A crowd of sighs emanated from beneath the stage. When they'd seen 'Mu Gaoqi' stand there with such composed leisure, they'd thought he would have some stunning move. But to think that he would actually stand there like a wooden dummy, swallowed whole by the whale king qi current without even attempting to dodge! No matter how great his potential might be, what the heck could he do now that he'd been devoured by the whale king qi current and thoroughly trapped by the other's

tempo?

Rumble, rumble!

The momentum from the enormous waves of whale king qi was as if the rivers of heaven cascading down into the deep abyss below, as if muffled thunder rolling over the sky on a clear day, each wave stronger than the one before and all churning towards that central area! Each wave was tremendously heavy and backed with great strength. Wang Jing had sent out at least five hundred waves with his furious move, if not a thousand. The destructive force of five hundred layered waves and the crushing force they formed would crush even a mountain, much less a body of flesh and blood.

Judging from Mu Gaoqi's strength, he was at most seventh level origin realm. Under such strong momentum from the waves, he would snap all his bones and tendons, if not pounded into meat paste. His organs might also be completely crushed, and his dantian and qi sea in tattered fragments.

"Sigh, this is so sad!"

"What a pity! I heard that Mu Gaoqi was an innate wood constitution!"

"The Regal Pill Palace really made a misstep this time. What's a pill dao genius doing here?"

“Right, it’s always been said that Palace Head Dan Chi’s wisdom has no failings. He’s truly made a mistake this time. How would he not know that the Sacred Sword Palace and their Regal Pill Palace are sworn enemies? They would have even more of a reason to destroy a genius of the Regal Pill Palace!”

“Right, Mu Gaoqi even offended Wang Han with his words earlier, so the disciples of the Sacred Sword Palace will have even less of a reason to let him off easily.”

“This was a moth to the flames, suicide!”

“Tsk tsk, I heard that Mu Gaoqi was already being hailed as the future pill king in the Regal Pill Palace, they were tooting their horn much too early, hmm?”

Out of the mass of sighs beneath the stage, some were delighting in the misery of others, some were feeling deeply regretful, and yet others didn’t care at all. Even Elder Lian Cheng couldn’t help but sneak a peek at Palace Head Dan Chi. He really wanted to see what expression that confident palace head would have on his face now. However, Elder Lian Cheng was disappointed to see that Dan Chi had an unconcerned expression on his face. There was even a hint of a meaningful smile playing on his lips, quite baffling Elder Lian Cheng. He almost couldn’t help but suspect that Palace Head Dan Chi had purposefully sent Mu Gaoqi off to his death! Although this suspicion was ludicrous, it appeared to be the most reasonable when everything was viewed holistically, and was the most apt explanation for the matters at hand.

The matches in the other rings had already ended by this time,

and almost all sage realm geniuses had instantly defeated their opponents. Wang Han of the Sacred Sword Palace had already returned to Wang Jianyu's side and was watching the frothing whale king qi current on stage with unspeakable glee. If it wasn't for a matter of appearances, he almost wanted to crow to the sky.

"This kid is all talk. His true colors have come out once he's set foot in the ring." Wang Han flung a frosty look at Shen Qinghong as he snorted coldly. He was obviously telling Shen Qinghong that Mu Gaoqi's current predicament was Shen Qinghong's future.

Shen Qinghong snorted dismissively and looked at the ring with mixed emotions. He hadn't liked Mu Gaoqi much before, but he'd suddenly understood after the trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage just how important unity was in a sect! It was such a pity for Mu Gaoqi to be destroyed in the ring with all his pill dao potential.

Bam, bam, bam, bam!

The sounds from the waves of whale king true qi slowly dissipated. They were powered by origin energy after all, so if their source of energy slowly vanished, so would the waves. All eyes were on the stage. Everyone wanted to see just how tragic Mu Gaoqi would be after this devastation. Some even suspected that he was likely a puddle of gory meat at this point in time. But, all their expressions froze int he next second.

When the overwhelming layers of waves disappeared and the scene on the stage cleared, a figure suddenly appeared in the center. It was standing there lazily and stretched even more indolently.

Mu Gaoqi!

At this moment, surprised flashed through even a heavyweight such as Wang Jianyu. Mu Gaoqi was actually standing in place and stretching lazily. He looked like he'd just had a good dream and still wanted to linger in it. How was this the demeanor of someone who'd just been crushed by waves of whale king qi?

Everyone watching the match was filled with baffled confusion. This completely upended everyone's understanding of martial dao. Some even wondered if Wang Jiang had purposefully gone easy on his opponent, that he'd only looked domineering, but hadn't used any true origin power at all? Otherwise, how could Mu Gaoqi be standing there so lazily, so at ease? How had he been subjected to a fatal attack at all? He looked like he'd just woken up!

"How can this be?" The previously strutting Wang Han was now slack jawed, his mouth open so wide that an entire bun could fit inside. He wouldn't have been surprised at all if the other had been reduced to meat paste. He would've accepted it if the other's bones and tendons had all been broken, and he was crawling on the ground. And yet, Mu Gaoqi stood there completely unharmed. That lazy stretch had been a crisp slap to the Sacred Sword Palace, and one that caught everyone in the sect completely off guard!

The step seemed to echo around the entire arena, everyone seemed to be able to hear it. Shen Qinghong's originally tense nerves suddenly relaxed. This immense rise and fall had also greatly affected his mindset as well. He couldn't understand it at all, how could junior brother Mu Gaoqi have become so heaven

defying all of a sudden? His thoughts were different from others as he felt that there was no way anyone from the Sacred Sword Palace would show mercy to the Regal Pill Palace. There must be something going on here that he didn't know!

Equally baffled was Shen Qinghong's martial dao master, Elder Lian Cheng. Contrary to Shen Qinghong, Elder Lian Cheng felt a hint of something else in addition to his stunned astonishment. He couldn't help but sneak another glance at Dan Chi, and saw that that unconcerned smile still clung on Dan Chi's face. However, that meaningful lilt to his lips was even more obvious now. Could it be that Palace Head Dan Chi had long since anticipated this scene?

Those of the other sects were even more taken aback. It was obvious that the immense rises and falls of this unexpected scene had caused everyone's emotions to soar and plummet accordingly. They were unable to calm themselves after a long while.

"This is crazy! How strong is Mu Gaoqi, or did Wang Jing go easy?"

"Even a sage realm genius wouldn't be completely unharmed after such a strong impact, right?"

"Isn't Mu Gaoqi a pill dao genius? When was he so accomplished in terms of martial dao?"

"Tsk tsk, it looks like the Regal Pill Palace is still superior in the end!"

“Who knows, perhaps Mu Gaoqi had some special treasure that just so happened to counter the whale king qi currents? There is always a counter for something in the world of martial dao, this isn’t outside the realm of possibilities.”

“Ah, right. It’s not impossible that Mu Gaoqi’s used some strong defense talisman to block this blow!”

Those who were watching concluded that this must be the case, whereas Wang Jing was staring with eyes as wide as copper coins, staring fixedly at Jiang Chen and unable to return to his previous state of mind. He’d thought of many possible outcomes, but not this one!”

“Kid, your Regal Pill Palace is rather generous huh, to give you such a strong defense talisman! But, no matter how strong it is, it will only protect you once!”

Jiang Chen lightly flicked off some dust on his sleeve and laughed softly. “What defense talisman? Don’t delude yourself.”

“What do you mean?” Wang Jing’s tone sank.

“Do you want to blame it on your opponent using a talisman everytime you fail? Is this the logic of the Sacred Sword Palace?” Jiang Chen smiled superciliously.

Wang Jing was immensely enraged and roared out, “Still putting

on an act huh!? You won’t admit to what you’ve done?! Alright, let’s see how Master Jing beats you down to your true form with my next blow!”

Whale king qi currents were just the appetizer, his technique of Whale King Sword Aura was the main course!

Chapter 650: Sent Flying With One Kick

Even when compared to the rest of the Sacred Sword Palace's younger generation, Wang Jing was shockingly powerful when his ire reached its maximum. With exception of those solidly in the sage realm, not even ninth level origin realm geniuses were willing to fight against a berserk Wang Jing. He fought like a madman when he was in a rage. And right now, he had without a doubt gone berserk.

Vast waves of whale king qi spewed into existence once more. However, their form was markedly different from before. Wang Jing seemed to have learned from his lesson and decided against multiplying waves to crush his enemy. This time, the waves spread to become rivers of iron locks and chains that sealed off the space in many tiny compartments. "Let's see how many defense talismans you have left this time, brat!"

At the heart of it all, Wang Jing believed that his enemy had broken through the lockdown of his enormous waves earlier through defensive talismans rather than their own strength. Jiang Chen was as calm as ever as he watched the enormous tidal waves lock down all space on the ring. Wang Jing's hands grabbed at the air, and a broadsword materialized between his hands. This sword flickered between a bright gold and an eerie white.

"Tsk tsk. It would seem that junior brother Wang Jing is truly furious this time!" When Wang Han saw Wang Jing's demeanor, he knew that Wang Jing had unleashed his trump card.

Using currents of whale king qi to seal off the airspace and the

Whale King Sword Aura attack to strangle the opponent—Wang Jing had executed a seamless attack. There were absolutely no gaps to be found in the entire ring. Even if his opponent could break through the first layer with defensive talismans, he would not be able to break through the second and third layers. This ability to lock down space itself was achieved through Wang Jing's understanding of formations, and a hint of the profound mysteries of space. Even Wang Han wouldn't want to face such a method. Even at peak second level sage realm, he would have no choice but to try and strike out first. If he failed to mount an attack before he was locked down by Wang Jing, the only way out would be to break through this lockdown via force. When he looked down at Mu Gaoqi again, Wang Han was simultaneously angry and pleased to discover a look of fearless recklessness. He was angry because Mu Gaoqi was still cocky even though he was about to meet his doom. And yet, Wang Han was also pleased because this kid wouldn't be able to strut around for much longer.

"Mirage!" Wang Jing executed a series of hand seals, causing ripples of light to shimmer throughout his qi currents. They merged with each other at random, forming various mirages. Soon, Jiang Chen was completely surrounded by those illusions.

The moment Jiang Chen was surrounded by the rippling light mirages, the broadsword in Wang Jing's hand rose up. "Yaksha Explores the Sea!" The golden sword aura shot into the sky, taking tangible form, and becoming a fearsome, fiendish Yaksha brandishing a trident. The evil spirit then stabbed fiercely down at Jiang Chen from above. From where he stood, Wang Jing's sword aura continuously conjured many tangible dharmas.

"Two Dragons Toy Pearls."

“Tiger Devours the Sky!”

“Erlang Shoots the Sun!” Wang Jing had used his understanding of the profound mysteries of space to seal off the space with his qi currents with one hand, and had concentrated the metallic attributes of his sword aura into dharma attacks on the other. This absolutely exquisite combination of both skills was without a doubt Wang Jing’s trump card.

He had challenged and defeated many ninth level origin realm experts beyond his level with this move. Even sage realm geniuses had to admit that Wang Jing’s finishing move was extremely hard to deal with.

More spectators gathered beneath the stage as the monstrous aura rose, their voices tinged with awe as they praised the technique.

“The Sacred Sword Palace’s martial heritage is truly impressive. While this Wang Jing is not yet the topmost genius of them all, his abilities can possibly even take down a genius of ninth level origin realm!”

“Mm. It is said that the Sacred Sword Palace’s martial heritage is stronger than even the Great Cathedral’s. The Great Cathedral is stronger only because it holds the advantage of merging bloodlines.”

“Considering his strength, we must be careful if we encounter

Wang Jing in the future."

"I wonder if Mu Gaoqi still has a chance? This isn't something that can be settled with a single defense talisman."

It was obvious that everyone thought that 'Mu Gaoqi' had used a powerful defense talisman to break out of his predicament earlier. However, this time they were sure that a defense talisman was nowhere close to sufficient even if he were to use them again. However, Jiang Chen's next move was something that stunned all spectators into a jaw-dropping silence. Jiang Chen lifted his arm slightly, put his thumb and middle finger together, and snapped them once.

Snap! The snap was so crisp that it sounded like a clap of thunder.

It was the events that followed that left all others gaping. The dharmas conjured from the boundless sword aura deflated instantly, like balloons popped by a needle. Nothing but tendrils were left drifting in the air, and they too soon faded away into nothingness. All of the golden qi currents in the air suddenly arced into Jiang Chen's hands. Jiang Chen's open palm faced upwards as the qi currents landed in his hand and condensed into a single ball of golden light. It grew brighter and brighter like a gold candle as more and more qi currents gathered into one spot. When all of the qi currents had gathered into his palm, Jiang Chen folded his fingers and squeezed softly. The candle-like ball of golden light vanished between his fingers like a waning flame doused by water, disappearing into complete nothingness.

“What?!” This time, even Wang Jianyu himself could barely hold onto his seat. Behind him, Wang Han staggered, almost falling to the ground. He rubbed his eyes fiercely. His first thought was that he had fallen prey to an illusion. After all, these dharmas formed from the condensed sword aura were so powerful that even Wang Han himself would not dare to treat them recklessly. In addition, the thought of destroying all of the dharmas with a single snap of his fingers and then absorbing all of the sword aura with an open palm was even more ludicrous. This wasn’t something that a seventh level origin realm cultivator could perform! In fact, not even the head of the Sacred Sword Palace, eighth level sage realm Wang Jianyu himself, could replicate this feat so easily.

“How could this be?” The elders of Sacred Sword Palace were astonished beyond words. To a man, they had all leaped to their feet upon seeing the outcome.

“Sect Head, how has this happened?”

Wang Jiangyu too frowned, but kept silent in the face of the torrent of questions. In the end, he opened his mouth, “Wang Jing’s Whale King Sword Aura is made of the crushing power of the metal attribute. Its edge is extremely sharp. Therefore, there is no way this kid could’ve broken these dharmas so easily with his own strength. If my guess is correct, he likely possesses some sort of treasure that specifically counters this type of art.”

“A treasure?” An elder sucked in a breath in shock, “And just how shockingly powerful this treasure must be!”

Wang Jianyu sighed, “It must be absolutely incredible. I doubt

that even I could destroy all of those dharmas as easily as he did."

It was true that even sage realm experts couldn't have destroyed all of the sword aura dharmas with a snap of their fingers. Of course, they could break through them or destroy them with their fist or palm. However, 'Mu Gaoqi' hadn't executed any hand gestures, martial arts or techniques. Just how perverse was his strength if he could break all of those dharmas with just a snap of his fingers? It was absolutely impossible for anyone beneath emperor realm.

Therefore, Wang Jianyu held fast to his view that it wasn't Mu Gaoqi's strength that had won him the exchange. It just so happened that Wang Jing's art had been perfectly countered. Beside him, Wang Han was fuming with rage. His teeth ground against each other as he spat, "The Regal Pill Palace is a bunch of losers who are good for nothing but their luck!"

Unlike those in the Sacred Sword Palace, the rest of the audience was completely stunned by this sight. Even the proudest person had to admit that Mu Gaoqi's move had been filled with dashing flair.

He'd destroyed thousands of dharmas with just a snap of his fingers.

Aren't you powerful, Wang Jing? Aren't you overbearing? Weren't you having fun showing off all those fancy moves? Your opponent had literally stood there unmoving and destroyed all of your attacks with a single snap of his fingers. And he'd done it as easily as blowing out a candle.

What was true strength? This was true strength!

The person in question, Wang Jing, was also greatly shocked by this outcome. In fact, he had even spent some time in the battle to prepare a victory speech, before that shocking reversal. Lines to humiliate his opponent, lines to humiliate Regal Pill Palace, and lines to show off his status as the victor. The only thing he had left to do with his scripts was to use them.

However...

However, reality had stolen his innocence as his opponent used an almost humiliating method to give him and the Sacred Sword Palace an enormous slap to the face.

Wang Jing had doubted his eyes as well when he saw those dharmas shattering. And yet, the loud commotion of astonishment beneath the arena confirmed again and again that his eyes weren't playing tricks on him. There was no doubt anymore that the opponent he had completely looked down upon had indeed used a humiliating method to easily crush the final ace he had taken so much pride in.

While he stood there in shock, Wang Jing's face turned so pale that it was as if all the blood in his body had been drained away. Then, his pupils abruptly shrank, and a bit of fear and bewilderment in his eyes appeared in his eyes. "What... what are you doing?!"

Sadly, the whale king qi currents that he'd laid down as intersecting locks were as if paper as his opponent lightly swept an arm across the arena.

Rip, rip.

The white qi currents that were supposed to be as heavy and durable as manacles were torn and ripped apart like daisy chains.

Dong dong dong.

His enemy's footsteps didn't slow at all as Jiang Chen took one measured step after another towards Wang Jing. Right now, Wang Jing looked like a frightened rabbit, despite possessing a body comparable to that of a small hill. His slim and short opponent continued to exert a pressure on him that was as if he was the real giant. Wang Jing's heartbeat pounded faster with every footstep his opponent took. "Don't... don't come closer!"

Jiang Chen smiled indifferently as he looked straight at this Sacred Sword Palace disciple who was all show and no skills. Smiling disdainfully, he abruptly darted forwards like lightning and kicked Wang Jing right in the chest.

Bam!

Wang Jing's large body immediately tumbled from the stage like a kite with a broken string. Blood gushed madly out of his mouth, and the people beneath the arena could hear his bones crack while

he was in midair.

With an ashen look on his face, Wang Jianyu vanished from where he stood and caught Wang Jing in his arms. Wang Jiangyu's expression contorted when he examined Wang Jing's injuries. A chilly light exploded from his eyes as he glared at Jiang Chen, standing on stage, "You destroyed Wang Jing's dantian and qi sea, boy? Aren't you afraid that you will be punished by the heavens for destroying another person's dao foundation?"

Jiang Chen smiled indifferently, "No one is exempt from death in the world of martial dao. One might even say he had good karma from his past life since I only went so far as to destroy his dantian."

The words were said gently, but the youngsters in the Sacred Sword Palace all felt their hair on their neck rise because of them. Their Regal Pill Palace opponent was instantly shrouded in mystery to them.

A malevolent spirit in Buddhism

Chapter 651: Stunning All Sides

Forget the Sacred Sword Palace, even the Regal Pill Palace suddenly found Mu Gaoqi to be completely unfathomable. While outsiders might not know anything of Mu Gaoqi, the Regal Pill Palace disciples had lived under the same roof as him. How could they possibly not understand him? Was this the same cautious and slightly timid Mu Gaoqi they knew? Not only had Mu Gaoqi talked easily and fearlessly in face of Wang Jianyu's questions and threats, he'd even retorted with supreme indifference. Was this the Mu Gaoqi whose temperament had been known as one as docile as rabbit?

Truth be told, it would've been palatable if it was just a change in temperament. But since when had Mu Gaoqi become so mysteriously strong? Now that they thought of it, Mu Gaoqi had already participated in two battles. In the first battle, Mu Gaoqi had fought fiercely against Feng Pao, a fifth rank sect's seventh level origin realm expert. The battle had looked incredibly intense, and he'd given the impression that he was just a bit better than Feng Pao. However, an attentive person would've realized that Mu Gaoqi had only been using a wilted branch as his weapon from beginning to end. He hadn't executed any moves of his own.

Logically speaking, the second round should've been a difficult battle for Mu Gaoqi. But again, he hadn't used any of his own moves from beginning to end. In the beginning, everyone had thought that Mu Gaoqi had used a powerful defense talisman to protect himself from Wang Jing's whale king qi currents. It was a barely plausible explanation of that clash. However, could a defense talisman aid Mu Gaoqi in shattering all of Wang Jing's dharmas with a single snap of his fingers? Obviously impossible!

However, how many profound martial arts techniques could a simple finger snap contain? There were plenty of martial dao heavyweights present, but none of them had seen through what had happened. They reviewed the moves Mu Gaoqi had used to tear apart the qi currents that had locked down the area in the ring. Those restrictive currents had been torn apart like paper, without any discernable power to speak of. He had displayed nothing but crude and simplistic moves again, and so the audience still couldn't figure out just what stunning move Mu Gaoqi had discreetly employed. In fact, the final kick onto Wang Jing had literally been a move that would be seen during a brawl between commoners. There had been absolutely no technique to speak of.

The battle had been all too preposterous! It was so ludicrous that the assumption that Wang Jing had cooperated with Mu Gaoqi to put on a show sounded more plausible.

Yes, the whole battle had looked so incredibly fake that the people couldn't help but want to inspect Wang Jing's injuries and check if they were actually real. However, the sounds of Wang Jing's broken bones couldn't be fake, that mouthful of blood couldn't be fake, and Wang Jianyu's anger at the destruction of Wang Jing's dantian couldn't be fake either!

In that case, Wang Jing hadn't actually cooperated with Mu Gaoqi to put on a show. After all, who in their right mind would risk the destruction of their dantian to work together with their sworn enemy and put on this tragic act? If this was all true, then this Mu Gaoqi was just too frightening.

Before he'd taken the stage, everyone had thought that Regal Pill Palace had chosen unwisely. They all thought that the decision to send a pill dao genius to duel a martial arts genius was no better than sending a moth into the flames. But now, it would seem that everyone had underestimated Mu Gaoqi!

The victory in the third round meant that he had secured a spot in the Myriad Domain Hidden Dragon rankings.

"Congratulations, junior brother Mu." Shen Qinghong calmly walked up to Jiang Chen and stretched out his hand.

Seeing that Shen Qinghong was actually sincere with the gesture, Jiang Chen nodded and slapped hands with Shen Qinghong, "Thank you, senior brother Shen."

Jun Mobai also walked over and smiled, saying, "You've hidden your strength well, junior brother. That kick was definitely to everyone's satisfaction!"

Ling Bi'er and Nie Chong had both beaten their respective opponents and cleared the third round. However, Ling Bi'er had gone through a rather difficult battle before she managed to secure her victory.

Nie Chong was also feeling extremely conflicted as he watched Mu Gaoqi walking down the stage. He'd mocked Mu Gaoqi earlier, saying that Rong Zifeng might as well have taken the former's place since Mu Gaoqi had struggled so hard during the second battle... Now that he looked back on Mu Gaoqi's performance, Nie

Chong could only feel a burning sensation on his face. He suddenly felt like finding a crack on the ground and hiding inside it.

Yes, that was how he felt.

He had watched the second half of the match, and if he were to conjecture bluntly, he himself only had a 50% chance at victory if he couldn't suppress Wang Jing from the beginning and had allowed him the time and opening to unleash his trump card. As for imitating Mu Gaoqi's fighting style, defeating his opponent easily and sending him flying with a kick while chatting and laughing? Simply impossible.

"Junior brother Mu, I have misjudged you. I apologize." While Nie Chong wasn't one to hesitate flaunting his strength, he also knew that he really wasn't qualified to put on airs when even Shen Qinghong himself treated Mu Gaoqi with politeness and courtesy. Therefore, he voiced his apology and gave himself an exit.

Jiang Chen was indifferent in this regard. He shared no relations with Nie Chong, so he naturally wouldn't take his words to heart at all. He nodded once with a faint smile on his face, "It's fine."

Ling Bi'er stood at the back of the group. She looked a bit tired after a difficult battle. Thankfully, the day would end after three rounds of battle. The next round would happen on the morrow.

"Congratulations on your advancement, junior brother." Ling Bi'er nodded slightly at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen gave her a small smile and said, “It seems like you’ve had a bountiful battle as well. You’ve caught a hint of inspiration to break through to the sage realm?”

Ling Bi’er was absolutely astonished, “You can tell?”

Jiang Chen’s consciousness was immeasurably powerful, so naturally he noticed the slight change in Ling Bi’er. In reality, Ling Bi’er’s talent wasn’t any weaker than Shen Qinghong’s. In fact, her potential was even stronger than his. However, her advancement on martial dao had been negatively affected due to her father’s sickness and her concentration on pill dao. Otherwise, her martial arts potential would have allowed her to break through to the sage realm two years ago.

Now that her father’s sickness was cured, the heavy stone in her heart had finally been lifted. Her anxiety was gone and the world had suddenly opened up to her. Naturally, her understanding of martial arts would continuously improve. A difficult battle in the third round had rewarded her plentifully. As a result, the comprehension of martial dao she had accumulated for many years seemed to spring forth like a fountain.

Innumerable martial dao inspirations surged into her mind all at once. Although she couldn’t be sure that it was a sign that she was about to break through to sage realm, at the very least it meant that she had accumulated so much understanding in martial dao that it couldn’t help but show her a path forward. Now that Jiang Chen had pointed it out to Ling Bi’er, she grew even more certain that she had a chance to break through to the sage realm.

If the breakthrough took time, then it would be around three to five months. But if it was quick, then she could break through to sage realm in three or five days' time.

Dan Chi and Elder Lian Cheng all glanced sideways at Ling Bi'er when they heard Jiang Chen's words. They had actually been neglecting Ling Bi'er because they had been closely observing Jiang Chen's battle all this time. Now that they focused on her, they discovered that Ling Bi'er's origin realm spirit sea was extremely active. Be it inside or outside her body, the signs of breakthrough were incredibly obvious.

"Good! I didn't think that we Regal Pill Palace will be welcoming the birth of yet another sage realm genius. This is truly an occasion for celebration!" Palace Head Dan Chi laughed to his heart's content. After casting a rather meaningful glance at Jiang Chen, Dan Chi had to admit that Regal Pill Palace's younger generation had been provoked into ever astounding improvement since Jiang Chen had shown up. It was obvious that a man of great fortune like Jiang Chen was affecting the young geniuses with his every word and movement.

There were many kinds of geniuses. Some were powerful beyond ken, but they often trod a lonely path all the way to the end. Yet, there were also geniuses who were beloved by fate, and brought luck and fortune to their sect in all sorts of ways.

Jiang Chen was one such example.

He hadn't entered Regal Pill Palace for more than three or four years, but the wind of change he had brought to Regal Pill Palace

was absolutely astounding. Shen Qinghong, a genius of the youth generation, had turned over a completely new leaf. Ling Bi'er's greatest worry and obstacle in martial dao had been permanently assuaged. Mu Gaoqi's talent had been unearthed, and as a result, his strength had grown tremendously. In all of these cases, Jiang Chen's merits couldn't go unacknowledged. As for the rest of the disciples, while they had not received any personal positive influences from Jiang Chen, he had injected Rosy Valley with an all new temperament with his actions. It was a fire these Regal Pill Palace geniuses hadn't possessed before.

Moreover, the resources and good fortune Jiang Chen brought to the sect were tangible. Sky rank spirit herbs, earth rank spirit herbs, countless stalks of Sage Fledgling Grass and the recipe of the Longevity Pill...

His merits were literally innumerable if Dan Chi were to list them all properly. Naturally, with his level of intelligence, Dan Chi understood that this was Jiang Chen's blessing on the Regal Pill Palace.

That night, all the sects settled down where they were and set up camp around the arena. Cultivators didn't necessarily need to sleep at night. It was just that battles at night were inconvenient. Plus, all living beings went to sleep at night. Cultivators themselves could use the opportunity to reserve and hone their strength.

However, the martial arts competition of the Grand Ceremony was a momentous event that was held once per thirty years. Naturally, it was impossible for most youngsters to calm down and rest. This was especially true for those cultivators who had already

been eliminated. They gathered in groups of twos or threes as they discussed the extraordinary things that had happened during the day.

The first two rounds of the battles had passed by blandly, but the third round had much in the way of exciting battles. Of course, the most interesting battles weren't the battles of the sage realm experts. After all, those battles were all completely one-sided and thus produced only a limited amount of entertainment.

When one spoke of entertainment, the most entertaining match of them all was the conflict between the two sworn enemies, the Regal Pill Palace and the Sacred Sword Palace. On one side was the powerful and high-profile Wang Jing, and on the other, the honest and low-key Mu Gaoqi.

Before the battle had started, almost everyone thought that this battle was going to be a one-sided victory for Sacred Sword Palace. However, the outcome had exceeded everyone's expectations. To almost universal surprise, Mu Gaoqi had countered and defeated Wang Jing with an almost monstrous level of ability!

That battle was an absolute classic, and it also qualified to be recorded in the history of Myriad Grand Ceremony. As a result, the battle was discussed the most overnight. The clamor raised around Mu Gaoqi's mysterious abilities was even greater. In fact, plenty of people suspected that Mu Gaoqi was feigning a lack of ability was most likely a sage realm cultivator already.

Apart from Mu Gaoqi's counterattack against Wang Jing, Ling Bi'er's even match against a Walkabout Sect's genius was just as

classic. She'd won after a pitched battle, and it was even rumored that she attained great understanding from the battle and showed signs of ascending to sage realm. Naturally, this too became the focus of many discussions.

……

On that dark night, at a shadow covered spot five kilometers away from the arena. A ghostly black figure landed inside the forest, materializing like black lightning. "Venerated Envoy Wei, the Nethersun Manor's main army had already been mobilized. They will be crossing the borders in three days time."

"Good." An indifferent voice rang deeply from amidst darkness, "How goes the situation at the Great Scarlet Mid Region?"

"According to the report of our spies in the Great Scarlet Mid Region, the fourth rank sects in the Great Scarlet Mid Region have begun to mobilize. They will be arriving in three to five days time as well. All the fourth rank sects in the Great Scarlet Mid Region have mobilized this time, and made very targeted deployments. It would seem that they are planning to utterly destroy all the sects in Myriad Domain." The intel brought back by this spy was incredibly detailed.

Chapter 652: The Fires of Battle Continue

This Envoy Wei was naturally Wei Zikua, who'd traveled to the Tristar Sect last time. Cao Jin had travelled with him had left the Myriad Domain first last time and returned to the Sky Sect, collecting Wu Heng and Shi Zhen to venture into Mt. Rippling Mirage and then perished there. In contrast, Wei Zikua hadn't left the Myriad Domain. He'd stayed to make his preparations and wait for the arrival of the Myriad Grand Ceremony. The rumors of the so-called Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal had been his work.

The appearance of these two matters had triggered the ambitions and impulses of the various Myriad Domain sects as well as provoked the Great Scarlet Mid Region, giving them another reason to invade the Myriad Domain again. This was all to give the Sky Sect a reason to intervene in the Myriad Domain. After Great Scarlet made their moves and clashed terrifyingly with the Myriad Domain sects, the Sky Sect would then appear with great fanfare when the two sides were injured and hoist high the banner of mediation. The Sky Sect would be able to do as they wished then.

The Sky Sect had raised the Tristar Sect after so many years in the Myriad Domain, so they'd naturally supported some other powers as well. They'd even arranged for pawns in each of the fourth rank sects. The pawns were just hidden very deeply, and there was no need to use them at non critical junctures. They were all puppets that would be used to control the Myriad Domain. Countless years had gone by as the Sky Sect had set all this up.

……

Jiang Chen had already opened his eyes from his meditation when the first rays of dawn shone onto the ground. The new day had come.

After a night of rest, the young geniuses had recovered their energy to peak form and was full of anticipation for the day ahead. The geniuses who yet remained were guaranteed spots on the rankings, but geniuses would fight to the very end for any spot on the rankings.

“How is everyone feeling?” Dan Chi walked over and smiled at the youngsters of the Regal Pill Palace.

“Greetings to the palace head.” The youngsters all greeted him in return.

Dan Chi waved his hand, “No need to stand on ceremony. The fights today will be even more heated up. There will be another three rounds today, with four groups formed at the end of them. Those eliminated in the first round will be in the fourth group, eliminated in the second round will be in the third group, the third round will be the second group, and the ones who emerge victorious in the third round will be the first group. Are you all clear on this?”

Everyone nodded in response.

“Qinghong and Mobai, you two are first seed opponents. The sage realm geniuses still will not meet each other in the battles

today. Therefore, those who can make it into the first group after today's battles are mostly sage realm geniuses."

Everyone was quite aware of these rules. At the end of the day, they were to protect the sage realm geniuses, to prevent the top geniuses from clashing against each other prematurely."

"However, there are 16 spots open in group one. There are 13 sage realm geniuses amongst the younger generation of the Myriad Domain, which means that there will be three spots going to non sage realm geniuses. There is hope for all of you."

There had originally been no spots left for those beneath sage realm, but the betrayal of the Tristar Sect had decreased the competition at the Myriad Grand Ceremony and left some quota for others.

Dan Chi smiled, "Everyone, just do your best. No matter what your rank is, I will not fail you as long as you have exerted yourself to your utmost."

Dan Chi was quite openminded and didn't purposefully give them any additional pressure. He knew that the Regal Pill Palace had no advantage at all in the ceremony. His eye was set on a goal far in the distance. It would be good to obtain a good ranking, but he wouldn't overly criticize them if they didn't. After all, momentary success was inconsequential given the current perilous situation of the Myriad Domain. But of course, it'd be good if the young geniuses performed above their usual level and achieved a heaven defying result.

However, as the palace head, Dan Chi still had a general understanding of the abilities of the Regal Pill Palace geniuses. Apart from Ling Bi'er surprising him with her impending break through to the sage realm, he knew full well how much potential Shen Qinghong and Nie Chong possessed. It was rather Jun Mobai that he felt possessed an extra depth of mysteriousness when compared to Shen Qinghong.

Of course, when it came to the only unknown factor of the Regal Pill Palace, that was Jiang Chen. If Dan Chi had to identify what he was most looking forward to this ceremony, that was Jiang Chen. He was well aware that only Jiang Chen had the ability to soar to the top with one amazing move, that Jiang Chen was a genius with heaven defying future. He also wanted to use this ceremony to plumb the depths of Jiang Chen's potentials. Jiang Chen hadn't disappointed with yesterday's competition, but he'd retained his aura of mystery as he hadn't used any trump cards at all. This had made Dan Chi completely unable to estimate Jiang Chen's martial dao potential.

As he watched the five youngsters from the Regal Pill Palace walk to the ring in high spirits, Dan Chi suddenly had a flashback to when he'd participated in the Myriad Grand Ceremony in his youth. He'd emerged from the mass as the dark horse in that year's ceremony, taking the championship and entering the Paramount Realm to further strengthen his dao. He'd gained much from that trip, but he hadn't run into the type of fortuitous occurrence that would chance his life.

This had disappointed him to a certain degree, as he'd felt that there should've been more to the mysteries of the Paramount

Realm. Time had been too short and perhaps he hadn't possessed enough fortune to run into that streak of heaven defying luck. As for the two Grand Ceremonies afterwards, the Regal Pill Palace never again produced another genius on the level of Dan Chi. If there was a dark horse to emerge from them this time, it would only be Jiang Chen and never Shen Qinghong.

The matches on the second day were vastly different from the first day. Ability had been uneven on the first day, and the gaps between the strong and weak had been enormous. They were noticeably smaller today, and apart from the sage realm geniuses far in the lead, there were no more absolute advantages any more.

"Everyone, those of you on the stage today are the top hundred geniuses of the Myriad Domain. There are places for you on the rankings of the Myriad Hidden Dragon Trials.

"Of the three rounds today, fifty will emerge from the first to advance to the next. We will select fortune from the fifty who lose to ascend as well, making for 64 in the second round. You will pair off and fight until the final rankings are determined."

It made for odd numbers if only fifty advanced from the first round. With sixty four total, they could cut down the numbers from sixty four to thirty two, thirty two to sixteen, sixteen to eight, eight to four, four to two, and the champion determined from the finalists. This also made it easier to arrange for the matches.

"Some of you may have questions on how we might select the fourteen? It's simple, we'll base it on cultivation level from those

who lose, and if the levels are the same, we'll base it on their opponents. For instance, if two candidates are eighth level origin realm, whoever faces off with a stronger opponent in the first round will be selected. Fourteen will be selected in this manner."

The additional list of fourteen was a jolt of security for many, enabling them to relieve the weight on their shoulders. It was obvious that everyone was a bit worried they'd be unlucky and eliminated in the first round if matched against a sage realm genius. However, with the additional list, even the unluckiest had the chance to make it through as long as they were strong enough. This mitigated to a certain degree the unfairness resulting from weaker geniuses being defeated by sage realm geniuses.

"This additional list makes sense." Although Jiang Chen didn't fear any sage realm genius, it would be unfair if someone at peak ninth level origin realm, such as Ling Bi'er, rang into a sage realm genius in her first round. After all, apart from the sage realm geniuses being guaranteed not to run into each other today, there were no other such rules. This meant that those at the peak ninth level origin realm wouldn't be protected during the draw and could also encounter a sage realm genius. With Ling Bi'er's strength, there was still a difference between her and a sage realm genius.

Entering the sage realm meant that one had truly set foot into the higher levels of martial dao. Those realms beneath sage realm could only count as a foundational level.

"Alright! Let's begin the draw."

Apart from the sage realm geniuses being coolly composed, the other cultivators were all feeling very solemn. Although there was an additional list for the losers, no one wanted to end up on it. It wasn't the most glorious way to ascend. And what if the sage realm genius lost their mind and actually hurt them? How would they fight when injured? Therefore, it was best to not run into a sage realm genius if possible.

Jiang Chen was very composed. He had his ways even if he ran into the top genius, Xiang Qin, of the Great Cathedral. It'd just take him a bit more effort, was all.

"Mu Gaoqi of the Regal Pill Palace versus Li Xin of the Great Cathedral Sacred Wolf family."

Li Xin, the third ranked genius in the Sacred Lion family, ninth level origin realm, and at least top 40 out of the hundred here. This opponent was much stronger than the Wang Jing before.

"Jin Feng of the Sacred Sword Palace versus Nie Chong of the Regal Pill Palace!"

Nie Chong's expression immediately changed when he heard this. The second genius of the Sacred Sword Palace whose strength was second to only Wang Han, also a sage realm genius. He'd entered the sage realm before the Pill Battles, a feat even earlier than Shen Qinghong! Nie Chong was naturally quite depressed to be facing such an opponent.

Chapter 653: Voluntary Forfeit

In comparison, Ling Bi'er's rather average draw luck had improved considerably. She actually drew an eighth level origin realm genius from a fifth rank sect as her opponent. It was a rare opportunity for Ling Bi'er to readjust her mentality.

Generally speaking, it was impossible for an eighth level origin realm genius from a fifth rank sect to compete against a peak ninth level origin realm genius from a fourth rank sect. Moreover, Ling Bi'er was currently in a state where she was on the verge of breaking through to sage realm. She was brimming with qi, without a doubt a great boost to her power. Ling Bi'er would be much stronger than usual in this situation.

Shen Qinghong and Jun Mobai were both sage realm geniuses. They were protected, and thus it was impossible for them to encounter another sage realm opponent. As long as their opponents stayed beneath sage realm, then it was all the same to them no matter who they drew. Shen Qinghong walked up to Nie Chong. "Do what you can and don't force yourself. We can afford to win just as we can afford to lose. There is no need to struggle pointlessly out of pride."

Nie Chong might be at the peak of ninth level origin realm, but he was obviously incomparable to the peak of first level sage realm Jin Feng. If his opponent was any other sage realm genius, they would've taken care not to go overboard and ruin a weaker opponent just because they were stronger. They wouldn't do so unless that weaker opponent purposefully taunted them.

However, the sage realm genius he'd drawn was from the Sacred Sword Palace. That was a problem. The Sacred Sword Palace and the Regal Pill Palace were sworn enemies.Their battles were incredibly intense every time they fought each other. Take Wang Jing and Jiang Chen's match for example. The stance Wang Jing had assumed from the beginning wasn't one suitable for an exchange of martial arts. Jiang Chen's counterattack had also obviously gone overboard.

Nie Chong inhaled deeply and nodded with a darkened expression, "I will be careful."

He was a man who preferred baring his fangs over hiding them. He couldn't accept forfeiting the moment he went up stage.

"All participants, please head for your rings."

On the Regal Pill Palace's side, Jun Mobai walked next to Nie Chong and patted him on the shoulder. However, he said nothing to him.

Ling Bi'er said faintly, "Be careful."

Jiang Chen walked over and stretched out his hand, "Good luck."

Nie Chong understood that there was no way that peers wouldn't take joy in the misfortune of someone in their own sect. He accepted their feelings, and strode into the ring with no more hesitation.

When Jiang Chen finally walked up the stage, his opponent had already been waiting for him for a while.

“Mu Gaoqi?” The Sacred Wolf family’s Li Xin had truly underwhelming looks. He had a sharp chin, a common pair of triangular eyes, and thin cheeks. His countenance gave off an incredibly sinister feeling, and his voice carried within it a strange, metallic quality that numbed a listener’s skull.

Jiang Chen nodded but said nothing. This was a martial arts competition. They had neither grudges nor bonds with each other, so there was nothing to talk about. He would let his strength speak for itself.

Li Xin’s mouth curled into a weird, eerie smile, “Mu Gaoqi, I have heard of you. You are born with an upper rank innate wood constitution, and a future pill king.”

Jiang Chen cast a glance at this Li Xin expressionlessly. He wasn’t sure what this guy was trying to say.

“I don’t wish to hurt you. How about this: I’ll let you have ten moves and then allow you to persevere for an hour’s time in the ring. Then, I’ll send you off stage with your dignity intact. What do you think?”

When Jiang Chen heard this, he couldn’t help his annoyance and his amusement. “Why?” Jiang Chen was curious about his reasons.

“I don’t wish to offend a future pill king. Is that good enough?” Li Xin appeared to be very confident in himself. He didn’t seem to care about Wang Jing’s defeat yesterday.

“Are you so absolutely confident that you can beat me?” Jiang Chen asked indifferently.

Li Xin was caught off guard by the question. He felt that his opponent was now spouting nonsense. I am a genius from the Great Cathedral, and you are just a seventh level origin realm Regal Pill Palace disciple. Isn’t it normal that I will defeat you?

As for Wang Jing’s defeat, what the hell does it have to do with me? Li Xin was at the ninth level origin realm, and a member of the Great Cathedral. The only people he paid attention to were sage realm cultivators like Wang Han. That peak eighth level origin realm cultivator Wang Jing? Li Xin had never paid him a whit of attention. He was completely unconcerned with Wang Jing’s victory or defeat.

Those of the Great Cathedral wielded absolute confidence in the Myriad Domain. In fact, they were almost blindly confident in their power. Therefore, Li Xin couldn’t help but laugh out loud at Jiang Chen’s question. He calmly replied Jian Chen’s question with a question of his own, “You can’t be thinking that you stand a chance against me, hmm?”

Jiang Chen let out a soft sigh. Why were the Myriad Domain’s geniuses always so blindly confident in themselves? He’d fought

against the geniuses of the first rank sect Ninesuns Sky Sect several times, but hadn't found this kind of blind confidence in them at all. Be it Cao Jin or that fatty Wu Heng, they'd never displayed such blind haughtiness. The geniuses of Ninesuns Sky Sect might be confident in themselves, but that didn't mean that they lacked prudence. They acted within boundaries, and was calm in the face of most surprising situations. They were neither blindly confident nor unduly humble. Although they were enemies, Jiang Chen had to admit that both the strength and the temperament of a first rank sect genius far exceeded those possessed by a Myriad Domain genius.

"Stop wasting your breath already. Come at me," Jiang Chen frowned.

Li Xin sneered, "Are you sure you want me to act first? You may not have the chance to act if I do so. I will give you one last chance: Ten moves, and an opportunity to descend this stage with dignity."

"No, thank you." Jiang Chen said indifferently.

"So you're saying that you want to refuse a toast and be forced to drink a forfeit?" Li Xin's voice turned chilly. He wasn't someone who normally had a good temper. The only reason he'd given Jiang Chen an option was because he didn't wish to offend a future pill king. After all, what if he had a favor to ask of the pill king in the future?

"This is a martial arts competition, not an invitation to a meal, so cut that toast and forfeit crap. If you're afraid to attack me, I can throw you a few punches instead." Jiang Chen really didn't wish to

waste his breath with this fellow any longer.

He took a few steps forwards, clenching his hand into a fist and abruptly dashed towards Li Xin like a beam of light. It was just the simple clench of a fist, but the crisp roar of a tiger and the howl of an ape accompanied it. The entire arena seemed to shake, as if an entire army was running across its surface. The battlecry of this illusory, yet incredibly powerful army seemed almost ceaseless.

In that moment, an illusion descended onto Li Xin's consciousness. It was as if he'd been thrown into an ancient slaughter ground. He couldn't believe that this one simple preparatory move for a punch could conjure so many profound illusions. His eyes, ears, skin, and every sensory organ he had was combining forces to assault his mind.

"Not good!" Yet, Li Xin was a Great Cathedral genius after all. That animalistic battle instinct he possessed wasn't for show. He slapped his head fiercely and repeatedly with both hands in attempt to chase out the attack on his consciousness. Then, he opened both his hands and transformed great waves of qi into ten sharp blades.

Swoosh swoosh swoosh!

The ten sharp swords conjured numerous phantom edges that resembled wolf fangs. Those full and crisscrossing blades of power actually transformed into shields of aura made of wolf fangs.

"Gale Wolf Shield!" The engraved runes in the wolf shield

vibrated intensely as it emitted rays of dark light that lent it a deep and abstruse air. The wolf shield formed from the fangs had obviously undergone a special rune treatment. Its defensive power was not to be underestimated.

Jiang Chen's fist slammed into the shield.

Bang!

The pressure from the fist caused the shield to emit a sharp crack! The wolf fangs that made up the wolf shield actually began to fragment, and the engraved runes vanished like shooed flies.

"What?" Li Xin was completely flabbergasted by this. He knew very well just how tough his Gale Wolf Shield was. Forget an seventh level origin realm cultivator, not even a peak ninth level origin realm cultivator could break it with just their boxing aura. In fact, even immensely treasured weapons would be hard pressed to break through his Gale Wolf Shield.

Instinct took over in the absence of thought. Li Xin's hands blurred through hand gestures as he hastily buffed himself with a defensive glyph. At the same time, his body twisted like a wolf in an attempt to dodge his opponent's fist.

However, while Jiang Chen's boxing technique appeared to be common, it obviously contained incredibly profound mysteries within it. Obviously, this punch wasn't as simple as a one-two punch. Jiang Chen took one step forwards, drawing back his fists before unleashing a quick two strike combo on his opponent.

Crack crack crack!

Li Xin might be quick, but he wasn't faster than Jiang Chen's fists. The defensive barrier created by his glyph was mercilessly shattered into pieces by Jiang Chen while he desperately dodged. Jiang Chen's fists seemed to be akin to indestructible divine weapons that prevented Li Xin from escaping his dire predicament, no matter how hard he tried to evade or defend. By now, as confident as Li Xin was, even he knew that he had drastically underestimated his opponent.

He could barely defend himself against his enemy's fist, much less counterattack his opponent and go on the offensive. For a moment, Li Xin was filled with bitterness and regret. He was known for his outstanding offensive power. His defensive ability was passable, but they were ultimately incomparable to his stunningly powerful offensive power. However, he had been denied any opportunity to attack even once in this battle.

Defend, defend, and defend once more.

Jiang Chen obviously didn't plan to waste too much time on this battle. He wanted to end this match as soon as possible. His technique changed slightly, and the powerful force of metal was added to his boxing aura. It was as if hundreds and thousands of swords was imbued into his fists to shatter seas and mountains.

Once again, he threw out a perfectly normal punch.

Wham!

Every defense Li Xin possessed shattered into pieces in that instant, and the punch continued to strike his chest. Just before Jiang Chen's boxing aura entered Li Xin's body, Jiang Chen pulled back his fist slightly and withdrew ninety percent of his strength.

Bam!

The remaining ten percent of power rammed into Li Xin's chest. Blood spurted out of Li Xin's mouth as he was launched sharply backwards. He was lucky Jiang Chen had been merciful. As Li Xin careened through the air, he slammed his hand into the ground, digging a trench into the arena as he tried to stop himself. After expending every ounce of his strength, he managed to reach a stop at the very edge of the arena. Another step, and he would've fallen off the ring. He spat out another mouthful of blood.

Li Xin stood dumbstruck at the edge of the arena with a gloomy look on his face. He was unable to immediately accept that he had just been defeated. However, when the mountain winds brushed by and caused Li Xin to shudder, he ultimately understood that his opponent had shown him mercy. If his opponent hadn't withdrawn a large portion of the strength behind the punch after it broke through his defenses, he would likely be a corpse on the floor already.

When his thoughts reached that point, Li Xin lost all courage to stay in the ring any longer. He gave Jiang Chen a deep, meaningful glance before clasping his hands and sighing, "Thank you for your mercy. I concede."

What?

Gasps of astonishment rang from beneath the stage. Was this really a member of the Great Cathedral's Sacred Wolf family? The Sacred Wolves was known to be the most warlike and competitive among the Great Cathedral's four great families! Had Li Xin truly just surrendered after being punched twice?

Chapter 654: Jiang Chen Muddies The Waters

Those watching beneath the stage thought that they had heard wrongly at first. Li Xin might not be the top genius in the Great Cathedral, but he was still a second-rate genius. He wasn't entirely subpar even compared to the first-rate geniuses of other sects. Plus, the Sacred Wolf family was famed for their ferocity. Would someone from the Sacred Wolf family really voluntarily surrender after a mere two punches from the enemy?

Most of the rounds of the various matches of this year's Grand Ceremony had been quite normal, so why did every battle involving Mu Gaoqi appear so out of the ordinary? During Mu Gaoqi's first round, the fifth rank sect disciple Feng Pao he'd gone up against had only been at the seventh level origin realm. However, Mu Gaoqi had struggled against him and looked drenched in sweat by the end of the battle.

His second round opponent, the Sacred Sword Palace's Wang Jing, was without a doubt several times stronger than Feng Pao, and the offensive power he displayed could only be described as incredibly destructive. However, when he displayed that terrifyingly strong offensive power on Jiang Chen, it seemed like a gentle breeze floating past the latter. In the end, Wang Jing was the one who'd been kicked out of the arena instead.

The third round had been even more bizarre. Li Xin was much, much stronger than Wang Jing, but this time, he didn't even have the chance to execute a move. After enduring several simple punches from Jiang Chen, Li Xin had vomited blood and

surrendered voluntarily.

What on earth was going on? It was as if every opponent Mu Gaoqi fought was acting with a script.

“Do you guys understand what’s going on? Why did that Li Xin surrender all of a sudden?”

“I wasn’t able to get a clear look. I think it was probably because Mu Gaoqi’s punches were pretty strong?”

“Who knows? I personally couldn’t see what’s so strong about his punches.”

It was true that Jiang Chen’s punches had appeared much too ordinary. It looked like a move that any true qi cultivator could execute. It didn’t even look like it contained any profound mysteries behind it, much less pleasing aesthetics.

Jiang Chen ignored the gazes of astonishment from beneath the ring and slowly made his way down. He’d actually become the fastest person to move onto the next round this time. He’d taken out his opponent faster than even the sage realm geniuses. That being said, it didn’t take long before the sage realm geniuses also finished their battles and walked down from their rings in a relaxed fashion.

Jiang Chen scanned the participants briefly and discovered that Myriad Domain’s sects had indeed sent out all of their elites this

time. The number of young sage realm geniuses he glimpsed were far greater than during the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles. “I see that some of the martial dao geniuses thought little of the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles.” Jiang Chen looked on briefly as the sage realm geniuses slowly made their way down the stage. In particular, the Great Cathedral alone had sent four sage realm geniuses. They were also the four most outstanding cultivators of the Great Cathedral’s four great families.

The Sacred Sword Palace was represented by three sage realm cultivators. The Dark North Sect, Walkabout Sect and Regal Pill Palace had two sage realm cultivators each.

If the Tristar Sect hadn’t wallowed in degeneration, then the top sixteen spots and leading echelon of the martial competition would have been fully monopolized by sage realm geniuses. It would’ve been impossible for someone not of sage realm to obtain a spot. Besides the sage realm geniuses, some of the one-sided battles also began ending in succession.

Ling Bi’er for example, had been quite lucky this time. She’d managed to draw a non-fourth rank sect opponent and easily won her round. In the end, four of the Regal Pill Palace disciples easily won their matches and proceeded to the next round. However, the last Regal Pill Palace disciple, Nie Chong, was in a miserable predicament.

His opponent was the Sacred Sword Palace’s number two genius, Jin Feng. This person was at peak first level sage realm, and perhaps not even Shen Qinghong would have been able to beat him in terms of pure combat power. Although Nie Chong had gone all

out from the start and used all of his trump cards, he still instantly fell into a disadvantageous situation.

Jin Feng obviously had no plans to hold back either. Although he was a little wary of Nie Chong using all of his strength from the start, Nie Chong wasn't so strong that he could force Jin Feng into a fluster. As the number two genius in Sacred Sword Palace, his strength and his trump cards were all a tier better than Nie Chong's.

It was true that everyone had advised Nie Chong to forfeit if he couldn't win. But even forfeiting required an opportunity, especially when the combatant had fallen into his enemy's rhythm. Jin Feng clearly didn't plan on giving Nie Chong any such opportunity at all. He went at him with full force, obviously planning to destroy Nie Chong in one go.

Everyone on the Regal Pill Palace's side was wearing solemn looks on their faces. However, no one could interfere with an arena battle. They could only sit and watch anxiously from beneath the stage.

"Honored Master, do you have any way to protect Nie Chong?" Shen Qinghong couldn't help but ask Elder Lian Cheng.

Elder Lian Cheng smiled wryly, "This is the martial competition of the Grand Ceremony, and there are rules in place that we must obey. If we interfere with this battle, then everyone from the sect will be disqualified from the competition. Plus, even if we ignore the consequences, the Sacred Sword Palace isn't here just for show. They will not idly sit by."

Shen Qinghong cast a glance at the Sacred Sword Palace's direction. It was obvious that those of the Sacred Sword Palace were eying them. They were clearly on guard against any movement, and doing their best to nonverbally provoke them into action.

Dan Chi said in a heavy tone, "Those who are willing to bet must pay their due."

Jiang Chen raised his head to watch the unfolding battle. He knew that Nie Chong would either die or be destroyed if this situation were to continue any further. To be frank, he wasn't responsible for Nie Chong's current predicament. Even if he hadn't destroyed Wang Jing earlier, the Sacred Sword Palace still wouldn't have shown mercy to a Regal Pill Palace disciple. At worst, his action of destroying Wang Jing had only worsened an already bad situation.

Jiang Chen cast a glance up the ring. Nie Chong was already surrounded by peril, and looked liable to falter at any moment.

While Nie Chong was extremely impulsive, he was ultimately a Regal Pill Palace disciple as well. If anything happened to him, Palace Head Dan Chi would be humiliated too.

Jiang Chen immediately sent a silent message to Long Xiaoxuan, "Brother Long, can you please help my peer over there? You don't need to show yourself. Just interrupt that battle for a bit so he has a chance to surrender."

Long Xiaoxuan was a true blooded dragon, and he was truly reluctant to do something as trivial as this. However, he had to admit that he had been getting along quite well with Jiang Chen recently, and Jiang Chen hadn't summoned him much at all. Therefore, he didn't turn down Jiang Chen's request despite his reluctance. He simply voiced his complaints, "I'm not your nanny. I can't believe you called me over for something like this."

"Brother Long, I don't have your ability to conceal yourself, do I? It is exactly because you are so capable that I ask for your help." Jiang Chen knew Long Xiaoxuan very well. He knew that this little dragon was amenable to coaxing but not coercion. If someone were to flatter him, coax him, and praise him to the heavens, then nothing would be a problem.

As expected, Long Xiaoxuan immediately grew motivated the moment he heard Jiang Chen's praise. The dragon race was very adept at invisibility and concealment. They could instantly transform into the size of a mustard seed and conceal themselves from the naked eye.

Of course, even without the ability to transform into the size of a mustard seed, a dragon could enfold itself within space and pass unseen.

Long Xiaoxuan shrank himself to the size of a mustard seed and flew up over the ring. It casually used a bit of strength and pushed down lightly on the middle of the ring.

Wham!

The two men who'd been caught up in a pitched battle were suddenly sent skidding backwards by an unknown power. They staggered to a halt at the edges of the arena, nearly falling off because of how off balance they were.

Nie Chong had been at the end of his rope to begin with. His valor had been the only thing that kept him going. Not only did he feel no anger at being pushed out of the battle, he even felt like a drowning person who'd suddenly risen above the water's surface.

Salvation!

As proud as Nie Chong was, he knew that this battle couldn't continue any longer. It was only a matter of time before he was destroyed by Jin Feng.

"I surrender." When Nie Chong uttered these two words, the Sacred Sword Palace disciples beneath the arena immediately started to boo and jeer.

"What the hell, how can he surrender without even putting up a fight?!"

"Is the Regal Pill Palace made up of cowards who escape from battle?"

"What trash! People like him have no right to be a part of the

Grand Myriad Ceremony!”

Even Wang Han could not help but swear inwardly. He was obviously surprised by this outcome as well. He couldn’t deny that Jin Feng likely wasn’t strong enough to ravage Shen Qinghong, but how had he given Nie Chong, a character below the sage realm, the chance to surrender? For a moment, Wang Han almost suspected that Jin Feng was purposely butting heads with him. Yet, Jin Feng himself was also completely bewildered by this outcome.

He had completely dominated the battle just now, and was literally seconds away from destroying Nie Chong. However, a strange power that he wasn’t able to resist at all had appeared out of nowhere and thrown him involuntarily to the edge of the ring. This shocking turn of events left him standing still in shock for a while before he finally came back to himself.

“Objection!” Jin Feng stared at the Regal Pill Palace beneath the stage with a furious look on his face, “Someone interfered with the battle just now!”

There were at least several hundred pairs of eyes who were watching the battle between Jin Feng and Nie Chong just now. It did look like a kind of force had pushed the duo apart while they were locked in battle earlier.

There was just one problem. All several hundred pairs of eyes had clearly seen no one interfering with the battle.

Had the Regal Pill Palace interrupted the battle?

Even if the Sacred Sword Palace hadn't been keeping a hungry eye on them, the Regal Pill Palace was still quite a distance away from the ring. Just how difficult would it be to interfere with the battle from that distance? Therefore, the referees wasn't sure how to deal with Jin Feng's objection.

Wang Jianyu was absolutely furious. His face darkened as he walked forward, "Dan Chi, the honest person does nothing underhand. If your Regal Pill Palace couldn't bear losing, then just admit it openly. Aren't you ashamed of interfering with a battle?"

"Right! The Sacred Sword Palace requests an investigation into the Regal Pill Palace's interference with a battle. According to the rules, they should all be disqualified!" A Sacred Sword Palace elder hooted.

"Yes, investigate them!" Everyone else in Sacred Sword Palace began to clamor as well.

Dan Chi himself hadn't interfered with the battle. He also knew that no one on the Regal Pill Palace's side had interfered with the battle. So he faced the Sacred Sword Palace's overbearing attitude fearlessly and showered them with a disdainful smile. "What did you just say, Wang Jianyu? Did you think everyone present here is blind, or is your Sacred Sword Palace simply made up of a bunch of pigs? You were all watching us with extreme prejudice. If we'd truly interfered with the battle, do you think no one here would notice? Would you have let us interfere without jumping in as well?"

Dan Chi had a clear conscience, so naturally his words were bold and confident. There were also plenty of Great Cathedral members who were dissatisfied with Sacred Sword Palace's complaints too. This was because the Sacred Sword Palace's claims that anyone who surrendered were cowards had stepped onto their toes too. After all, their Li Xin had just surrendered voluntarily just now.

The elder of Great Cathedral's Sacred Wolf family had naturally questioned Li Xin about his battle earlier and knew of Mu Gaoqi showing mercy. This was why the Sacred Wolf family felt a bit of gratitude towards the Regal Pill Palace. When they heard the Sacred Sword Palace claim that those who surrendered were cowards, they couldn't help but feel even more unhappy.

They felt gratitude for one side and disgust at the other. An elder of the Sacred Wolf Clan slammed his hands down on the table and surged to his feet. "Does the Sacred Sword Palace only know how to cause trouble without good reason? There are countless eyes who are watching this battle, and you claim that the Regal Pill Palace had interfered? I say instead it's you putting on the act and seeking to disqualify an entire sect!"

The slander caused the aggrieved Sacred Sword Palace to feel like they'd just run headfirst into a wall.

However, upon careful thought, the elder's statements weren't invalid either. There were plenty of people who were present during the battle. How could nobody have noticed if the Regal Pill Palace really did interfere with the battle? This was slander from the Sacred Sword Palace!

Chapter 655: Jiang Chen Takes the Field

Wang Jianyu had always been rude and overbearing. He was the kind of person who would always make something up to justify his own wants, never mind whether he was in the right. This time, anyone who wasn't blind could see that someone had interfered with the arena battle, and they hadn't even bothered to hide the fact that they had. Otherwise, why would Jin Feng and Nie Chong suddenly retreat to the edges of the arena for no reason?

Thus, Wang Jianyu had proper reason to be angry this time. However, it was just as obvious that no one from the Regal Pill Palace had interfered with the arena battle. Everyone present for the battle could bear witness to this. There were only so many people that the Regal Pill Palace had brought this time, and the cultivators who were powerful enough to interfere with the arena battle could literally be counted on one hand. They were Dan Chi, Elder Lian Cheng, and the sage realm elders. However, the fact that these people could interfere with the battle didn't mean that they could do so without being noticed. It was absolutely impossible that anyone from Regal Pill Palace could've done it. In fact, even the strongest cultivator in the Myriad Domain, Xiang Wentian, might not have been able to interfere with this arena battle without being detected.

In other words, unless a cultivator possessed the ability to create a double and send it off to a different location, as well as conceal its physical body and all signs of its presence, it was impossible that anyone could've interfered without being detected at all. Following this line of thought, there just wasn't a cultivator in the Myriad Domain who possessed such an ability.

Naturally, the Dark North Sect and especially Honored Master Tian Ming, stood on the Regal Pill Palace's side. The latter had just obtained the Longevity Pill from Regal Pill Palace after all, and was even more supportive of the Regal Pill Palace than usual.

"Ole brother Wang, the Regal Pill Palace really can't be blamed for this. How could the Regal Pill Palace possibly interfere with the battle while everyone was watching? In my opinion, we should just forget about this and move on."

The Great Cathedral had voiced their opinion. The Dark North Sect had also voiced their opinion. Obviously, the remaining Walkabout Sect wanted no part of this. The Sacred Sword Palace suddenly experienced a lonely, miserable feeling. No one seemed willing to listen to them.

Nie Chong had escaped death with inches to spare, so he was drenched in sweat from his back all the way down to the bottom of his feet. His legs were weak as he walked off the ring. Although he had fought in the ring with the determination to fight to the death, he understood that his best efforts would at best have caused Jin Feng a miniscule amount of injury. There was absolutely no way he could've taken his enemy down with him. That was why Nie Chong felt extremely relieved and fortunate to be able to withdraw from the arena intact.

When he returned to Regal Pill Palace, Shen Qinghong came over to console Nie Chong a little and give him a pat on the shoulder. But he said nothing to Nie Chong. In the same vein, Jiang Chen would naturally say nothing to Nie Chong. He had rescued Nie Chong purely for the Regal Pill Palace's sake. He wasn't trying to

show goodwill towards Nie Chong.

Nie Chong might have surrendered this round, but it wouldn't be difficult for him to enter the next round. He was already at the highest possible level beneath the sage realm, and had been taken out by a sage realm expert. Therefore, even if he lost the match, he could still enter the next round as a substitute, no questions asked.

Although the bizarre scene on the arena remained a mystery, the Sacred Sword Palace still couldn't recover from their frustration. "Hear this, Regal Pill Palace! If you guys cower like a turtle for the rest of the competition, we'll wrench open those turtle shells the second we run into you on the arena!"

"Pussies! Bunch of cowards!" The Sacred Sword Palace's youngsters mocked, ridiculed and hooted at Regal Pill Palace without pause.

Shen Qinghong's face was livid. As the number one cultivator among the younger generation of Regal Pill Palace, there was no doubt that these words humiliated him greatly. On the other hand, Jun Mobai turned a deaf ear towards Sacred Sword Palace's hoots. It was as if their swearing and abuse were completely unrelated to him. Nie Chong was gritting his teeth in anger, but he was the cause of all this abuse. What could he say against them?

Ling Bi'er was a woman. Naturally, there was no way she would lower herself to trade insults against the Sacred Sword Palace's pigs. However, Jiang Chen noticed that Ling Bi'er was looking at him when he looked towards her. Jiang Chen scratched his head and flashed a rueful smile. He had to admit that it would be an

immense blow to the Regal Pill Palace if he didn't say a little something in return despite being provoked by the Sacred Sword Palace like this.

He took a few slow steps forward and swept his gaze unhurriedly across the Sacred Sword Palace crowd, on their feet and hurling abuse at them. He suddenly revealed a strange smile and said, "Do you guys think we're weak just because we ignored you? Also, cut that petty act of yours and stop instigating a bunch of small fries to do your work, Wang Han. By the way, I heard that you're the number one genius in Sacred Sword Palace? I wonder if your lackeys would stop yapping if I take you out?"

Everyone's faces changed the second Jiang Chen's voice rang out. What did he mean by that? Was he openly challenging Wang Han? The other sects' interest was instantly piqued. Right now, Mu Gaoqi was the most mysterious person from the Regal Pill Palace. He was even more mysterious than Shen Qinghong. This mysterious Mu Gaoqi had actually stood up to issue an open challenge to Wang Han. Didn't this mean that a good show was brewing right around the corner?

Wang Han obviously hadn't expected this to happen either. He raised an eyebrow, his reply chilly, "What do you mean, boy? Are you trying to make a name for yourself or what?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "What if I am?" His expression and tone implied just what he thought of the number one genius of Sacred Sword Palace.

He's playing the blind man. Everyone was dumbfounded by this

conversation. There was no longer any doubt that he was clashing head on against Wang Han, and ‘Mu Gaoqi’ was unwilling to give even an inch of ground to his opponent.

Wang Han shivered inwardly in excitement, but his curiosity was actually piqued by Jiang Chen’s defiance. He stared closely at Jiang Chen and tried to figure out exactly why his opponent was so confident. Was he just pretending, or was he actually confident in his chances? Unfortunately, Wang Han didn’t notice anything from Jiang Chen’s face despite staring at him for a long time.

“Is there something on my face? Am I that handsome?” Jiang Chen’s mouth twitched.

Shen Qinghong walked over to Jiang Chen and spoke in a soft voice, “Junior brother Mu, this Wang Han is powerful and at peak second level sage realm. Do not fall for his tricks.”

Jiang Chen nodded and said, “I know what I’m doing.”

A frosty look crept over Wang Han’s face. He said in a low tone, “So, you want to challenge me?”

Jiang Chen laughed heartily before saying, “Challenge you? You thought too much. I simply thought it easier to cut the bullcrap with a single match, that’s all.”

A single match?

Everyone was stunned by this. Was Mu Gaoqi truly looking to duel Wang Han?

This was enormous news. Mu Gaoqi, a mere seventh level origin realm cultivator was trying to challenge Wang Han, a peak second level sage realm cultivator in a duel? No matter how one looked at it, this was plain suicide. Was Mu Gaoqi overconfident, or was he actually certain of his chances?

Wang Han was so angry that his expression gave way to a vicious grin. Suddenly, he lowered his voice and muttered a few words into Wang Jianyu's ears. Wang Jianyu's expression was heavy, and he observed Jiang Chen closely for a short period of time. When Jiang Chen had fought Wang Jing, he'd already thought that this Mu Gaoqi of the Regal Pill Palace wasn't ordinary. Now, the feeling that this kid was rather queer had grown even stronger.

However, Wang Han's strength was undeniable. It was simply impossible for a mere seventh level origin realm cultivator to bridge the gap between the origin and sage realm and threaten a peak second level sage realm expert. Wang Jianyu had researched every young genius in the Regal Pill Palace. Even if Mu Gaoqi was incredibly talented in pill dao, his foundation couldn't be changed. Although he seemed to have improved tremendously during these past two years, it was still impossible for him to achieve the necessary height of power required to win in such a short time. No matter how he played out the duel in his mind, Wang Han simply couldn't imagine any other outcome but his absolute victory.

After a moment's thought, Wang Jianyu nodded and immediately informed the referees of every sect, "Everyone, I am

sure that you are all privy to the grievances between our two sects. Since the Regal Pill Palace is so full of hope, why don't we fulfill them by taking out their names from the lot and grouping them together as a pair? The winner of the duel can proceed to the next round. I request the referees to permit this!"

The next round would determine the top thirty two participants of the competition. It would be a bit of a shame if Mu Gaoqi was disqualified during this round. With the level of strength he had displayed so far, it was entirely possible for him to become a top thirty two contender. Meanwhile, as a sage realm genius, Wang Han was destined to become a top sixteen contender. It would be an enormous loss to either party if they were to be matched up during the second round and disqualified.

The referee committee cast a glance at the Regal Pill Palace. It was obvious that they were asking the Regal Pill Palace's intentions. If both parties were fine with this arrangement, then of course they could make an exception for this case.

Palace Head Dan Chi gave Jiang Chen a meaningful look. Then, he smiled suddenly, "If the young man himself is confident of his chances, then naturally I have no objections."

What?

Dan Chi is fine with this? Everyone almost doubted their own hearing. Wasn't this Mu Gaoqi born a high rank innate wood constitution? So why was Regal Pill Palace so indifferent about him to the point where it seemed that he was born from a stepmother? Why did they do nothing to stop him from committing suicide?

Was Dan Chi really a sect master?

There were plenty of people who actually started to pity Mu Gaoqi. In fact, they wondered if Dan Chi was intentionally throwing Mu Gaoqi under the bus. After all, Mu Gaoqi versus Wang Han, a peak second level sage realm expert, looked like suicide for Mu Gaoqi no matter how they craned their necks to look at it. It was smashing an egg against a rock.

It was true that Mu Gaoqi had performed well earlier, beating Wang Jing and forcing Li Xin to forfeit. However, those cultivators were all third rate opponents. They couldn't even be counted as second rate. At minimum, a second rate genius had to be a peak ninth level origin realm expert.

Li Xin was only at the ninth level origin realm. Wang Jing was even worse at the eighth level origin realm. While a ninth level origin realm and second level sage realm seemed quite close to each other, there was in fact a huge gap between the two realms. The difference of strength was no different than that of heaven and earth.

Back then, had Shen Qinghong not risen to Wang Han's provocations when he was still at peak ninth level origin realm? He understood that that he had no right to challenge Wang Han until he reached the sage realm. If he had accepted the challenge back then, then he would've become the architect of his own death.

But now, seventh level origin realm Mu Gaoqi had actually stood up to challenge Wang Han instead of Shen Qinghong. It was impossible for the crowd not to be taken aback.

Yet, by this time, everyone had a guess that Mu Gaoqi had most likely hidden his true strength, given that he hadn't used any trump cards, or even finishing blows in his previous battles. However, despite their suspicions, no one could truly discern how powerful he was. Even someone as powerful as Wang Jiangyu wasn't able to decipher Mu Gaoqi's true level of cultivation. He was thwarted every time he attempted to peer through the veil. Mu Gaoqi had done very well to hide his true strength. On the surface, he looked just like a seventh level origin realm cultivator.

The Sacred Sword Palace was fine with the arrangement. The Regal Pill Palace was also fine with the arrangement. Naturally, no one else had any objections to this fight. After all, the point of the Grand Ceremony was to spar in martial dao. Whatever the format of the exchange might be, no one would voice an objection unless it departed from this spirit. Besides, who wouldn't want to watch a good show like this?

"Mu Gaoqi, I have to admit that I'm a little impressed by your courage. However, I have to ask, was your head caught in a door when you were a child?" Wang Han didn't bother to conceal his ridicule for Mu Gaoqi at all.

"The state of your head is far more dangerous than mine, I would think. I haven't seen anyone place the bar this high when it comes to cheapness. I slapped you once, I slapped you twice, and you're still sticking your face over for a third and fourth time. How cheap

are you, really?” Jiang Chen smiled faintly. He had already made up his mind to settle all the various matters with this one battle.

Chapter 656: Jiang Chen VS Wang Han

Jian Chen's grievances with the Sacred Sword Palace had begun with the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles, and after so many encounters he was well and truly tired of Wang Han. Seeing that the Sacred Sword Palace was so dissatisfied with the current state of affairs, Jiang Chen thought that he might as well stand up and make an example out of Wang Han. He would destroy Wang Han and shut up the Sacred Sword Palace once and for all.

Having entered the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's forbidden area, Jiang Chen's understanding of the Divine Abyss Continent and his improvement in martial dao had exceeded beyond the paradigm of the Myriad Domain. He wasn't much interested in the Myriad Grand Ceremony itself. He was actually more curious about the Paramount Realm that came after. Therefore, it didn't matter who he faced in battle. They were all the same to him. In that case, he might as well settle all his grievances with the Sacred Sword Palace and utterly extinguish their annoying arrogance. This could also be considered as his repayment for Palace Head Dan Chi's patronage.

As expected, Jiang Chen's words caused Wang Han's face to distort greatly. He knew that this fellow had a glib tongue, but he still couldn't help the fury that erupted in his heart. "Boy, I'd like to see how much bite is behind that smelly bark of yours!"

An indifferent smile tugged on the corner of Jiang Chen's lips as he said nothing in return.

It was obvious that Wang Han was truly furious this time. He

yelled, “Boy, weapons are blind in the heat of battle. Do you dare agree to a life or death match?!”

“Oh?” Jiang Chen’s eyes twitched slightly, “How will that work?”

“We’ll bet on the battle and be responsible for our own lives. Dare you accept this?” Wang Han tried to goad Jiang Chen into accepting his proposal.

Jiang Chen smiled leisurely, “Isn’t that how it’s supposed to be in the first place?”

“Hmph, the only thing I’m afraid of is you sore losers crying to us after losing the fight.” Wang Han was secretly pleased to see that he’d been somewhat successfully in goading his opponent. After being ridiculed repeatedly by ‘Mu Gaoqi’, Wang Han’s hatred for this ‘Mu Gaoqi’ had surpassed his hatred for Jiang Chen. This arena was the his best opportunity to grind this annoying opponent to pieces and vent his anger. Wang Han naturally didn’t wish to let it slip by. He had brought up the idea of a life and death battle so that he could kill Mu Gaoqi with every justification. He wouldn’t give the Regal Pill Palace anything to complain about later.

Jiang Chen was unruffled by this poorly disguised scheme. He smiled and said, “Since you’re so fearless and in such a hurry to gift your life to me, what reason do I have to turn down such an opportunity?”

Those who were clueless might've been fooled by Jiang Chen's calm attitude and cool words to think that he had already ascended to sage realm. The disciples of every sect started whispering amongst themselves beneath the ring.

"What on earth is wrong with this Mu Gaoqi? I don't think he'd been this unbridled in the past, was he?"

"I know, right? I heard that he was as cowardly as a mouse in the past. Could it be that his confidence really has been boosted by his abilities?"

"Bolstered by his abilities? How high do you think his cultivation level is? Anyone can see that his cultivation is weaker than Wang Han's. The Great Cathedral's Xiang Qin might be the only younger generation cultivator in the entire Myriad Domain who is assuredly stronger than Wang Han. I doubt that anyone else can beat him."

"You're right. Just what is this Mu Gaoqi's background? Why can't I figure him out? This is a life and death battle. He can't actually be a cat with nine lives, can he?"

"Eh, who knows? Let's just watch the show. At the point, death might be the only thing that can settle the grievances between those two sects."

While the audience was heatedly discussing things, Wang Han was staring at Regal Pill Palace's side in an aggressive and imposing manner, "Palace Head Dan Chi, what does the Regal Pill Palace say

about this duel?”

Dan Chi smiled faintly and responded, “I’m only afraid that the Sacred Sword Palace won’t take the loss gracefully.”

What? He’s afraid that Sacred Sword Palace might act like sore losers? The crowd couldn’t help but click their tongues. Palace Head Dan Chi sure knows how to catch people off guard. He can’t really be thinking that Mu Gaoqi would beat Wang Han, can he?

Does he really think that Sacred Sword Palace’s sword dao legacy is just for show?

Dan Chi didn’t care about the audience’s reaction. Instead, he cast an indifferent glance over at Wang Jianyu and said, “Wang Jianyu, if you think you can endure this loss, then do whatever you want.”

His casual words were met with a sneer from Wang Jianyu, “Dan Chi, do you actually think that your pathetic taunts can intimidate me? A life and death battle it shall be, as long as you can afford the loss!”

Dan Chi said indifferently, “Then we’re decided.”

Wang Jianyu’s heart couldn’t help but skip a beat when he saw how calm Dan Chi was. Could Regal Pill Palace really be as confident as they appeared?

The whole matter was too bizarre. Wang Jianyu couldn't help but feel like he'd been played. However, it was impossible to turn back now that harsh words had already been traded. He wouldn't just be making a fool out of himself, but would also humiliate the Sacred Sword Palace as well. Plus, he didn't really think that Wang Han could lose to a cultivator who wasn't famed for his martial dao. It was true that a high grade innate wood constitution was impressive, but that was only in terms of pill dao. Unless this talent was coupled with a unique wood based martial dao inheritance, it possessed no special advantages to speak of.

"Palace head, junior brother Mu..." Shen Qinghong looked like he wanted to say something.

Dan Chi smiled calmly, "Don't worry, he knows his limits."

Elder Lian Cheng hadn't said anything for the longest time, but he was already sneering on the inside. He knows his limits? I wonder how amusing it'll be when this show-off Mu Gaoqi is taken out by Wang Han with one strike. But of course, he kept those thoughts strictly in his mind, not revealing even a flicker on his face. Meanwhile, Jun Mobai stared at the arena and examined Jiang Chen from afar, a thoughtful look in his eyes.

Nie Chong himself was completely puzzled by this turn of events. He had no idea where Mu Gaoqi had found the courage to agree to a life and death battle. What was the difference between this and committing suicide? But no matter how much Nie Chong looked down on Mu Gaoqi usually, he couldn't help but be impressed by him right now. An odd emotion suddenly filled his heart. Hope, hope that Mu Gaoqi would safely return from the ring.

Ling Bi'er was also staring at the arena with unblinking eyes. However, she was the only one amongst the younger generation who knew the truth. Since she knew of Jiang Chen's true strength, there was naturally nothing for her to be worried about. In fact, she was somewhat looking forward to Jiang Chen stunning everyone in the martial arts competition in one go. Wang Han was without a doubt the best stepping stone to achieve that effect!

Since both sect masters had agreed to the duel, the bet to life and death was so decided.

"Senior brother Wang, do your best! I wager that you'll take out this kid in three moves!"

"Three moves? Are you still dreaming? Crush him in one move, senior brother Wang!"

"Brat, if I were you I'd surrender right now and die a slightly better death. If you wait until senior brother Wang crushes you later, there won't even be an intact corpse left!" The Sacred Sword Palace's people hooted like a rowdy crowd, like they were about to eat someone alive.

Jiang Chen suddenly laughed loudly, "Wang Han, if you're afraid you can just tell them to join you on the stage. Aren't you embarrassed to have them cheer you on like that?"

What?

Join him on the stage? This taunt was like a pail of oil dumped into a large fire. It instantly ignited the anger of the Sacred Sword Palace disciples.

“Are you trying to die, brat?!”

“Arrogant bastard! Senior brother Wang, definitely torture this brat to death!”

“Is this crazy bastard complaining that he’s lived too long?”

“Destroy him, senior brother Wang!”

Wang Han sneered as he stared darkly at Jiang Chen, “Do you hear that, boy? Are you prepared to face the Sacred Sword Palace’s judgment?”

“This bullshit just doesn’t end, does it? Start the fight already. I’ll give you three moves.” Jiang Chen frowned and crossed his arms in front of his chest, throwing an indifferent glance at Wang Han.

This action instantly re-ignited Wang Han’s anger. “How dare you act so impudent even in death!” Killing intent burst out of him in waves. Since ascending into the sage realm, the frosty sword aura that Wang Han cultivated could now freeze and crack the very earth, becoming so potent as to shatter the mountains themselves. An overbearing and powerful sage aura erupted into existence, and

transformed the entire arena into a vast world of snow and ice. This powerful and unfathomable coldness was not only chilling, but also seemed capable of freezing a human's soul and consciousness.

A white mist of ice coiled around and enveloped the entire arena. No matter how powerful one's vision was, it still couldn't penetrate the delicate mist. The audience could only hear the howl and roar of the frigid wind as a bone chilling aura seeped into the surroundings. The weaker origin realm geniuses who happened to be close to the arena couldn't help but back away. It was obvious that they couldn't resist the chill that spilled over from the arena.

The frigid atmosphere was already quite shocking beyond the ring itself. No one there could help the sudden doubt that sprang up in their hearts. How could the seventh level origin realm Mu Gaoqi withstand this boundless chill?

Suddenly...

A beam of white light shot towards the sky. It seemed to connect with the nine heavens themselves, summoning the frost of the heavens. Snowflakes the size of goose feathers started to drift through the arena. Crystalline in shape and color, each snowflake was a work of art in and of itself, comparable to the most beautiful flower in the world. It was if they could wipe away all the dirt and filth in the world.

"Mu Gaoqi, make sure you get a good taste of how weak you truly are!" Wang Han's proud laughter rang out from all corners of the ring. The domain of ice and snow suddenly blossomed, as if

revealing the fangs that had been hidden in this wintry world. As the snowflakes fell, crisscrossing sword auras and countless icy sword qi lights arced madly through the air. The entire arena was filled with the flurry of snowflakes. Before long, every snowflake contained a sharp and cold sword light. The drifting snow started to whip through the air, as a true snowstorm descended upon the arena.

As the swords light continued to cut through the arena, they grew in number and speed under Wang Han's control. Soon, they formed an enormous web of sword aura that shaved away at Jiang Chen's space. Wang Han gestured, triggering a sword incantation. Upon activation, the web of sword auras contracted, sending out many silken sword threads towards Jiang Chen.

"Sword aura like silk thread that can cut through the soul and corrode bones!" This thread-like sword aura might have appeared thin, but it was in fact scarier than any thick or enormous sword aura. Not only could this sword aura cut through flesh and blood, it could also slice through a person's soul. If Jiang Chen's body was invaded by the threads, then his only future would be a pool of meat paste. His soul would be crushed into bits as well.

One had to say that a casual attack by a sage realm genius was far, far stronger than anything Wang Jing and Li Xin could bring to bear. However, the current Jiang Chen was not the Jiang Chen who had found the Sage Fledgling Grass back at Mt. Rippling Mirage. Back then, Jiang Chen had no choice but to escape into the ground when Wang Han had interfered. His fifth level origin realm abilities would not have let him win without harming the Sage Fledgling Grass.

But now? Even if Jiang Chen were to go up against Wang Jianyu himself, there was no reason for him to dodge out of the way, much less Wang Han. The instant the sword auras reached within ten meters of him, Jiang Chen abruptly exploded with golden light. The ten meters wide of golden light from the Transformation of Demons and Gods instantly burst forth from his body.

This golden light was a strong defensive wall, around fifteen meters wide at full range. Jiang Chen had only summoned 70 to 80% of its defensive power at the moment. But even then, the golden light had been combined with magnetic and metal power. Its defensive power was so strong that even Wang Jianyu himself might not be able to break through it.

Wham!

The countless streaks of sword aura that resembled like silver needles sank into the golden light.

Pfft pfft pfft pfft! Much like countless lit candles that had suddenly been hurled into water, the golden light was rife with ripples and shrill explosive noises. Yet, in the end, Jiang Chen's golden light rippled, crushed and devoured all of the needle-like sword auras instantly.

Chapter 657: Light from the Eyes Breaks Through Mystical Ice

Wang Han wouldn't have been this surprised if Jiang Chen had utilized a strong defensive talisman to devour and dispel his sword aura of silver needles. After all, all fourth rank sects had some kind of reserve of heaven defying talismans. Wang Han would never believe that Mu Gaoqi didn't have any of those in hand, since he'd dared to stand in a ring against the former. But Mu Gaoqi had used the defensive golden light from his own body to destroy Wang Han's silver needles? Wang Han found this rather difficult to accept.

His sword qi had been devious and wily, and would have penetrated even the smallest deficiency in the strongest defensive talisman. Once it seeped in like an insidious breath of air, it would drill into his opponent's body like a flesh eating bug, devouring through his opponent's flesh, blood, tendons, meridians, organs, and even consciousness! Although this move didn't count as Wang Han's great trump card, there was scarcely anyone in the younger generation of the entire Myriad Domain that could take this blow and still remain standing.

But now, an ant at seventh level origin realm had broken through his sword qi of silver needles with his own abilities? The match between Mu Gaoqi and Wang Jing suddenly flashed through Wang Han's mind. Wang Jing's surging sword qi and frothing whale king qi currents had also been easily negated by the other's defenses. Wang Hang had an odd feeling in that moment. He started to truly suspect that Mu Gaoqi had some sort of treasure that defended against sharply honed attacks, resulting in his complete lack of fear when facing them.

However, Wang Han had many techniques up his sleeves. One technique's failure was far from enough to make him shrink back. On the contrary, his rage had only grown and his battle intent stoked to a higher intensity!

"Mu Gaoqi, I admit that I've underestimated you. However, you've also successfully enraged me. I'll let you understand today what a true sage realm genius is!" Wang Han advanced on his opponent. His approach embodied the very essence of a gaunt and ice gripped mountain . He seemed the source of all the wintry air in the world, causing the temperature around the arena to take a steep plunge. The snowstorm raged even more fiercely as it transformed into a true blizzard. Crystalline snow fell in biting sheets as the ring vanished from view. The cruel and endless world of snow and ice expanded to become a glacial kingdom in an instant.

The ring had already been covered by this snowy world, and as Wang Han continued to release his frost energy, his control over this icy land suddenly exploded. He seemed capable of freezing the very air in one's lungs, trapping all living beings in coffins of their own frozen flesh.

Whoosh!

A stark silver light burst into the skies behind him, streaking through the sky...

Then another...

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

The silver lights crossed in mid air, coalescing to become enormously thick white chains that enclosed the arena.

“This move again?” Jiang Chen scoffed inwardly, but noticed upon closer inspection that the movement of these silver air currents was still different from the space slicing method that Wang Jing had deployed. At the very least, the nature of the air current was different, and it seemed that Wang Han’s ice currents were several levels stronger. However, Jiang Chen’s ascension to the sage realm had exponentially increased his strength. Even air currents twice or threefold stronger than these wouldn’t be enough to hold him. Wang Han’s frosted air currents were far from sufficient.

“Mu Gaoqi, let’s see how you struggle out of my locks of mystical ice!” These interlocking air currents of mystical ice was the strongest sage realm technique that Wang Han could call upon. Not only were they frighteningly cold, they were also terrifyingly flexible. The power of extreme cold would decrease an opponent’s speed and freeze their body’s operations, even their very consciousness! This was one of Wang Han’s trump cards.

Wang Han’s gaze was cold as he inspected the layers of intersecting mystical ice. When he concluded that he hadn’t left any dead corners at all, his confidence immediately exploded, certain in the knowledge that his opponent was a fish in a barrel. His opponent was now prey that he could tear into as much as he pleased. He gave a long whistle and grasped the air. A longsword

materialized between his hands. Overflowing with the power of frost, it seemed like a blade of mystical ice that pulled out of a mountain of ice. It glowed with a mysterious white light, as solemnly dignified as the embodiment of the frozen wind that blows from the depths of a glacial hell.

He lifted the blade into the air and an awe-inspiring figure of an ancient demon-god coalesced above it. Its arms were raised high as it became one with the sword of mystical ice, hovering atop Jiang Chen's head.

"Tell me, kid, do you want to be sliced... or diced?" Wang Han'a laugh and tone betrayed his mindset, certain in his superiority and about to toy with his food.

Yet, Jiang Chen smiled as a hint of pity flashed through his eyes. He suddenly felt that Wang Han was rather pathetic. Even though he'd cultivated to second level sage realm, his only way of displaying his abilities was to trample the geniuses around him. Yet, such a genius was nothing more than a frog at the bottom of the well known as the Myriad Domain. No matter how he hopped, he would never be able to hop out of the well. As his thoughts reached that point, Jiang Chen spoke up, his tone cool and indifferent. "Wang Han, if all the so-called top geniuses of the Myriad Domain only know how to preen themselves like you, then you all will become the tragedy of the Myriad Domain. Since your arrogance seems to know no bounds, let me show that delusional confidence of yours what reality looks like!"

Jiang Chen's eyes widened, as his eyes burst forth with golden light. God's Eye was like a bright sun behind his eyes, lighting up

the entire ring. Two fountains formed within his eyes as he activated the Evil Golden Eye as well, adding metallic power to it. The golden light obliterated the silver restraints in the air, exuding a terrifying killing intent. Like the unstoppable tide of a cavalry charge, the golden light tore through everything in its path.

Pfft pfft pfft pfft!

The skies, full of currents of extreme cold, shrieked as each and every air current was ripped to shreds by the golden light. It shone forth like a conquering army, shredding the blizzard that had raged in the arena. The ring once again appeared from beneath the snow. All this, from just his eyes!

What?

Wang Han was struck dumb, as was everyone watching from beneath the ring. The ring had been obscured by the descent of a icy world, and everyone had imagined various grisly scenarios as flashes of silver light danced inside. They couldn't help but feel nervous for Mu Gaoqi as their imaginations conjured up increasingly morbid scenes under Wang Han's savage blows.

But they'd never imagined—

They hadn't even the time to finish taking in a breath when the golden light had exploded out from the ring, and annihilate the ice-sealed world of snow. 'Mu Gaoqi' stood as he had from the beginning, his arms crossed in front of him, not having changed an iota from beginning to end. The audience hadn't even seen how

he'd made his move. All they'd seen was the golden light suppressing the white light, destroying the world of snow in an instant.

"Everyone look! His eyes..."

"Right, right, there seems to be golden flecks in his eyes!"

Jiang Chen hadn't completely retracted his eye technique yet, a detail that made the audience abruptly understand what had happened.

"It's an eye art!"

"What a frightening art! To think Mu Gaoqi hid himself so deeply!"

It wasn't rare to train in eye arts in the world of martial dao, and it wasn't enough to suspect Mu Gaoqi's true identity. After all, Jiang Chen hadn't fought with many people in the Myriad Domain with his eye arts, so there weren't that many people who knew of his skill in them. Apart from Palace Head Dan Chi knowing of the Evil Golden Eye, no one else had been able to glean any hints from it.

Wang Han's power of mystical ice could numb his opponent's nerves, slow them, freeze their circulation and eventually even their consciousness. Jiang Chen's Evil Golden Eye could do the same thing, except Wang Han froze his opponents, and Jiang Chen

turned his into metal. It was a good thing that Wang Han had swift reflexes. When the Evil Golden Eye swept through him, his consciousness suddenly trembled and he hastily closed his eyes. He leaped back, evading the quick intrusion from Jiang Chen's Evil Golden Eye.

"This kid moves fast." Jiang Chen laughed softly inside.

Having two of his major moves thwarted, Wang Han was now quite dejected. He raised his longsword again and began to coalesce the figure once more. Without a word, he slashed down angrily with the momentum of splitting apart Mt. Hua.

The very air trembled as he brought his sword down, as both sides of the blade froze the air around it. Two walls of mystical ice six meters wide also came hurtling towards Jiang Chen. They sealed off his escape routes to either side as the light from the longsword hurtled down from above. It was well thought out, trapping him in place. Even underground was no longer safe as the sword would hew open the earth to get to him.

Everyone sucked in a breath when they saw this stunning strike. This blow encompassed the strongest profound mysteries of the blade that Wang Han possessed. It was a guaranteed, fatal blow that didn't allow Jiang Chen a millimeter of distance to dodge.

It was at this moment that Jiang Chen made his move. He lifted his arm slightly as he focused his energy to a small ball of light on his right index finger, one that sparkled with the deep hue of the galaxy.

“Slash!” Jiang Chen suddenly cut the air with his index finger, his speed so fast it was as if he was a ghost. The fourth technique of the Supernova Point—Galaxy Slash!

Even Cao Jin had been wary of the strength behind this multitude of slashes, much less a mere Wang Han!

Suddenly—

Crackcrackcrackcrack. Cracks spiderwebbed across the walls of ice as the walls groaned in protest.

An explosive bang rang out in the next instant as they collapsed into fragments of ice. However, the entire process had taken too long; Wang Han’s fatal blow had already arrived directly above Jiang Chen’s head

“Die, kid!” Wang Han leered. He’d given up on his mindset of toying with Jiang Chen. Multiple trump cards of his had been destroyed almost effortlessly. His only mission now was to kill Jiang Chen, by any means he could.

The blade cleaved through the air, the earth, through space itself. The audience gasped beneath the stage. They all knew that Mu Gaoqi had the golden light to protect himself with, but the blade was mere moments away from bisecting him. There was no time for the light to activate!

It was at this time that Mu Gaoqi up on the stage did something that no one would've imagined in a thousand years. One hand lifted into the air, fingers splayed out wide; it was almost like... he'd raised it to catch the sword!

"What?! He's going to use his hand to block the sword?"

"Oh no, Mu Gaoqi was overconfident in the end!"

"I'm afraid this blow will cut him into two!"

Many sighed; they'd felt that Mu Gaoqi had already demonstrated the raw ability to contend with Wang Han after successfully breaking through two of his moves in a row. But who would've thought that he would be so brash this time as to wish to catch Wang Han's blade with his bare hand? Wasn't this just asking for death?

The westernmost mountain of the Five Great Mountains of China and has a long history of religious significance.

Chapter 658: We All Have Trump Cards, But I'm Still Stronger Than You

The same thing done by different people would obviously result in different outcomes. Not even Xiang Qin, the most outstanding cultivator amongst the younger generation of the Myriad Domain, would dare try to grasp this sword barehanded. However, the only exception in the Myriad Domain was Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen extended a hand as the golden light around his palm abruptly brightened.

Plonk!

The body of the longsword of mystical ice landed solidly in his palm. A dull bang echoed around the arena, and Jiang Chen's palm remained perfectly unharmed from the strike. Wang Han's expression, on the other hand, abruptly changed as he drew upon his strength repeatedly in an attempt to pull his sword free from Jiang Chen's grasp.

However, no matter how hard he tried, his sword didn't move an inch. "How... how is this possible?" Even if his opponent's was made out of metal and stone, there would still be some sparks, right? So what on earth was Mu Gaoqi's palm made of?

"Isn't this Mu Gaoqi a little too overpowered?"

"He caught the sword with his bare hand. Not even Xiang Qin

would be able to do such a thing, would he?”

“The most unbelievable part is that he didn’t look hurt in the least. In fact, Wang Han’s the one who’s trying to pull away.”

Over on the Regal Pill Palace’s side, Palace Head Dan Chi was the only one who looked perfectly cool and collected in face of this outcome. Even Elder Lian Cheng’s well-built form trembled as he blurted out disbelievingly, “P-Palace Head… what on earth is going on?”

Shen Qinghong was even more surprised. Since when had the honest and introverted Mu Gaoqi that he knew of become this powerful? Not only had he tried to capture Wang Han’s sword with his bare hand, he’d actually succeeded in the attempt!

Nie Chong’s face was more or less the same as Shen Qinghong’s, filled with astonishment. Even the eyes of a cool beauty like Ling Bi’er were sparkling like stars. She looked overjoyed at this turn of events. She knew that Jiang Chen had improved tremendously, but she hadn’t expected him to be this powerful. Jun Mobai was observing the battle happening in the ring with an unfathomable expression, his eyes carefully evaluating the scene. However, he too was absolutely shocked by Jiang Chen’s power.

Dan Chi smiled calmly and said, “It is exactly because the world of martial dao is full of miracles that it is so attractive to all of us.”

He sounded a bit like a show-off, but no one could deny the truth of his words right now. Mu Gaoqi’s performance was, in every

sense of the word, a miracle. In fact, it was the kind of miracle that no one'd had the audacity to imagine.

In complete contrast to the Regal Pill Palace's completely delighted mood, the Sacred Sword Palace was utterly stunned by this. Wang Jianyu's eyes betrayed his deep shock and bewilderment. Nevertheless, he had enough presence of mind to remind, "Wang Han, do not underestimate your opponent."

Wang Jianyu was a formidable man. He sensed a hint of danger and unrest from this battle. He hadn't expected an obscure cultivator like Mu Gaoqi to display such a ferocious level of combat power out of nowhere. He had to admit that Mu Gaoqi was absolutely capable of battling Wang Han on equal footing. In fact, the Regal Pill Palace disciple possessed enough strength to threaten Wang Han's very life! That was why he reminded Wang Han to not underestimate his opponent.

"Sect Master, this Mu Gaoqi..." Those of Sacred Sword Palace voiced their doubts.

Wang Jianyu's eyes were dark with meaning, "This boy possesses unfathomable strength. If Wang Han isn't careful, he may very well lose against Mu Gaoqi."

"What?!" Everyone in Sacred Sword Palace was absolutely flabbergasted at those words. In their eyes, their eldest senior brother was renowned throughout the Sacred Sword Palace and absolutely invincible. How could they even entertain the thought that he would lose? And to an obscure boy from the Regal Pill Palace no less? For a moment, no one in the Sacred Sword Palace

could accept this statement at face value. Jin Feng couldn't help but ask, "Sect Master, just what martial dao does Mu Gaoqi practice?"

Wang Jianyu sighed, "I don't know either. In fact, I suspect that his martial arts legacy fundamentally exceeds the Regal Pill Palace's level."

"I believe in eldest senior brother!"

"Yeah, eldest senior brother still has a lot of trump cards. I believe that he'll definitely win out over the enemy."

"We support the eldest senior brother! Destroy the Regal Pill Palace, eldest senior brother!"

Above the arena, Wang Han had unsuccessfully tried thrice to yank his sword from Jiang Chen's grasp. His surprise only grew with each attempt.

"What tricks have you used, brat?" Wang Han suddenly felt like he couldn't see through his opponent, even now. A formidable eye art, a formidable finger ability, and a formidable one-handed blade blocking technique. The diverse skills that Mu Gaoqi had displayed in the ring was worlds apart from the Regal Pill Palace disciple Mu Gaoqi that Wang Han remembered.

Had he been hiding his true strength all this time, pretending to be a pig so he could eat the tiger? When Wang Han thought about

this, he couldn't help but tremble in anger. You want to hide your true strength, is it? In that case I'll beat you into a real pig!

With a step, he thrust his sword forwards instead of pulling it back to himself. Jiang Chen let out a laugh and twisted the sword, slipping it from Wang Han's grip and into his hands. He smiled casually, "How nice of you to gift me this sword."

Wang Han's fury erupted. It wasn't as if he had another choice. He had thrust the sword forward in an attempt to catch his enemy unawares, but he didn't think that his opponent would be on guard against it as well. Now, it really did look like he'd simply handed the sword to his opponent's hands. His opponent's taunts made him feel even more humiliated by this failed attempt.

"Gift? You first need to be alive to accept it!" Wang Han's fury had reached new heights. He unclenched his fist, and summoned a scroll into his palm. As the scroll rolled open, three balls of snowy white light rolled off its surface. The three balls of light hit the ground and expanded into three creatures, each at least ten meters tall. When the glow died, three white-haired Giant Icebears appeared.

Howl! Howl! Howl!

The Icebears raised their arms to the sky and let out earth-shattering roars. They sounded so loud and intimidating that the world itself seemed to cower before their might. The entire arena shook along with the roars.

Dongdongdong!

All three Giant Icebears brimmed with tremendous power, all at the level of the mortal sage realm. This turn of events caused a soft murmur of shock to begin from beneath the arena. The three ferocious and cruel Icebears were thick-limbed, bloodthirsty and terrifying. Their attack stance alone would probably cause the consciousness of weaker people to collapse on the spot. It was absolutely terrifying.

“Are those… Sealed True Saint Beasts?”

“Three true saint beasts at the level of mortal sage realm. What a favored disciple!”

“Oh no, oh no. Mu Gaoqi was a rare dark horse, but it looks like he’s going to be suppressed entirely from here on.”

“He still has time to concede defeat.”

“Yeah, no matter how powerful he might be, can he really withstand the combined attack of three true saint beasts and a Wang Han? No matter how powerful he might be, there’s no way he can fight one versus four.”

Everyone’s opinions turned from anticipation to the depths of pessimism in an instant. But although they were in awe of Wang Han’s methods, they were also slightly dissatisfied with the path he was taking. After all, this was a duel, a one-on-one fight. This

had just devalued the battle from a competition of ability to a competition of wealth. Wang Han was the number one genius of Sacred Sword Palace, but rather than fighting his enemy in single combat, he had chosen to employ such an dishonorable method instead. While summoning helpers this way didn't count as breaking the rules, it was ultimately an unfair fight.

Everyone's breathing on Regal Pill Palace's side grew rapid. Ling Bi'er especially was feeling a sudden wave of regret for encouraging Jiang Chen to stand up for the Regal Pill Palace. Earlier, the reason she had been so expectant was because she was sure that Jiang Chen had the ability to fight Wang Han. However, she never imagined that Wang Han would use a dirty trump card like this. Any one of these three Giant Icebears were as strong as Wang Han in terms of offensive ability. In fact, their defensive power might even be stronger than Wang Han. Jiang Chen's predicament immediately caused Ling Bi'er's heart to thump rapidly. She almost gave in to her impulse and asked Jiang Chen to give up the match. However, she knew that Jiang Chen would never forfeit after he entered a fight.

"What do we do, Palace Head? This Wang Han is absolutely despicable!" Shen Qinghong squeezed his words through gritted teeth.

For a moment, Palace Head Dan Chi wasn't sure what to do. He knew that Jiang Chen was strong, but he wasn't sure if Jiang Chen could withstand a trial like this. "Gaoqi, be careful! Just do what you can." Palace Head Dan Chi reminded him. He didn't say it openly, but he was in fact granting Jiang Chen the right to concede the battle. If Jiang Chen admitted defeat now, Dan Chi wouldn't blame him in the slightest. However, he had obviously

underestimated Jiang Chen's determination.

Jiang Chen smiled calmly upon hearing his advice, and turned to look at Wang Han, "What do you mean by this?"

Wang Han laughed and said, "What do I mean? Do you really not understand?"

"You plan to win by numbers?" Jiang Chen frowned.

"So what if I am? Do the rules say that I can't do this?" Wang Han was extremely pleased with himself. It didn't matter what method he used as long as he could defeat his opponent. In fact, this was precisely the outcome he wished to see. The more Jiang Chen acted this way, the more he thought that Jiang Chen was afraid.

"Do the rules allow this? Is it fine to win by numbers?" Jiang Chen glanced at the audience, but didn't see any judges objecting to this state of affairs. He nodded slightly and looked back at Wang Han, who was feeling supremely proud at himself, "Let's see who has the bigger army then."

Jiang Chen's hands flickered, as one golden light after another fell from his hands.

Taptaptap.

Golden prayer beads clattered as they landed on the floor. Like

golden beans, they bounced on the ring's floor. A flash of golden light later, the six beans disappeared to reveal six golden armored soldiers. They looked majestic, and they were all at the level of mortal sage realm.

The audience went crazy. Every new development seemed crazier than the previous, keeping their attention transfixed on the battle. Their hearts and emotions rose and fell again and again like a wild rollercoaster.

There had just been too many surprises in this battle. First, Mu Gaoqi had used his eye art to break through the locks of mystical ice. Then, he'd used his finger to shatter Wang Han's walls of ice. They'd barely gotten over that when he used his bare hand to catch Wang Han's sword. Finally, Wang Han summoned three Giant Icebears at the mortal sage realm level in an attempt to win by numbers and regain the initiative.

However, before he could convert this initiative into any sort of advantage at all, Mu Gaoqi had surprised everyone again and summoned six golden armored soldiers of his own. None of those soldiers were in any way weaker than the three giant bears. How could they not be entertained by these non-stop surprises?

"One of them hid beasts in his scroll, and the other scattered beans that transformed into soldiers. Amazing! This is truly amazing! They truly are the top geniuses of the Myriad Domain."

"Tsk tsk, these bean soldiers are just too incredible. What on earth has Mu Gaoqi gone through to procure such a thing?"

“I can’t believe this is happening. Everyone’s underestimated the Regal Pill Palace. Mu Gaoqi is obviously gunning for first place in the rankings!”

For a time, the audiences were filled with conflicted emotions. Envy, jealousy, admiration and longing roiled in a unrelenting war in their hearts…

Chapter 659: The Utter Domination of Wang Han

Even the Regal Pill Palace's Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Lian Cheng were filled with sudden emotion, to say nothing of anyone else. Palace Head Dan Chi was mainly sighing over the fact that Jiang Chen was indeed truly worthy of Elder Shun's high regard. There was no doubt that Jiang Chen was going to become a star in one brilliant stroke today. This strengthened Palace Head Dan Chi's intentions to keep Jiang Chen in the Regal Pill Palace and pursue Elder Shun's path. If Elder Shun returns in the future, I'll cast all considerations of face aside and beg him to take me as his disciple. I don't care even if I'm just a nominal disciple.

By now, Dan Chi could almost say with certainty that Elder Shun was an emperor realm expert, or even a Titled Great Emperor! Meanwhile, Elder Lian Cheng was feeling very jealous. He could never imagine that the personal disciple Elder Yun Nie cared for so greatly would possess such wondrous martial dao talent too.

Seriously, what the hell? Is my position as the hallmaster of the Hall of Might just for show? This Mu Gaoqi, if he was this strong in the first place, why did he go to Elder Yun Nie and ask to be his disciple and not mine? The more Elder Lian Cheng ruminated, the more sullen he became.

Shen Qinghong and the others were completely numb. They had been utterly shellshocked by Mu Gaoqi's almost endless pool of skills. Shen Qinghong suddenly discovered that Mu Gaoqi might very well replace Jiang Chen as the true number one genius in Regal Pill Palace. Meanwhile, for the first time in the entire Grand

Ceremony, one could find disbelief in Jun Mobai's eyes. Countless questions regarding Mu Gaoqi swirled around him. Ling Bi'er trembled slightly, barely mastering her excitement.

Up in the ring, Wang Han stood, dumbfounded. How could this be? Why was this brat able to deal with any move he dished out?

"Are you cheating, Mu Gaoqi?" Wang Han gritted his teeth.

"Cheating? Isn't winning by numbers exactly what you wished for? I'm just giving you a taste of your own medicine. It seemed only appropriate to satisfy your desires." Jiang Chen smiled calmly. He was too lazy to bicker with Wang Han.

Wang Han couldn't help himself anymore. A low growl turned into a full roar as madness flashed in his eyes. He snapped his fingers, and the previously still Giant Icebears burst towards Jiang Chen in a sudden charge. He was obviously trying to use their enormous bodies to crush Jiang Chen and the golden armored soldiers. However, Wang Han had obviously underestimated the combined combat strength of those soldiers.

Jiang Chen had summoned these golden armored soldiers from the Soldier Rosary Beads. They were refined as an imitation of human cultivators, and Jiang Chen could control these immensely strong soldiers in any way he wanted. They were completely different from the primitive Giant Icebears. Moreover, these six golden armored warriors obviously outnumbered their opponents. How would they possibly allow these giant bears to approach Jiang Chen?

The warriors paired up to pick off an Icebear. They quickly broke up the trio and gave each one a thorough beating. The Icebears might be ferocious, but they weren't as flexible as the golden armored warriors that were built to imitate humans.

The Giant Icebears could only passively take blows as they desperately tried to hold off two soldiers each. It didn't take long before the three giant bears were howling in pain. Wang Han's face was livid as he watched the battle, feeling so irritated that his eyes were about to spit fire. If only he had his sword, he would've hacked this damnable opponent several hundred times over and minced him into meat paste.

Jiang Chen was unruffled despite the commotion. He calmly watched the lively battle. He knew that there was no way these three giant bears could hold on for long, not to mention that Jiang Chen had only summoned the six weakest units from his Soldier Rosary Beads. He could also summon the earth sage realm and sky sage realm warriors if needed.

When Wang Han saw Jiang Chen crossing his hands across his chest so leisurely, he grew even more furious. How dare you look down at me? Wang Han was so infuriated now that he threw aside any idea of holding back.

He formed a hand seal and opened his palm. Rays of cold light swirled into existence on his palm. Once they'd accumulated, he flung them into the sky where they transformed into a mountain of ice. Unsatisfied, Wang Han formed another seal, gathering more rays of cold light that he then threw into the sky. He repeated this

another eight times. The rays formed another layer atop the previous layer until the mountain had a total of nine layers. Significantly taller than its first iteration, the mountain hovered imposingly between heaven and earth, and brimmed with a shocking amount of ice energy and power. It looked like it alone could hold up the sky.

Wang Han leered, “Close your eyes, Mu Gaoqi. Die content in the knowledge that you’ve forced me to reveal my ultimate trump card. No matter what or who, all living beings will be crushed under this nine layered ice mountain!”

Truth be told, this nine layered mountain of ice was incredibly imposing. Even those beneath the ring felt oppressed by the mountain, even they were quite far away from the battlefield. It felt like their souls were in danger of crumbling under the repeated waves. As for Wang Jianyu, he was full of smiles when he saw Wang Han summon the nine layered ice mountain.

In his mind, the outcome of the battle had been decided the instant the summon had been a success. Wang Jianyu had to admit, it was a pity that Wang Han had been forced to reveal his final trump card. He would be at a slight disadvantage when he fought for the championship at the end. But there really hadn’t been any other choice. If he couldn’t surpass the wall that was Mu Gaoqi, that what championship or finals was there to speak of?

Moreover, who cared if he used his trump card? Even if his main competitors saw this, they still might not necessarily be able to break through it. After all, this nine layered ice mountain was made out of the ultimate power of ice, the ultimate power of

gravity and a tremendous amount of strength. Even an earth sage expert would be suppressed by this attack, much less Mu Gaoqi. Even a sky sage expert might suffer an enormous loss if they weren't careful.

"Sigh, this Wang Han is unbelievable. It's as if he has an endless amount of trump cards. This is more than a little unfair to Mu Gaoqi!"

"Yeah. There's not much glory to be earned even if he did beat Mu Gaoqi in this way!"

"Mm, he had revealed all of his trump cards. He probably doesn't stand a chance against Xiang Qin now."

"It's unfortunate that this black horse will have to retire soon. Mu Gaoqi had seriously given us too many exciting surprises."

"Don't say that. Who knows, maybe Mu Gaoqi still has a trump card? Who can say what will happen next?"

"That's true, Mu Gaoqi had given us plenty of pleasant surprises so far. Who's to say he doesn't have more beneath his sleeves?"

The audiences spiritedly discussed the battle for a time. They had even greater expectations for a continuously changing battle in the ring.

"What do we do, Palace Head? This nine layered ice mountain..."

Palace Head Dan Chi pondered and said, “This nine layered ice mountain is extraordinarily powerful. Even an earth sage expert would suffer an enormous blow if they were forced to take on an attack of that caliber. Let’s just watch for now.”

Right now, Dan Chi was hoping that Jiang Chen would give him another pleasant surprise. If Jiang Chen could deal with Wang Han’s Giant Icebears, then he might not necessarily falter in the face of that nine layered ice mountain. As expected, Jiang Chen’s eyes narrowed as he looked at Wang Han’s smug face, “Now what do we have here? Is this the grave that you’ve prepared for yourself? I have to admit that it looks pretty spectacular.”

Everyone beneath the ring felt lightheaded when they heard his words. This Mu Gaoqi sure was composed in the face of such a situation! They couldn’t believe that he could still crack a joke in this situation. Or... could it be that he still had a trump card just like the others had predicted? In that case, this battle would surely be very interesting. This battle had already risen to the level of the final match of this Grand Ceremony.

“Brat, you should rein in your tongue. I, Wang Han, guarantee that this is the last chance you’ll even have to spout nonsense! Face your doom!” Wang Hang viciously brought his hand down, bringing the nine layered ice mountain to slowly descend on Jiang Chen. It was so large that as it drew closer, it looked like the sky itself was collapsing on Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen laughed heartily, “How unfortunate. I’m afraid I’ll have to disappoint you.”

Not only did Jiang Chen not make a move to evade the enormous mountain of ice, his aura flared as his golden body grew even bigger. He grew to a twelve meter tall golden giant in an instant.

He extended a glowing hand and summoned the magnetic golden mountain. An even more majestic golden mountain appeared beneath the nine layered ice mountain.

“What is that?”

“No way! He’s practically slapping Wang Han’s face.”

“It most definitely is! Wang Han summons giant bears, he summons golden armored warriors. Wang Han summons an ice mountain, he summons a metal mountain. This is a tooth for a tooth, not giving up an inch of ground!”

“This golden mountain looks so majestic. It’s just as strong as that nine layered ice mountain!”

“Wang Han has quite met his match this time.”

“This Mu Gaoqi is truly astounding. It would seem that Regal Pill Palace is overflowing with geniuses lately.”

The audiences’ exclamations kept coming one after another. They had all been conquered by the flow of this battle. Every

change in the battle's development had taken their emotions on enormous ups and downs. As Jiang Chen's image grew larger, just like the audience, Wang Han too nearly doubted his eyes as the magnetic golden mountain appeared. He almost thought that Jiang Chen was purposely messing with him!

Don't tell me he has all the skills I have?

Why does this all look so ridiculous?

Wang Jianyu finally lost his cool and yelled, "Wang Han, be careful! There's no need to keep fighting!"

Wang Jianyu was truly a sky sage realm expert. His perception of danger was extremely sensitive, and he'd immediately detected a great amount of danger from Jiang Chen. He couldn't help but warn Wang Han. Wang Han was not only the top genius in the Sacred Sword Palace, but also his direct grandson. If anything were to happen to Wang Han, then all of Wang Jianyu's efforts would go to waste. It was an incredibly difficult task to nurture a successor as outstanding as Wang Han.

However, Wang Han was furious when he heard Wang Jianyu's advice. Even the sect master doesn't believe I can win? Suddenly, Wang Han's irritation boiled over. He roared loudly and swung both arms down, "Die, Mu Gaoqi!"

The nine layered ice mountain crashed down fiercely on Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen didn't bat an eye as he casually waved his arm. The magnetic golden mountain turned into a beam of golden light

as it shot towards the nine layered ice mountain.

The golden light broke straight through the nine layered ice mountain's first layer. Golden light flashed from within the ice mountain as it bounced around inside. The flashes continued as the ice mountain still fell through the air.

When it looked certain that Jiang Chen had no hope left, a loud rumble echoed through the air. The golden flashes winked out for a second, and abruptly exploded outward like a supernova. The nine layered mountain shattered into a million shards. Shattered ice fragments rained down on the ground, the combatants, and the stunned audience. Jiang Chen opened his palm, and the magnetic golden mountain, looking none the worse for wear, shot towards to him in a beam of golden light, gently coming to a stop in the middle of his palm.

"What other trump cards do you have, Wang Han?" Jiang Chen smiled as he stared at Wng Han. This nine layered ice mountain was Wang Han's final move. He'd never imagined that it would ever be broken by his opponent, let alone turned into fragments like an eggshell. A hint of panic finally flashed across his face.

"If you have nothing else to pull out, then I'll send you on your way!" Jiang Chen drew a slash in the air with a finger, and a terrifyingly powerful air current streaked towards Wang Han's neck. "Galaxy Slash!"

His attack was aimed at Wang Han's neck; he'd made up his mind to reap his life by beheading him.

How could Wang Jianyu possibly maintain his composure at such a moment? Without warning, he unsheathed a sword and threw it towards Jiang Chen's Galaxy Slash. At the same time, his other hand grabbed at the air, pulling Wang Han forcibly from the arena.

Chapter 660: The Sacred Sword Palace Withdraws

Although Wang Jianyu was quite a distance from the ring, he was actually capable of hauling Wang Han straight off the stage. As fast as Jiang Chen's Galaxy Slash was, he just wasn't as fast as Wang Jianyu.

As a result, Wang Han was yanked out of the way of the strike when it arrived, and the crowd erupted. Jiang Chen demonstrated immense grace and withdrew his hand seals, smiling faintly as he looked at Wang Jianyu. Without a doubt, someone would make trouble for the sect head without his prompting.

Indeed, Palace Head Dan Chi slammed his hand down on the table and rose to his feet. "What do you mean by this, Wang Jianyu? This is a battle to the life and death, how dare you interfere?!"

"Ole brother Wang, you've certainly gone against the rules here." Xiang Wentian didn't remain silent either.

Honored Master Tian Ming also shook his head, "Quite inappropriate, quite."

Even Wei Wuying of the Walkabout Sect shook his head with a sigh, "In a fight to the death, the heavens hold our fates. Sect Head Wang, your actions were in defiance of the rules."

Wang Jianyu was coldly irate in the face of such criticism from all sides and snorted, “I know I broke the rules; I don’t need your reminders. My Sacred Sword Palace will withdraw from the Myriad Grand Ceremony here and now. Will that do now?”

According to the rules, interfering in a battle would cause any results from that sect to be negated. Thus, it was a wise decision for Wang Jianyu to immediately withdraw from the Grand Ceremony. None of the others had anything to say after this quick and resolute decision. Wang Jianyu however, glared at Dan Chi. “Dan Chi, I’m quite curious, is this Mu Gaoqi truly a disciple of your Regal Pill Palace?”

Dan Chi smiled faintly, “What, are you trotting out that act again? Speak frankly if you can’t afford to lose; don’t waste everyone’s time.”

Wang Jianyu laughed heartily, “Are you feeling guilty? I only asked you one question; what are you so nervous for?”

Jiang Chen had also made his way off the ring by now and flicked a glance at Wang Jianyu. “Sect Head Wang, are you going to suspect me of being of the demon tribe? Do you want to test my bloodline?”

This was a tried and true ploy that the Sacred Sword Palace liked to use. Wang Jianyu snorted coldly, “Don’t get too cocky, you brat. Dare you say that your inheritance comes from the Regal Pill Palace? Pardon my ignorance, but when did the Regal Pill Palace’s heritage rise to such heights?”

“They were fortuitous occurrences I gained when adventuring outside; what about them? Do I have to report to your Sacred Sword Palace about everything I run into?”

Wang Jianyu had nothing to say to that. Jiang Chen flicked a glance at Wang Han, “Wang Han, you used up quite a bit of your luck this time. But scrabbling for your life like this today, what kind of breakthroughs do you think you’ll have anymore in martial dao? Today’s shame will haunt you forever, and you’ll wish you’d died here. At least you would’ve died with honor.”

There were always winners and losers when it came to sparring, and they wouldn’t necessarily become internal demons. But to Wang Han, today’s events were very likely to become one of his internal demons. After all, regardless of how the battle’s flow had seemingly flipped between the two, Jiang Chen had used an almost humiliating manner to trample and crush Wang Han’s confidence. This kind of internal demon was the most difficult to remove, because the opponent had already burrowed into your soul and thoroughly defeated you.

Wang Jianyu’s aura burst out when he saw Jiang Chen provoking Wang Han. He almost wanted to crush the Regal Pill Palace disciple right where he stood.

Dan Chi stepped in front of Jiang Chen, his voice turning cold, “Wang Jianyu, do you want to take the field yourself?”

The heavyweights of the two sects started to slip into battle

stances.

"This is nonsense!" Xiang Wentian roared loudly. "Wang Jianyu, your Sacred Sword Palace has already been eliminated. Don't try to stir the pot anymore, unless you fancy becoming the public enemy of the Myriad Domain!"

"Right, don't be too extreme in your methods Ole Brother Wang. Leave some space so that we can all meet each other happily in the future."

Wang Jianyu was livid as a look of hate crossed his face. He glared at all those in the Regal Pill Palace before huffily backing into a corner, not leaving just yet. Even if they had been eliminated, he didn't want to leave like this. Wang Han's defeat had left everyone in the Sacred Sword Palace hanging their heads. In particular, Jing Feng was rather dejected. As the second genius in the Sacred Sword Palace, he'd had certain expectations for this time's Myriad Grand Ceremony. His goal had been to make it into the top five and thus be able to enter the third and final level of the Paramount Realm. But because of Wang Han and the sect head, all of the Sacred Sword Palace disciples' efforts had been in vain. Their scores had been erased and they were kicked out of the ceremony. However, although he didn't want to accept this state of affairs and was dejected, he didn't dare show it. Wang Han was Wang Jianyu's direct descendent, his grandson, after all. He would never sit by and watch Wang Han be killed.

The breathtaking battle had treated the audience to a fantastic show, and they all felt thrilled by what they'd watched. The second round had been delayed for this match, and now that it was over,

the matches resumed. However, after Wang Han and Mu Gaoqi's battle, everyone's appetites had been enlarged and although there were many exciting fights in the second round, they just weren't as appealing in comparison.

The various strategists of each sect however, still continuously lectured their disciples. Those disciples had all been eliminated earlier, but each match was a rare learning opportunity. All of the sect heads wished for their disciples to benefit immensely from this occasion, so they didn't find the second round boring at all. As exciting and a good show as a classic match-up was, it wasn't possible for every single fight to be so thrilling and stunning!

The top thirty two were determined after the day's second round, and the list of names from the Sacred Sword Palace was erased, making room for those behind them. Thus, when the list of the top 32 came out, there were suddenly three fewer sage realm geniuses, leaving only ten. But folks naturally didn't view Mu Gaoqi as a seventh level origin realm genius anymore. They placed him in the ranks of the sage realm geniuses.

The Regal Pill Palace's luck still held in the second round, with all five advancing. Although Nie Chong had surrendered, he'd made it in on virtue of the now smaller list and was lucky in his second round, helping him make it into the top 32. Even with the Sacred Sword Palace out for the count in the top 32, the list was still mostly made of fourth rank sect disciples. The Great Cathedral occupied ten spots, Dark North Sect seven, Walkabout Sect five, and Regal Pill Palace five. This accounted for twenty seven spots out of the thirty two, and if it wasn't for the Sacred Sword Palace being eliminated, none of the fifth rank sects would have had the chance to advance at all.

The third round would thin the competition from 32 to 16, and Jiang Chen had been listed as a seeded opponent this round, making for three seeds from the Regal Pill Palace. Ling Bi'er had drawn a ninth level origin realm opponent, and Nie Chong unluckily picked another sage realm cultivator, finally halting his movement upwards.

The battles were becoming fiercer and fiercer, but no further dark horses appeared. All eleven sage realm geniuses, including Jiang Chen, had advanced into the top sixteen. The remaining five spots went to two from the Great Cathedral, Ling Bi'er of the Regal Pill Palace, one from the Walkabout Sect, and one from the Dark North Sect. There was no one not from a fourth rank sect, and this result surprised no one. Making it into the top 16 was a mission that a fifth rank sect couldn't complete, unless they too had a sage realm genius.

The day was just about over after three rounds of matches, and the remainder would conclude on the third day. The spots for the Paramount Realm would also be divided up on the third day. According to the rules, all those on the rankings would be able to enter the Paramount Realm. Candidates would be able to enter different levels according to their rankings. There were nine levels to the Paramount Realm, which was the reason for the further division of candidates.

That night, Jiang Chen sat cross legged in front of Dan Chi, the two communicating with their consciousness.

"Was I too impulsive today, Palace Head?" Jiang Chen wasn't

actually apologetic, but just wanted to ask this out of respect for Dan Chi.

Dan Chi was very pleased with Jiang Chen's performance as he smiled, "I like your impulsiveness. Cultivators should not hide and cower in the shadows when it's time to fight for glory. You did well today, and stamped the mark of our sect on the scene."

"As long as it doesn't impact the palace head's overall plans," Jiang Chen sighed.

"Overall plans?" Palace Head Dan Chi's voice also sank when he spoke of the greater picture. "The Myriad Domain is currently a pile of loose sand. What greater picture is there to speak of? There are only contests over pride. The Sacred Sword Palace acts like a rabid dog, constantly provoking others and inciting trouble. Jiang Chen, truth be told, I really have a forbidding feeling."

Jiang Chen also had a foreboding premonition, but no one knew what would happen in the future. They could only take one step at a time. Jiang Chen was only here for the Paramount Realm in any case, and he would make it in no matter what. When he saw that Jiang Chen wasn't speaking, Palace Head Dan Chi suddenly sighed, "Jiang Chen, if something happens in the Myriad Grand Ceremony this time and you have a way out, you should leave first. Don't pay any attention to us."

"Palace Head, why say this?"

"There's nothing for it. If such a devastating disaster really does

arrive, the more you wish to save everyone, the more you might be caught up in it. I only hope that you leave with the Regal Pill Palace's spirit and maintain a wisp of hope for us. When the day comes..."

Jiang Chen hastily stopped the palace head, "No more, Palace Head. Even if something happens, I trust that we'll have a way to handle it."

Dan Chi smiled and felt his spirits lift, "Right, I believe you. You and I both aren't the sort to live premature lives. We are both highly blessed. I believe that the foundations of the Regal Pill Palace won't fall in my hands!"

Dan Chi was a man of great vision after all. Although he was momentarily in a lull, he quickly adjusted his emotions. "Right, Jiang Chen, I have a mission for you after you enter the Paramount Realm."

"What mission?" Jiang Chen was curious.

"Keep an eye on Jun Mobai," Dan Chi responded faintly.

"Keep an eye on him? Why?" Jiang Chen started.

"I suspect that he's a spy." Grave solemnity was apparent even in Dan Chi's silent message.

"What? Jun Mobai, a spy?"

“Indeed. One of our elder brought him back when he was a baby, and I’ve observed him silently for a while. Although he covers it up well, there’s a seventy to eighty percent certainty that he’s an undercover agent.” Although Dan Chi’s tone wasn’t one hundred percent certain, there wasn’t much hesitation in it. This matter was practically truth in his heart.

Chapter 661: The List of Top Four

The matches on the third day were even more ferocious. The top sixteen competitors met in crazed collision as each battle reached a fever pitch. Sage realm cultivators were no longer protected today, so they were destined to meet each other in battle. Indeed, Jiang Chen drew a sage realm opponent, one from the Walkabout Sect.

This person was a bit similar to Wei Qing. His name was Wei Gong, and he had a similar bearing to Wei Qing, but his strength and cultivation was much stronger than Wei Qing. Even so, he still wasn't as strong as Wang Han. After exchanging a few rounds with Jiang Chen, Wei Gong did not think little of forfeiting. He he knew that he'd end up worse off if his opponent went all out. He knew full well that he wasn't Mu Gaoqi's opponent. The fellow had easily taken out even Wang Han, much less than a Wei Gong!

As a result, Jiang Chen smoothly advanced to the top eight. Shen Qinghong was also quite lucky as he drew an opponent at peak ninth level origin realm. His path to advancement was equally easy. Ling Bi'er maintained her good luck and met another peak ninth level origin realm genius. She once again pulled through after a difficult battle and advanced to the top eight.

One had to know that in the top sixteen, there were eleven sage realm geniuses and five peak ninth level origin realm geniuses. She was one of those five, so she only had a four out of fifteen chance to select an origin realm opponent, yet she'd done it. In this regard, an odd situation developed for the list of top eight. Half of them, a full four, were from the Regal Pill Palace. Three spots were taken by the Great Cathedral, and the last was the Dark North Sect genius Lin Hai. Both the Walkabout Sect geniuses had been very

unlucky. One had ran afoul of Xiang Qin, and the other Jiang Chen.

The list of the top eight was comprised of Xiang Qin, Yue Baize, Lang Jiuling, Mu Gaoqi, Shen Qinghong, Jun Mobai, Ling Bi'er, and Lin Hai. No one was surprised that there were three from the Great Cathedral, but the four from the Regal Pill Palace greatly astonished everyone. Setting aside dark horse Mu Gaoqi, Shen Qinghong and Ling Bi'er had made it into the top eight purely based on luck. This luck had also been a result of the Sacred Sword Palace withdrawing. If they hadn't, then there wouldn't be that many origin realm cultivators in the top sixteen, and no such luck of the draw to speak of. The Regal Pill Palace's strong luck had gained them a massive advantage in the end!

However, Jun Mobai's performance also slightly startled some. He'd been able to go toe-to-toe and eliminate first genius Yuan Yuan of the Sacred Ape family of the Great Cathedral. Although this genius didn't boast of a particularly strong combat ability, it was still unexpected that he'd been defeated by a newly ascended sage realm genius from the Regal Pill Palace.

And thus, there were many unexpected developments in this list of top eight. No one had thought that the least favored fourth rank sect, the Regal Pill Palace, would in fact become the biggest winner. When they thought back to how the Great Cathedral had wanted to rebuild the Myriad Empire before the matches, and how certain they'd been that they would be the champions, it certainly didn't seem like things were developing in that direction now.

The Regal Pill Palace was a dark horse that looked poised to

defeat the Great Cathedral! Folks couldn't help but think whether the Great Cathedral's painstakingly created atmosphere would eventually just benefit the Regal Pill Palace? After all, they'd all voted that the champion of the Myriad Grand Ceremony, the top genius of the Myriad Hidden Dragon rankings, would have the right to control the Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal. Back then, it had seemed a foregone conclusion that Xiang Qin would reign as champion, but things didn't seem that straightforward anymore.

The most promising challenger, Wang Han, had been forced out of the competition, but an even crueler candidate had emerged in the form of Mu Gaoqi. Mu Gaoqi's strength was unfathomable, and his true trump cards had yet to be revealed even now. It was still unknown whether Xiang Qin would be able to overcome Mu Gaoqi's challenge.

So therefore, the situation could now be summed up as — a mess. It was complete chaos, and the champion's seat was now a royal scramble.

Nevertheless, the matches continued their inexorable march.

The atmosphere for the draw for the quarterfinals was a bit tense. After all, this would determine the top four.

The first name drawn was Ling Bi'er. When her name was drawn, everyone clamored loudly in their hearts, hoping that they would be paired with such an opponent. However, the one lucky this time was one of the Regal Pill Palace. It was Jun Mobai versus Ling Bi'er.

Lin Hai's name was selected next. He was quite unlucky to be matched with Xiang Qin of the Sacred Elephant family. Honored Master Tian Ming pounded his chest in great dejection. How he'd wished that Lin Hai would face Ling Bi'er, the only origin realm genius left in the field. That would guarantee his placement in the top four. What a pity...

'Mu Gaoqi' was drawn again, his opponent selected as Lang Jiuling of the Sacred Wolf family. Shen Qinghong was up against Yue Baize of the Sacred Lion family.

The crowd erupted in a furor when the names were drawn. Each match's conclusion was already certain. Although Lang Jiuling was strong, and even a bit stronger than Wei Gong, he was still far from Mu Gaoqi's level, someone who had defeated Wang Han.

Ling Bi'er was matched against sage realm cultivator Jun Mobai, the one who'd defeated first genius Yuan Yuan of the Sacred Ape family, so there was no doubt about the outcome of the match either. Lin Hai versus Xiang Qin would undoubtedly be a one sided trampling. As for Shen Qinghong versus Yue Baize, the second genius of the Great Cathedral, the outcome seem predetermined as well. After all, Yue Baize's strength was on par with Wang Han and just a tad bit weaker than Xiang Qin's. If Yue Baize and Xiang Qin went head to head, it would be difficult to say who would be laughing in the end.

Indeed, Ling Bi'er immediately forfeited after the results of the draw were announced. It wasn't out of consideration for another peer of her sect, but that she'd felt the opportunity to break

through to the sage realm and voluntarily gave up the chance to fight, choosing to focus on the opportunity to break through instead.

In Lin Hai and Xiang Qin's battle, Lin Hai decided to forfeit after probing his opponent a few times and realizing that there was no way he could triumph. As for Shen Qinghong, he had no chance to win at all. He barely managed to put up a fight before Yue Baize hurled him off the stage with a furious barrage of attacks.

Lang Jiuling actually put up a serious posture, as if he would settle the score with Mu Gaoqi. For him, there was no other reason than avenging his junior brother Li Xin. He refused to accept that his junior brother had been beaten so badly by a few punches that he surrendered. Therefore, he wanted to use his own fierce attacks and stunning speed to take on this Mu Gaoqi.

The results showed that he was far too naive. No matter how fast he was or how fierce his attacks, Jiang Chen only needed to use the golden aura to nullify all of his attacks. He hurled Lang Jiuling off the stage just like he'd done Li Xin, with just the power of his bare fists. Jiang Chen's performance once again won him applause from the audience. After all, the attitude that he was displaying wasn't so simple as one of a genius. It was one that caused others to wholeheartedly submit to him. He was always so coolly composed, so dashing. As long as his opponent didn't employ any extreme methods, then neither would he.

Take Lang Jiuling for instance, Jiang Chen could've used the Soldier Rosary Beads to steamroller the other, but he hadn't. Instead, he had used his bare fists instead. He used pure strength to

thoroughly convince Lang Jiuling of his defeat. This kind of advancement was more convincing than someone like Wang Han, who would use any method possible to win, and one that won Jiang Chen more support from others as well.

Everyone knew now that the list of top four wasn't important anymore. They wanted to watch the finale of Xiang Qin versus Mu Gaoqi. However, they were also curious if Mu Gaoqi would run into further Great Cathedral disciples as he advanced. Or would the two Great Cathedral disciples run into each other next, and the same for the two Regal Pill Palace disciples as well?

Jiang Chen actually rather wished that his next opponent was Jun Mobai. Ever since the palace head had mentioned him, Jiang Chen had paid more attention to him. He hoped to have the chance to examine Jun Mobai in a battle.

However, the draw results disappointed everyone. The insane collision they hoped for didn't happen. They'd wanted the two Great Cathedral disciples to face their counterpart from the Regal Pill Palace, and the strongest two would advance. However, the draw dictated Xiang Qin face Yue Baize, and Mu Gaoqi face Jun Mobai. It would be an intra-sect battle!

Jiang Chen was rather happy that the draw had followed his wishes. If Jun Mobai truly was as the palace head had said, then he would certainly be hiding his strength. When he thought of how Jun Mobai had defeated Yuan Yuan, the fourth genius of the Great Cathedral, it was an obvious sign that a newly ascended sage realm cultivator was performing above his level.

“Could there really be something amiss about him? That he’s been hiding his strength all along?” Jiang Chen was also incredibly curious.

On the other hand, the Great Cathedral was a bit depressed. They’d hoped to avoid the clash and have Yue Baize meet Mu Gaoqi. Mu Gaoqi would then have his strength chipped away, allowing Xiang Qin to meet a tired Mu Gaoqi in the finals. Only with this double insurance would the Great Cathedral solidly occupy their position as head of the Myriad Hidden Dragon rankings. And yet, it was to be an intra-sect clash. The Great Cathedral could only hold an emergency meeting and finally compromise out of resignation, having Yue Baize forfeit and guarantee Xiang Qin a place in the finals.

“Xiang Qin, this is a chance for us to rebuild the Myriad Empire. You must take the championship no matter what!” Xiang Wentian of the Great Cathedral gave a solemn order to Xiang Qin.

Yue Baize was from the Sacred Lion family, and his family head was equally as solemn, “Baize has sacrificed himself for the greater picture. Xiang Qin, you must acquit yourself well and not make his sacrifice meaningless!”

Xiang Qin nodded firmly and felt a heroic air stir in his heart. “Don’t worry everyone, I will most certainly be the champion of the rankings!”

Chapter 662: Finals, Each Punch Finding Its Target

No one was surprised about Yue Baize announcing his forfeit. It was impossible for the two of the them to fight to the death. That would only benefit the Regal Pill Palace. Everyone was now curious, would Jun Mobai do the same for Mu Gaoqi?

The Great Cathedral had held an emergency session, but Dan Chi didn't give Jun Mobai any pressure over on the Regal Pill Palace side. Even Elder Lian Cheng didn't give Jun Mobai any advice due to his desire not to see Elder Yun Nie's disciple gain so much of the spotlight. As for the other elders of the Hall of Might, they wouldn't bring trouble down on themselves given that their leader hadn't spoken. They had a certain degree of confidence in their hallmaster's thinking. He likely didn't want Elder Yun Nie's disciple to put on too good of a showing, so they would rather let them fight even if it was an intra-sect battle.

However, Jun Mobai apparently had other thoughts. He had taken a moment to think, but he voluntarily forfeited. "Junior brother Gaoqi, from your display of prowess against Wang Han, it is obvious to me that I'm far inferior to you. I'd simply be inviting humiliation down on myself if I fought you." He waved a paper fan with a gentleman's air, giving others a dashing feeling even though he'd conceded.

Jiang Chen was a bit surprised, and slightly disappointed. Ever since the palace head had given him the mission to keep an eye on Jun Mobai, he'd wanted to make use of this fight to gain a better understanding of Jun Mobai. But the fellow had actually gone and

forfeited! I wonder if he's hiding his true strength or really thinks he isn't up to the challenge.

And so, this theatrical scene happened. With two voluntarily forfeiting in the semifinals, this sent Xiang Qin and Mu Gaoqi directly into the finals.

"Good luck, Brother Xiang." Yue Baize's gaze was steady. "All of Great Cathedral is standing with you."

"Do well, Xiang Qin. Don't let the sect down," Xiang Wentian clapped Xiang Qin's shoulder. All of the other family heads also looked at Xiang Qin encouragingly. It was apparent with how things had developed that everyone knew that they had to unite behind Xiang Qin, no matter what. Even if they had internal matters to take care of, they had to stand together when it came to the overall profits of the Great Cathedral and the greater picture. They had prepared much for the Myriad Hidden Dragon Trials this time, and had put much into play to rebuild the Myriad Empire. They'd even bribed the small sects to vote for the Great Cathedral as well. Why had they done all this?

For this day. They had been absolutely assured of success in the Myriad Hidden Dragon Trials.

Off on the Regal Pill Palace's side, they didn't have any bracing words of courage or aspiration. They all knew that Mu Gaoqi's strength was unfathomable. Even Shen Qinghong was well aware that even if he cloned himself, he still might not even be a match for Mu Gaoqi. If it'd been the Shen Qinghong of old, he wouldn't have been able to accept this conclusion at all. But at this moment,

his heart was as calm as still water. It might've been difficult for him to accept if Mu Gaoqi was only just a bit stronger than him. But when Mu Gaoqi had utterly trampled Wang Han, it was clear that he was leagues ahead of Shen Qinghong. This actually made Shen Qinghong feel like a weight had been taken off his shoulders. When the gap was that enormous, like an origin realm versus a sage realm cultivator, there was no chance of decreasing the gap at all. At that point, there was no need to think too much about it.

When Nie Chong thought about how he'd jeered at Mu Gaoqi before and said that they should've brought Rong Zifeng instead, he felt the sudden urge to bash himself against a wall.

"Be careful, junior brother." There was a thick sense of encouragement and delight in Ling Bi'er's eyes. It was obvious that she was hoping Jiang Chen would take the championship! This would be the first time that the Regal Pill Palace would take the championship after Palace Head Dan Chi had done so sixty years ago.

Elder Lian Cheng walked up to say some pleasantries. Jiang Chen nodded, but didn't pay attention to anything he said. Palace Head Dan Chi drew Jiang Chen off to the side, "Those of the Great Cathedral fight a crazy battle. You must remember that this match will differ from the one with Wang Han."

"I'll be careful," Jiang Chen nodded solemnly.

"Mm, the geniuses of the Great Cathedral have a few common characteristics. Their close combat ability is quite ferocious, and the power of their bloodlines rather extreme. They also draw

power from their totems. These are all points you must be on your guard against."

"I understand the close combat ability and power of bloodlines, but what is the power of their totems?" Jiang Chen was curious.

"The power of their totems is the ancient totem of each family. When each family head nears the end of their lives, they imbue their strength into the master totem of each family and nurtures it, raising its strength. Xiang Qin will certainly have been baptized by his family's master totem and formed his own personal totem. The power of this personal totem is certain to be extraordinary. Not only can it form ephemeral images of the totem, but at a certain level of power, it can also summon the powerful sacred beast of the totem." Dan Chi had crossed paths with experts of the Great Cathedral back when he'd participated in the Myriad Grand Ceremony years ago, so he was familiar with their fighting style.

Jiang Chen nodded. Things would be easier now that he knew the other's fighting style. He'd managed to defeat Cao Jin, so as strong as Xiang Qin's potential was, it was impossible for him to be stronger than Cao Jin. He wasn't overly worried about this battle.

The two walked up to the ring with all eyes on them.

Xiang Qin was dressed in armor unique to the Great Cathedral. Add that to his strongly built body—he appeared quite majestic and grand, boasting an uncommon aura. Jiang Chen, on the other hand, was still dressed in ordinary clothes and hadn't gone through any special preparations. He merely stepped onto the stage, but no one felt that the two sides were in any way

imbalanced. They all knew that this was a match between equals. Even the overweening Wang Han had fallen to Mu Gaoqi. Although Xiang Qin was even stronger, it was unknown if he could beat Mu Gaoqi.

Xiang Qin's gaze was deep, and he seemed to be able to peer into the sun and moon. "Mu Gaoqi, to think that you would be standing in front of me. I'd thought it'd be Wang Han!" Xiang Qin's presence seemed to expand outwards as he spoke. "However, it excites me more than it's you and not Wang Han!"

When Jiang Chen saw how Xiang Qin brimmed with confidence, and how unguarded he was even after seeing Jiang Chen defeat Wang Han,, Jiang Chen knew that Xiang Qin was feeling fairly certain of himself. He responded coolly, "I hope you're a bit stronger than Wang Han, otherwise I'd be entirely disappointed."

Jiang Chen was sort of disposed towards Xiang Qin. This fellow was an open and aboveboard sort of man. When Jiang Chen had refined the Longevity Pill and given Xiang Wentian the chance to extend his life, Xiang Qin had shown Jiang Chen some face and had been polite to him in the ancient herb garden. However, Jiang Chen was now appearing as Mu Gaoqi, so none of that was relevant anymore. There was nothing between them. This match was fought for personal ambition, but also for the championship of the Myriad Grand Ceremony. Jiang Chen was representing the Regal Pill Palace, so he had to bring everything he had to it.

"Prepare yourself, Mu Gaoqi!" Xiang Qin bellowed, his voice ringing across the arena.

“No need,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

“I would strongly recommend you prepare yourself in some way. It’ll be too late once I start my attack. I don’t want people to think I didn’t win fair and square,” Xiang Qin had the expansive air of a great hero. He was different from Wang Han. Wang Han’s tactics always used an ambush as its foundation. In Xiang Qin’s eyes, those tactics were base, too vile for him to consider stooping to. He was quite dismissive of those tactics because he preferred to beat his opponents openly and fairly.

Jiang Chen shook his head. He had many weapons, such as the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect token that was the nameless blade, and the Moonshatter Awl and Ocean Covering Sword that he’d received from Cao Jin. He’d even held onto Du Lihuang’s weapon from the Sacred Sword Palace, but he didn’t plan on using any of them.

Xiang Qin chuckled when he saw how resolute his opponent was and didn’t mention it again. “Alright, then take a few of my punches first!”

He charged forward, his strides long and powerful, seeming to vanish into the air with his movement. Afterimages filled the air, closing in on Jiang Chen from all sides. In the span of a moment, the afterimages blurred into figures that looked like enormous ancient elephants thundering towards Jiang Chen. Like enormous mountains, these figures were the coalesced form of Xiang Qin’s speed, momentum and power!

Jiang Chen’s opinion of his opponent rose at the sight of this

technique. From this alone, Jiang Chen could tell that Xiang Qin was more frank and forthright than Wang Han, and much stronger as well.

A cultivator at the peak of third level sage realm was indeed astonishing. In Jiang Chen's eyes, Xiang Qin could hold his own against an earth sage realm cultivator. However, since Jiang Chen had trained in the Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods, he really didn't fear close body combat. He leapt up, three meters in the air, with a flicker of his body and summoned his golden aura. With the golden light protecting him, Jiang Chen started throwing punches left and right, filling the air with explosive sounds.

Bambambambam!

Continuous explosions rang out in the air as each of his fists found a target. The very air around the ring began to shudder and quake from the explosions. This was completely different from the match between Mu Gaoqi and Wang Han. There had been almost no close combat there. Here, Mu Gaoqi and Xiang Qin were going toe-to-toe in the manner that Xiang Qin was most well versed in, bodily combat!

The two figures streaked around the ring, pummeling each other fiercely. No matter how fast Xiang Qin's speed was or how strong his fists, he didn't seem to have an advantage in the fight either.

"This Mu Gaoqi is truly well-rounded, he can even hold his own in close combat?"

“What the hell? He can go toe-to-toe with someone from the Great Cathedral with that body of his?”

“This is a true genius!”

The golden body of the Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods was originally meant for close combat, so its defensive abilities needed no boasting. Although Xiang Qin’s Sacred Elephant Punch was very strong and his inner power quite incredible, he still wasn’t able to form an advantage when faced with the golden aura.

Bam bam bam!

Jiang Chen paid no heed to Xiang Qin’s attacks, allowing some punches to slip past his defense in order to sink a couple of blows past the other’s defenses. Xiang Qin had been blessed with a strong inherent defensive ability from his thick skin and muscles. He was also further protected by his armor. But even with that protecting him, as multiple punches began to hit his body, he began to feel some serious discomfort. He almost had to suppress the urge to vomit. He’d never thought that Mu Gaoqi’s close combat skills would be so perverse! Mu Gaoqi’s speed and attacks were completely on par with his! His defensive skills were even slightly stronger!

Xiang Qin was rather depressed. The defensive abilities of the Sacred Elephant family were unparalleled in the Myriad Domain. He’d never thought he’d lose to Mu Gaoqi in defensive ability! He’d wanted to take the initiative through close combat, but he’d ended up putting himself at a disadvantage instead.

Chapter 663: The Power of Bloodlines Shocks the Audience

Everyone of the Great Cathedral was looking at the ring with incredulous eyes, never mind Xiang Qin. They were fully aware of Xiang Qin's close combat ability since they were all of the same sect. Apart from Yue Baize of the Great Cathedral, not a single person of the younger generation of the Myriad Domain was capable of standing up to Xiang Qin in the arena of close combat. Even Wang Han, the strongest of the lot, was no exception.

Xiang Qin, frustrated beyond measure, punched one last time before clawing at the air, hauling out a peculiar weapon. A long handle ended in two chains, from which hung two golden metal balls. This was a flail; one of the most imposing weapons in single combat, it relied solely on brute force and strength to crush opponents. The flail had its own imposing aura, as if thousands of ancient elephants rumbling forward in a charge, an inexorable and untiring momentum radiating outwards.

This seemed to be the most primitive kind of attack, but it also encompassed an art of the Sacred Elephant family. The heavy golden balls looked like they were being tossed around carelessly, but in fact, there was a profound mystery embedded within them. However, Jiang Chen didn't plan on using any weapons. You want to compete on basis of brute force and primitiveness? My golden aura will take on all comers!

This kind of attack wasn't a simple one of physical force. What was more frightening about it was the presence of a devouring power behind it, a type of power that could devour space. This

energy would eat away at both the energy in the space as well as the space within the ring, slowly but surely cutting off the opponent's escape routes.

Jiang Chen saw through this, and while he was slightly surprised, he also started attacking furiously as well. Since Xiang Qin wanted to compete on the basis of brute force, then he would help Xiang Qin get a taste of the strength behind the golden aura!

Jiang Chen's body streaked around the ring like a golden beam, darting to and fro across the stage so quickly that no one beneath it could see where he was headed. Xiang Qin's flail seemed to almost hit him a few times, but like a lively fish, the golden balls slid off Jiang Chen's golden aura. To Xiang Qin, it felt like he was using his bare hands to catch a slippery fish, and he couldn't quite get a good grip. It was frustrating almost to the point of helplessness; he almost had the urge to spit blood.

At the same time, although Jiang Chen's boxing aura wasn't as abundant and surging as the one from his flails, each blow that landed almost made Xiang Qin vomit blood. It was apparent that Jiang Chen had increased the power behind his blows.

Bambam, bam! After taking a few combos of punches, Xiang Qin's flail technique started to show signs of disorder. Indeed, the Sacred Elephant family was known for their strong defense, thick skin, and their armor. But Jiang Chen had strengthened his boxing aura to the point where his heavy blows were causing serious discomfort to Xiang Qin. Before long, Xiang Qin was forced right to the edge of the ring. Xiang Qin's eyes were staring widely as he huffed loudly for breath.

The flail was trailing on the ground, yet he still held on to them as tight as he could. A wild stubbornness was writ clear across his face, “Good, good! To think that the Regal Pill Palace had someone like you! Someone who could put me at a disadvantage in close combat! However, just because you can triumph over my regular form doesn’t mean you can do the same when I’m berserk!” He hadn’t just been posturing for effect, as he tapped a few of his major acupoints as he spoke. As his fingers left the last acupoint, small arrows of blood sprang out from all of them.

He reached out and grabbed the blood arrows, using them to send ripples through the air. The ripples soon materialized into strange runes, some of which were definitely of the exotic animalistic variety. These runes shot into Xiang Qin’s skin and blood vessels, lighting up his body. Before long, Xiang Qin was covered in a faint light as the runes vibrated and danced just above his skin. Without warning, he suddenly unleashed a bestial roar.

AWROOOOO~!

This savage howl really did seem to be one of an ancient, violent beast stirring awake. The wild ferocity that it encompassed within caused the blood of the young geniuses below to roil. They felt the earth shake and heavens darken, and almost wanted to vomit from the feeling.

It was as if a demon-god had awakened within Xiang Qin’s body. The aura that this roar radiated was that of half human and half ancient beast, giving others a terribly violent feeling.

“His bloodline’s gone berserk!”

“Oh my gosh! The Great Cathedral is truly frightening! His bloodline could go berserk so easily!”

“Xiang Qin is too impressive, he’s the first genius of the Great Cathedral alright!”

“Did you all see? He tapped his acupoints four times just now, that’s fourth level berserk!”

“Fourth level berserk? It’s possible to go that high? I’ve heard that it’s impressive to just have someone’s bloodline go berserk already.”

“Mm. Anyone who can incite their bloodline to go berserk is a genius. To complete it to the second level is a first rate genius. I’ve heard that Xiang Qin and Yue Baize had completed it to the third level, but who would’ve thought!”

“Who would’ve thought that Xiang Qin can already reach fourth level berserk!”

All of the geniuses below were struck speechless for a moment. They knew that they would be hard pressed to fight against a regular Xiang Qin, much less a Xiang Qin who had gone fourth level berserk. The Sacred Sword Palace was watching off in the far corner. Wang Jianyu had to admit that even Wang Han would have had no chance going up against a berserk opponent, not to

mention that this likely wasn't Xiang Qin's strongest form.

"Gaoqi, be careful, he's fourth level berserk!" Palace Head Dan Chi couldn't help but call out a loud warning.

"Berserk?" The corners of Jiang Chen's mouth twitched. He could tell that Xiang Qin's strength had absolutely reached fifth level sage realm after he'd gone berserk. This was several folds stronger than the strength he usually had. Jiang Chen had to look upon Xiang Qin's rampaging strength with respect. However, he had yet to feel fear at this development. On the contrary, he suddenly remembered a brother he'd made during the selection process of the four great sects, named Liu Wencai. Jiang Chen had felt a yet sleeping power in Liu Wencai's body. Thanks to Xiang Qin, he now recognized what kind of power it was. It was the power of a bloodline, and it seemed the depths of the one brewing in Liu Wencai's body was equally fathomless. Jiang Chen guessed that Liu Wencai had the same ability to cause his bloodline to go berserk as well.

"I heard that his Myriad Spirit Sect had the ability to ally with the Great Cathedral last time. I wonder why he isn't part of the Great Cathedral's entourage?" His thoughts took another spin and Jiang Chen remembered that Liu Wencai had only been a spirit realm cultivator back then. Even if he'd broken through to the origin realm by now, he still wasn't strong enough to participate in this ceremony. However, Jiang Chen believed that given enough time, the depths of Liu Wencai's potential wouldn't be any less than that of Xiang Qin's.

I just wonder if the Great Cathedral will be able to excavate his

full potential. Jiang Chen was no stranger to causing a bloodline to go berserk. This was an art of the beast tribes. As a family of sacred beasts, the Great Cathedral not only had the various human bloodlines, but had also assimilated numerous sacred beast bloodlines throughout the generations. Therefore, it wasn't a surprise that they possessed this ability.

This was actually quite common in the martial dao world. Jiang Chen himself had assimilated the bloodline of the ancient golden cicada and refined the blood of a true dragon. As he watched the berserk Xiang Qin, Jiang Chen could tell that his opponent's aura had taken a noticeable jump in power. He was struck by a sudden thought. You want to compete on power of bloodlines? Then let's compete!

Jiang Chen had refined the dragon crystal and blood in the forbidden area of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, so he now possessed the evolutionary bloodline of the dragon tribe as well.

The dragon race was the royal tribe of old, and unquestionably one of the strongest bloodlines in existence. Their aura, defensive skills, and evolutionary abilities of their bloodlines were extraordinary. One could say that all cultivators lusted over their bloodlines. The notable exceptions were superb experts who had no need to use a bloodline to enhance their own strength. But, if one had to use a bloodline of another race, then the bloodline of a dragon had no peer. It wasn't the only choice, but one of the very best.

It was a testament to the dragon's bloodline that even if Long Xiaoxuan hadn't awakened much of his heritage, as the descendent

of a true dragon, the purity of his bloodline was enough to enable any cultivator to ascend to the emperor realm. Even if Jiang Chen hadn't had any other fortuitous occurrences or the memories of his past life, the dragon crystal and blood alone would've propelled him into the emperor realm.

This wasn't exaggeration;l it really was that amazing.

Xiang Qin was also quite strong to have entered a berserk state. The Sacred Elephant family actually counted as an ancient family as well. The bloodlines of the sacred elephant race wasn't that much lower than the ancient dragons. However, the Great Cathedral family was obviously not of the most orthodox bloodline. So although Xiang Qin's bloodline was currently fourth level berserk, it still wasn't enough. He'd have to go reach ninth level berserk to be able to enter the emperor realm. As for Jiang Chen's dragon bloodline, he didn't need to think of going berserk at all. He'd be able to reach the emperor realm as long as no accidents happened.

When those watching beneath the stage saw Jiang Chen simply standing there and not preventing Xiang Qin from entering his berserk state, they all felt it to be a great shame. If he'd made a move to prevent his opponent from finishing the process, then the odds of victory would've been much greater.

"Mu Gaoqi is underestimating his opponent far too much."

"Right, there's no way he doesn't know what fourth level berserk means!"

“Hmm? Wait, look at Mu Gaoqi…”

“He… is that the power of a bloodline?” The voice trembled, astonishment causing his voice to break.

“Eh, I think so. Those ripples of energy are indeed ones from a bloodline.”

“Right, it’s the power of a bloodline. But he doesn’t seem to be going berserk. The power of his bloodline seems to be more pure and peaceful.”

“Yeah! Why do I feel that although he hasn’t gone berserk, his bloodline seems to exude more of an awe-inspiring feeling?”

“It’s an aura! This is absolutely the aura from his bloodline!”

Those watching beneath the stage all started yelling from surprise. There were simply too many bizarre things that Mu Gaoqi seemed capable of, and every new occurrence was more shocking than the last. He’d already been quite ridiculous in that fight against Wang Han, but to think that he still had trump cards in his fight against Xiang Qin! What kind of endless supply of trump cards did he have? Also, he was simply too tricky of an opponent. He seemed to be able to respond in kind whenever his opponent pulled out an ultimate move. Was he doing all this on purpose?

Chapter 664: A Physical Battle to a Civil One, A Battle of Grace

“Look, what’s that?”

“Are… are those scales?”

“Oh… my… defensive scales are appearing around Jiang Chen. Are those… dragon scales?”

“What does this mean?”

“What does this mean? Dragon scales! Mu Gaoqi has the bloodline of the dragon race?!”

“Dragon bloodline? How’s that possible? Does the Divine Abyss Continent even have dragons?”

The audience instantly boiled over with excitement. Not even the old fellows amongst them could keep calm anymore. Their vision was naturally better than the youngsters, so they were able to confirm that it was indeed dragon scales that appeared around Jiang Chen.

Dragon scales!

That meant he possessed the bloodline of the dragons! The heritage of the dragons was very broad, and all their descendants

would have immense potential even with the slightest, most diluted dragon bloodline. Even the Great Cathedral had never possessed a real dragon bloodline. Thus, when they saw the sparkling dragon scales materializing around Jiang Chen at that moment, they were all struck dumb with shock.

Xiang Wentian was also swaying slightly. “This... Mu Gaoqi, why does he have the bloodline of the dragons? How is this possible?”

“This child is too stunning!” The family head of the Sacred Lion family exclaimed with astonishment.

“Elder brother Xiang, we must bring this child to our Great Cathedral no matter what the cost. With the bloodline of the dragon race, our Great Cathedral can absolutely dominate the Myriad Domain and even become a third rank, possibly second rank sect!” The family head of the Sacred Ape family couldn’t help but speak up agitatedly.

Everyone of the Great Cathedral were on their feet in incredulous agitation. In the face of a dragon bloodline, all talk of the Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal paled in importance. Those two items were just tokens that conferred legitimacy for rebuilding the Myriad Domain. However, a genius with a dragon bloodline was a potential that could step into the emperor realm without a second’s doubt.

With such a genius, why would they need to worry about rebuilding the Myriad Empire at all? They could even found their own dynasty! Over on the Regal Pill Palace side, Elder Lian Cheng’s face had changed greatly. He knew Mu Gaoqi was of a high rank

innate wood constitution, but when had he gained the bloodline of the dragons as well? They hadn't seen this when they'd tested him last time!

However, something like a bloodline may truly not be identified properly when testing for potential. Shen Qinghong murmured to himself, "Incredible, truly incredible. I really was a frog at the bottom of the well before. To think that junior brother Mu Gaoqi has had such fortuitous occurrences!"

Jun Mobai wasn't one to speak much normally, but he laughed ruefully now. "This kind of fortune truly makes one envious. Good thing I didn't try to put myself forward just now; he would've trampled me into the ground!"

Although Ling Bi'er didn't say anything, waves of shock were still crashing in her heart. She knew that Jiang Chen was amazing, but she was still rocked by astonishment when it came to a dragon bloodline.

Palace Head Dan Chi had also not anticipated this scene either. He'd never thought that Jiang Chen would possess a dragon's bloodline! This was an unanticipated delight! The purity of Jiang Chen's bloodline looked extremely high as well. It was magnificent and imposing, obviously no ordinary dragon race bloodline. It could possibly even be one from the true dragons!

What were true dragons? They were the proper and noblest bloodline of the dragon race! Their heritage had been carefully guarded and passed through the generations to ensure no losses in purity! Even the coolly composed Huang'er was shocked to her

core as she watched Jiang Chen. “Elder Shun and I were both mistaken. Sir Jiang’s secrets are far deeper than Elder Shun had guessed. Elder Shun’s eye for talent is truly astonishing.”

Huang’er smiled as she looked at Jiang Chen, a slight smile appearing on her face. A few stray thoughts crossed her mind and an unknown trace of anticipation grew in her heart. With Jiang Chen’s bloodline and potential, she couldn’t help but think of a few things; things that allowed her to feel a few hints of sweetness in her heart. Some things that she hadn’t dared think of before suddenly seemed to dip towards the realm of possibility.

Up on the stage, Xiang Qin had completed his advance into fourth level berserk and once again started his furious assault. Jiang Chen drew deeply on his dragon bloodline and raised his strength by several times over in an instant. The two figures madly collided against each other on the stage to give rise to an astonishing momentum. They seemed to be akin to two rampaging demon-gods.

A fourth level berserk of the Sacred Elephant family attacked with abandon, shaking the heavens and earth with the force of the ancient sacred elephants. On the other side, although the dragon bloodline had only barely awakened, the immense and magnificent presence it exuded, as well as that tremendous aura, was able to fully suppress the opponent’s momentum. This development nearly made Xiang Qin spit blood in frustration.

He was already performing above and beyond his usual abilities in going fourth level berserk. He’d thought it to be but a matter of minutes before he’d overwhelm his opponent. But, who would’ve

thought that his opponent would have a dragon bloodline! The bloodline of the sacred elephants was strong, but there was a noticeable difference between that and one from the dragon race.

Not only had he not gained the advantage after going fourth level berserk, but now he was even worse off than before. He couldn't break through the other's dragon scale defenses at all. In addition, the offensive capabilities of the dragons were nothing short of heaven-defying. Jiang Chen seemed to be able to break through the very air with any random swipe, and any careless punch seemed capable of obliterating the sun, stars, and moon. Xiang Qin could just barely manage to take Jiang Chen's blows before they'd called upon their bloodlines, but now he didn't even dare to do so.

Bambambam!

The crazed battle began to lean in a certain direction as Xiang Qin's attacks started dwindling in exchange for more time defending. Pretty soon, his offense was completely sealed as he desperately focused all his efforts on evasion, slipping past Jiang Chen's punches by the skin of his teeth.

This scene left the audience slack-jawed with shock. Now that the match had progressed thus far, they finally believed that Mu Gaoqi was truly an incredible heaven defying genius. Judging from the situation, unless Xiang Qin had an equally heaven defying ability, there was no possible way for him to emerge victorious.

Although Xiang Qin was on the defensive, he didn't fall into a panic. He could still hold onto his position, but he was just quite anxious at the moment. He was in a dilemma. Do I use the power

of the totems? Or do I stop here?

"Do I really have to use the power of the totems?" Xiang Qin hesitated. However, the fire and spirit of a cultivator made it impossible for him to forfeit calmly. He gritted his teeth and decided to go for it. He would win this time even if he exposed the power of the totems!

"Mu Gaoqi!" Xiang Qin roared loudly.

Jiang Chen smiled slightly and jumped backwards in a show of good grace. "What's up?"

The crowd beneath the stage erupted in noise when he did this. Mu Gaoqi was too cute, wasn't he? Why had he backed off in the middle of a pitched battle just because the other had yelled at him? Was he giving his opponent the chance to catch a breath by taking a step back!? One didn't need to be quite so generous with a show of good grace, did they?

Palace Head Dan Chi also smiled ruefully. He didn't understand why Jiang Chen had given Xiang Qin the chance to breathe either. He should've kept his current momentum and hurled his opponent off the stage. Otherwise, Xiang Qin still had trump cards! The power of the totems were the Great Cathedral's fiercest strength, the strongest trump card that raised their battle strength to its pinnacle.

Xiang Qin likely hadn't thought that his opponent would allow him a chance to speak by taking a step back either. The bold fellow

felt a bit awkward in the moment. He'd never been one to take unfair advantage of a situation, so when he saw the other back away, he felt that he was benefiting unfairly. He raised his hand to scratch his head, "Mu Gaoqi, I'm surprised by your strength. I have one last trump card. If you can face it as well, then I'll concede." Xiang Qin was benefiting from a small advantage, so he issued a reminder to the other to allow him mental preparation as well.

Jiang Chen smiled, "I've heard that your Great Cathedral can draw power from the ancient totems."

"Exactly, it's the power from the ancient totems. I've also borrowed the power of the Sacred Lion, Sacred Wolf, and Sacred Ape family totems. This means you'll face all four of them at the same time." Xiang Qin was as straight as an arrow, but the degree of his candor made all the Great Cathedral folks shake their heads.

This battle was different from the shrill screaming match with Wang Han. These two sides were very friendly, a battle between gentlemen. Although the audience felt this to be quite the novel development, they had to admit that only this battle between two top Myriad Domain geniuses was worth watching. Even when lives were on the line and genuine emotions running high, they still stayed above petty trickery. This was a true genius!

The elders of the various sects all held this as a standard by which to educate their disciples. The young geniuses of the Myriad Domain were also conquered by their actions and words. Mu Gaoqi had been quite honorable in stepping back, and Xiang Qin's candor in admitting that he was going to use the power of the totems from

all four Great Cathedral families was no less honorable.

There might be a bit less blood and gore in this final match, but it was a heartwarming match. Sparring between geniuses shouldn't be such a bloody, messy affair. This was the proper attitude to have. Even the leaders of the sects unconsciously nodded in this moment, quite approving of this situation.

Jiang Chen was silent for a moment, then flicked out the Soldier Rosary Beads. Six mortal sage realm golden-armored warriors hit the ground at high speed, dropping into a battle stance.

Xiang Qin shook his with a slight smile, "That's not enough."

Jiang Chen nodded, still smiling, and flicked his fingers again. Another three earth sage golden-armored warriors hit the ground and materialized.

Xiang Qin could only stare in astonishment before he could recollect himself. "Perhaps... this might be enough... to create a draw."

Jiang Chen laughed heartily and flicked his fingers again, sending forth a sky sage realm warrior. He had three sky sage realm warriors; this was just the weakest. And yet, however weak it was, it was still a sky sage warrior. Jiang Chen didn't want to reveal the two stronger ones just yet.

"How about this? If this still won't do, then I'll have to forfeit,"

Jiang Chen smiled.

The entire scene was silent for a moment, so still that even a pin drop could be heard.

Chapter 665: Forfeiting with Frankness

The silence was deafening. Not a word was uttered; people couldn't even begin to form a reaction to what their eyes told them. Jiang Chen's never-ending series of trump cards had brought everyone's minds to a stuttering halt.

Exactly who is this person?

Setting aside everything he'd displayed when he'd beaten Wang Han, this child also had a dragon bloodline as well? Not only that, he also had the Solder Rosary Beads with the six mortal sage realm warriors that everyone had seen before. By itself, that was incredible enough already. But he could then also summon three earth sage realm warriors, and when that wasn't enough, he had more!

The limits of everyone's common sense had been tested again and again, and they were almost numb by now. But when Mu Gaoqi summoned the sky sage realm warrior, they'd been instantly petrified. They no longer had words to describe him. When had such a heaven defying genius appeared in the Myriad Domain? Just what was Mu Gaoqi's background?

The heavyweights over on the Great Cathedral's side were all wearing rueful smiles. There were no words to express how much the Great Cathedral valued Xiang Qin, as they'd even lent him the personal totems of the other geniuses. However, the opponent's moves were blatant evidence of even greater wealth. This gave them a completely helpless feeling. At this point, Xiang Qin also had a wry expression on his face as well. He may have been

ambitious, but he was an honest and generous fellow. He was full of confidence about the totem's power, but that didn't mean he would stoop to lying.

When he saw that Jiang Chen summon a sky sage realm warrior, his heart sank, but a massive feeling of relief flooded his body in the next moment. He suddenly felt that the burden on his shoulders had been completely lifted. He had indeed come in pursuit of the championship, and he'd borne the pressure of his sect with equanimity, but he now felt that pressure to be meaningless. What was the point of pressuring oneself to become the champion in front of such an outstanding opponent? There was nothing about his loss that he couldn't accept. He shook his head, a rueful taste in his mouth, and sighed, "I forfeit."

No one there was surprised by his words. The forefathers of the Great Cathedral all shook their heads wryly as well. They didn't feel downcast at all about their loss. What they'd seen today had been simply too, too amazing.

Xiang Qin raised his hands in a cupped fist salute to Mu Gaoqi. "Brother Gaoqi, I've never bowed before anyone, but I truly accept my defeat to the Regal Pill Palace today. You first have a Jiang Chen, and now a Mu Gaoqi. I, Xiang Qin, have only known today that our Myriad Domain lacks not for geniuses!"

Jiang Chen chuckled, rather liking Xiang Qin's attitude. After all, this fellow clearly delineated his grudges from his debts of gratitude. He was someone who was able to put down his high emotions just as easily as he could pick them up. This kind of attitude was necessary for a genius to rise. To grow jealous after

losing one match and be unable to recover from it, well, that was a fake genius.

Thunderous applause sounded from beneath the stage in unrehearsed accordance. All of the geniuses who were present started clapping. They had been conquered by this match, and felt genuine admiration for both participants. Almost everyone in the audience, with the exception of the Regal Pill Palace, was applauding loudly. It didn't look like they were going to stop anytime soon either. Although they hadn't witnessed the power of Xiang Qin's totem, and didn't see the ultimate battle, this match that hadn't happened had left a deep impression in everyone's minds.

Xiang Wentian of the Great Cathedral sighed, "What need do we have to worry about the Myriad Domain not achieving anything great with such geniuses? When our geniuses are so, what right does Great Scarlet have to live with their noses in the air? Why must we fear them and live in terror after our kin have been slaughtered?"

"Palace Head Dan Chi, will you possibly let go of someone as beloved as Mu Gaoqi given that he has a dragon bloodline?" Xiang Wentian asked probingly. "Just let me know what your conditions are."

Palace Head Dan Chi smiled, "Ole brother Xiang, this isn't someone you can steal."

Xiang Wentian scratched his head, "Dan Chi, I'm really not speaking out of personal desire right now. I just feel that it's a bit

of a pity for Mu Gaoqi to be in the Regal Pill Palace. He seems to be more suited to my Great Cathedral?”

Dan Chi looked at Jiang Chen and saw the latter nod at him. Dan Chi knew what Jiang Chen was thinking of, “Ole brother Xiang, you already tried stealing him away at the Pill Battles. Didn’t he turn you down then?”

Wang Jianyu of the Sacred Sword Palace walked over before Xiang Wentian had a chance to respond. “Dan Chi, the martial competitions are over now. I’m curious just what kind of fortune Mu Gaoqi has run into? I don’t think he’s a simple character, is he?”

“So what if he isn’t?” Dan Chi said faintly when he saw Wang Jianyu.

“Hmph. who knows what ambitions and scheme your Regal Pill Palace has in hiding Mu Gaoqi for all this time? In my opinion, we need to investigate Mu Gaoqi’s background and see if the Regal Pill Palace has colluded with any outside influences. We already have the example of the Tristar Sect, who’s to say that you weren’t involved as well?” Wang Jianyu was absolutely eaten away by jealousy at the moment. He could see that the Sacred Sword Palace was mere moments away from being crushed underfoot by the Regal Pill Palace, so he chose to step forward and muddy the waters at this moment. He had to, no matter how chaotic the situation was.

“I say, Wang Jianyu, you’ve lost your mind, haven’t you?” Dan Chi laughed coldly. “My Regal Pill Palace collude with external

enemies? Show us your evidence, and shut up if you don't have any!"

Xiang Wentian also rolled his eyes. "Wang Jianyu, now's not the time for personal grudges. Set aside your personal goals in the face of the greater picture of the Myriad Domain."

Wang Jianyu responded without a trace of emotion in his voice, "Ole brother Xiang, I know you treasure talent, but you need to think carefully as well. What if Mu Gaoqi is actually a pawn of the enemy? Wouldn't we be sleeping with wolves?"

These words were quite blatantly pointed. Even Elder Lian Cheng from the Regal Pill Palace grew enraged. Although he didn't wish to see Elder Yun Nie's disciple be so extraordinary, it was all too clear that Mu Gaoqi would be able to change the fortunes of the Regal Pill Palace. He would lead the Regal Pill Palace into a new age of glory. Therefore, the sect would suffer the greatest loss if he were targeted. And so, Elder Lian Cheng suppressed the jealousy in his heart and finally spoke up, "Wang Jianyu, at the end of the day, you're an esteemed sect head. How do you have the face to act so ridiculously shameless? You lost, deal with it. A genius like Xiang Qin forfeited as well! Your words are no different than the resentful baying of a rabid dog!"

Elder Lian Cheng had a bad temper as well as a foul mouth, a fact well known by all. Wang Jianyu was enraged by these insults from Elder Lian Cheng. "What, can I not take a loss? Which of your eyes has seen that? Can't I be thinking for the greater picture of the Myriad Domain as well?"

“Greater picture? And are you worthy of talking about the greater picture?! You’re a typical case of trashing something just because you’re jealous! You can point to anyone here and say that they’re an enemy pawn. Even you yourself wouldn’t be able to prove your own innocence! Bring out your evidence if you want to slander others. Otherwise, stop running your mouth. If you can accuse others, so can they accuse you. If that’s what you want, let’s just all do nothing and spend our days running our mouths off at each other!”

One had to say, in spite of his foul mouth, Elder Lian Cheng was very eloquent. Many were nodding in agreement after all of this.

Honored Master Tian Ming also walked up. “Ole brother Wang, I feel like we can’t speak of something like this so easily. Everyone has proof that the Tristar Sect betrayed us. All the rest of the sects are all sitting here, and it’s difficult for anyone to prove their innocence. After all, it’s difficult to explain what happens in private.”

“Honored Master Tian Ming is right, if the Regal Pill Palace and Ninesuns Sky Sect really are in cahoots, then that Sky Sect true disciple wouldn’t have gone to attack the Regal Pill Palace!”

Everyone started speaking up, and it was apparent that no one was on Wang Jianyu’s side. The facts were clear. The Great Cathedral had lost the finals and hadn’t complained, nor had they taken the chance to make any trouble. It was apparent from this that Wang Jianyu wouldn’t be successful in stirring up any trouble at this time.

Xiang Wentian chuckled and looked at Dan Chi, “Old brother Dan Chi, I did try to lure someone away from you at the Pill Battles, but that was Jiang Chen. This time it’s Mu Gaoqi. Don’t be in a hurry to reject me; we promise to not make use of his pill dao at all. That’s still the resource of the Regal Pill Palace. I just feel that with his dragon bloodline…”

Dan Chi waved his hand. “Ole brother Xiang, you’d have to ask him about this.”

Xiang Wentian looked at Jiang Chen, “Sage nephew Gaoqi, my proposal…”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and raised a cupped fist salute, “Family Head Xiang, I am a disciple of the Regal Pill Palace and don’t have any thoughts of joining any other sects for now. Besides, the Great Cathedral has an enormous amount of geniuses. Brother Xiang Qin, Yue Baize, Lang Jiunling, and Yuan Yuan will all certainly be pillars of the sect in the future.” He paused here, “And to be honest, there’s something I must come clean about. I’m actually not Mu Gaoqi.”

“What?”

Everyone was taken by surprise when he said this, and even Wang Jianyu was first stunned before quickly turning overjoyed. “What did I say? I said this kid was a bit strange! Well now? I was right wasn’t I?”

The others were all looking on with faces of stunned

astonishment. Even the Regal Pill Palace folks were at a loss as they stared dumbly at Jiang Chen, not knowing what his words meant. If you aren't Mu Gaoqi, then who are you? Can it be that after all this time and winning the championship, you're not a Regal Pill Palace disciple?! Then all our rejoicing was pointless!

Only Dan Chi still had a smile on his face. He was exchanging looks with Jiang Chen and knew very well what was on his mind. There was no need to keep concealing the matter anymore. After all, the aftereffects of this battle were too great. If they still didn't reveal the truth, then Mu Gaoqi would be in for a world of trouble. Besides, now that the match was over, Jiang Chen had fewer concerns about everything. He'd pretended to be Mu Gaoqi before so that he wouldn't be discriminated against along the way, and to avoid the inevitable interrogation from affecting his participation in the Grand Ceremony. Now that it was over, he didn't need to worry about that anymore. He'd shown his strength and sufficiently awed everyone present. Even the leaders of the sects would have to think first before questioning him. And so, there was no need to continue to keep his identity a secret.

Chapter 666: Jiang Chen Reveals Himself, Astounds All Present

What was going on? Mu Gaoqi was saying that he wasn't Mu Gaoqi? Then who was he?

All eyes were on him and scanning furiously, full of curiosity and speculation. This change was simply too ridiculous. He'd put on such a show and fight, overcoming all obstacles, but was turning out not to be Mu Gaoqi? One had to say, the sudden changes to this script made those watching feel that they couldn't mentally keep up.

Huang'er down beneath the stage had a faint smile on her face. She had also guessed that Jiang Chen was about to reveal his identity. After all, it wouldn't do to continue in this manner. Mu Gaoqi didn't have this kind of strength. It wouldn't be good for him to have this kind of reputation. With Jiang Chen's personality, he would never create trouble for his friends.

Palace Head Dan Chi raised his hands in a cupped fist salute and ignored Wang Jianyu taking delight in his misery. He spoke sincerely, "Everyone, we shouldn't have kept it a secret from you, it was just that..."

Wang Jianyu roared angrily, "Stop talking, Dan Chi! Answer truthfully! Do you dare say that your Regal Pill Palace has nothing wrong with it now?"

Dan Chi smiled faintly, "And what's wrong with us?"

“This fellow’s background? Dare you say where he’s from?” Wang Jianyu felt that he had finally grasped onto the Regal Pill Palace’s secret.

Dan Chi looked at him as if he were looking at an idiot. “I was going to tell everyone anyways, do I need your reminder?”

Xiang Wentian smiled wryly, “Come on, out with it ole brother Dan Chi.”

Even Honored Master Tian Ming didn’t speak up on behalf of the Regal Pill Palace this time. After all, everyone would feel a bit of doubt before his identity was revealed.

“He may not be Mu Gaoqi, but he’s someone you’re all familiar with. Jiang Chen, show yourself!”

Jiang Chen? The faces of those assembled all changed enormously again when they heard this name. Jiang Chen? Had they heard wrongly? How could it be Jiang Chen? Shouldn’t Jiang Chen be within Mt. Rippling Mirage? He might’ve even perished within it after all these years. What was he doing here?

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and ripped off his disguise with a shake of his body, revealing his true form. His confident smile and sharply defined features gave everyone an enormous visual impact. There was the air of a victor in his smile, making the other geniuses somehow feel a bit ashamed of themselves.

Ling Bi'er's heart trembled the moment Jiang Chen revealed himself. When she saw that familiar face that had haunted her dreams, she too felt an irrepressible surge of emotion. Which girl didn't have dreams? Which girl didn't hope for the prince of her dreams to appear in front of her in a position of utmost superiority? Jiang Chen was satisfying almost all of her daydreams in this moment, and Ling Bi'er felt herself completely sunk in his attraction.

Huang'er also seemed to detect Ling Bi'er's emotional ripples, but she didn't grow jealous. Her smile was still that generous and open beneath her veil. With his display of such glory and prowess, he sits firmly on the seat of top genius in the Myriad Domain, doesn't he? Elder Shun would be quite gratified if he knew all this. To be honest, Huang'er also knew that Jiang Chen's potential was astounding, but she had to admit after she witnessed all of his methods that this man from the Eastern Kingdom was imprinting himself ever further into his consciousness.

Jiang Chen!

Xiang Wentian smiled ruefully, at a loss for words. He had indeed tried to tempt Jiang Chen at the Pill Battles, but the Regal Pill Palace and Jiang Chen had turned him down. He finally understood Dan Chi's words now. He had indeed been rejected once, so how would he possibly succeed now?

Xiang Qin was in great spirits when he saw Jiang Chen. "Hahaha! Jiang Chen, it's you! Good, good, very good! I feel so much better all of a sudden! I was thinking how the Regal Pill Palace would

have not one, but two disciples who could heartily defeat me! Now that I know it's all the same person, I feel so much better!" This fellow had a straightforward personality and said whatever was on his mind.

Shen Qinghong was also greatly surprised. "Jiang Chen? Then junior brother Mu Gaoqi..."

"Gaoqi should still be cultivating in the Regal Pill Palace," Jiang Chen smiled. "I'm worried of making trouble for him with my impersonation, this is why I've revealed myself."

Shen Qinghong nodded and sighed, "Jiang Chen, I really do bow down to you."

Jun Mobai walked over speaking in a very friendly tone, "Jiang Chen, I haven't had the chance to invite you to my residence, and had thought I wouldn't have the chance to in the future. But to think..."

Elder Lian Cheng's bit of jealously towards Elder Yun Nie vanished when he saw that Mu Gaoqi turned into Jiang Chen. He was in a great mood that it wasn't Elder Yun Nie's personal disciple. As for Jiang Chen, this kid had been ridiculous already when he'd been in the Regal Pill Palace, so he could actually accept Jiang Chen being even more heaven defying now. However, Wang Jianyu obviously wouldn't let them off the hook so easily. He called out loudly, "Well isn't this even more interesting! Everyone knows that Jiang Chen should be in Mt. Rippling Mirage. What's he doing here for no reason? Do I have reason to think that this is an imposter?"

This matter was simply too bizarre, no one couldn't make sense of it at all. Why had Jiang Chen suddenly appeared here? This didn't make any sense at all!

Jiang Chen looked remotely at Wang Jianyu. "What? how do you want to play this time? Do you want to test my bloodline? Or accuse me of being planted by the Sky Sect?"

Wang Jianyu snorted coldly and spoke arrogantly, "I don't need to do anything. I only ask this, how are you possibly here if you're in Mt. Rippling Mirage? Do you take all of us for idiots to be played around by your Regal Pill Palace?"

Everyone flung curious looks over at Jiang Chen. They were also curious and wanted an answer from Jiang Chen.

Xiang Wentian chuckled, "Indeed, Jiang Chen, I've heard of your exploits in the ancient herb garden as well. You didn't emerge from Mt. Rippling Mirage."

Wei Wuying of the Walkabout Sect also spoke up, "Indeed, we've all seen this matter with our own eyes."

Jiang Chen smiled, "And this matter is precisely what I'm afraid that you lot are still harboring a grudge about!"

Xiang Wentian responded faintly, "You had no wrong in that matter. Everyone was fighting for the sky rank spirit herbs in the

ancient herb garden on basis of their own strength. It's not all you. Besides, you refined the antidote and saved everyone. As much as some might still hold a grudge, they swore a heavenly oath to not make trouble on basis of that matter."

"I will thank everyone then since that's the case." Jiang Chen smiled and cupped his fists, raising them in the four directions as a gesture of thanks.

"Hmph, Jiang Chen, are you playing dumb? Everyone's asking how you got out, do you think you can get by with this smoke and mirror?" Wang Jianyu took threatening steps forward and wouldn't allow Jiang Chen to evade the question.

Jiang Chen shrugged, "I don't think I have an obligation to explain myself to you, hmm?"

Wang Jianyu burst out laughing, "Look at that everyone! He's feeling guilty! I don't think he could've walked out before the formation cycle was up. If there really is a problem with the Great Formation, then why is he the only one out and not Elder Chen of my Sacred Sword Palace either?"

Wang Jianyu's words still ended up having some effect. Suspicion was written all over everyone's faces and they were also curious, was this young man really Jiang Chen? Or was he yet another imposter? There was a risk to pretending to be Mu Gaoqi, but none whatsoever for Jiang Chen since he was locked away in Mt. Rippling Mirage. There was no witness to accuse him otherwise!

Xiang Wentian too felt this matter was too important. “Sage nephew Jiang Chen, if you can, please explain yourself.”

Wei Wuying also remarked, “You must explain. The Great Formation of Mt. Rippling Mirage has to do with the ancient herb garden. Anything to do with it has to do with the source of all spirit herbs in the Myriad Domain. This is very important.”

Even Honored Master Tian Ming couldn’t speak for the Regal Pill Palace this time. He only looked at Jiang Chen, waiting to hear his explanation. Jiang Chen smiled frankly, “It’s actually very simple. A crack formed in the formation and I happened to find it. That’s all.”

“What?” Everyone was flabbergasted. How could there be a crack in the formation? The Great Formation had been passed down for thousands of years. They’d never heard of any crack! Was Jiang Chen talking sheer nonsense?

Wang Jianyu guffawed loudly. “Do you hear that, do you hear that everyone? He can say something so ludicrous as this! A crack in the Great Formation? Do you all believe this? Ole brother Xiang, you’re a ninth level sage realm cultivator. Have you ever felt this?”

Xiang Wentian had a solemn expression on his face as well as he stared at Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen however, remained perfectly at ease. “Wang Jianyu, I have no need to be polite since you are an elder with no virtue. You can simply find a time and take a walk with me to the Great Formation to see if there’s a crack! I walked

out from there, what can you do about it? You want proof? Easy!" He made a grasping motion with his hands and summoned forth various sky rank spirit herbs. "I trust no one's unfamiliar with these?"

They were the spirit herbs that Jiang Chen had taken from each sect back then. No one would be unfamiliar with them. Elder Wu Hen of the Walkabout Sect smiled ruefully, "It really is him."

He'd made up his mind not to fight against Jiang Chen when he left the ancient herb garden, and was now both frightened and relieved. What a good thing he'd done in not continuing to fight against Jiang Chen. This child was absolutely insane! His strength hadn't been enough to measure up to the elder's in the ancient herb garden and so he'd escaped, but now Elder Wu Hen was well aware that five of himself wouldn't be enough to withstand against the bombardment from Jiang Chen's golden armored warriors, not to mention his dragon bloodline...

The sky rank spirit herbs were the best evidence. Those of the other sects all shook their heads with rueful smiles. They had once possessed these herbs, but they'd been taken away. Now that they saw the herbs again, they did so with mixed emotions. Elder Xiang Gan of the Great Cathedral was also extremely dejected. He also knew that even Family Head Xiang Wentian would have to treat Jiang Chen with caution now, much less himself!

Chapter 667: Sacred Sword Palace, All Of You Come At Me Together!

These sky rank herbs were the best evidence of who he was. It wasn't something that people could fake. Yet, Wang Jianyu was quick to try and refute, "Don't forget everyone! Jiang Chen could've handed these spirit herbs over to Elder Yun Nie in the beginning, and had the elder bring them out! That's not impossible either, don't be taken in by them!"

Jiang Chen had thought that the sky rank herbs would be enough to dispel everyone's doubts, but these words awoke another train of suspicion in their minds. Indeed, Jiang Chen could've handed these spirit herbs over to Elder Yun Nie and had the elder bring them out! Bringing them out now might not mean anything. If the Regal Pill Palace really was up to something, they could easily pull the wool over everyone's eyes in bringing out these spirit herbs. The doubts that had been dispelled grew once again.

Jiang Chen had been contemptuous of Wang Jianyu to begin with, but now his temper had been completely roused by this sect head's insistence on creating trouble for him time and again. He rolled his eye and stared straight at Wang Jianyu, "Wang Jianyu, you're doing this on purpose, aren't you?"

Wang Jianyu laughed, "I have a clear conscience. My only intention is the good of the Myriad Domain. What proof do you have that you're actually Jiang Chen?"

"Proof?" Jiang Chen laughed heartily. "Why don't I tell you how we all killed Elder Chen? That was rather exciting; I wonder if you

want to hear it?”

Wang Jianyu’s face changed greatly as Jiang Chen’s words hit him, and he unconsciously reached for the hilt of his sword. Undeterred, Jiang Chen continued on with great gusto, “That old man Elder Chen used sword butterflies to split everyone into two directions, having that idiot Elder Xi take another bunch of little idiots to lure away the Great Cathedral and Tristar Sect. He then followed me all the way back to the island…”

Jiang Chen described the battle with great enthusiasm, obviously with some creative modifications to what had happened. He naturally wouldn’t reveal Long Xiaoxuan’s presence, but described Elder Chen’s demise at the hands of his golden-armored warriors instead. No one knew when he’d gotten them anyways; he could say whatever he wanted. The audience was enthralled by his story, growing more astonished at each twist in the story. Who would’ve thought that the earth sage realm Elder Chen would be so despicable? And then die in such an ignoble manner?

Silence, dead silence prevailed.

Every detail from Jiang Chen was a perfect match with what had happened. Of that, the Great Cathedral could bear witness because they’d wanted to follow Jiang Chen then too. They’d wanted to benefit from a fight between Jiang Chen and the Sacred Sword Palace. Xiang Qin called out, “I don’t care if you all believe it or not, but I do, absolutely. He’s Jiang Chen, there’s no doubt about it. The Regal Pill Palace had already left by then; there’s no way they could describe this.”

A rueful laugh suddenly sounded from the Walkabout Sect side. It was Elder Wu Hen. “Everyone can stop being suspicious. I can confirm that this fellow is Jiang Chen.”

Jiang Chen started. He’d never thought that Elder Wu Hen of the Walkabout Sect would step forth to bear witness. After all, they’d fought to the death for that sky rank spirit herb, and he’d chased Jiang Chen only to fail. It looks like Elder Wu Hen’s thoroughly bowed down to me?

“Don’t ask me why; I just want to say that it’d be insane if he wasn’t Jiang Chen,” Elder Wu Hen smiled wryly.

There were people stepping forth from the Great Cathedral and Walkabout Sect. Honored Master Tian Ming also stepped forward at this time, “Since everyone thinks there’s no problem, then there’s definitely no problem. It’s easy to fake being someone, but all of this evidence isn’t easy to fake.”

Wang Jianyu gritted his teeth. It filled him with a deep sense of helplessness to see everyone choosing to believe Jiang Chen. At the same time, he knew that his window of opportunity had closed. Anything he said now would be for naught. He looked at Jiang Chen with a sinister look. “Not bad, you little scum. You’ve such a glib tongue that everyone’s convinced and vouches for you. My Sacred Sword Palace however, doesn’t believe you!”

“Do I need you to?” Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

The Sacred Sword Palace? It was nothing in Jiang Chen’s eyes.

He wouldn't think much of it in ordinary times, never mind the chaotic times that the Myriad Domain was in now. He'd even killed Cao Jin, so he didn't mind a Sacred Sword Palace at all.

Wang Jianyu looked at Xiang Wentian, "Ole brother Xiang, if I said that my Sacred Sword Palace would like to take care of private grudges with the Regal Pill Palace, would your Great Cathedral agree to it?"

The assembly erupted into an uproar when these words were said. Did the Sacred Sword Palace want to erupt into open hostilities? The atmosphere immediately turned into glass, fragile, but deadly. Dan Chi held up a hand as the Regal Pill Palace bristled from behind him, each of them radiating hostility and ready for anything.

Xiang Wentian looked at Wang Jianyu, "Wang Jianyu, are you looking to rebel?"

Wang Jianyu started. He hadn't thought that the Great Cathedral would oppose him fighting with the Regal Pill Palace! Wouldn't such an action be to the Great Cathedral's benefit? He'd thought that they'd agree wholeheartedly, but he'd actually run into opposition from Xiang Wentian!

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "Wang Jianyu, are you sure you want to settle the score?" He suddenly grinned and looked over the Sacred Sword Palace entourage. His lips curled indifferently as he said, "Then how about this? No matter how many you've got with you, come at me. I'll take you all on myself."

“What?!” These words were even more explosive than the last. Once again, people began to disbelieve their ears. What did Jiang Chen mean? Him alone against all of the elites of the Sacred Sword Palace? Although their strongest, Wang Jianyu, was only eighth level sage realm, his strength was still rather impressive. It wasn’t an empty boast that the Sacred Sword Palace’s strength was second only to the Great Cathedral. Was Jiang Chen so arrogant as to take on all of the Sacred Sword Palace by himself? You may be genius enough to crush Wang Han underfoot and force Xiang Qin to forfeit, but that’s limited to the younger generation! Now you want to face the entire Sacred Sword Palace, and all those old monsters hundreds and thousands of years old? This Jiang Chen really did dare run his mouth off.

Dan Chi spoke up noncommittally, “There’s no need for this, Jiang Chen. Those of our Regal Pill Palace are all brave warriors. None of us will flee on the eve of battle. His Sacred Sword Palace wants to try and win using a numerical advantage? What does my Regal Pill Palace fear?”

Jiang Chen waved his hand, “Palace Head, allow me to handle this.” He’d made up his mind this time. You Sacred Sword Palace fellows keep challenging my bottom line time and time again. I’m no saint to keep endlessly enduring. He’d decided, to hell with everything. It was time to settle this once and for all. If he could fell the peak of ninth level sage realm Cao Jin, what was there to be scared of in just a Sacred Sword Palace? As strong as they were, they wouldn’t be stronger than Cao Jin’s group of three. Their strongest combatant was an eighth level sage realm Wang Jianyu. In terms of strength, he was miles from Cao Jin. Therefore, Jiang Chen knew that if he were to use formations, he would be able to easily destroy the entire Sacred Sword Palace. He wasn’t blindly

confident. He was well aware that the Sacred Sword Palace wasn't the Great Cathedral.

Jiang Chen wouldn't have contemplated this if his opponent had been the Great Cathedral. Their ability to make their bloodline berserk was terrifying enough, let alone their totemic power. If Xiang Wentian went berserk and used the immense power of the totems, he might even be on par with an initial stage emperor realm cultivator. Jiang Chen may not be afraid of that level of strength, but he'd find it tricky as well.

However, the Sacred Sword Palace was different. They just weren't as strong as the Great Cathedral, even with trump cards. Although Jiang Chen hadn't digested even one tenth of the heritage he'd received from the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, it was more than enough to handle the Sacred Sword Palace. He wouldn't even have to bring Long Xiaoxuan into the battle!

Jiang Chen's current posture alone was enough to make those of the other sects all look at each other askance. After all, even if he had displayed an overwhelming strength, it wasn't at the level where it could back up his words. Yet, the forefathers of the Great Cathedral were also looking at each other speechlessly. They'd discovered that Jiang Chen was truly unfathomable. It looked like he hadn't displayed the true depths of his strength yet in previous matches. This meant that he still hadn't brought out his final ace when Xiang Qin had forfeited!

"Just... what kind of fortune does Jiang Chen have?" Xiang Wentian of the Great Cathedral experienced a complicated mix of emotions at that moment. He really wanted to take Jiang Chen

away from the Regal Pill Palace, but knew that even if he did so, Jiang Chen wasn't the least bit interested in joining the Great Cathedral. Right now, it looked like he wanted to take on the entire Sacred Sword Palace in single combat! With Xiang Wentian's understanding of Jiang Chen, this kid likely wasn't speaking frivolously. Does he really have that much confidence? Just how frightening is his strength?

Even Xiang Wentian himself wouldn't be willing to take on an entire sect alone. Although he had the strength to, he wouldn't have the attitude to say it so boldly!

"Everyone, might we borrow the premises for a battle?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly and raised a cupped fist salute in all directions, speaking quite politely. All of the sect heavyweights were taken with curiosity at this point and subconsciously had their people back away.

Honored Master Tian Ming smiled wryly, "Sage nephew Jiang Chen, must you really do this?"

Jiang Chen smiled, "Since they wish to settle old scores, then let's settle it all here and now!"

Xiang Wentian's heart trembled. He stared fixedly at Wang Jianyu, "Wang Jianyu, are you sure you want to settle the score between the two sects right now?"

Wang Jianyu laughed coldly, "Let this kid try his luck. His arrogance is praiseworthy, if nothing else."

Xiang Wentian nodded, “Alright, then the situation is clear. Your Scared Sword Palace is acting alone to destroy the greater picture of the Myriad Domain. This isn’t just making an enemy out of the Regal Pill Palace, but of the entire Myriad Domain as well. Are you sure?”

Wang Jianyu’s heart sank, “What do you mean by this, ole brother Xiang?”

“These are tumultuous times for the Myriad Domain. Not only are you not thinking of the greater picture, but you also constantly stir up internal conflict. I feel that your intentions are damnable. Therefore, I call upon us of the Myriad Domain to unite and suppress the Sacred Sword Palace!”

The faces of all those in the Sacred Sword Palace changed when they heard this. This wasn’t a crime that they could shoulder. Things would go from bad to utterly dire if everyone started gunning for them. As arrogant and fierce as Wang Jianyu was, he was also stunned silent at this moment. He could tell that Xiang Wentian wasn’t just saying this! It was rather Jiang Chen who sighed inwardly. He knew of the family head’s intentions behind this move.

Chapter 668: Opening of the Myriad Domain Paramount Realm

Xiang Wentian might've looked like he was publicly censuring the Sacred Sword Palace, but in reality, he was protecting them. The Sacred Sword Palace wouldn't dare stir up trouble after this display of dominance, and he wouldn't have a reason to suppress the Sacred Sword Palace either.

Jiang Chen looked at Xiang Wentian meaningfully, but didn't reveal the latter's intentions. It looked like Xiang Wentian had guessed that Jiang Chen really had enough strength to off the entire sect. Otherwise, he wouldn't have thought to do something like this. Hidden in his words were also a hint to the Sacred Sword Palace ot back down. Of course, Jiang Chen was also guessing that Xiang Wentian's actions weren't targeting him, but rather took into consideration the greater picture of the Myriad Domain. The Tristar Sect had already betrayed them and chipped away at their battle power. If the Sacred Sword Palace was also destroyed, then the Myriad Domain would really be hurting then.

Beams of light exploded out of Wang Jianyu's eyes, but died down. After a long tense moment, he snorted coldly. "Good, good! Since ole brother Xiang has said as much, then I must show you this face today."

In reality, apart from Wang Jianyu, none of the others from the Sacred Sword Palace wanted to battle the Regal Pill Palace either. They were firmly underfoot at the moment, and had no assurance of victory if they went toe-to-toe against anyone else. Jiang Chen was also quite the odd kid. They couldn't help be a bit wary of him.

It seemed like he'd even killed Elder Chen. Who was to say that he didn't have a method to kill them too?

Wang Jianyu was very strong, but things would be uncertain if Jiang Chen had an even stronger backup plan up his sleeve. Even if the elders could save themselves, Jiang Chen could very well take out half of their geniuses. That would be an unmitigated disaster for the Sacred Sword Palace. Therefore, no matter what benefit was dangled in front of them, they weren't willing to take this fight.

There was no honor in winning as a sect over one young man, and great shame in losing. Not only would they suffer great shame, but they might also incur enormous injuries, possibly even ones that were impossible to recover from. No matter what angle they looked at things from, there was no need for this match. Therefore, they were rather relieved to see Wang Jianyu give up, even the arrogant Wang Han. He'd already been thoroughly cowed by Jiang Chen. He just wished for this harbinger of bad luck to not appear in front of him anymore. He could hide from Jiang Chen, even if he couldn't win in a fight! Although he hated Jiang Chen with a passion, Wang Han had tragically discovered that he would likely never surpass Jiang Chen in this lifetime.

The Walkabout Sect was actually feeling slightly dejected that the Sacred Sword Palace had backed down. They wanted to watch a good show and see how this situation of one person against an entire sect would play out. But Wang Jianyu had actually shrunk back at the critical moment!

Xiang Wentian however, breathed a sigh of relief. From his

perspective, he didn't wish for the Myriad Domain to clash and take any more losses in civil war.

"Ole brother Dan Chi, show me some face and settle your grudges later, alright?" Xiang Wentian looked towards Dan Chi.

Dan Chi responded remotely, "We naturally have to show ole brother Xiang some face, however, there won't be a next time. I'm sure you have all seen that Wang Jianyu always steps out to make trouble whenever a matter involves my Regal Pill Palace."

This was true, something that everyone had borne witness too. Indeed, if anything whatsoever came up with the Regal Pill Palace, the Sacred Sword Palace would always be the one to create the most trouble. No one could deny that.

Xiang Wentian looked at Wang Jianyu, "Ole brother Wang, you should more or less think of the greater picture when we are faced with a great enemy, shouldn't you? If disaster truly befalls the Myriad Domain, what meaning do you think there will be in the grudges between the two sects?"

How would Wang Jianyu not know of this? However, when faced with his mortal enemy, he'd rather be bullied by an outside enemy than see his rival grow stronger. "Old brother Xiang, I'll show you face and not make more trouble at this time's ceremony. However, the grudge between the Sacred Sword Palace and Regal Pill Palace does not end here. The mountains are high and the rivers long, this matter will not end just like this." Wang Jianyu huffed and waved his hand, "We go."

“Go?” An elder of the Sacred Sword Palace was taken aback.

“What else can we do other than leave? There’s no spot for the Sacred Sword Palace in the Myriad Domain, so do you want to stay and watch them strut around?” Wang Jianyu retorted angrily.

The Sacred Sword Palace made their way away from the ceremony, but an elder spoke quietly when they’d put a few miles between them and the rest of the Myriad Domain sects, “Palace Head, are we really leaving?”

Wang Jianyu leered, “Leave? How could it be that easy? We’ll hide in wait first and wait for them to emerge from the Paramount Realm. Then we’ll ambush the Regal Pill Palace when they separate. If we don’t kill that little cretin Jiang Chen now, we won’t have the chance to in the future.”

After all, Jiang Chen’s strength was rising too quickly. He’d just stepped forth to challenge their entire sect by himself. Not only did this deeply offend Wang Jianyu, it also made wariness grow in his heart for the first time. Even if the kid was boasting, he must’ve had some confidence in his ability to defy the Sacred Sword Palace. He wouldn’t have been so arrogant otherwise. Therefore, the best way to handle Jiang Chen now wasn’t through a match in the ring, but a sudden ambush that would catch him off guard. Everything would be much easier if they could injure him in an ambush. The Sacred Sword Palace wasn’t ranked second in strength among the sects for nothing. Naturally, it had some of its own trump cards.

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Now that the Grand Ceremony was over, the rankings were posted for all to see, and Jiang Chen's name was on prominent display at the top. He had the honor of being the champion of this year's Grand Ceremony. The Regal Pill Palace was delighted and congratulated Jiang Chen enthusiastically. Even the previously rebellious Nie Chong acknowledged Jiang Chen's prowess. He had no ability to do so otherwise, because the strength that Jiang Chen displayed gave him no reason not to submit. To be honest, he didn't even have the strength to be jealous of Jiang Chen. Much less him, Shen Qinghong didn't have the right to either. Only a genius on the level of Xiang Qin would have the right to envy Jiang Chen.

There were three major areas in the Paramount Realm, with nine levels in total. Three were in the transcendent region, three levels in the inner region, and three levels on the outskirts. According to previous ceremony rules, the top sixteen of the martial competition had the right to enter the transcendent region. The top thirty two could enter the inner region, with those ranking thirty third and beyond with only the right to stay in the outskirts.

The Paramount Realm would be open for nine days, allotting one day per level. There were many geniuses who'd entered the Paramount Realm after the previous Grand Ceremonies, but very few had found any fortune in the transcendent region. Barely any of them had made to that area to begin with, nd those who did came back out empty handed. Those who returned all said that there was nothing in the transcendent region at all.

“Disciples, you all are top sixteen and have the right to enter the transcendent region. However, I’ll be frank and say that when I had the chance to explore the transcendent region, I didn’t get anything for my time there. There simply doesn’t seem to be anything there. The heritage I obtained was from the inner region. Your fate is in your hands this time, and it’s up to you if you would rather head to the transcendent region or stay within the inner region to seek your heritage.” Dan Chi gave his disciples some sincere advice as someone who’d gone through the process before.

It was possible to have great gains in the transcendent region, but even more likely that one would receive nothing at all. Competition would be high in the inner region, but there were many legacies left in the inner region and a high possibility of obtaining treasures. Dan Chi was leaving the ultimate choice up to the youngsters. He might be the sect head, but he couldn’t make the decision for them.

“How are you choosing, Jiang Chen?” Shen Qinghong asked curiously.

“Let’s go in first, nine days really isn’t much time. It’s an unknown if we’ll even make it to the transcendent region.” Jiang Chen smiled.

Jun Mobai nodded with a slight smile, seeming to agree very much with Jiang Chen. Ling Bi’er looked at Jiang Chen. It was obvious that she would choose whatever Jiang Chen chose. When Shen Qinghong and Jun Mobai saw her thus, a wry feeling crept into their hearts. They understood that Ling Bi’er’s heart had made its choice already. In the end, this icy beauty had opened her

heart to Jiang Chen. As for Nie Chong, he hadn't made it into the top sixteen, so he wasn't faced with this dilemma. It was already quite a feat that he could enter the inner region. If things had gone as expected, he was supposed to have been eliminated in the first round, but had made it into the top sixty four thanks to the additional spots that had opened up. He'd then been lucky in the draw to make it into the top thirty two and received the chance to enter the inner region. Otherwise, he wouldn't even have that to look forward to.

"Alright, there's not much time left. Everyone, go make your preparations. The Paramount Realm will be opening soon."

The Paramount Realm was sealed shut, a seal that even the Great Scarlet Mid Region hadn't been able to break through when they'd invaded. After all, this place was a culmination of all the emperor realm cultivators in the Myriad Domain's history, and even had the life essences of the Titled Great Emperors from ancient times. Unless the invader reached that level of strength, they would have almost no hope of breaking through the seal by force. Therefore, the invaders had unsuccessfully made several attempts before leaving without anything gained.

Fortunately, every region had a place like the Paramount Region. It wasn't a phenomenon unique to the Myriad Domain. When all was said and done, it was a cemetery of experts. The Great Scarlet Mid Region had a similar place, containing even stronger inheritances. Therefore, although the Great Scarlet Mid Region wanted to gain access, they didn't want it too badly. They might not even found anything worth the trouble if they'd gone to the effort of breaking through the seal.

“Remember, you only have nine days. You must crush the jade transportation token in your hands after nine days or you’ll be trapped inside. The Paramount Realm is a place of rebirth, and the energy of life is very weak there. I can’t guarantee that you’ll be able to survive the thirty years within until the next ceremony.” Xiang Wentian swept his eyes across everyone’s face in solemn warning.

Chapter 669: The Ming Tuo Relic

Jiang Chen waved to Palace Head Dan Chi and Huang'er, also sending a message at the same time, "Be careful Palace Head, I don't think the Sacred Sword Palace will rest their case this easily. I even feel that something else will be happening during the Myriad Grand Ceremony."

Dan Chi smiled faintly, having been prepared for something like this beforehand. "Remember what I reminded you about." He was referring to keeping an eye on Jun Mobai. Jiang Chen nodded and looked at Huang'er. She had the sudden urge to enter along with Jiang Chen, despite her usually indifferent mindset. However, her cool logic quickly triumphed over this momentary impulse. She knew that if she wanted to go in as well, this would place Jiang Chen in an exceedingly difficult position. She thought for a moment and still decided to wait outside.

"Miss Huang'er, I hope you'll take care of the Regal Pill Palace some if anything happens in the outside," Jiang Chen didn't put on airs either. He knew the person who'd chased off Cao Jin last time was Miss Huang'er. There were no other such experts around, and how would anyone else in the Myriad Domain chase off Cao Jin with such good intentions towards the Regal Pill Palace?

It was almost impossible for it to be anyone other than Miss Huang'er.

Huang'er smiled faintly and nodded slightly, but didn't say anything.

The Paramount Realm was an area of rebirth, and no one could tell just how large this area was. It was an area that'd been created since the ancient times and held within it the profound mysteries of space. What looked like a boundless world would possibly not even exist in the blueprint of the Myriad Domain. Therefore, the hundred from the rankings of the Myriad Hidden Dragon Trials were as if flinging a hundred pebbles into the ocean. It was immensely difficult to give rise to any large ripples.

Ling Bi'er had planned on traveling with Jiang Chen, but discovered that they'd landed in completely different areas despite entering through the same door. There was no sign of Jiang Chen at all.

At the same moment, Jiang Chen himself had landed in the Paramount Realm and noticed that there wasn't a sign of anyone in a span of a few miles around him. He'd seemed to enter a region that was desolate beyond belief, a place that'd seemed to be abandoned by the outside world. The sky was heavily overcast, and there seemed to be no life in this dreary world.

And yet, there was flora all over the ground, and growing quite lushly. There seemed to be no difference between the vegetation here and in the outside world. But for some reason, the plants here gave one an exceedingly sinister feeling. There wasn't the slightest sign of life to them.

"My gosh, what kind of place is this? Is this a land of despair after armageddon?" Jiang Chen looked around and laughed wryly. A place of rebirth was a place where experts passed on, so it being full of the air of death was no surprise. But in this Paramount

Realm, even plants that were alive looked to have the same characteristics. They seemed to be without life, without vigor, and deathly still. This place quite surprised Jiang Chen.

He travelled according to the instructions in the jade token, picking up the general direction and moving forward. The scenery in front of him didn't change even after a dozen miles. There were mountains and rivers, grass and forest. It seemed to be a picture of a world. Stagnant and devoid of life.

"No wonder Family Head Xiang Wentian gave us such reminders. This Paramount Realm is indeed a place devoid of the energy of life. However, it's a suitable place for rebirth." Jiang Chen finally understood why Xiang Wentian had emphasized that everyone had to leave within nine days. Once the seal closed and they were unable to leave, they would never survive here for thirty years and await the arrival of the next ceremony. The energy in this life was enough for a few months at most, and this was the best case scenario. "I can't be overconfident this time. I must leave within nine days. Otherwise, I wouldn't last thirty months here, much less than thirty years."

This place was different from Mt. Rippling Mirage. The mountain was another forbidden zone, but it was a place full of life no matter what. It was only sectioned off from the outside world through use of formation, a way of carving out its own territory. This place however, was obviously a patch of dead land. The vitality of the outside world wouldn't be able to enter at all, and the life energy within this place was very weak. It wasn't enough to sustain long-term life at all.

Jiang Chen saw no clues along the way, much less any fortune that would be his making. They all said that the Paramount Realm was the place of rebirth for all emperor realm cultivators, but this didn't happen just anywhere in the region. Each spot was carefully selected, and it wouldn't be noticeable in one easy glance. At the heart of it all, even if the experts had moved on, they still liked to play some smoke and mirrors. They wouldn't throw their legacy in here for free for someone to just pick up. Therefore, Jiang Chen's leisurely tour of the area didn't immediately gain him any expert's legacy.

There were many who came into the Paramount Realm, and not a small number of people who really did receive a legacy. Each time someone received one however, that meant there was one legacy less. The legacies weren't endless and infinite. There had been no new emperor realm cultivators as time went on, so there wouldn't be any new legacies appearing in the Paramount Realm. That meant each one taken was being drawn off of a dwindling supply. It was an extinct resource. That meant that all the legacies would be exhausted one day.

"Hmm, there's something odd about this place." Jiang Chen suddenly discovered a place that was a bit odd as he walked forward. He used his consciousness and detected that there was actually a small formation in this area. When he entered it skillfully, he discovered that it was a place of rebirth. There wasn't anything special about this place, and it was a rather clever formation. However, he noticed that there wasn't anything left in this place other than a stone inscribed with a message. There was a body, and all of the cultivator's legacy and reflections were completely gone.

Jiang Chen smiled ruefully when he saw this and sighed, “Brother, I don’t know how strong you were when you were alive, but you were an emperor realm cultivator alright, just by the fact that your body hasn’t rotten after all these years. But you ended up just a bit too tragic. The reflections of your martial dao have all been taken from your stone tablet, and your legacy has been seized. However, they’ve left your body exposed out here. Just which black-hearted fellow stole your legacy?” He really couldn’t let it slide any longer. This was simply out of hand. Inheriting a legacy usually meant inheriting someone’s mantle. Even if the heir didn’t express anything, they should at least bury the body. It was simply too selfish.

Jiang Chen was resigned. This had nothing to do with him, but since he’d come here, he should at least do them the honor of burying them. After all, the dead commanded respect, and Jiang Chen wasn’t that shameless to do otherwise. He dug a pit and moved the corpse into it. He was about to shift the dirt to bury the deceased when something suddenly rolled out from it. It exceeded a faint, golden hue. It was a relic the size of a lotus seed.

“An emperor level relic?” Jiang Chen rubbed his eyes as he couldn’t believe what he was seeing. When he took a closer look, he discovered that it was indeed an emperor realm relic that contained strong life force.

An azure light suddenly flashed from it and a coalesced message glyph over it shattered, projecting a voice out. “Whoever buries me will receive the Ming Tuo relic.”

The Ming Tuo relic? As Jiang Chen hefted the azure relic in his

hand and felt its strong energy ripples, he didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He found it funny because he'd only happened to do a random act of kindness, and hadn't thought that the benefits would be so great! He'd only wanted to keep the cultivator's body from being exposed in the wilderness. This was a mentality that any normal person would have. At the same time, he couldn't help but pity the fellow who'd received the martial dao inheritance. He was lucky in that he'd found a place of rebirth, but the fellow had only received the inheritance. The essence of the owner however, was in this relic.

This was a relic that held all of the life-force of the emperor realm cultivator. Most emperor realm cultivators wouldn't be able to condense their life's essence into one relic without the help of immense methods and strong pills. One would have to have a Embalmment Pill in order to condense one's life-force into a relic. Only an Embalmment Pill can absorb a cultivator's vitality and contain it. There were other methods and arts that were needed as well, and the cultivator needed to seal off all of their acupoints when they were about to lose all their cultivation to prevent the loss of life-force.

Each step of this process was exceedingly difficult, and one slight mistake would cause all previous efforts to be a waste. Jiang Chen could understand these experts' good intentions. Most experts would be worried at the end of their lives that others would destroy their bodies in order to absorb the last bit of vitality. Therefore, they'd rather choose their own place of passing so they could go through the final steps alone. They wouldn't want anyone to see their ugly struggles at the end of their lives.

This was how this tradition formed after a while. Many experts

were willing to choose their final resting place when the end of their lives were coming. Not all of them were like this. Some of the great sects with legacies had experts who were willing to straightforwardly pass on their life essence to the next generation. Of course, there were also those who weren't willing to accept the end of their lives. They would enter the Paramount Realm to hunt for opportunity to save their own lives. This was another reason why many entered the Paramount Realm.

This is actually a sharira, a Buddhist concept of a small relic from the body of a holy figure, usually a small, crystalized/solid form of part of the body or its ashes.

Chapter 670: The Transcendent Region

“Even an expert can’t help but feel the passage of time when they reach the end.” Jiang Chen lamented as he stared at the pile of dried bones. He could very much imagine this person as an expert who’d moved unhindered in the Divine Abyss Continent countless years ago. At the very least, he must be a reputable person in the Paramount Realm.

However, those who were not acknowledged by the heavenly dao would only live limited lifespans, even if they called themselves emperor cultivators. Those who were not acknowledged by the heavens were only mortal, no matter how long of a lifespan they possessed. If one was mortal, it was inevitable for their lifespan to have an end.

Jiang Chen put away the Ming Tuo relic and said sincerely, “Senior – well, it’s not like I’m losing anything by calling you a senior. I have received your Ming Tuo relic, and buried your body. I hope that you have successfully entered the cycle of reincarnation and will be reborn.”

Jiang Chen pushed down the mound of soil to fill in the pit and buried the old corpse.

He had spent quite some time sidetracked by this, so he didn’t dally, continuing on his way without further ado. Although it was but a tiny episode in his life, one he’d profited from, Jiang Chen couldn’t quite shake the melancholy that had gripped him. Seeing that body had caused him profound sorrow, one that only a likeminded person would share. The powerful memories of his

past life and the millions of years he'd lived through elicited a thick sense of discrepancy in Jiang Chen.

It was only now he realized what an unnatural act his father had done in his past life. The Celestial Emperor had somehow managed to prolong his son's life for millions of years, even though Jiang Chen was unable to cultivate. One couldn't describe just how much of a defiance of the natural order this act was. "The cataclysm must have occurred because Father prolonged my life for over millions of years, despite possessing a disabled body. He must've deeply angered the heavens."

It was only now Jiang Chen finally remembered this particular question. He'd been but a mere mortal in the past, but a mere mortal like him had somehow lived for millions of years. How was this possible?

It'd all been thanks to his father engaging in skullduggery, harnessing the very powers of creation to forcefully prolong his son's life. Although his father had been the Celestial Emperor who'd ruled over the heavens, the heavenly dao couldn't be overcome easily even by the Celestial Emperor. Even further, his act of defiance had bought Jiang Chen millions of years.

Jiang Chen's heart brimmed with regret and pain for his father. He might not know how the cataclysm had appeared, but there was no doubt that his millions of years of life had also brought his father ill fortune. It was something that had never occurred to him in his past life. But, faced with that old emperor realm cultivator's body, the realization had finally struck.

A mortal would always have a limited lifespan. In life, that body had been an emperor realm cultivator. He might even have been a Titled Great Emperor. But in the end, he was just a mortal. The final destination of a mortal was simply a pile of white bones. Jiang Chen reminisced about his past life as he thought about those bones. He was supposed to have transformed into a pile of white bones a long time ago, but he'd somehow managed to live for millions of years.

"Father..." All sorts of indescribable feelings welled up in his heart. His father was the only person who could have been this amazing and selfless in the entire world. For his son, he had been willing to defy the heavenly dao. He had even been willing to suffer the cataclysm. For a long moment, Jiang Chen experienced an unspeakable pain in his heart.

He walked for an entire day before he finally felt a bit better. He also reached the second level of the Paramount Realm. There, he discovered another presence around him, a Walkabout Sect disciple. Rather than showing himself, Jiang Chen chose to evade the other, continuing deeper in the Paramount Realm.

As he shook off the negative feelings, Jiang Chen quickened his footsteps and followed the directions from the jade token, arriving at the third level of the Paramount Realm several hours later. The third level wasn't that much different from the previous two levels. However, there were obviously more areas of rebirth and many more legacies in this place.

Jiang Chen had already run into two such places along the way. However, both spots had obviously been dug up. Nothing of value

had been left behind, and even the tombstones on which teachings had been etched had been destroyed.

“Sigh, human nature is ultimately selfish. They got what they wanted, but they weren’t willing to share it with someone else. It looks like there were at least three tombstones that expounded on martial dao, but not a single one has been left intact. They had all been destroyed by their inheritors.” Jiang Chen sighed softly. He too understood that this was just human nature; the normal state of the world of martial dao.

The fewer the inheritors, the more valuable the inheritance. On the other hand, the more legacies there were, the less valuable they actually became. After all, why should they share what they’d obtained with someone else? It was obvious that preserving one’s own inheritance as their exclusive secret was better than sharing it with the world. Even if the heir’s talent was average, and they might not be able to plumb the depths of what they’d acquired, it was still better to have the inheritance die in their hands than passing it to someone else.

No matter how frustrating it was for Jiang Chen, there was nothing he could do about it. This was the black mark that plagued humans, the despicable underbelly of human nature. It was fortunate then, that Jiang Chen wasn’t interested in legacies. He had plenty of secret techniques in his memories. But he never cultivated his techniques blindly. He always took his current cultivation into consideration when choosing the techniques he needed to cultivate. Recklessly choosing techniques to cultivate would only result in wasted time, let alone the possibility of successfully cultivating it to begin with. Given the pile of divine arts lying around in his memories, he would only consider an

inheritance if it was particularly attractive. Otherwise, he had no interest.

In fact, Jiang Chen liked things like the Ming Tuo relic even more. It was tangible, useful, and contained the life essence of an emperor realm expert. If a sage realm expert could refine this relic, they could absolutely directly ascend to the emperor realm. This was the best shortcut available to rise to the top in a single step.

Of course, Jiang Chen wasn't interested in this type of shortcut. After all, the power he could obtain from refining the relic was ultimately not as attractive as the power he could cultivate himself. Moreover, there was a certain amount of risk in refining a relic. If the energy of the relic was too powerful, it was possible that it might create a backlash for the sage realm expert. It wasn't as if Jiang Chen had no hope of ascending to emperor realm. In fact, he had absolute confidence that he could break through, so there was no need for him to use such a method to pursue the emperor realm.

"Likely not even Palace Head Dan Chi would be willing to use such a method to ascend to emperor realm." With Jiang Chen's understanding of Palace Head Dan Chi, he understood that the palace head was a man of great ambition. He would rather desire to cultivate his own way to the emperor realm. On the other hand, for those such as Elder Yun Nie who were destined never to ascend to the emperor realm might find this kind of item to be extremely attractive. Of course, those were just Jiang Chen's assumptions.

Relics like these might not necessarily be relegated just for ascending to emperor realm. If one slowly absorbed and refined

the life energy within the relic, a cultivator would still be able to enrich themselves. That is, if they weren't looking to ascend to emperor realm. However, it would result in an excessive loss of spirit energy if used that way. It was a rather wasteful use of a precious resource.

Jiang Chen arrived at the edge of the outskirts two days later. Going any further and he would arrive at the inner region. It was obvious that he was the fastest among all those who had entered this place. No one else had reached the entrance of the inner region yet. Without a moment's hesitation, Jiang Chen entered.

After entering the inner region, Jiang Chen could sense that the amount of life-force inside the inner region had deeply fallen. It had already been quite weak in the outskirts, but the inner region was almost completely bereft of life force. Even Jiang Chen experienced a slight sense of discomfort. Thankfully, a cultivator's powerful life-force enabled them to acclimate to this change easily. It wasn't a problem to hold out here for at few months.

"No wonder this horrible place is called a place of rebirth. It's obviously no place anyone would easily come into." Jiang Chen said knowingly. This was how a place of rebirth should be. If anyone could enter a place of rebirth, then it was almost unavoidable that the dead's eternal slumber would be disturbed.

For some reason, Jiang Chen recalled Palace Dan Chi's words soon after he entered. "You may be able to find an expert's place of rebirth and inheritance in the inner region. However, you may not find anything in the transcendent region."

Jiang Chen laughed wryly, “It would seem that Palace Head Dan Chi took the chance to linger in the transcendent region before. It’s just that he found nothing there.”

When it came to the inner region, it wasn’t exactly littered with inheritances either. The chances that one might find an inheritance weren’t high. From past experience, there wouldn’t be more than ten people out of a hundred who would find an inheritance. Sometimes, there would even be just two or three people who came out profitable. There were plenty of empty places of rebirth. At least half the people who entered this place would find those bare places of rebirth instead.

An empty place of rebirth naturally had had their inheritances taken by someone else already. Since someone had already inherited the legacy, there would be nothing else left behind. Therefore, as the number of inheritances dwindled, it became harder and harder to find one as well. After all, it was a nonrenewable resource. The more it was used, the less it became until it was ultimately depleted. However, no one could tell exactly when it was going to be fully depleted.

Jiang Chen’s consciousness was powerful, and his perception was at least several times stronger than the other geniuses. However, even with his consciousness, he still wasn’t able to find a true place of inheritance so far. This showed just how difficult it was to find an inheritance.

Jiang Chen had been walking in a straight line all this time, without dilly dallying for too long in any place. He hadn’t searched through the place very thoroughly either. If he were to thoroughly

search, it was very likely that he might discover a place of two with his level of consciousness. However, deep inside Jiang Chen's mind, he thought that his final destination should be the transcendent region.

In his personal experience, the stranger a place was, the likelier that a secret was hidden somewhere inside it. Palace Head Dan Chi had told him that there was nothing in the transcendent region. In that case, Jiang Chen was certain that there must be something inside this transcendent region. Otherwise, there was no way the Paramount Realm would have a place called transcendent region or something. It looked noticeably more impressive than the outskirts and inner region.

The fact that Palace Head Dan Chi had found nothing didn't mean that there were nothing there. It might just mean that Palace Head Dan Chi simply didn't possess enough skill to spot it back then. That was the line of thinking Jiang Chen was following, whether or not it was actually the truth.

"There might be some inheritances inside the inner region. However, while it would be nice to gain one, it's not an insufferable loss to me if I missed out. On the other hand, there must be some kind of secret hidden inside this transcendent region. Since I'm already here, I must check out this region." Jiang Chen had made up his mind not to search inside the inner region. Instead, he headed for the transcendent region straight away. Following the directions, he moved through the inner region at full speed. On the fourth day, he arrived at the outer limits of the transcendent region.

Chapter 671: Huang'er Sounds the Warning

Jiang Chen stood at the border of the transcendent region, taking a moment to observe. The entrance into the transcendent regions seemed a little different than the ones that had led into the inner region and the outskirts. But, try as he might, he couldn't quite put his finger on what that subtle change was. "Forget it, I'll go in first." He didn't dwell on it too much, and sprang through the entrance.

Nothing untoward happened as he took his first steps into the transcendent region. It didn't seem to be all that different from the inner region, other than the fact that the deathly stale atmosphere seemed even thicker. The inner region was already stifling, but there didn't seem to be a difference between the transcendent region and hell. Jiang Chen couldn't detect the slightest trace of life anywhere around him.

"No wonder the palace head said that there was nothing here. Not even those weird plants seem to be growing here." Jiang Chen lifted his eyes to scan the yellow sands and dirt in the distance. He seemed to have truly entered a land of boundless desolation, completely devoid of life. He suddenly understood Palace Head Dan Chi's feelings. Not even Jiang Chen with his broad knowledge from his past life wanted to linger too long in a place like this, much less Dan Chi. Jiang Chen estimated that even he himself wouldn't hold out for ;longer than a month. The others wouldn't last ten days.

He almost wanted to retreat, but decided to forge onwards. After all, he'd already made his way here, so he should make the most of his time. There was no reason to come and then immediately

withdraw. There had never been such a notion in his vocabulary. He'd either not make a decision, or follow it through its very end once made. The transcendent region was so bizarre to begin with, and he wouldn't believe it if there was truly nothing more to it.

……

Just as Jiang Chen entered the transcendent region, Ling Bi'er happened to enter the inner region at the same time. She'd dithered on the outskirts for three days looking for Jiang Chen, but had come up empty-handed. She knew that she shouldn't be depending on a man so much, but ever since entering the Paramount Realm, the idea that she wanted to spend some time alone with Jiang Chen had grown ever stronger. She knew that it was an embarrassing thought, but first love is ever insistent on its desires.

However, she was a smart girl. Given the vast desolate wilderness of the Paramount Realm, it would be impossible to find Jiang Chen. There was no difference between finding him and searching for a needle in a haystack. After re-focusing her attentions, she decided to attend to her search seriously. Cultivators only had one chance in their lives to enter the Paramount Realm. In thirty years, it would be another batch of young geniuses who would enter; she wouldn't have a chance to come again.

"Junior brother Jiang Chen is so strong now that he can take on the entire Sacred Sword Palace by himself. I was stronger than him before, but now I've fallen far below him. I must find a legacy in the Paramount Realm to increase my own strength. Even if I can't catch up to his footsteps, I must be able to keep track of his back."

Ling Bi’er had a frosty personality, but she had a headstrong streak hidden deep within her bones. To a certain degree, all cultivators shared this characteristic, and Ling Bi’er was no exception.

……

Outside the Paramount Realm, by the rings.

It’d been a full day since the geniuses had entered the Paramount Realm. Palace Head Dan Chi was sitting cross legged on the floor, but he wasn’t relaxed. Although the Regal Pill Palace had won the championship of the rankings, he wasn’t overjoyed either. He also didn’t raise the topic of the Imperial Jade Seal or the Guardian Dragon Seal.

If it’d been in the past, he would’ve surely been highly interested in these two items. But at this moment, the Great Cathedral wasn’t talking about them, so he wasn’t talking about them. It was as if that conversation had never happened. He only wanted to peacefully await the geniuses exiting the Paramount Realm. As for rebuilding the Myriad Domain, it wouldn’t be something that could be accomplished overnight. He wouldn’t be against it if the Great Cathedral wanted to do it, but he didn’t want to take up the mantle right now. The timing wasn’t right yet.

Dan Chi suddenly heard footsteps next to his ear and saw a figure in a veil and cloak approach. He recognized the mysterious person as one of Jiang Chen’s followers. Jiang Chen had never introduced the follower, so although Dan Chi was curious, he hadn’t asked. The person suddenly walked closer and spoke in a low, slightly hoarse voice that seemed to have been altered. “Palace Head Dan

Chi, how many days did Elder Shun spend in the Regal Pill Palace?”

Dan Chi trembled involuntarily when he heard this question, “What?”

“Don’t worry, Elder Shun is my kin. He taught you the defensive method you used against the Sky Sect disciple the other day, right?” The person speaking was naturally Huang’er. But how could Dan Chi know that Huang’er was Elder Shun’s junior? He stammered and stuttered for a moment, “Who are you?”

Huang’er’s tone was indifferent, “Never mind who I am, Palace Head Dan Chi, I mean you no harm. I’ve come to warn you that large numbers of enemies have arrived around the rings. You’re already surrounded.”

“What?!” The palace head leaped up, an incredulous look in his eyes. He stared at Huang’er, half believing and half suspecting in that moment. Their words had been exchanged privately, but his sudden movement alarmed the others. They began to look over with questioning gazes.

“Don’t doubt, there are many who’ve come, at least several hundred to almost a thousand. Their ranks include absolute experts who outnumber you three to five times over. They also have emperor realm cultivators with them.” Huang’er’s tone remained composed. She was sending her words silently, so only Dan Chi could heard them. “Palace Head Dan Chi, there’s no need to conceal things now. I was the one who helped you beat back the Sky Sect disciple that day. You can refrain from believing me, but

you must trust Jiang Chen.”

“Jiang Chen?” Dan Chi started.

“Yes, Jiang Chen is my benefactor and Elder Shun my elder.” With Huang’er’s strength and position, there was no need for her to be so polite. But she’d always preferred polite peacefulness over threats. Her tone was still coolly composed even in the face of this juncture, without the normal attitude of “take it or leave it”.

“How long until they arrive?” Dan Chi took a deep breath to settle himself.

“They’re already here but they’re still making preparations. Now is the time to make it out. If you’re any slower, none of you will be able to leave.” Huang’er responded faintly.

“Make it out? What about the ones in the Paramount Realm? What about Jiang Chen?” Palace Head Dan Chi shook his head. “I won’t leave.”

Huang’er stared at Palace Head Dan Chi with her clear eyes. “You will die if you don’t leave right now. Even Elder Shun’s pointers will be futile. After all, you spent only half a month with him at most, I’m guessing.”

Palace Head Dan Chi didn’t know what to say in response to her scarily accurate guesses about Elder Shun.

“Tell everyone to leave now, I can help you in the shadows for a bit and counter a few blows from them. You don’t need to worry about Jiang Chen, I’ll stay here to wait for him.” Huang’er’s tone was measured and calm, belying the urgency in her words. As for the dire situation, she had a plan.

Chapter 672: Dan Chi Retreats

The situation was perilous, and Huang'er didn't continue her advice when she saw that Dan Chi was hesitating. "It will be easiest to break through in the southeastern corner. I can hold things off for about fifteen minutes. I won't be able to do anything after that." Her figure blurred after speaking, and the mysterious cloaked person vanished into the air.

Everyone's attentions were on Dan Chi at the moment, and they were all slightly surprised to see the mysterious person suddenly disappear. The speed with which she'd disappeared was a bit beyond everyone's imagination.

"Palace Head Dan Chi, is that one of yours?" The Sacred Ape family head of the Great Cathedral asked out of curiosity.

Palace Head Dan Chi laughed wryly and shook his head, "My Regal Pill Palace doesn't have this kind of fortune." He was quite anxious at this moment. His instincts were telling him that the cloaked person wasn't telling him false, but he just couldn't find it within him to leave the young geniuses behind. However, the person had said that he only had fifteen minutes. Their attitude had been very clear, and if the Regal Pill Palace missed this best timing, the consequences were theirs to deal with.

What to do? Dan Chi was feeling quite conflicted. The younger generation were the future of the sect, and if they couldn't protect the young, then there wasn't much of a meaning to them retreating. But there was also the fact that if all of them perished here, then that pretty much meant that the entire sect was pretty

much done for as well.

“Ole brother Dan Chi, what did that person say to you just now that made you react so strongly?” Xiang Wentian was more curious about this.

Dan Chi no longer hesitated when he heard Xiang Wentian ask about this. He responded solemnly with a grave look, “Ole brother Xiang, this is a dire situation.”

“What do you mean?” Xiang Wentian frowned.

“We’ve been surrounded.” Dan Chi’s expression was full of portent. “The mysterious friend told me just now that large numbers of experts have already surrounded us.”

The crowd erupted when they heard this.

“What did you say?”

“Palace Head Dan Chi, jokes like these can’t be made lightly.”

“Right, surround us? Who would be so bold? No way!”

Loud censures sounded for a while. Although no one called out ugly insults, it was obvious that no one believed Palace Head Dan Chi. However, some who were more astute didn’t say anything. They looked at Dan Chi solemnly, trying to determine if what he

said was true or not. When they saw that Dan Chi seemed serious, those in a uproar gradually calmed down, because they saw that the heavyweights of the various sects all had extremely serious expressions on their faces. Have we really all been surrounded?

Xiang Wentian's face was exceedingly frosty, "Ole brother Dan Chi, these words are not to be spoken lightly."

"Ole brother Xiang, you know that I'm not one to speak frivolously. Besides, the mysterious person has told me that he can help me buy fifteen minutes of time."

"What do you mean?" Xiang Wentian asked lowly.

"He means that we can still break through in these fifteen minutes, and we're responsible for what happens afterwards if we remain."

Xiang Wentian's facial muscles spasmed slightly as a complicated expression crept onto his face. "Fifteen minutes? Are things really that serious?"

"Family Head, why don't we send someone to find out if this is true or not?" Elder Xiang Gan snorted coldly. He was obviously not putting much stock in Palace Head Dan Chi's words. Having been played by Jiang Chen in the ancient herb garden last time, he was still holding some grudges against the Regal Pill Palace. He felt that this could be another one of their tricks again.

Dan Chi's expression changed, "We absolutely cannot. If we send people now, that'd be alerting the enemy. That would put us in an even more disadvantageous position."

Elder Xiang Gan sniffed. "I'm rather curious, who is that mysterious person? Why would he be so kind as to warn us? I'm not being paranoid, Palace Head Dan Chi, but your Regal Pill Palace is really too much of an alarmist."

He'd thought that Dan Chi would argue and debate with him, but who knew that the other wouldn't pay any attention to him? Dan Chi turned to Xiang Wentian, "Ole brother Xiang, I've done all I need to do in speaking of this. I choose to trust him, and won't interfere in whether or not you choose to believe him." He then turned to speak to the others in his sect, "Everyone, danger has arrived and it is unpredictable. We must break through."

Elder Lian Cheng was faintly surprised. With his understanding of Palace Head Dan Chi, he wasn't the sort who would abandon those of his own sect. Was he going to leave the youngsters behind to their doom?

"Palace Head, then Shen Qinghong and the others..." Elder Lian Cheng asked purposefully.

"They won't be in any trouble for now in the Paramount Realm. This is also a chance to test them." Although these were Dan Chi's words, they weren't his thoughts. He just wasn't at liberty to speak of the mysterious person's identity. However, since the mysterious person was Elder Shun's kin and had helped the Regal Pill Palace before, then their strength would certainly not be ordinary. With

the protection of this mysterious person, Dan Chi was naturally full of confidence. Besides, Jiang Chen was no pushover either. He was more worried about the sect. If the Grand Ceremony had been surrounded, then their sects would surely be under siege as well. With these thoughts in mind, he decided to break through first and return to the sect.

Fifteen minutes was a very short amount of time, and there was no further time allotted to him for hesitation. Dan Chi arched his eyebrow at Honored Master Tian Ming, “Ole brother Tian Ming, what do you say?”

Tian Ming was a bit hesitant, “Ole brother, although I know you’re steady and dependable, what if the mysterious person is being an alarmist?” He cast a glance in the direction of the Paramount Realm. “Not to mention that the younger generation is all in there. It doesn’t seem to be right if we just leave like this.”

He didn’t really want to leave, not because of the younger generation, but because he felt that the mysterious person was likely toying with Dan Chi.

Dan Chi continued, “Ole brother Tian Ming, we’re friends. Time is of the essence, if we don’t leave now, we’ll have to hack our way out in blood when the other side finishes their preparations. At that time…”

Tian Ming smiled ruefully, “I can understand your feelings ole brother, but I think I’ll stay here. I say old friend, aren’t you overreacting a bit?”

Dan Chi sighed softly and shook his head. He knew there would be no convincing them now. He raised his hands in a cupped fist salute, “Then, I hope our paths intersect again in the future.” He immediately took to the air with Elder Lian Cheng and the others, heading for the southeast. Five minutes had already passed, if they didn’t hurry, they might very well miss out on the best timing to escape. His heart was afire with anxiety, and the elders following behind him were completely baffled. Was this the palace head they were familiar with? He’d always been the coolly composed sort, never in such a panicked frenzy like today, as if facing a tremendous enemy.

“Palace Head, are there really enemies out there?” An elder couldn’t help but ask.

Dan Chi responded lowly, “Absolutely. Everyone, there will be a hard fought battle to break through this time, you must be ready to charge out at the cost of everything else. The sect might be in a worse situation than us right now.” His heart grew even more anxious at the thought of the sect. A young genius like Jiang Chen had great fortune, and Dan Chi didn’t believe that he would perish. But the sect had to do with the Regal Pill Palace’s legacy, so Dan Chi was even more worried about it. He’d wanted to convince the Dark North Sect to break through with him, but who would’ve thought that Tian Ming would refuse to leave?

Dan Chi would’ve explained with patience if in ordinary times, but how did they have that luxury now? Every breath taken was precious when they only had fifteen minutes to spare.

As those who remained behind saw the Regal Pill Palace draw further and further away, they all looked at each other silently. Elder Xiang Gan laughed ruefully, “Has Palace Head Dan Chi gone mad? Or is he possessed?”

Xiang Wentian however, frowned, “Ole brother Dan Chi isn’t someone like this. How strange. Just what did that mysterious person say to him to make him believe it so wholeheartedly?”

Elder Xiang Gan speculated viciously, “Family Head, is the Regal Pill Palace really colluding with outside enemies and putting on this act?”

Honored Master Tian Ming couldn’t accept this. “Family Head Xiang Gan, you’re really being unfair there. I am well aware what kind of person ole brother Dan Chi is. Even if ninety nine percent of the Myriad Domain has gone over to the enemy, he might still hold out.”

Xiang Wentian frowned, “Elder Xiang Gan, some things shouldn’t even be joked about. Dan Chi has an immense amount of self pride. Although the Regal Pill Palace only possess mediocre strength, Dan Chi has grand ambitions for our region. I would never believe that he’d gone over to the enemy.”

Xiang Wentian and Dan Chi was the same kind of person at the end of the day. Both had the ambitions to unite the Myriad Domain. They naturally had a mindset of fellow heroes relating to each other. Suddenly, someone from the Walkabout Sect side ran out and spoke to the sect leader, “Sect Head, why don’t we retreat along with the Regal Pill Palace?”

The person speaking was Elder Wu Hen. Wei Wuying looked at the elder in utter incomprehension. “Elder Wu Hen, you believe that tripe as well?”

Complicated emotions flickered rapidly over Elder Wu Hen’s face as he suddenly raised his hands towards Wei Wuying in a cupped fist salute, “Sect Head, time waits for no one. I’ve decided to follow the Regal Pill Palace, my apologies.” He immediately transformed into a gust of wind and swiftly followed the Regal Pill Palace, ignoring all of the stunned expressions on the Walkabout Sect’s face.

Had he gone mad?

Elder Wu Hen had just left them all, right in front of the sect head?

“Sect Head, what do we do now?” Elder Wu Hui had always depended greatly on Elder Wu Hen. Now that the elder had left just like this, he could feel a sense of danger descending upon them as well.

Wei Wuying bit off his words, “What? Do you want to leave as well? So what if we’re surrounded? We have strength in numbers if we stay here, and we might die earlier if we try to break free just by ourselves!” He had started to believe the notion that they were indeed surrounded.

Chapter 673: Like Turtles In A Jar

Everyone's expressions changed when Wei Wuying finished his acidic words; their sect head had just gone and admitted that they were surrounded. Everyone in the Walkabout Sect turned pale with fright.

The Dark North Sect's members all scanned Honored Master Tian Ming's face, trying to glean some clues. Honored Master Tian Ming's lips moved silently, but said nothing in the end. Instead, he turned to look at Xiang Wentian. Xiang Wentian was the strongest person in the Myriad Domain. Naturally, his instinct was just as powerful. Looking at Dan Chi's hasty retreat, Xiang Wentian had in fact more than half believed his claims already. He was just about to speak when several figures suddenly appeared from a path to the west. They were moving at an incredible speed, and each one cut an incredibly sorry figure. They sprinted furiously towards the crowd. The crowd noticed them as they drew closer, only to discover that they were actually the Sacred Sword Palace!

The person at the head of the group was none other than Wang Jianyu. His hair was dishevelled, and his face and head were covered in blood. His chest, his thighs and several other parts of his body also looked like they'd been grievously injured. All in all, he looked an absolute mess. Several cultivators followed close behind him. They too were revealed to be the strongest elders of the Sacred Sword Palace, as well their number one genius, Wang Han. Of the hundred people delegation the Sacred Sword Palace had boasted of, there remained only eight. Furthermore, each of those remaining eight seemed injured in some way too. It was obvious they had just gone through a difficult battle. Their arrival stunned everyone present.

“Wang Jianyu, hadn’t you returned to Sacred Sword Palace already?” Xiang Wentian frowned.

Wang Jianyu could only suffer in silence. If he had returned to Sacred Sword Palace back then, he might not have encountered this disaster at all. The problem was that they hadn’t left. Instead, they’d lain in hiding and waited, wanting to ambush the Regal Pill Palace’s people once they left. However, they themselves had been ambushed by an unknown force not long after they’d settled into a hiding place.

This time, not even Wang Jianyu’s presence was enough to safeguard his sect. The Sacred Sword Palace’s people were slaughtered like someone reaping wheat. In the end, only sage realm experts managed to survive that first onslaught. Under Wang Jianyu’s protection, the sect’s strongest powers joined hands together and barely managed to cut a bloody path out towards safety. That was how they’d escaped back to the ceremony grounds. The rest of the Sacred Sword Palace disciples had already been annihilated.

“Return to Sacred Sword Palace?” Wang Jianyu laughed like a maniac. “Can we still return?” His tone was crazed and filled with a thick sense of malice. His maddened eyes swept across the scene and narrowed, “Where is the Regal Pill Palace? Have they already run away with their tails between their legs?”

“Wang Jianyu, we’re asking you a question. Why do you want to know about the Regal Pill Palace? Look at your sorry self! Don’t tell me you still want to fight the Regal Pill Palace in your state?” The

Walkabout Sect's Wei Wuying said with a fed up tone.

Wang Jianyu grew livid, "You idiots! Do you still not understand what's going on? We're trapped! We're surrounded, and the few of us have barely managed to fight our way back inside! The rest are all dead!"

"What?!"

"That can't be. You've brought a lot of your people with you this time, haven't you?"

"Doubt all you want! So what if you have a lot of men? Our enemies are stronger than even my Sacred Sword Palace, and we were almost completely annihilated! Your turn will come soon!" Wang Jianyu laughed crazily and pointed at the crowd, "Didn't you want to play the good guys? Didn't you want to stand for the Regal Pill Palace? But where are they now? The Regal Pill Palace must've made an excuse and left, haven't they? Do you believe now that Regal Pill Palace have colluded with our enemies?"

One could see just how much Wang Jianyu hated Regal Pill Palace. Even now, he still wanted to drag Regal Pill Palace's name into the mud.

Honored Master Tian Ming frowned, "If you have something to say then say it, but save us all this nonsense, Wang Jianyu. Ole brother Dan Chi had just advised us to leave now. It's just that none of us believed his words."

He suddenly felt a bit of regret as he finished his words. Before this, he'd thought that Dan Chi had misplaced his trust and had been foolish to listen to the mysterious stranger's alarmist warning. However, it would seem that Dan Chi had ultimately made the right bet.

"Sect Master, Palace Head Dan Chi said that we still have fifteen minutes. We should still have a bit of time to do something."

Honored Master Tian Ming's wrinkled face distorted into a grimace, "It's too late, it's already too late. Our enemies are already here."

Xiang Wentian abruptly boomed out to his sect, "Do not panic. Great Cathedral, lay down our defensive formations and prepare to engage the enemy!"

The Great Cathedral were indeed a well trained fourth rank sect. Their movements were urgent but orderly as they obeyed their sect head's orders.

"Walkabout Sect, heed this order! Activate the Infinite Poison Walkabout Formation and coordinate with the Great Cathedral's defensive setup!"

Honored Master Tian Ming also ordered, "Everyone, form up and assume the Dark North Sky and Sea Formation!"

However, Wang Jianyu laughed crazily with bloodshot eyes. "It's

useless; it's all useless. We're all dead this time. Hahaha, we're all dead!"

The terrible, sudden disaster had dealt a huge blow to Wang Jianyu's psyche. He was currently lost in a state of extreme madness.

"Wang Jianyu, you can either help us or screw off to another corner." Xiang Wentian was fed up. He was partially regretting not listening to Dan Chi and retreating with the Regal Pill Palace. While they might not necessarily have been able to break through the enemy's encirclement even if they had retreated back then, it was still a better choice than being forced to erect a defensive palisade here to engage the enemy. Their retreat had been cut off the moment they chose to stay and defend. They would either successfully defend themselves, or fight their enemies to the death. Most importantly, most of their elites had followed them to this ceremony. If the enemies had sent a detachment to attack their sects as well, then their sects' inheritances would most certainly be destroyed. This possibility made Xiang Wentian feel incredibly anxious.

However, it wasn't something he could spare a thought on in the current circumstances.

Swoosh swoosh swoosh swoosh!

A vast sea of people suddenly appeared out of nowhere, shooting through the air and surrounding the Myriad Domain sects. Four figures, instantly recognizable as their leaders, stood to the forefront. Each of those four figures looked extraordinary and

incredibly imposing.

Like four great mountains, the four figures descended to the ground. An invisible pressure pushed down on everyone's shoulders, even Xiang Wentian. Those whose cultivations weren't up to par dropped to their knees, vomiting violently. The pressure squeezed every inch of their bodies; it was almost like they were throwing up their hearts. Xiang Wentian's expression changed as he cautioned the crowd in a low voice. "Be careful. All four of them are emperor realm experts."

Emperor realm experts! Everyone who heard this turned as white as paper in an instant. They felt as if the apocalypse had befallen them. Four emperor realm experts at once? Are they trying to raze the entirety of the Myriad Domain?

Woosh, Woosh, Woosh! Many more of the hovering figures dropped down in formation, completely surrounding the cultivators of the Myriad Domain. A quick glance was all they needed to reveal a troubling fact. Their enemies were at least several thousand strong, while the Myriad Domain cultivators only numbered a thousand or so. Every fourth rank sect had brought a hundred or so in their delegation, and combined with the fifth rank sect, they barely scratched two thousand in number. However, when faced with four to five thousand enemies, they were obviously starting with a disadvantage. To make matters worse, the enemies were obviously stronger as well.

"Keep calm, everyone. We must walk right up to gates of death in order to find the sliver of hope we need to survive." Xiang Wentian might be old, but he still had great aspirations and ambitions. It

was obvious that he wasn't planning to beg for mercy in this kind of situation. It didn't even seem like he would have the chance to, given the atmosphere. After all, their opponents had arrived with such an aggressive air. There was no way they would've killed so many Sacred Sword Palace disciples if a compromise could be reached. They had undoubtedly come to eliminate the Myriad Domain.

"Family Head, who are these people?" Someone from behind sent him a silent message.

Xiang Wentian was actually observing and pondering that question himself. Suddenly the answer flashed across his mind, followed by a sense of despair. He had figured out who their enemies were. "Everyone, cast out any wishful thoughts of peace or compromise. Our enemies do not hail from the Ninesuns Sky Sect," Xiang Wentian's tone was heavy. "They come from the Great Scarlet Mid Region!"

The Great Scarlet Mid Region? A clap of thunder seemed to strike above every Myriad Domain citizen's head, as they were mentally rocked back a few paces. This news was just too shocking. They're actually from the Great Scarlet Mid Region? The Great Scarlet Mid Region had always been a curse; a butcher's knife that hung over everyone in the Myriad Domain for the past six hundred years. One could say that everyone in Myriad Domain had been living in the shadows of infinite anxiety for the past six hundred years, fearful of none other than the residents of the Great Scarlet Mid Region.

The Great Scarlet Mid Region was the Myriad's Domain's eternal

nightmare! They naturally hoped that this nightmare would never return to Myriad Domain. However, their biggest fear had now manifested before them.

There was at least be a chance to compromise with the Ninesuns Sky Sect, even if the Myriad Domain didn't measure up to them. However, the Great Scarlet Mid Region and the Myriad Domain shared a blood feud that was as deep as the sea. Not a single shred of possibility existed for a compromise. Everyone's heart sank in that moment. However, the revelation had also caused their fear and shock to gradually fade away. Instead, the determination to fight to their deaths slowly welled up inside everyone. To put it bluntly, their opponents had come with nothing but the intention to slaughter them. They could either stand and accept their deaths, or grasp that slim hope to survive by lining their path with the bones of their enemies. There was no other choice. .

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The four leaders of the Great Scarlet Mid Region all wore confident smiles on their faces. In fact, barely hidden beneath that smirk was the ridicule that a person might have when toying with their prey.

"Brother Xing, your Qitian Sect is most versed in prolonged offensive tactics and siege battles. Why don't you and your sect take charge in this battle to break through the formation?" A man clad in golden robes smiled merrily at another tall and thin man dressed in black robes.

"Brother Fu, I think it be better if your Golden Glyph Sect takes

the lead. Whoever leads the siege will undoubtedly suffer some injuries, and your sect is unmatched when it comes to talismans. At worst, you might use up a bit more resources than expected." The black dressed man obviously hadn't fallen for the golden clad man's words.

These two men were the heads of the Great Scarlet Mid Region's fourth rank sects: the Qitian Sect and the Golden Glyph Sect. They were both second level emperor realm cultivators. It was obvious that no one here was willing to take the lead in this battle. Although they all knew that they held the advantage, the ones who led the charge would obviously bear the brunt of the cost.

They were here under orders, and were motivated more by the pillaging and plundering to come. No one wanted to suffer too much of a loss from this battle. As the emperor realm cultivators conversed, the blue robed man with blue eyebrows suddenly frowned, "Brother Xing, Brother Fu, haven't you noticed something? There are only four out of the six great fourth rank sects of Myriad Domain here. Where did that last sect go?"

This blue robed man had a long beard and a dark, cold countenance. He stared at the Myriad Domain cultivators like a venomous snake, as if unwilling to let a single morsel of prey slip through his hands.

Chapter 674: Qin Mo, Besieged on All Sides

The blue clad man's words caught the attention of the others. The last elder was dressed in ragged clothing, with an ancient zither strapped to his back. He looked so frail that it seemed like the merest hint of a breeze might blow him over. But when he opened his eyes, the light that shone from them was the light of a fiery star, filling him with an awe-inspiring dignity.

"We are indeed short one." The elder's voice was hoarse and weak, but the Myriad Domain cultivators couldn't help but tremble at it. They could tell, this elder's cultivation level was higher than the other three! The other three were second level emperor realm, but the elder was third level emperor realm.

"Why are we missing a sect?" Qitian Sect Head Sing frowned and looked darkly towards the Myriad Domain assembly. "Who amongst you has authority to speak for everyone?"

Everyone naturally looked at Xiang Wentian. His expression, though strained, was collected, "Greetings. I must confess, I haven't heard of the order of the Divine Abyss Continent collapsing recently, or has it? Bringing your armies into our territory so blatantly, it might seem cause for public censure, no?"

He had to seek the side of righteous justice, no matter how the battle developed. As the most powerful cultivator in the Myriad Domain, Xiang Wentian had enough awareness to see further than this conflict. However, he also knew that even if they managed to stay on the path of righteousness, it would be hard to make it out of today alive.

The blue clad, blue eyebrowed Bamboo Sect Head's eyes narrowed in a cold glare, as his voice turned to ice, "Cut the bullshit. That year, the Myriad Empire offended my Great Scarlet Mid Region, and more than deserved death for their actions. Even after six hundred years, you ragtag remnants haven't given up on your past. Every thirty years you put this piddling ceremony together in remembrance of a Myriad Empire that lies crowned in dirt. That alone is a great offense to my Great Scarlet Mid Region! Now, you've trotted out some Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal. The only thing that's blatantly obvious is your wish to rebuild the empire. You think that's not deserving of punishment!?"

Just like the Myriad Domain, Great Scarlet also sought the moral high ground. Regardless of their sophistry, they were trespassing, even invading. It was more than most needed to censure them. It was why the Great Scarlet emperor had reminded them multiple times to come up with a righteous reason to justify their actions. Obviously, they had decided to use their feud with the Myriad Empire as their moral foundation.

Xiang Wentian grew irate. "The ones who offended you were the Myriad Empire royalty, and you've already completely destroyed them. We're simply memorializing the glories of the empire. This has no connection with the royalty, so what does it have to do with the events of the past?"

"You're still trying to argue? If it has nothing to do with the ancient royal family, why did you choose to hold the ceremony in their ancestral hall? Wasn't the Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal items left behind by the royal family?" These people

had clearly come prepared.

"Why waste words with them, Sect Head Heng?" The black robed Sect Head Xing's gaze was as provocative as could be. "I think us four sects should each take a corner and charge together. Then that formation wouldn't prove the slightest trouble."

The Myriad Domain would be hard pressed to defend themselves from an attack on all four sides. It was a good suggestion. The other three sect heads all looked at the raggedy sect head of the Zither Sect. He was the strongest, so they all wanted to seek his opinion.

He rasped out, "Find out first where that one sect has gone. His Majesty has given orders to wipe them all out, with no stragglers as exceptions. According to our intelligence, there's another fourth rank sect other than the Tristar Sect that should be here."

From within the Myriad Domain ranks, Wang Jianyu suddenly cackled, "Another sect? One of the sects has already slipped off, so what can you do to them?"

An unhappy rustle disturbed the Myriad Domain formation after those words rang out. They were obviously extremely dissatisfied with Wang Jianyu's actions and even extremely contemptuous. The Regal Pill Palace had indeed left, but they'd had the decency to warn everyone to retreat before they'd done so. It was just that no one had believed them. In comparison, Wang Jianyu's actions were ten thousand times more reprehensible. He'd actually gone to the depths of creating more trouble for this sect during these troubled times.

“Slipped off?” The emperor realm cultivators from the Great Scarlet Mid Region exchanged glances. This was a rather unexpected development. Had the Myriad Domain detected their plans beforehand? But that didn’t seem likely. They’d been particularly careful when setting up their formations to avoid alerting anyone in this region. Even if they had been detected, why hadn’t the others run off as well?

The black clad Qitian sect head spoke, “Fellow daoists, even if one sect has managed to run off, they might not be able to break through our blockade on the outskirts. Besides, even if one or two of them make it out, there are still others to take care of them when they return to their sects.”

The color drained from the faces of the Myriad Domain cultivators. If they heard that man right, their sects were in the same dire situation they were in. These people were incomparably confident in their strategy and didn’t bother speaking out of earshot. It was obvious that they were looking at the Myriad Domain as turtles in a jar, not at all worried about not being able to take them down.

“Daoist Qin, can we start now?”

“Indeed, Daoist Qin, let’s put this matter to bed and start!” The heads of the Qitian and Golden Glyph Sects both spoke up.

“There’s no rush, let’s treat them to one of my performances first.” The elder from the Zither Sect reached behind him to grasp

his zither and placed it horizontally on the air. There was nothing beneath the zither, but it floated in the air as if supported by an invisible frame. It was truly wondrous.

The more wondrous it seemed, the more pressure the Myriad Domain cultivators felt. They would be hard pressed to make it out alive if the four emperor realm cultivators made a move in unison, much less considering the thousands strong army that was also present.

Wrinkles creased the face of the old man from the Zither Sect, but the hand that extended out of his robes was as tender and gentle as a lady's. "Let's have a song, 'Beseiged On All Sides'."

The Zither Sect head's raspy voice stood in stark contrast to the lightness of his hands as he placed them on the zither. Rays of light started to coalesce around the zither, and the elder's fingers began to rhythmically strum the instrument. Notes joined and blended to form a melody, and the sound waves began to transform into various shapes in the air. Like an entire army unto themselves, the sound waves began to crash against the Myriad Domain's defensive formation. The elder's fingers blurred as he increased his speed, and the various shapes began to move with the momentum of an avalanche, crashing down on the Myriad Domain from all directions.

"What a nice song of 'Besieged On All Sides'." Sect Head Leng of the Bamboo Sect applauded as his grin grew cruel.

Rumble, rumble. Once the momentum had been added to the notes, it was quite an intimidating sight. Some of the Myriad

Domain folk who were unfortunate enough to be closer to the outer parts of the formation were almost instantly devoured by the shapes formed by the notes. Agonized wails and howls rang out from the clash of weapons as severed limbs flew and churned through the air. The images formed by the notes seemed to slice and cut through the air like innumerable blades with murderous intent.

Wang Jianyu had been standing on the outskirts with the rest of the Sacred Sword Palace, and instantly beat a hasty retreat deeper into the formation when they saw this attack descend. The Great Cathedral, Dark North Sect, and Walkabout Sect had set up their formations, but their preparations were thrown into swift disarray when Wang Jianyu brought his sect randomly charging in. The music notes didn't hesitate in exploiting a newfound hole in the formation and slashed their way in after them. A dozen or so people instantly perished in their wake. The fifth rank sect members fell like scythed wheat, incapable of putting up the slightest defense. The power of an empire realm cultivator wasn't something that someone of a fifth rank sect could even hope to defend against

The fifth rank sect groups on the outside also started to push their way deeper, trying to find shelter in the defensive formations set up by the great sects. The Myriad Domain's formations began to degenerate into chaos under the combined assault of the notes and the mad rush of the fifth rank sects. Another hundred cultivators were gleefully ripped apart by the notes in the ensuring madness.

"Haha, nice, very nice! Daoist Qin is a demon with a zither alright! We don't even need to take the field after this song!"

“The melody of a zither demon is extraordinary alright!”

The other sect heads were generous with their praise. They were astute enough to see that the Myriad Domain had been hamstrung by the internal chaos, severely limiting their ability to fight back. It even looked like the invaders didn’t even need to get their hands dirty.

“What a bunch of trash. They’re like mud that won’t even stick to a wall.”

“Haha, His Majesty has always been worried about the Myriad Domain. But it looks like he was simply overly anxious.”

“Indeed, just us alone are enough to take out this group of ants. How could they possibly be of any threat to our Great Scarlet Mid Region?”

It was as they said, the Myriad Domain sects were all in a panicked frenzy. Xiang Wentian watched the proceedings with a darkened expression, but there was nothing he could do. The other party was only attacking via sound waves and hadn’t seriously attacked the defensive formations yet. There was nothing they could do even though they wanted to fight the invaders. The enemy was defeating them without even drawing their blades. Emperor realm cultivators were indeed strong.

Xiang Wentian’s eyes turned bloodshot. He knew that he couldn’t possibly look to the Walkabout Sect or Dark North Sect

any longer. His only hope was from his Great Cathedral. He sent a silent message to the other three family heads, “Wise younger brothers, I’m afraid that it’s not looking good for us in this fight. The Dark North Sect and Walkabout Sect look like they’ve found their footing, but they won’t be able to withstand an emperor realm attack when push comes to shove. Our Great Cathedral must force a path out, and so we’ll have to utilize the combined power of the totems of our four families.”

“We’ll follow your orders, old brother Xiang!”

“Right! The Myriad Domain has hope as long as our Great Cathedral still remains!” The other three family heads all had great trust in Xiang Wentian.

“Alright, we’ll combine the power of the totems in a moment and break through in a sudden surge of power. No matter what, we must break through!” Xiang Wentian couldn’t spare any thought for the youngsters anymore. The sect elders and heads themselves only had a flicker of a hope to leave themselves, let alone the Myriad Domain youngsters.

It was at this moment that a figure flew in from the east. It was frantic as it screeched to an abrupt halt in front of the emperor realm cultivators, falling into a deep bow. “Four sect heads, things have gone wrong! A group of people have escaped from the southeast and have broken through our perimeter. Our casualties have been high!”

“What?” The four sect heads were all stunned, including the Zither sect head currently playing “Besieged On All Sides”. How is

this possible?

Although the outer perimeter wasn't as strong as the blockade here, it was still formed from the elite elders of their four sects. The southeastern corner was under the jurisdiction of the Bamboo Sect, and all eyes looked towards the blue clad, blue eyebrowed Sect Head Leng.

The sect head frowned, "Elder Shen Huang was in charge of keeping control over the southeastern quadrant. Although he's not yet in the emperor realm, he's still ninth level sage realm! He also has a large number of sage realm experts with him, there's no rational reason that he would let a group of ants break through and escape."

The others were all taken aback as each tried to make sense of this bewildering piece of information. According to their intel, of the sects in the Myriad Domain, only the Great Cathedral stood above the rest, and only by a bit at that. But one of the sects had managed to detect them, sneak away unnoticed, and then break through the outer perimeter? Just which sect in the Myriad Domain had this level of ability?

The exact characters for his name are "Zither Demon/Monster/Ghost/Spirit", and I really couldn't figure out an English translation that didn't sound foolish. "Sect Head Zither Monster" sounds extremely cringe, as are other all English option. There was the option of keeping "mo" in pinyin, but "Zithermo", "Zither Mo", "Mo Zither" sounded equally dumb lol. Welcome ideas!

Chapter 675: Diverting the Heat

The Myriad Domain group could obviously hear their conversation too. Everyone's hearts skipped a beat as surprise shook them on the inside. They had thought that there was no way the Regal Pill Palace could break through the encirclement with just their number. Contrary to their expectations, the Regal Pill Palace had actually succeeded in their attempt. Literally no one had expected this outcome. For a time, everyone in the Myriad Domain was wracked with regret. Honored Master Tian Ming especially wanted to slap his own face.

He was such good friends with Dan Chi, but because he'd hesitated during a critical moment and failed to listen to his friend, he had missed out on an opportunity to break free of this siege. It would be incredibly difficult to escape now that he and his sect were trapped like turtles in a jar by four emperor realm cultivators.

Various shades of dejection and regret flashed through the hearts of every Myriad Domain cultivator. But their shock was exceeded only by the shock the Great Scarlet Mid Region sects felt. Someone had actually managed to slip through their perimeter? This was a mark of extraordinary shame and humiliation! Even if they were to annihilate everyone in this place, this battle would never be considered perfect again.

Their emperor had ordered them to suppress the Myriad Grand Ceremony. It had been clear that he meant annihilating every single person, with no exception. Their achievement would be marred if any one person had managed to escape, let alone an entire group. Now, when they went back to report the completion

of their mission, they would be shamed. Every dispatched fourth rank sect had their own missions to fulfill during this operation. Obviously, they were competing with each other too. Now that one Myriad Domain sect had slipped through their grasp, there was no doubt that their merits would be greatly diminished!

As the sect responsible for guarding the southeast, the Bamboo Sect's share of responsibility was without a doubt the greatest. The blue clad and blue eyebrowed Sect Head Leng's dark expression turned almost sadistic as as he swept a slow glance across the Myriad Domain.

"Who wishes to live?" The question came out of nowhere. Everyone on the Myriad Domain's side cast puzzled glances at him, but there were also those people whose face turned ashen as they desperately endured the focused aura of an emperor realm expert. They didn't know what this cultivator was planning to do next. "I'll give this one chance to just a single person!"

Sect Head Leng stretched out a finger, "Who amongst you will tell me which sect made their escape? The first one to answer shall spared from death."

His offer was like a thunderclap in the ears of the Myriad Domain denizens. There were plenty of people who were moved by the offer. A hint of curiosity crept into their eyes. They were obviously wondering whether or not he was telling the truth. Their instinct to live caused some to grow restless.

"I will count to five. It's up to you whether you want to squander this opportunity." That Sect Head Leng stretched out his five

fingers and began counting, “One, two, three…”

Many people began to breathe rapidly in the crowd. It was obvious that many were tempted by the offer. They all wanted to step forward and seize the opportunity to escape death. After all, this battle was far too one-sided. They had no doubt that they would die if they were to continue the fight. Therefore, this opportunity was the chance of a lifetime, a ray of light in a hopelessly dark tunnel. However, anyone who stood up under such circumstances would become a Myriad Domain traitor. That label would follow them for the rest of their lives.

“I-I’ll tell you!” While everyone else was still struggling to make a decision, a voice suddenly piped up. It was none other than the Sacred Sword Palace’s Wang Han. He walked out of the crowd with a dark expression on his face.

Loud boos resounded from the Myriad Domain group. While there were plenty of people who were sorely tempted by the offer, still no one was more despicable than Wang Han. Hisses and jeers resounded from every direction. The majority of the crowd looked down on Wang Han’s cowardice. They couldn’t believe that he was so willing to turn traitor. Meanwhile, a small number of people were regretting profusely for not being quick enough in coming to a decision.

“What is your name?” Sect Head Leng stared indifferently at Wang Han.

“Lord, this humble one is Wang Han, a disciple of the Sacred Sword Palace. I’ve long since admired the Great Scarlet Mid

Region, and now I finally have the opportunity to worship you all in person. Wang Han wishes strongly for the experts of Great Scarlet to take him in. I believe that even working like an ox or horse in the Great Scarlet would be a hundred times more interesting and filled with potential than a hopeless place like the Myriad Domain." Wang Han clamped down on his nervousness, trying to project his voice into a deep tone.

For a moment all four emperor realm experts were stunned by his words. They obviously didn't expect Wang Han to voluntarily surrender to them. In their views, the Myriad Domain and the Great Scarlet Mid Region were sworn enemies; how could something like this possibly happen? The other three emperor realm cultivators wore ruminating smiles on their faces.

"Sect Head Leng, not only did this kid voluntarily surrender himself to us, he even seems to possess a bit of talent. He may even turn out to be an unpolished jade if we take him back with us."

"Hehe, Sect Head Leng, this kid is more flexible than those people. It's obvious that his powers of comprehension are excellent. He is indeed good material, don't you think?"

Sect Head Leng's face changed slightly as he assessed Wang Han and smiled indifferently, "Talk. Which sect's escaped?"

Wang Han hardened his heart. He had came this far already. He tossed all notions of life and death to the back of his head. It was time for the biggest gamble of his life.

“Lord Sect Head, this junior had betrayed the Myriad Domain with only one wish in his mind, to obtain your protection. If this humble one may obtain your protection, then I have more secrets to tell you. I believe that all the experts here would be very interested to know those secrets. Not only can I tell you about the sky rank spirit herbs...” Wang Han had just finished those words when the stooped Zither sect head Qin Mo abruptly shifted and appeared before Wang Han. He immediately grabbed Wang Han, lifting him into the air. His body flickered once again, and he was once again back in a corner of the sky.

Sect Head Qin Mo’s sudden movement shocked the other three emperor realm experts. Sect Head Leng was especially unhappy with this turn of events. Wang Han had asked him for protection, and thus Sect Head Qin Mo’s unwanted interference angered Bamboo Sect Head Leng. “What do you mean by this, Daoist Qin Mo?”

The old man cackled, “Younger brother Leng, since you’re apparently uninterested in taking him as your disciple, this old man has reluctantly decided to do so for you. Alright, let’s cut the nonsense. Let us so settle upon this happily.” This old man was at third level emperor realm, a full level higher than all three other sect heads. Therefore, although both the sect heads of the Qitian Sect and the Golden Glyph Sect were tempted and exchanged glances with each other, they decided not to claim Wang Han.

Sect Head Leng’s darkened face was filled with reluctance and anger, but when he considered his current strength, he ultimately decided to swallow his irritation, “Brother Qin Mo, we all serve at the pleasure of the emperor. Don’t you think you’re being a little overbearing with this little act of yours?”

The old man smiled indifferently, but his face told a different story, “Does that mean you want to teach me how to do my work, Sect Head Leng?”

The old man’s voice was raspy, but when his face darkened, a mountain-like pressure instantly descended upon on Sect Head Leng, causing the latter’s hackles to rise. This was no ordinary threat! He had no choice, grudgingly backing off in the face of absolute strength, “Very well. I will be sure to report everything to the emperor.”

The old man chuckled in an odd tone, “Do what you want. I serve the emperor, and my conscience is clear.” As he said this, he slowly drifted down to the ground and dropped Wang Han. He started to assess his new prize with a stern gaze. After a moment, he said indifferently, “Kid, I can give you a chance to earn your protection. I may even consider taking you as my disciple. However, you should choose your words carefully, do you think your intel is useful enough to me to be worth my protection?”

Wang Han pointed at the sky and vowed, “If my intel is false, then this junior will willingly take a palm strike from you and die.”

The old man Qin Mo nodded, his face still expressionless, ‘Tell us this first, what is the name of the sect that escaped this place?”

“It is the Regal Pill Palace.”

“Regal Pill Palace?” Old Man Qin Mo abruptly recalled what the

Great Scarlet Emperor had specially reminded them of before they'd departed. He asked, "Is it the same Regal Pill Palace who refined the Longevity Pill?"

Wang Han nodded hurriedly, "Yes, they are. Do you know about the Regal Pill Palace, my lord?"

Seeing that this Lord Qin Mo seemed to be strongest out of everyone here, he spoke with the intention of taking credit for an achievement, "My lord, not only does this Regal Pill Palace have the Longevity Pill, they also have plenty of sky rank spirit herbs too. I am positive that the group of people who broke through the perimeter and escaped possesses some sky rank spirit herbs!"

These claims finally caused old man Qin Mo's expression to change. Even his heart couldn't help but itch a little. Forget the sky rank spirit herbs, he couldn't even claim all the earth rank spirit herbs that he wanted. As an emperor realm cultivator, their cultivation had to be laboriously supported by earth rank spirit herbs. Only then would they find the opportunity to break through to the next level. However, earth rank spirit herbs were also precious plants. Although he was the master of a sect, the amount of earth rank spirit herbs he could obtain was limited. Therefore, he was very much tempted when he heard that the Regal Pill Palace possessed over a hundred earth rank spirit herbs. It was only natural that he felt a little irritated when he heard that the group who escaped was none other than that Regal Pill Palace.

He knew that Regal Pill Palace would be running to their doom even if they managed to escape back to their sect. However, if that was the case, then all the good stuff would fall into the hands of

the two sects heading towards Regal Pill Palace: the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect. When that happened, all the profits they obtained would have nothing to do with him at all!

The old man hesitated greatly for a moment. On one hand, he had been personally given the mission of suppressing the Myriad Grand Ceremony. On the other, he had to face the temptations the earth and sky rank spirit herbs represented. To put it bluntly, if he acted alone and caught up to the Regal Pill Palace's group, there was no way the emperor would notice if he turned in four sky rank spirit herbs to him and kept one for himself. As long as he offered up the rest of the sky rank spirit herbs, the emperor would even praise the effectiveness of his work. As for the earth rank spirit herbs, everything he obtained had been decreed to belong to him. Therefore, this was an extremely attractive proposal for Sect Head Qin Mo.

The old man stared at Wang Han and asked, "Kid, what is the strongest level of cultivation in the Regal Pill Palace? What kind of special ability do they possess that actually helped them to break through our perimeter?"

Wang Han thought for a moment, "The Regal Pill Palace's martial power is ordinary, but I heard that they managed to beat back a true disciple of the Ninesuns Sky Sect a while ago. Rumors spoke of a mysterious expert aiding them in secret."

"Mysterious expert? What level are they?" Old man Qin Mo frowned and asked.

Wang Han hastily said, "I'm not sure about their rank, but I

heard that the true disciple of Ninesuns Sky Sect was at peak ninth level sage realm."

"Peak level sage realm, huh?" A smile appeared on old man Qin Mo's face. He was at the third level of emperor realm. How could a mere peak level sage realm possibly match up to him?

Seeing that old man Qin Mo was tempted to hunt down the Regal Pill Palace, Wang Han hastily messaged him in secret and said, "Senior, I actually have even more important information to tell you."

"What is it?" Old man Qin Mo grew solemn when he saw that Wang Han had purposely messaged him instead of voicing it aloud.

"What you'll obtain from hunting after those people may not necessarily be better staying here. There is a kid called Jiang Chen inside the Paramount Realm. He'd previously obtained many sky rank spirit herbs from Mt. Rippling Mirage and even more earth rank spirit herbs. Moreover, he is of a dragon's bloodline, and he possesses many strange treasures. Last, but not least, he was the one who refined the Longevity Pill too..." Wang Han did hate Regal Pill Palace with a passion, but the one he hated the most was Jiang Chen. Naturally, he was going to try and divert the heat of the Great Scarlet Mid Region and burn Jiang Chen with it!

Chapter 676: The Sacred Sword Palace Betrayal

Jiang Chen? This name triggered a faint memory in Sect Head Qin Mo's heart. When one reached his level of cultivation, it was no big deal to remember everything they'd heard, no matter how miniscule the detail. Not to mention, this particular tidbit of a name had fallen from the Great Scarlet Emperor's lips. However, he remembered clearly that this kid was supposed to be trapped in Mt. Rippling Mirage. Was there an error in their intelligence? His heart began to grow agitated without warning. Somehow, it was difficult for him to repress those feelings.

"You're called Wang Han, correct? Are you sure that Jiang Chen is in the Paramount Realm?" Even at his age, Qin Mo wasn't entirely capable of keeping his composure. After all, Jiang Chen was someone that the emperor had personally expressed his desire for. He had even sent his trusted confidante at the head of the strongest sects, Dragonslayer and Flowing Sands, to Mt. Rippling Mirage. Their only mission was to seek and bring back Jiang Chen.

This alone spoke volumes as to how much the emperor valued Jiang Chen. How great of an accomplishment would it be if he, Qin Mo, were to capture this kid? He immediately threw all thought of the Regal Pill Palace and other nonsense to the back of his head. There was only one goal left in his mind, and that was Jiang Chen!

Wang Han was well versed in observing people, and he spared no words when he saw the sect head paying great attention to him. "My Lord, this is absolutely true. Everyone had thought that Jiang Chen was still in Mt. Rippling Mirage, but who would've imagined

the oddity this kid could be. He found a crack in the formation and managed to sneak out. That kid's always had this kind of freaking ridiculous luck."

Sect Head Mo Qin was pretty much convinced at this point. Fantastic, utterly fantastic. To think that what I was searching for for so long was delivered right into my hands! He clapped Wang Han's shoulder, "Wang Han, is it? You're not bad. One who tailors their actions to the situation are nothing less than wise. I am of a mind to take you in as a disciple. You know what to do, don't you?"

Wang Han was delighted to hear this, "Disciple Wang Han greets honored master!"

He immediately knelt down and kowtowed to the sect head, every action dripping with sincerity. As he rose to his feet, he slapped his chest, "Honored master, your disciple would like to personally lead the way and enter the Paramount Realm to kill Jiang Chen!"

Sect Head Mo Qin laughed heartily, "Good, good! I was waiting for these words."

If it'd been any other time and the Paramount Realm hadn't been open, even Qin Mo might not have been able to open the seal. At the very least, he'd have to pay an exceedingly high price in order to do so, a trade-off that was obviously not worth it. However, the Paramount Realm opened for nine days every thirty years, and at this time, there was no price to pay in order to enter.

“Heh heh, congratulations Daoist Qin Mo.”

“To think that you really would have the desire to take in a disciple!” The black clad Sect Head Xing of the Qitian Sect and golden clad Sect Head Fu of the Golden Glyph Sect both came forward to tender their good wishes. Sect Head Leng of the Bamboo Sect remained silently off on the side, his face dark.

Sect Head Qin Mo spoke faintly, “This Wang Han is my personal disciple in the future. You cannot look at him in the same way again.”

“Naturally. congratulations sage nephew Wang. You’re lucky to catch the eye of Daoist Qin Mo. Those who suit their actions to the times are wise, aren’t they!”

“Sage nephew Wang, you need to do much to prove yourself to your new master!”

Wang Han was so delighted that flowers were blooming in his heart when he saw how politely these two emperor realm cultivator were in speaking to him. He felt that he had made a decision that was wise beyond parallel. The scene however, caused those of the Myriad Domain to go slack jawed with astonishment. Some with more fiery tempers began cursing him loudly.

“You shameless thing! Taking a thief for your master!”

“Wang Han, you really are the shame of your Wang family! You’ve thrown away all of the Sacred Sword Palace’s dignity!”

Some even jeered at Wang Jianyu directly, “Wang Jianyu, so this is your direct descendent, hmm?”

Wang Jiangyu’s expression was black; he really didn’t have a response to any of this. It was rather Wang Han who sent a silent message to Sect Head Qin Mo, “Honored master, it is the fortune of three lifetimes that this disciple is able to take you for my master. However, some of the Sacred Sword Palace are good fighters. I would seek to toil on behalf of my master and recruit them into our Zither Sect.”

Wang Han didn’t have many feelings for others, but Wang Jianyu was his grandfather and they shared the same blood. He naturally couldn’t just hang the sect head out to dry, or it really would become a blot on his life. Leaving the sect in search of higher status was a sight often seen in the world of martial dao.

Sect Head Qin Mo smiled, “You are my disciple from now on, so I will naturally give you a chance. It’s up to you how many you are able to convince. But remember, I want loyal people. They can give up any ideas of plotting after joining my Zither Sect, or else…”

“Please be at peace, honored master, those who recognize the greater picture they reside in are wise. If they persist in their delusions, then it is simply a function of their blindness.” Wang Han turned to Wang Jianyu, “Sect Head, I’ve already made my plea on everyone’s behalf, and those from the Sacred Sword Palace who are willing to change their allegiance can come over.

Remember, a change in allegiance means full loyalty. Those who have other ties need not come over. You have only one chance, and those who have yet to walk over after I've counted to ten will be viewed as enemies of my Zither Sect. They will be killed without exception!"

His words of "my Zither Sect" made everyone on the Myriad Domain side break out in loud curses as numbness crept over their scalp. They were obviously been disgusted by Wang Han's shamelessness.

"Go on, Wang Jianyu, go worship your grandson's stinking foot!"

"How utterly disgusting! The Sacred Sword Palace is full of cowards!"

"Pah! Traitors! You guys yapped every day on how the Regal Pill Palace is colluding with outside enemies, but in the end, you're the most spineless ones!"

Verbal abuse rained down from the Myriad Domain side. Everyone's emotions were running high to begin with in this tense environment, and their rage was palpable. The kind of despair one felt when death was staring at them in the face made everyone vent their emotions in a very extreme sort of way.

Wang Jianyu's face was dark as he walked out of the cluster of Myriad Domain cultivators. He had only taken a moment to think. "Those who are willing to follow the Zither Sect, step forth. I will not force those who are not willing."

He had sized up the situation and knew that death was a foregone conclusion if they stubbornly dug their heels in. Although he greatly detested the idea of being under someone's roof, he had no reason not to surrender now that his own grandson had already done so.

His actions blew the rest of the Sacred Sword Palace away. They could understand Wang Han's betrayal, but the sect head had also turned traitor, just like that! Second genius of the Sacred Sword Palace Jing Fong couldn't help himself any longer, "Wang Jianyu, is this how you and your grandson stays loyal to the Sacred Sword Palace heritage?!"

Wang Jianyu hadn't thought that the younger generation would be so bold as to judge him, instead of the elders. He stared coldly at Jing Fong, "Only the strong have the right to talk of heritage. Do you actually think yourself worthy?"

Jing Feng was enraged beyond thinking, "Wang Jianyu, we can't stop you and your grandson from going over to the enemy, but put down the sacred sword on your back! That is the sword of legacy that belongs to the Sacred Sword Palace. You may have surrendered, but the heritage of the Sacred Sword Palace has not fallen!"

His words were met with great applause, but a trickle of people began to flow from the Sacred Sword Palace as more and more people began to take their place by Wang Jianyu's side. It was apparent that they were planning switching allegiances as well. Jing Feng watched the numbers by his side dwindle until there was

only one veteran elder left. He was quite touched, “Elder Ming, you’re the one with the truest principles alright!”

The veteran elder suddenly grinned and smashed his fist into Jing Feng’s chest without warning. Jing Feng didn’t even have time to cry out before the fist crashed into his dantian. Bam!

He was flung backwards like a kite with a cut string. The elder moved like lightning, catching up to the flying body and beheading Jing Feng in one ruthless slash. He turned to walk over to Wang Han with a fawning expression, “Young master Han, that idiot Jing Feng didn’t recognize the greater picture. I’ve already executed him for you.”

Wang Han had had good relations with Jing Feng before, but the latter had just insulted him and his grandfather just now. Wang Han felt that he’d lost quite a great deal of face and so naturally didn’t sympathize with Jing Feng. “You’ve done well,” Wang Han nodded slightly and walked up to the Zither sect head. “Honored master, only this one was blind. We’ve already taken care of him.”

Sect Head Qin Mo smiled, almost disinterested, as he looked at Elder Ming, “What’s your name?”

“In response to the lord sect head, this humble one is Ming Wangyu. I am willing to serve the sect master.”

Sect Head Qin Mo nodded slightly, and his casual tone dropped to freezing levels, “You can kill those of your own sect today, so how do I know you won’t kill any of my Zither Sect tomorrow? What

use does my Zither Sect have for such a heartless person?”

Ming Wangyu was scared out of his mind when he heard this. A cold light flashed by as Sect Head Qin Mo strummed a chord that sang a sword-like note. Before Elder Ming knew it, his head had separated from his body, flying into the sky. The elder’s body fell to the ground with a thud. Killing someone was as easy as crushing an ant to Qin Mo. He swept his gaze across Wang Jianyu and the others, “Remember, my Zither Sect does not take in trash, especially not trash with wavering loyalties. You can request protection from the Zither Sect, but you must show your sincerity to let me know that you are not trash.”

Wang Jianyu hurriedly responded, “Your subordinate is willing to lead the charge into the formation for the Zither Sect and take down these stubborn, short-sighted fools!”

Sect Head Qin Mo waved his hand, but didn’t say anything else. He turned to walk over to the other three emperor realm cultivators. “Everyone, the sect that slipped away earlier was the Regal Pill Palace. As far as our intel indicates, it is highly likely that they have precious treasures on their person. While I would like to chase after them myself, I cannot abandon the situation here. So I leave this chance to one of you. Who amongst you would like to go after them?”

The Regal Pill Palace? They were familiar with this name. The emperor had emphasized it before they left, mentioning that there were many sky rank spirit herbs to be found on them. Thus, the other three sects were greatly tempted.

Sect Head Qin Mo smiled faintly, “According to the intelligence, there are certainly sky rank spirit herbs on them and even more earth rank spirit herbs. If none of you wish to go, I can trouble myself to go after them too.”

He was playing a tactic of advancing while retreating. Indeed, Sect Head Leng of the Bamboo Sect immediately spoke up, “I’ll go. They broke through the southeastern corner—the territory that my Bamboo Sect was defending. It was my sect that committed this oversight, and naturally I should personally go to fix it. How can I ask anyone else to clean up after our mess?”

This was a righteous and noble sounding reason, but everyone knew that he was going because of the Regal Pill Palace’s sky rank spirit herbs.

“Sect Head Leng, your sect made the mistake, but who knows if you can truly fix it or not? In my opinion, let my Qitian Sect go,” Sect Head Leng eager volunteered.

“Heh heh, when it comes to tracking, the tracking glyphs that my sect produces are the best. Let my sect go.”

The three began to argue heatedly. A cushy job like this was much better than staying here and fighting against the stubborn Myriad Domain powers.

Chapter 677: Hunting in the Paramount Realm

In the end, they actually drew straws to decide their respective responsibilities. The Bamboo Sect got lucky, drawing the task to hunt down the Regal Pill Palace. A hint of a smile cracked Sect Head Leng's sinister face. "Then, we have an accord, no? I shall leave the undue troubles here to you all." He summoned a portion of his men and raced towards the southeastern area.

Sect Head Qin Mo was glad to see Sect Head Leng depart, but he showed nothing on the surface as he walked forwards, "Sect Head Xing, Sect Head Fu, are you two interested in entering the Paramount Realm with me? I heard that there are still some mice scuttling around inside the Paramount Realm. Our orders are to eliminate them all, you know."

Black garbed Sect Head Xing waved his hands and said, "It's fine, isn't it? I've heard that Paramount Realm is a place of rebirth, and not only is it filled with dead energy, it also contains a shockingly low amount of life force. If we emperor realm cultivators are to go inside, we may be attacked by the energy inside. I have no intentions of going in."

The Paramount Realm was off limits not only to emperor realm experts, but even cultivators at higher levels. It contained an enormous amount of dead energy that would corrode living beings, especially emperor realm experts. Moreover, the level of life energy inside the Paramount Realm was far too weak. It was true that an emperor realm cultivator would be met with many inconveniences if they were to go inside. In fact, the chances that

they would be devoured by the dead energy inside it were far higher than those of the sage realm experts.

Sage realm cultivators had yet to reach the level of power necessary to trigger a response from the dead energy, and thus the amount of vitality they expended was incomparable to the amount consumed by emperor realm experts. Therefore, the dead energy were more attracted to emperor realm experts than sage realm cultivators. This was why an emperor realm expert was normally reluctant to enter a place of rebirth like the Paramount Realm unless it was critical. However, after hearing from Wang Han that Jiang Chen was inside Paramount Realm, there was no way Qin Mo was letting the opportunity slip by, no matter how risky it might be.

This was his Zither Sect's only chance at glory. If he succeeded in capturing Jiang Chen, then either robbing Jiang Chen of his inheritances or presenting him to the emperor would result in great merits. In fact, this might turn out to be the perfect opportunity for his sect to rise and become a third rank sect! As the saying went, reward was to be found within risk.

"What say you, Sect Head Fu?"

Sect Head Fu of the Golden Glyph Sect also shook his head after a moment's consideration, "I'll pass too. Brother Qin Mo, you can't be..."

Sect Head Qin Mo nodded indifferently, "So what if I have to take a little risk? Someone has to fulfill the emperor's orders."

He spoke so self righteously that both sect heads of the Golden Glyph Sect and the Qitian Sect couldn't quite fathom what he was really thinking. They refused to believe that this old man was as noble as he claimed to be. There must be some kind of unspeakable secret involved. However, they really didn't want to step into a place of rebirth either. After all, there were only a few youngsters undergoing their trials inside. Sect Head Qin Mo couldn't be interested in those youngsters, could he? Was he thinking of winning over a group of young geniuses for his sect?

They admitted that it was a somewhat attractive opportunity, but they still weren't willing to take this much of a risk for such a tiny matter. They thought that maybe Sect Head Qin Mo's goal was some of the inheritances inside the Paramount Realm. After all, any cultivators who could undergo rebirth at a place of rebirth were emperor realm or even higher. However, there were only a few emperor realm experts who existed in the history of the Myriad Domain. Where would they find the good luck to obtain an emperor level inheritance?

Therefore, the two sect heads ultimately decided against entering the area. The reason Sect Head Qin Mo had jumped through so many hoops was to enter the Paramount Realm alone. Words couldn't describe how overjoyed he was when he discovered that both sect heads were unwilling to accompany him.

"In that case, I shall lead my newly recruited disciple and this group of defected warriors into the Paramount Realm. The main army of my Zither Sect shall stay here and eliminate this paltry resistance," as he said this, Sect Head Qin Mo beckoned for his vice sect head over. "Number two, I shall temporarily leave this task to

you. Remember that weeds can only be destroyed by burning the roots. Let not one person leave this place alive. Sect Head Xing, Sect Head Fu, the two of you should be enough to handle anything that might arise here, correct?”

“Don’t worry, brother Qin Mo. We are emperor realm after all, and the strongest amongst the Myriad Domain are only at the ninth level of sage realm. There shall be no mishaps even if we were to do nothing.”

“Mm. Be careful, and don’t underestimate our enemy.” Sect Head Qin Mo waved his hand and spoke to Wang Jianyu’s group, “Lead the way.”

There were six in Wang Jianyu’s group. Their status was currently incomparable to Wang Han’s, so naturally they had to walk at the front. Meanwhile, Wang Han followed behind with Sect Head Qin Mo, looking the picture of a diligent disciple serving his master’s every needs. One had to say that Wang Han was extremely pragmatic. He’d looked high and mighty when still in Sacred Sword Palace, but after entering the tutelage of the Zither sect head, he somehow managed to put up such an appearance of a practiced servant that one couldn’t help but sigh in astonishment. All of the other Myriad Domain sects broke out in sneers and jeers when they saw that the Sacred Sword Palace was actually going to lead their enemies into the Paramount Realm.

“Wang Jianyu, you will die a horrible death, you old bastard!”

“Your Sacred Sword Palace will go down in history as a byword for infamy!”

“Wang Han, you little bastard, how dare you sell yourself to your enemy! The wrath of heaven will smite you!”

They couldn’t keep their composure any longer. The sects’ greatest geniuses were all inside the Paramount Realm. This Sect Head Qin Mo possessed unparalleled strength, and if he were to go inside, then it was more than likely that all one hundred or so cultivators inside Paramount Realm would perish! They had made up their minds to fight with all their might unto the last, but they hadn’t completely lost hope on the inside. This bit of hope had been carefully placed on the shoulders of the young geniuses currently inside the Paramount Realm. As long as these young geniuses didn’t perish, then the Myriad Domain still had a chance to make a comeback.

But now, Wang Jianyu and the rest of the bastards in the Sacred Sword Palace had obviously decided to pull the carpet from beneath their feet and destroy all of their hopes at the root! If these bastards weren’t full traitors before, they were now! However, they were still hemmed in from all sides. They couldn’t stop their enemies from entering even if they wanted to. Moreover, that Sect Head Qin Mo was so powerful that he’d destroyed more than two hundred people with a careless tune of ‘Beseiged on All Sides’. A third level emperor realm like him sank all hearts into deep despair.

On the other hand, Xiang Wentian was actually overjoyed by this turn of events. He had been accumulating his strength for the eventual clash all this time, and now he sent a silent message to his three family heads, “My brothers, the Paramount Realm naturally rejects emperor realm experts, so this old man may not necessarily

be able to act how he wishes inside. The fact that he's going away is also an opportunity for us. Originally, we only had a 30 to 40% chance to break through their encirclement, but now I believe that our chances have risen to at least 70%. Get yourselves ready, make sure the troops are in order and wait for my signal. When I give the signal, summon the power of totems and focus them all on me. I shall open a path for us!"

……

After Jiang Chen entered the transcendent region, he stayed there for two full days. More than half of the nine days had passed by in the blink of an eye, but he'd still found nothing except for that little something on the outskirts of the transcendent region. It was especially empty inside this area. Yellow sands stretched as far as the eyes could see, a land utterly without life. He couldn't even find the shadow of an inheritance or place of rebirth.

The deadliest thing about staying inside this region was that the amount of life force it contained was extremely little. Jiang Chen even had to rely on some of his pills to maintain normal vital functions. He obviously couldn't dispatch the Goldbiter Rats in this situation either. Otherwise, their great numbers would be perfect for this occasion.

"Could it be that this transcendent region really is undeserving of its reputation? Perhaps no one else but me would enter such a place, eh?" When Jiang Chen thought this, a tiny ripple suddenly appeared in his consciousness. The ripple was extremely weak, but Jiang Chen captured it clearly.

Jiang Chen immediately concealed his own consciousness and then his figure using the sandy terrain. A figure ran swiftly into the area where he was before long. This figure didn't slow his footsteps or dither. He went right past Jiang Chen, obviously not noticing him in the area. Jiang Chen waited until the figure had gone a safe enough distance. Just when he was about to come out of his hiding place, another ripple appeared. Another figure actually rushed over from the distance as well. This figure seemed to be tracking something.

This one had suppressed his aura and energy almost perfectly, but Jiang Chen was still able to capture enough to identify him. It was actually the Regal Pill Palace's number two genius, Jun Mobai!

Jiang Chen thought, "It's him? The palace head told me to keep a close eye on him. I wonder what's wrong with this Jun Mobai?"

He was curious. He waited until Jun Mobai had gone far away before finally coming out of hiding. To think that two people have entered the transcendent region in a row. But who's the other person apart from Jun Mobai? Logically speaking, it was normal for geniuses to enter the transcendent region in seek of fortune. However, the fact that they had hastened on their journey while knowing this place was lifeless meant that their motives weren't as simple as just seeking fortune. Jiang Chen suspected that there was something in here that even he didn't know about. He decided to follow them and take a look. Even if he were to gain nothing as a result, he could check out Jun Mobai and see if he really was a spy.

For a time, the mantis stalked the cicada, unaware of the oriole chasing from behind.

Jiang Chen's tracking abilities were exceptional. He was able to use his consciousness to lock on to Jun Mobai's trail by capturing the little traces left behind. This pursuit kept going for a full half day.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen realized that they had arrived near a lake. A usual lake would either be sky blue or dark green in color. However, this lake was black green in color. In fact, its color was so dark that it was almost inky black. The lake was extremely large, and its brackish water gave off an extremely strange feeling.

Jiang Chen noticed that Jun Mobai had already halted. Jiang Chen didn't dare to move too close to him. Instead, he slowly crept closer from beneath the ground.

Jun Mobai was currently standing beside the lake and fiddling with a ring-like object in his palm. He seemed to be sensing something through the ring. His expression suddenly darkened. This was because he'd noticed a figure was staring coldly at him from the opposite side of the lake. The figure turned out to be Lin Hai of the Dark North Sect.

"What are you doing here, Jun Mobai?" Lin Hai stared at Jun Mobai with a flinty expression. His eyes were cold with unbridled scrutiny.

Since Jun Mobai had tracked Lin Hai to this place earlier, he wasn't surprised to see the latter show up. He smiled calmly and said, "Your ranking is even lower than mine. So why can't I be

here if you can?”

Jun Mobai had managed to fight his way into the top four during the Grand Ceremony, so Lin Hai’s ranking was indeed lower than his.

“Hmph, I will advise you to leave this place immediately,” Lin Hai’s tone was indifferent.

Jun Mobai broke into a laugh, “You’re telling me to leave? Why should I leave and not you?”

Lin Hai’s expression darkened, “Jun Mobai, I will give you a chance to preserve some of your face for the sake of the friendship between your Regal Pill Palace and my Dark North Sect. Do you really think I can’t chase you away if you refuse to leave?”

Jun Mobai smiled calmly, “Lin Hai, let’s not pretend any longer at such a moment. Are you really a Dark North Sect disciple?”

Lin Hai’s expression abruptly changed. Jiang Chen’s heart also skipped a beat from his hiding spot. What did he mean? Was the number one genius of the Dark North Sect, Lin Hai, a spy too?

Chapter 678: Emperor Featherflight, The Mysterious Palace

It was quite evident from Jun Mobai's tone that he also wasn't a true Regal Pill Palace disciple. Jiang Chen felt quite sad for the Myriad Domain all of a sudden. It looked to be a solid entity on the surface, but who knew that it'd been penetrated to this level? Just how many external pawns were hidden in the various great sects?!

However, Lin Hai didn't seem to want to admit to things too readily. He snorted coldly several times after his shock, "I don't know what you're talking about. Jun Mobai, are you going to scram or not? I'm giving you your last chance." He seemed to be at the limits of his patience as his hostility became overt.

"Scram?" Jun Mobai's tone was as cool as ever. "You're mistaking the situation, aren't you? Even if you want to, you don't have the chance to run anymore. If my guess is right, Lin Hai, you're a disciple of the Eternal Celestial Capital, aren't you?"

The Eternal Celestial Capital? Jiang Chen's heart sank. He'd made an in-depth study of the Divine Abyss Continent these past few years; the book Huang'er had given him years ago had several notes regarding the Divine Abyss Continent, so he now had a more thorough understanding of this plane of existence. He knew that the Eternal Celestial Capital was also a first rank sect, another heavyweight of the Upper Eight Regions. It was relatively on the same level as the Ninesuns Sky Sect.

Jiang Chen felt his head ache. He'd always thought that it was only the Ninesuns Sky Sect who had infiltrated the Myriad

Domain, but now it seemed that everyone in the Myriad Domain had been too naive. The region was a fat piece of meat! But just what was so tantalizing about it? He had no answer for this either.

The ancient herb garden of Mt. Rippling Mirage? Although there were some sky rank spirit herbs there, that wasn't even close enough to entice a first rank sect to make decades of preparations. The heritage of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect? The outside world didn't know of the heritage. Although the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect was indeed stronger than many first rank sets, it wasn't the strongest of the ancient sects. Besides, if the outside world had known of such a heritage, they likely would've barged in openly instead of making preparations for decades. He couldn't figure it out no matter how he contemplated the matter. There had to be a reason that was hidden to him, and it was a reason that had been carefully kept secret for decades. This was why they were all seeping in like this.

A thread of shock appeared in Lin Hai's eyes as he fixed his gaze onto Jun Mobai. "This is to say, you're a disciple of the Ninesuns Sky Sect?"

The two had previously been on guard against each other, but the atmosphere became ever more tense. It was apparent that since both their identities had been revealed, they both understood each other's intentions and knew that this would be a fight to the death.

"Speak, how do you want to resolve this?" Lin Hai actually calmed down after their masks had been ripped off, and his tone became cool and composed.

Jun Mobai smiled faintly, “Simple, you die.”

Lin Hai smiled in his anger and looked meaningfully at Jun Mobai. “Kid, you are indeed a Sky Sect disciple. That overweening attitude is the only proof I need.”

“As long as you know it,” Jun Mobai smiled faintly. “We’re all smart people here; you being here means that all of our goals are the same.”

Lin Hai laughed heartily, “This means you’re also here for Emperor Featherflight’s legacy?”

Emperor Featherflight?

Jiang Chen was unfamiliar with this name. Although he had an understanding of the Divine Abyss Continent, he’d truly never heard this name before.

“Legacy?” Jun Mobai cackled. “Lin Hai, we don’t have to fight if you want his legacy. You can have it all, I just want a few things on his body.”

“Dream on!” Jun Mobai sneered. “ I was just testing you, but it seems that you really know the details.”

Jiang Chen didn’t really understand the undercurrents of their mind games, but he’d guessed that the two were chasing after a Titled Great Emperor named Emperor Featherlight.

“Stop putting on an act, Lin Hai. Our two sects chased Emperor Featherflight a thousand years ago, but he escaped into the Myriad Domain. However, no one knew where he had hidden himself, but to think that he passed on in this Paramount Realm! How astonishing,” Jun Mobai rubbed the ring in his hand as he spoke. “Lin Hai, you must have the tracking symbol of the Eternal Celestial Emperor, which is how you’ve sensed his final place after entering the Paramount Realm. Have I guessed correctly?”

“No shit, aren’t you the same as well?” Lin Hai’s tone was quite dismissive, seeming to think Jun Mobai was speaking utter nonsense.

“Heh heh, Lin Hai, last chance. You can have Emperor Featherflight’s inheritance, and I’ll take all the other items.” Jun Mobai’s tone was devoid of emotion, but there was a type of pressure within it that didn’t permit questions.

Jiang Chen was inwardly solemn as he observed nearby. These two bastards hid their strength alright! They’re at least at peak earth sage realm, and might even be seventh level sage realm! These two bastards pretended to be initial sage realm, and even put on that act of forfeiting in the ceremony! He hadn’t personally fought with these two, so he had no idea that they were both hiding their true strength.

Lin Hai smiled dismissively, “Kid, those who don’t know you really would be frightened by you. But you’re still a bit wet behind the ears to try and threaten me. Bring it on if you dare!” He grabbed at the air with a hand and summoned a flag as he spoke.

He swung the flag down, sending rays of light shooting forth and cutting into the waters of the lake, as if a waterfall descending from the heavens.

Rumble!

The waters were instantly parted, and a long, thin abyss revealed itself. Lin Hai's expression was expressionless as he looked at Jun Mobai, "I've already parted the lake; dare you enter?"

Jun Mobai chuckled, "Heh, I'll go in if you do."

"Is that so?" Lin Hai suddenly grinned and swung the flag back, sending the waters hurtling towards Jun Mobai. "If that's the case, have a taste of these waters of death first!"

Two gouts of water cut through the air towards Jun Mobai with a wave of the flag. Jun Mobai's face charged slightly. He hadn't expected that Lin Hai would be so despicable. He summoned forth a paper fan with a wave of his hand and flicked it into dance, creating energy ripples that formed strange layers of defensive circles to protect himself.

This brackish water was seemingly very frightening. Ear-piercing sizzles sounded as soon as it touched the ground, devouring even the yellow sands. It was a good thing that Jun Mobai's defensive circle was so strong, allowing himself to barely withstand the attack. By the time Jun Mobai had dispersed the water attack, Lin Hai had already leapt into the depths of the lake. He gritted his teeth and formed a defensive barrier around him with a quick

wave of his fan. Then, he jumped down as well.

However, the two hadn't been in for very long before two enormous geysers shot out of the lake, throwing the two back to the shore in a bit of a bedraggled fashion. The two found their footing with difficulty as shock appeared in both of their eyes. They fixed their stares onto the lake with faces full of incredulity.

The black-green water began to agitate violently, as if a large fire had been stoked beneath the lake, as the boiling of the water became ever more pronounced.

Rumble!

The lake trembled, as displaced water turned into crashing waves on the shore. A palace's towers became visible through the murky water, and broke the surface like a breaching whale. Yes, a palace!

It wasn't large, roughly a hundred acres, but it was indeed a palace. The sight stunned even Jiang Chen, watching from the shadows. He hadn't thought that a palace would be hidden beneath the lake, and that it'd emerge like this! I wonder if those two fellows triggered some sort of restriction that activated the security measures of this palace, causing it to rise from the bottom of the lake? Regardless of what it had been, this also slightly surprised Jiang Chen. But the question eventually circled back to just what was with this palace? A Titled Great Emperor wouldn't be able to refine such a palace, no matter how strong they were. Even an ancient sect such as the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect could only fold space to create secret planes through the use of formations and arts of space. But they also relied heavily on the

terrain to make it possible.

However, this palace could seemingly move, and didn't look so simple as something created from just earth. From Jiang Chen's experience, this was someone's residence, and a mobile one at that. These kinds of residences could shrink to the size of a mustard seed through certain space arts, just like the magnetic golden mountain. A Great Titled Emperor couldn't possibly refine such a residence; they'd have to at least be an empyrean cultivator. Only through the recognition of the heavenly dao would one have the right to utilize the energies of heaven and earth to be able to create anything via these sorts of space arts.

"Just who was Emperor Featherflight?"Jiang Chen was now incredibly curious. He understood that Jun Mobai and Lin Hai weren't fighting over the cultivator's heritage, but some other secret he possessed. He had a sudden flash of inspiration that hinted at just why the Ninesuns Sky Sect had spent so much time and effort to seep into the Myriad Domain. It must have to do with the reason Emperor Featherflight had chosen this place as his place of rebirth. Although he didn't know what it was for now, it was certainly very important as even a first rank sect such as the Sky Sect kept coveting it.

Lin Hai and Jun Mobai exchanged glances, greed in both their gazes. "Lin Hai, you and I fighting here and going all out may just end up benefiting others instead. What if someone rushes here and sees the two of us barely alive? Wouldn't that be benefiting the fisherman while the snipe and clam are locked in combat?" Jun Mobai seemed a bit wary.

Lin Hai laughed heartily, “What’s the use of spouting bullshit now? Do other people have the chance to come to the transcendent region? Besides, they wouldn’t be able to find this place without the tracking symbol.”

This symbol was a mark that the two heavyweights of their sects had left on Emperor Featherflight. He had been deeply injured and unable to purge the symbol from his body. Which was why he’d escaped to the Paramount Realm and secluded himself from the outside world. Therefore, no matter how painstakingly the two sects had searched the Myriad Domain over the last thousand years, they had come up empty-handed.

Inspiration had finally struck in the form of a memory about the Paramount Realm. It was then they had begun to make preparations. Lin Hai and Jun Mobai were all pieces arranged by the first rank sects, with the sole mission to search for the remains of Emperor Featherflight. The sects had spent a great deal of effort in searching for Emperor Featherflight before, but had come up empty-handed. Thus, they hadn’t held much hope and had only wanted to try their luck in the transcendent region, but who knew that the tracking symbol would actually detect a hint of something! The two disciples had followed the tracking symbol, finally converging at this place.

Chapter 679: Ling Bi'er's Circumstances

Jiang Chen understood a couple of things from their conversation. This Emperor Featherflight had a secret on him that resulted in him being chased by the Ninesuns Sky Sect and teh Eternal Celestial Capital. When he had been gravely injured, he'd escaped to the Myriad Domain and thrown off his pursuers by entering the Paramount Realm. The two sects assumed that he was simply barely scraping by somewhere, or desperately searching for an heir to pass on his legacy and treasures. So they had broken off the chase and had spread out a net to find this successor or Featherflight himself. But they always came up empty handed. Moreover, the secret they coveted was far too high profile for them to openly search for.

"Just what secret did that Emperor Featherflight have to make these two sects continue to search for a thousand years? Perhaps, an empyrean decree?"

Any first rank sect would have numerous Titled Great Emperors, so ordinary items wouldn't send the first rank sects into such a frenzy. In Jiang Chen's eyes, only an empyrean decree would offer such temptation.

What was an empyrean decree? It was a sign from the heavens left in the body of an empyrean cultivator after obtaining the acknowledgement of the heavens. Many mortal planes viewed empyrean cultivators as demigods, and the empyrean decree was viewed as a sign of divinity. It was a validation of the heavenly law's favor, and a personal decree. When an empyrean cultivator perished, their empyrean decree could be refined by others.

This was a priceless chance for many Titled Great Emperors who were unable to obtain recognition from the heavenly dao. A chance to obtain recognition from the heavenly dao and break through to the empyrean realm. If they could manage that, their strength would go through an explosive increase, but more importantly, so would their lifespan. Therefore, Jiang Chen felt that the only resource that would cause two first rank sects to fight to the death for would be a treasure as stunning as an empyrean decree.

Just as Jiang Chen was lost in his thoughts, Lin Hai and Jun Mobai had already engaged each other in battle. The two had concealed a majority of their strength, revealing their ability as seventh level sage realm. They were even stronger than the Ding Tong that Jiang Chen had killed in Mt. Rippling Mirage.

“The Ninesuns Sky Sect is devious alright. Planting a pawn in the Tristar Sect wasn’t enough for them; they even stretched their hands out to the Regal Pill Palace. This Jun Mobai... hid himself well.” If it hadn’t been for Palace Head Dan Chi’s warning, Jiang Chen really wouldn’t have thought that Jun Mobai was a spy. However, he was happy to sit by and watch the two tigers fight amongst themselves. This was the transcendent region after all, and unlike the outside world, they might actually team up if they were confronted in here. Life energy was scarce in here to begin with, and fighting would consume a great deal of their personal stores of life energy. Besides, Jiang Chen wasn’t going to deliberately make the situation disadvantageous for him. Hadn’t Jun Mobai himself mention it? The fisherman would benefit when the snipe and clam fought each other. Jiang Chen decided to quietly sit by and be a fisherman.

Although he was someone who'd reincarnated, his body was that of a denizen of the Myriad Domain. He still had feelings for this place. Now that he knew that both Lin Hai and Jun Mobai were spies from external powers, he really couldn't think positively of the two anymore. Jun Mobai in particular disgusted him since he'd infiltrated his way into the Regal Pill Palace.

After all these years, Jiang Chen felt quite a deep kinship to the Regal Pill Palace. Humans weren't grass or trees, how would they possibly feel nothing? Whether it was Dan Chi, Mu Gaoqi, Elder Yun Nie, or the Ling sisters, Jiang Chen still greatly valued all of them. In his view, Lin Hai's strength was stronger than Jun Mobai's, but Jun Mobai was more devious. This placed them on roughly even footing.

Lin Hai was stronger not because of his own ability, but because of the flag in his hand. Clearly an extraordinary item, its offensive and defensive abilities were praiseworthy. There were many moments where Jun Mobai was on the verge of establishing an advantage, but was rebuffed by a sweep of that flag.

Things were just as Jiang Chen thought, the exceedingly low amount of life-force in the transcendent region left the two exhausted after fifteen minutes of vicious battle.

The two were akin to two bulls, their eyes bloodshot and panting heavily, but still full of crazed fervor. They didn't look like they would back down for anything.

"Lin Hai, you're nothing without that flag! Is this all that the Eternal Celestial Capital can do?" Jun Mobai knew that he

wouldn’t be able to win if he couldn’t get past that damned flag.

Lin Hai snorted coldly, “And you think you’re strong? You depend on devious schemes as well! Cut the bullshit, continue!”

……

Just as the two were furiously battling each other, Ling Bi’er actually found a place of inheritance in a remote corner of the inner region. It was very isolated, but she had just happened to stumble across it. This place of rebirth was left behind by a ninth level emperor realm cultivator!

The cultivator hadn’t lived out her days here, but was rather cultivating an art of rebirth, one that found life in death. She’d tried to ascend to a higher level in the Paramount Realm, but had ended up losing everything in the end.

This particular place of rebirth had been filled with the preparations for ascension, so it provided quite a comfortable environment for Ling Bi’er. She had been on the edge of breaking free of the spirit realm to begin with, so breaking through to the sage realm with an easy feat for her. Having received such a surprise, Ling Bi’er decided to bend her mind to breaking through to the sage realm and broke through all her shackles in one go, ascending after a full day and night’s worth of effort! Not only that, but the process seemed to have awakened something in the place of inheritance and she also received the ninth level emperor realm cultivator’s legacy.

This really gave her a surreal feeling. She'd never felt that such fortune would await her in the Paramount Realm! Although Palace Head Dan Chi had received a legacy in the Paramount Realm, the level of his inheritance was obviously inferior to hers. It was almost to the point where she wondered if such a level of inheritance had truly existed in the Paramount Realm for the last thousand years. This pseudo Titled Great Emperor had left behind many items, and the more Ling Bi'er counted, the more amazed she was. She finally understood why Jiang Chen was so strong. She guessed that junior brother Jiang Chen must've had some heaven defying fortune, and now Lady Luck had smiled on her as well. When she looked at all these treasures, the normally Ling Bi'er actually became a bit nervous. If the outside world knew of these treasures, a violent storm would rock the entire Myriad Domain as everyone fought over them.

"Mm, I must keep this completely secret. Senior Shao Yin was an extraordinary woman. There are far fewer female cultivators than male cultivators in the Divine Abyss Continent. As a female cultivators, I must take up the mantle for all female cultivators..." Ling Bi'er had slowly calmed down from her initial delight. The senior had indeed left behind many treasures, and any of them would be an unparalleled treasure in the Myriad Domain. She carefully put them all away and made her gestures of respect, "Senior Shao Yin, junior Ling Bi'er has received your inheritance. I will spread its glory to the world one day, and elevate the name of female cultivators for good."

Ling Bi'er wasn't the sort to dismantle the bridge after she'd crossed the river. She only left after paying her respects in full. She knew that she couldn't stay long here. She'd be in great trouble if someone found her, so she destroyed anything that could possibly be a clue before she left.

“Hmm, I’ve spent six out of the nine days allotted to us. I wonder where junior brother Jiang Chen is now?” Ling Bi’er was thinking about Jiang Chen and didn’t want to leave immediately, so she decided to look around and see if she could find him.

Her instincts suddenly screamed at her, but a yell exploded out from her left just as she leaped for a hiding spot. “It’s Ling Bi’er; that’s a disciple of the Regal Pill Palace!”

Ling Bi’er’s heart thumped when she heard this voice. Why is it him? She almost thought that something was wrong with her ears. The person speaking sounded like Wang Jianyu, the palace head of the Sacred Sword Palace! Her instincts were fully roused, and she knew something had gone wrong. Her body flickered as she prepared to flash away.

However, Wang Jianyu was way too fast, and caught up to here in a mere three steps, “Where do you think you’re going, you little bitch?”

Ling Bi’er had just started to increase her speed when Wang Jianyu stopped her. He leered, “Go on, run. Why don’t you run?”

Ling Bi’er’s slender eyebrows knitted together slightly, “Palace Head Wang, how dare you sneak into the Paramount Realm? This is a blatant violation of the rules! Aren’t you afraid of inciting public anger towards the Sacred Sword Palace?”

Wang Jianyu cackled loudly. His emotional and mental state had

been twisted after one shock after another, so he'd lost his customary poise of a sect head. But in that place was born a dangerous madness. "Public anger? Myriad Domain? Hahaha!! What's public anger? They can't even save themselves at the moment. What public anger could they summon!?"

Ling Bi'er's expression darkened. "Palace Head Wang, what do you mean by all of these alarmist words?"

Wang Jianyu continued cackling, "What do I mean? Simple, the Myriad Domain is done for! You little bitch, I heard you have a good relationship with Jiang Chen. Does that mean we can lure him out if we use you as bait?"

Wang Han and the others had taken their time to walk over now, supercilious smiles on their faces. Behind Wang Han walked an ancient, shriveled mysterious elder. But Ling Bi'er's instincts did something far worse than screaming at her when she saw this man. They went dead silent, as if the sky itself had caved in.

"Ling Bi'er, to think that there would be a day in which you fall into my hands!" Wang Han suddenly wanted to laugh to his heart's content. He'd lusted after her for so long, but the fact that their sects were rivals meant that he couldn't openly pursue her. However, he'd had many wet dreams about her, and now that he saw her, he felt a perverted sense of satisfaction rise in his heart.

Chapter 680: Jiang Chen Reveals Himself

“Wang Han? Of all people, how are you worthy of entering the Paramount Realm?” Ling Bi’er despised Wang Han’s character greatly and cast him a disdainful glance.

Wang Han had been humiliated by Regal Pill Palace time and time again in the past. Now that Ling Bi’er was looking down on him once more, he immediately felt rage erupt in his heart. You Regal Pill Palace dogs might have humiliated me in the past, but now I, Wang Han have entered the tutelage of an emperor realm expert! How dare a little wench like you still look down on me! He leered right back at her, “Put that ill temper of yours somewhere else, Ling Bi’er. Your words mean nothing here.”

Wang Han saluted Sect Head Qin Mo respectfully as he spoke, “Honored master, this woman is a Regal Pill Palace disciple, and has a relationship with Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen will absolutely appear if we hold her captive. In addition, the Regal Pill Palace and I have an all-consuming grudge. Therefore, I humbly request your permission to personally mete out punishment to this woman, master.”

He understood his place very well, and knew that he should always ask Sect Head Qin Mo for permission. As expected, the old man immediately felt a bit more appreciation for this new disciple after hearing his praise. He nodded, “End this battle swiftly, and don’t waste any more time than is necessary.”

The old man himself knew that this was already the sixth day out of the total nine days that the Paramount Realm would be open.

Time waited for no one. His biggest objective was to capture Jiang Chen. Nothing else mattered to him. He had no intention of dealing with any other issues that cropped up. Therefore, the old man's attitude towards any geniuses he encountered in the Paramount Realm could be summed up with one word: kill!

They had run into eight geniuses in the Paramount Realm, and the old man's had ordered them all slaughtered. Unfortunately, the Regal Pill Palace's Nie Chong had become one of those casualties. Of course, the old man had been very devious. He didn't bother killing the geniuses himself, but had instead ordered Wang Jianyu to do the dirty work. Every person Wang Jianyu killed distanced him further from the Myriad Domain, and sent him further down the path of absolute loyalty towards the Zither Sect.

Wang Jianyu's bloodlust had obviously been awakened by this order too. Although he knew that Sect Head Qin Mo was testing his loyalty, he didn't hesitate at all when killing the Myriad Domain geniuses. It was obvious that the depressed and sullen feelings Wang Jianyu had suffered lately had birthed a deep hatred for all the sects in the Myriad Domain. He desperately needed to wreak havoc to resolve those negative emotions swirling within him. Therefore, almost every genius they encountered in Paramount Realm died a horrible death at Wang Jianyu's hands.

For a time, Ling Bi'er felt utterly disconcerted as she looked at the crazed Wang Jianyu, the sycophantic Wang Han, and the old man of unfathomable strength. She had seen plenty of serious situations before, but the one she was facing now was without a doubt the deadliest of them all. For a moment, she didn't know what to do. She'd just inherited senior Shao Yin's inheritance, and she did have some escape talismans with her right now. In fact,

one of them could even break through an emperor realm cultivator's domain restriction. However, she was also in the Paramount Realm. She didn't know exactly what effect it would have on her talismans. Moreover, she was also worried for Jiang Chen. Judging from Wang Han's tone, these people were obviously targeting her junior brother.

Ling Bi'er hesitated. She felt that she had at least a 60 to 70% chance of escaping if she were to use senior Shao Yin's life saving talismans. However, what would happen to junior brother Jiang Chen if she were to escape alone? She snuck a glance at the mysterious old man, and estimated that he was likely an emperor realm cultivator. He was much stronger than any other cultivator in the Myriad Domain. If she were to leave all by herself, what would junior brother Jiang Chen do if he ran into this group?

Ling Bi'er knew that Jiang Chen was powerful and extraordinary, but this time their opponent was an emperor realm cultivator. He was different from any other opponent they had ever encountered in the past. She gritted her teeth and came to a decision.

She suddenly looked at the mysterious old man and said, "Senior, I know not where you hail from, and I know very well I am no match for your strength. You can capture me, but I will ask that you do not harm me. I will cooperate with anything you ask me to do, and I plead only that you do not give me to Wang Han. I would rather die than submit myself to shame!" Ling Bi'er's tone was velvet over steel.

Wang Han was furious, "How dare you still pretend to be a goddess! You may have been a goddess in the past when everyone

was praising you, but now you're just a mere captive. I can turn you into a sex slave any moment I want!"

Sect Head Qin Mo suddenly frowned and asked, "Wang Han, are you sure that this girl is very close to Jiang Chen? Are you sure than Jiang Chen would definitely show himself if we have her?"

"Honored master, Jiang Chen likes this bitch a lot. He will definitely appear."

"Mm. In that case we will keep her with us. You don't need to rush to do whatever you want with her. That can be decided after we capture Jiang Chen." The old man's chief objective was to capture Jiang Chen. When he saw Ling Bi'er's determined expression, he too was worried that this girl would kill herself to protect her chastity. If she really did kill herself, then he would have nothing to threaten Jiang Chen with. If that kid really was hiding in the Paramount Realm, it would be difficult to flush him out if he didn't have leverage.

With that, the old man stared indifferently at Ling Bi'er and added, "Little girl, I am fairly old, so I would rather not destroy a beautiful little girl like you if I don't have to. However, if you refuse to cooperate with me properly, then I wouldn't mind breaking my vow. Even if I could tolerate you, I'm sure these 'acquaintances' of yours wouldn't mind serving you at the same time..."

The old man began chuckling evilly after he finished speaking. Ling Bi'er's scalp tingled with fear as she listened. She forced herself to calm down and put on a fearful and obedient look. "I

only ask that I am not humiliated, senior."

"Let's go." The old man's expression sank as he waved a hand indifferently and walked forward. The group continued to make their search inside the inner region. They ran into a couple more Myriad Domain geniuses along the way, and Wang Jianyu killed all of them without hesitation. Ling Bi'er burned with fury when witnessing this, but there was nothing she could do about it.

"Wang Han, why haven't we encountered Jiang Chen yet?" The old man's tone had grown a little irritated.

"Honored master, Jiang Chen hates being left out. I suspect that he isn't in the inner region at all, but rather the transcendent region," Wang Han voiced his deductions.

After pondering for a moment, the old man waved a hand and said, "Then we go to the transcendent region."

Ling Bi'er felt both anxiety and yearning on the inside. Her heart was in disarray. She knew that junior brother Jiang Chen was most likely in the transcendent region. She was worried that these people would hurt him, but also had the optimistic hope that senior Shao Yin's powerful talismans could help the two of them escape together.

Ling Bi'er was roughly seventy percent sure that she would be able to succeed if she were to escape by herself. But no matter how she calculated, she deduced that their chances of success were only forty percent at most if she were to meet up with Jiang Chen and

attempt to escape together. However, Ling Bi'er was willing to try even if the chances of success were that low.

She knew that junior brother Jiang Chen would be in great trouble if she didn't meet up with him. The Sacred Sword Palace was one thing, but that old man was an emperor realm cultivator. Nothing was certain.

Even if she set aside that he was her father's savior, Ling Bi'er still would've made the same choice without hesitation. He was the first man to walk into her heart and the first man she was able to accept without any reservation. In Ling Bi'er's mind, she would rather walk into death herself so that Jiang Chen would be safe.

……

Meanwhile, the battle by the lake had waned. It'd lasted for six full hours, and both parties were nearing complete exhaustion. Even so, neither Jun Mobai nor Lin Hai were willing to let their opponent escape. They played trump card after trump card, flinging every ability they could dredge up at each other. The frenzied battle continued without a decided victor. In the end, they even blasted each other with their ultimate trump cards.

Bang, bang!

Both cultivators collapsed onto the yellow sands that now were decorated with long ditches drawn. Like a newly ploughed field, the gouges pockmarked the entire battleground. Both vomited blood at the same time and struggled to climb on their feet. It was

obvious that that final clash had cost them.

"You madman, if you keep this up we're both going to die here, Lin Hai!" Jun Mobai swore loudly.

Lin Hai said furiously, "How could I possibly die before you? And did you just call me a madman? Does it look like I'm fighting myself? Aren't you crazy as well?!"

Jun Mobai sighed, "We're both in big trouble if someone appears right now."

"Then you deserve it!" Lin Hai was an extremely swift and fierce person. He struggled to his feet and attempted to wave his flag, wanting to deal Jun Mobai the final blow.

Jun Mobai's face paled greatly, "Are you seriously planning to die, you madman?"

Lin Hai leered, "You definitely must die, or how could I possibly obtain Emperor Featherflight's inheritance for myself?"

Jun Mobai was just about to say something when his eyes widened in complete disbelief. He stared behind Lin Hai, as if he had seen the most unbelievable thing in his entire life. Lin Hai sneered and said, "No need to try this trick on me, kid. You trying to distract me so you can ambush me, aren't you? Don't you think that trick is a bit old?" It was obvious that Lin Hai didn't believe that anything was behind him at all. However, he immediately

heard footsteps behind him.

They were extremely firm footsteps.

He panicked, and nearly fell over because of how fast he turned around. A young man stood there, seemingly smiling at them both.

“Jiang Chen... Jiang Chen?” Lin Hai was shocked as he looked back at Jun Mobai. For a moment, he was obviously confused by the connections that were possibly in play. He wasn’t sure if Jiang Chen was another Ninesuns Sky Sect spy. After all, this world was full of half truths and whole lies. No one could say for sure whom they belonged to until their identities were exposed.

“Senior brother Lin Hai, senior brother Jun, what are you...?” Jiang Chen pretended to be curious as he stared at the two sorry-looking figures.

Jun Mobai hastily gave Lin Hai a meaningful look before explaining, “You’ve arrived just in time, junior brother Jiang Chen. It’s like this, we discovered this inheritance palace, but this Lin Hai simply wouldn’t stop fighting with me for it. Now we’re both hurt. Thankfully you’re the one who came and not someone else, or the alternative would’ve been simply inconceivable.”

Lin Hai immediately understood that Jiang Chen was no Ninesuns Sky Sect disciple. Lin Hai was fighting Jun Mobai to the death just a moment ago. But now, they were tacitly cooperating and standing on the same side. Otherwise, in their current conditions, they would be dead for sure if Jiang Chen learned the

truth. Lin Hai immediately slapped his head with regret and said, “I was foolish, I was so foolish. Brother Jiang Chen, your Regal Pill Palace has the numbers, so this inheritance is all yours. I only ask that you can give me a share too.”

Jiang Chen had to admit that these two weren’t only good at acting, but also quick to assume their respective roles. If he hadn’t known from the start that they were spies, he might actually have had the wool pulled over his eyes. No wonder they had risen to their current positions. Their acting skills were top notch.

“Please come over and give me a hand, junior brother Jiang. We must make haste, or we may not even be able to get a share. Especially if the Great Cathedral shows up,” Jun Mobai spoke with complete insincerity.

Chapter 681: Jiang Chen Successfully Schemes Against the Two

Jiang Chen sneered inwardly. Do these two bastards still want to trick me even now?

"Fear not, senior brother Jun. Since this Lin Hai has dared offend our Regal Pill Palace, I will finish him off first!" Jiang Chen proclaimed, the hypocrisy clear only to him.

Lin Hai felt a rush of anxiety flood him after hearing those words. Having fought an intense battle, the two of them were like arrows at the end of their flight—they had scarcely any stamina left. They might have had a way to salvage the situation if it'd been any other ordinary genius. But of all people, it had to be the unfathomable genius that even Xiang Qin had bowed down to. Lin Hai was possibly not even Jiang Chen's match when in peak condition, never mind his currently exhausted state. His expression changed almost immediately, "Junior brother Jiang, our sects have always been united and harmonious. Your fellow senior brother and I only fought a battle of pride, it wasn't one to the death."

Jiang Chen deliberately assumed a solemn expression, "This palace is no doubt an inheritance left behind by a powerful cultivator. Instead of sharing it, I would rather claim it for the Regal Pill Palace in its entirety."

Lin Hai responded hurriedly, "If junior brother Jiang Chen so wishes, I will forfeit my share."

“No. It will be detrimental to our business if you blab after leaving this place!” Jiang Chen’s gestures seemed to speak of his absolute resolve.

It was now Jun Mobai’s turn to be anxious off on the side. If Lin Hai really was killed off, Jun Mobai’s guilty conscience would weigh even more heavily. But even beyond that, if Jiang Chen later discovered Jun Mobai’s identity, the latter would have neither the confidence nor the means to deal with this top disciple. Additionally, if he were to simply watch and not help, Lin Hai might reveal everything in his irritation and drag Jun Mobai down with him.

Jun Mobai hurriedly spoke up as his thoughts came to a close, “Junior brother Jiang, let’s not resort to murder yet. Lin Hai has already expressed his sincere thoughts. After all, the Regal Pill Palace and the Dark North Sect have always had friendly relations. If they discover that we killed their number one genius, I fear that our relationship will hit rock bottom. Then, our enemies would no longer be the Sacred Sword Palace alone…”

This train of thought was extremely reasonable under normal circumstances. But it rang quite comically for Jiang Chen with the knowledge that one of them was a disciple of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, and the other from the Eternal Celestial Capital. They still wanted to play tricks even under these circumstances!

Jiang Chen pretended to be deep in thought, and then finally concluded, “Since it’s like this, I will treat senior brother’s wounds first. Here, please ingest this healing pill.”

Jiang Chen casually tossed a pill towards Jun Mobai. Jun Mobai was an undercover disciple of the Ninesuns Sky Sect and thus inherently paranoid. He found himself in quite the predicament after receiving the pill. Do I take it or not?

It was apparent from this that he had always held a sliver of wariness against Jiang Chen. He was worried on one hand that Jiang Chen might have already seen through their identities, but was also thinking about the palace on the other. Even if Jiang Chen hadn't seen through the two, he might also seek to hoard the inheritance for himself and possibly consider killing the two.

Jiang Chen noted Jun Mobai's hesitation, "Senior brother Jun, do you not trust me?"

Jun Mobai was suddenly at a loss for words. Did he not trust Jiang Chen? How could he possibly answer in the affirmative? Who knew whether Jiang Chen would turn hostile if he felt that Jun Mobai was suspicious of him? So Jun Mobai was all smiles. "It's not that I don't trust you, it's just that I've already taken a healing pill. I'll keep the one you've just given me for later use. There is no need to waste such precious medicine."

Jiang Chen's face turned solemn, "It appears that you don't trust me after all."

"Junior brother, you and I belong to the same sect. There's no need for suspicion. Would I possibly trust Lin Hai of the Dark North Sect over you? We are of the same sect, and should support

each other in the Paramount Realm."

Jiang Chen nodded, "In that case, keep the pill for later use. Let me help you up."

Jiang Chen walked up with his hand extended. Jun Mobai took in a deep breath. He knew this was his only chance. Opportunity never knocks twice! His surging murderous was carefully concealed as Jun Mobai prepared to deliver the coup de grace as soon as the unguarded Jiang Chen walked over. Just as Jiang Chen was about to reach out, he suddenly halted with a hint of spurious amusement in his eyes. "Senior brother Jun, there's just one more problem..."

"What is it?" Jun Mobai asked in surprise.

"It's like this. I encountered a few people in Mt. Rippling Mirage; a true disciple of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, a fatty and a pill king."

"Mt. Rippling Mirage? Disciples of the Ninesuns Sky Sect?" Jun Mobai was shaken, "Junior brother Jiang Chen. Why didn't you mention this before?"

Jiang Chen scratched his head. "I didn't want the other sects to ask me too many questions, so I omitted some of the details."

"Could you have been mistaken? Mt. Rippling Mirage is definitely inaccessible to normal people. Even a true disciple of the Ninesuns Sky Sect might not be able to enter at will."

Jiang Chen laughed. “Then perhaps I mistook them for someone else. However, I did obtain an item from that person.”

“What is it?” Jun Mobai asked curiously.

Jiang Chen produced the Moonshatter Awl with a twist of his hand. Jun Mobai’s heart spasmed painfully when he saw it. Although he was a spy, he wasn’t unfamiliar with the Ninesuns Sky Sect. Moreover, back when Cao Jin had caused a ruckus at the Regal Pill Palace, he’d used this Moonshatter Awl to attack the sect’s great defensive formation. Jun Mobai had been within the Regal Pill Palace at that time and was naturally able to recognize both the item and its wielder. Seeing Cao Jin’s Moonshatter Awl in Jiang Chen’s hands, Jun Mobai was momentarily stunned. However, he swiftly regained his composure and exclaimed with feigned surprise, “Junior brother Jiang Chen, is the Cao Jin you mentioned a blue-browed youth?

Jiang Chen nodded, “Senior brother Jun, how did you know?”

Jun Mobai felt his heart pounding as it filled with boundless fear. He realized that the enormously powerful senior brother Cao Jin might have been slain by Jiang Chen! “Junior brother Jiang Chen is truly impressive! That blue-browed youth is indeed a genius of the Ninesuns Sky Sect. He once came to the Regal Pill Palace to cause trouble and used this weapon back then!”

Jiang Chen said with a face full of delight, “He was someone from the Ninesuns Sky Sect after all! Hahaha, fantastic!”

Jun Mobai inquired further. “Then… then what happened to Cao Jin?”

“I killed him. He had a lot of good stuff on him,” Jiang Chen replied, his tone completely unperturbed.

Jun Mobai felt all his hair stand on end. It was at this moment—

With no forewarning, a beam of golden light shot out from Jiang Chen’s eyes and into Jun Mobai’s pupils. The latter felt his entire body tremble momentarily as an intense pressure started to constrict his soul. His blood, veins and even consciousness began to feel increasingly sluggish. What’s going on?

Jun Mobai felt like he’d plunged into an icy cave. A realization struck him—but by that time, the second beam of light had already penetrated his eyes.

Wave after wave…

Waves of golden light penetrated his pupils as the solidifying power of the Evil Golden Eye invaded his eyes.

“Jiang Chen… you!” Jun Mobai had realized by now that he’d fallen prey to Jiang Chen’s plot. He’d actually been on his guard against Jiang Chen, but had still failed to protect himself against this move despite all his defensive measures.

Lin Hai nearby had quickly grasped the situation and realized that their identities had been compromised the minute he saw Jun Mobai fall to Jiang Chen's plan. He was frightened out of his wits, as the need to escape consumed his thoughts. However, how could he possibly outrun Jiang Chen in his current state? He turned to flee, but as he ran, he discovered that the yellow sands in front of him had been replaced by a boundless glacial realm covered in brilliant, white snow.

"Jiang Chen, you played the pig to eat the tiger!" Lin Hai clenched his teeth, knowing that he had also been schemed against. He had entered Jiang Chen's formation. He saw everything clearly now. Jiang Chen had been deliberately stalling for time in talking to them. He'd been looking for a way to take them both out at the same time.

On the other side, Jiang Chen was also well aware that if he'd attacked them rashly, the two could escape by activating their escape talismans or other secret methods, to say nothing of the potential lethal final strikes that the spies from a first rank sect could use. Although he was confident that he could handle one head on, he wasn't able to kill two head on. Thus he'd feigned civility and spoken of trivial things, giving his opponents the illusion that there was still a chance to kill him. This way, his enemies wouldn't immediately think of fleeing. After all, judging from their attitudes, both of them greatly coveted Emperor Featherflight's inheritance.

He'd been manipulating the formation that would trap Lin Hai as he'd played for time. He'd activated it to ensnare Lin Hai while he himself delivered a killing blow to Jun Mobai. He'd also needed an opportunity to deploy the Evil Golden Eye in that fatal blow. Under

normal circumstances, Jun Mobai would be shielded by his impenetrable mental defenses. That was why Jiang Chen had mentioned Cao Jin, in order to cause some fluctuations in his consciousness. That momentary weakness induced by fear was all he needed for the Evil Golden Eye to invade.

Everything went just as Jiang Chen had planned. He'd grasped the perfect moment to attack, and although Jun Mobai had reacted after the Evil Golden Eye had penetrated his consciousness, it was far too late. That one opening had opened the floodgates to a series of attacks. In his exhausted and weakened state, there was no way for him to gather a defense. Countless strands of metallic energy flowed steadily into him, and after a few breaths, he'd transformed into a golden statue. Seeing Jun Mobai turn into metal, Jiang Chen felt more confident about his Evil Golden Eye. Compared to when he'd first started practicing the Evil Golden Eye, its power had grown exponentially.

Jiang Chen hopped into the formation after taking out Jun Mobai. He hadn't utilized the formation to kill, but rather to restrain Lin Hai from fleeing with an escape talisman. All escape and evasion arts were rendered ineffective inside the formation. And it was apparent that Lin Hai did not possess any powerful formation splitting technique or weapon.

Hatred flashed within his eyes when Lin Hai saw Jiang Chen step into the formation. "Jiang Chen, it's impossible for you to be a Regal Pill Palace disciple! There's no need to hide it any longer! Tell me, which first rank sect do you belong to? I remember that only the Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital were privy to information about the Featherflight Emperor. Did another sect come to know about it? And had even concealed themselves so

well!” Lin Hai gnashed his teeth indignantly, his tone full of resentment and an unwillingness to accept the situation.

Chapter 682: Emperor Featherflight's Remains

Given the current situation, Lin Hai's thoughts were perfectly understandable. After all, it was impossible that a person monstrous enough to kill a true disciple of Ninesuns Sky Sect, deceive him and Jun Mobai, and even drive them to their deaths could possibly spring from the Myriad Domain. There was no way Lin Hai would believe that a Myriad Domain genius could perform such a feat.

Xiang Qin's strength was exceptional in the Myriad Domain, and he could be considered to be the strongest genius of the region. However, Lin Hai was confident that both he and Jun Mobai could deal with this foremost genius. As for an expert at Cao Jin's level, that kind of existence was much stronger than even him and Jun Mobai. Even Xiang Qin would suffer a completely one-sided defeat if he were to encounter Cao Jin. However, this Jiang Chen was actually strong enough to take out Cao Jin!

Could he be the top genius of a first rank sect? Was he an emperor realm cultivator? Lin Hai's mind was filled with doubt and fear. He wanted to obtain the truth from Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smiled calmly and stared at Lin Hai. "Senior brother Lin Hai, I didn't know that you were such a good actor." His tone was calm despite the rather messy situation.

"Jiang Chen, stop pretending already. Tell me that which first rank sect you're from!" Lin Hai said angrily.

“Whether or not I’m a spy is none of your concern. Emperor Featherflight, huh? I’m curious. Just who is this Emperor Featherflight to be so attractive as to warrant the attention of two first rank sects? Why have your sects searched for him relentlessly for thousands of years, and gone so far as to send out spies to infiltrate the Myriad Domain?”

Lin Hai frowned, “You don’t know?”

Jiang Chen smiled calmly, “I don’t. But I’ve managed to guess a little here and there from your conversation. Well? Are you going to spill the beans, or do I need to pry your mouth open for you?”

Lin Hai laughed loudly, “Spill the beans? I am an Eternal Celestial Capital disciple, and I’d rather die than be shamed! If this idiot Jun Mobai hadn’t fought me to such a state, do you really think I would be scared of you?”

Jiang Chen smiled calmly, “Does that mean you’re going to resist to the so-called bitter end?”

Lin Hai’s face darkened, “Hmph, you’ll have to cough up something if you want to kill me.”

“Do I?” Jiang Chen didn’t waste his breath. He shook the Soldier Rosary Beads once, and summoned forth a sky sage realm and three earth sage realm golden armored warriors, surrounding Lin Hai completely.

Lin Hai paled greatly, “Jiang Chen, do you only know how to play cheap tricks? I dare you to fight me one on one!”

“Fight you one on one? I’m afraid I would only dirty my hands that way.” Jiang Chen wasn’t willing to waste any more time on him, and commanded his golden armored warriors to launch a frenzied attack upon Lin Hai. Lin Hai was already completely spent, and the strongest advantage of these golden armored warriors was that they were completely unafraid of death. Therefore, Lin Hai fell almost instantly to their rush, suffering quite a few blows in the process.

Jiang Chen walked over to Lin Hai, and the first thing he did as he looked at the barely breathing form was to confiscate the flag. This flag was definitely a treasure, and Jiang Chen had thought it to be fairly extraordinary from the start. It was extremely useful for both offense and defense. It was also thanks to this flag that Lin Hai was able to turn things around again and again when he’d fought Jun Mobai. Other than the flag, Jiang Chen also took Lin Hai’s storage ring as well. He had done the same with Jun Mobai’s storage ring.

It had taken him no small degree of effort to take out these two cultivators, and Jiang Chen wasn’t willing to tarry any longer. However, he didn’t dare neglect caution as he walked up to the lofty palace in the lake and stared at it. After all, this brackish lake water was extremely corrosive. Even Lin Hai and Jun Mobai had been extremely fearful of it.

Jiang Chen might have cultivated the golden body of the Nine

Transformations of Demons and Gods, but he still wasn't willing to test the corrosiveness of the lake water with his golden body. That was why he used Lin Hai's flag to protect himself. Jiang Chen knew that this abode was absolutely not the same as the other buildings in the Paramount Realm. It was most likely a spatial abode that was naturally portable. Normally, a residence like this could only be made portable after refinement.

If he wished to refine this residence for himself, then he must first find its core. Only then he would be able to truly control it. Had it been any of the other experts from the Divine Abyss Continent, then they might've been fooled by this palace's appearance and thought it simply to be another building in the Paramount Realm. However, Jiang Chen possessed the knowledge and experience of his past life. He naturally wouldn't be fooled just by appearances.

Considering how little life force there was in the Paramount Realm, no one would be senseless enough to build a palace in this place. Moreover, this obviously wasn't a suitable place to establish a sect either. Lin Hai and Jun Mobai seemed to have used a certain secret art to lock onto the signs of Emperor Featherflight's consciousness.

Of course, a tracking method like this had its own limitations. If they hadn't entered the Paramount Realm or wandered close to this area, it would've been impossible to pick up any traces. Otherwise, Lin Hai and Jun Mobai wouldn't have sounded like they had searched futilely for Emperor Featherflight for thousands of years. Due to many concerns, they couldn't openly make a thorough search of the Myriad Domain. That was why they had no choice but to infiltrate the sects to search for Emperor

Featherflight's whereabouts.

This Emperor Featherflight must have escaped to such an obscure place to avoid pursuit from the Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital. Therefore, there must be plenty of traps inside. If I act recklessly, I may be attacked by them.

From Emperor Featherflight's point of view, he had every reason to lay all kinds of traps. After all, no one would like to see their inheritance happily taken away by their enemies after being hunted for such a long time. Jiang Chen was carefully on guard after entering the palace. The palace wasn't large, but it was a completely different world within.

"This place is truly grand. There is no way that a Titled Great Emperor could've refined a spatial abode like this. If this place truly is connected to Emperor Featherflight, then he certainly didn't create this place by himself." Jiang Chen guessed that Emperor Featherflight might have accidentally obtained an ancient inheritance. However, his discovery had also alerted the Eternal Celestial Capital and Ninesuns Sky Sect, and he had been viciously hunted down by the two sects as a result.

Jiang Chen unleashed his consciousness at full power as he tread on the palace's stone stairs, guarding against any possible mishaps. What Jiang Chen didn't expect was that the attacks and traps he'd expected to be thrown at him didn't happen. In fact, he didn't trigger any kind of restrictions at all no matter how carelessly he walked through the interior of the palace.

"How odd!" This situation almost made Jiang Chen disbelieve his

senses. It was obvious that this palace abode contained some extremely powerful restrictions. However, none of them showed any signs of activating at all. Jiang Chen had been extremely experienced and knowledgeable in his past life, and so could more or less deduce the flows of power and restrictions inside the palace.

If these restrictions were in a state of high alert, then surely the energy in and around them would be balancing on a hair trigger, with barely suppressed activity. But the more he examined them, the more docile the restrictions looked. Not a single one seemed even primed to trigger, let alone be so sensitive to intruders.

“Could it be that Emperor Featherflight failed to refine this abode at all after he obtained it? Is that why he didn’t set these restrictions to automatically attack intruders?” Jiang Chen’s mind was filled with questions.

It was possible that Emperor Featherflight had been killed before he’d managed to refine the inheritance from the palace. Jiang Chen passed through many corridors and finally arrived at the back hall of the palace. Jiang Chen had just stepped foot over the entrance when he saw a corpse sitting cross-legged inside.

From a distance, the body looked like he was in a meditative state. The expression on his face looked as lifelike as ever. If it wasn’t for the fact that this man exuded no ripples of vitality whatsoever, Jiang Chen would have almost suspected that he was alive. His skin color and his countenance truly looked lifelike.

This man was sitting cross-legged with a grave expression on his face. It would seem that he didn’t even want death to mar his sense

of style and pride. His face contained none of the struggles that a person would usually face on their deathbed.

“Is he Emperor Featherflight?” Jiang Chen looked behind the person and noted the stunning sight of a pair of wings. It was truly an incredible sight. This man truly was a Titled Great Emperor alright, considering that his body hadn’t rotted away even after a thousand years. Jiang Chen didn’t approach the body hastily. Instead, he stood far away and observed the body carefully. It only took him a moment to discover that there were no restrictions or traps around him at all.

Jiang Chen was now completely puzzled. If Emperor Featherflight had truly been forced to escape to a place like this, there was no way he would expose his body so openly and easily. It made even less sense that he wouldn’t arrange a little something to deal with his enemies.

Could it be that Emperor Featherflight had lost all ability to resist prior to his death?

It didn’t look that way either. If he could die looking this calm and collected, then he shouldn’t have been that powerless.

Jiang Chen approached him slowly. Then, he saw that a few words had been engraved on the floor before Emperor Featherflight.

A Notice For Those Who Come After:

“Mine name is Featherflight. I have travelled across the Divine Abyss Continent unhindered for thousands of years. Against any reasonable expectation, I was hunted down by the Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital and ultimately wandered to this place. I have already burned out the wick of my life,, and have decided to use this place as my place of rebirth. I shall cast away my power and essence of a lifetime in hopes of entering the cycle of rebirth. To a person nearing his death, all gains and losses in this world are but a transient thing.

“A goose leaves behind its voice after its flight, , but a man’s legacy after life is his name. I dominated the Divine Abyss Continent at one point, and was a hero of those times. Therefore, I shall leave behind my inheritance in hopes that my future heir will be able to spread the name of Emperor Featherflight and avenge me.

“My heir must eliminate the Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital...”

Later on, Emperor Featherflight even detailed some of his experiences while he was being hunted by the Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital, and some of the reasons he had chosen to escape to this place. He also explained some of the processes and the reason why he had chosen this lake bottom.

“I am a titled emperor, and I share no ties with the Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital. The reason they hunted me was not because they wanted my martial dao inheritance, but because I obtained an ancient inheritance from a certain ancient secret realm. This ancient inheritance had been left behind by a great

empyrean expert. However, not only did it contain an empyrean decree, but also a secret order of the legendary fate secret realm. The fate realm is said to be connected to the shores of the heavenly law. It allows a cultivator to connect directly with the heavenly law and ascend to the heavenly planes…"

For a time, Jiang Chen's heart was filled with indescribable emotions as he read Emperor Featherflight's last message. He had guessed that there would be something amazing like an empyrean decree amongst the goods, but he'd never dreamed that Emperor Featherflight would possess a secret order that would enable passage to the secret realm of heavenly laws too.

Jiang Chen might not have known the Divine Abyss Continent very well, but he did know that every physical plane had secret realms that were connected to the heavenly law.

Normally speaking, once an expert of a physical plane obtained the acknowledgement of the heavenly law, they would ascend to the heavenly plane through the normal channels of celestial orbit. Otherwise, if they hadn't obtained this confirmation, then they would have to utilize secret realms to do so. Secret realms would give a cultivator the same chance to obtain the acknowledgement of heavenly laws, and ascend directly to the heavenly planes.

Chapter 683: Refining the Abode

Jiang Chen had conducted copious research into all sorts of physical planes in his past life. Many of the geniuses he'd encountered had actually ascended from these physical planes. As a result, he knew a great deal about those planes. This fate secret realm was likely a secret realm of the highest level on an ordinary plane like the Divine Abyss Continent. Something like this normally wouldn't appear this easily. Its discovery would undoubtedly bring forth a world-shaking change to the ordinary plane it appeared in. After all, a path to the heavenly law might not appear even once in ten thousand years.

It was the first time that Jiang Chen had clearly seen the words 'heavenly planes' ever since his reincarnation. Although the message only mentioned the words without any sort of clarifying details, Jiang Chen still felt excitement begin to brew in his chest.

Even though the universe was vast, with plenty of heavenly planes, not to mention that the one connected to the Divine Abyss Continent might not have necessarily been the one that his father had ruled in the past... Jiang Chen still couldn't help but feel much anticipation when he saw the words 'heavenly planes'.

A fate secret realm, empyrean decree and heavenly planes... These were all things far beyond the Myriad Domain.

"No wonder the Eternal Celestial Capital and Ninesuns Sky Sect chased after him for a thousand years. No wonder they were willing to make preparations for a thousand years in the Myriad Domain. Their goal was these things." Jiang Chen had guessed

from the beginning that it might be something like this. A first rank sect wouldn't have been this persistent if it'd only been Emperor Featherflight's inheritance they'd coveted.

After all, first rank sects weren't lacking in great emperors. In fact, they all had quite a few great emperors. They had even more emperor cultivators who had ascended to the emperor realm, but hadn't yet obtained a title. There was no way Emperor Featherflight's inheritance would be this attractive to a first rank sect. At the end of the message, Emperor Featherflight emphasized again that his heir must eliminate the Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital.

It was evident from this inscription the depths of hatred Emperor Featherflight bore towards the two sects. After all, the reason he'd died from his injuries was entirely because of the relentless pursuit of these two sects. Yet, Jiang Chen couldn't help but feel the tiniest sense of odd.

He didn't doubt that Emperor Featherflight hated these two sects very much, but there was still something that didn't sit right with these words.

If these inscriptions had been directed at an ordinary heir, then everything written here would be logical and perfectly understandable. However, Emperor Featherflight shouldn't have been entertaining the notion that his heir would be an ordinary person. He should have been focusing on the high likelihood that the Eternal Celestial Capital and Ninesuns Sky Sect would find him. After all, in the situation in which he was being hunted down without rest, they were the ones most likely to track him down.

Wouldn’t all his inscriptions be useless then?

Once those of the Ninesuns Sky Sect or Eternal Celestial Capital barged in, who would give a damn about his carved words? His inheritance would be robbed like taking candy from a baby! In fact, they might even go as far as to humiliate Emperor Featherflight’s body. Jiang Chen stopped when he thought up to this point. With Emperor Featherflight’s intelligence, it was impossible that he wouldn’t notice such an enormous flaw in his plans.

The fact that Emperor Featherflight had been able to escape the pursuit of two sects and enter the Paramount Realm proved that he was definitely an intelligent and courageous expert. How could he possibly not consider the notion that the first person to enter this place could be someone from the Ninesuns Sky Sect or Eternal Celestial Capital? If that happened, wouldn’t his last words become a joke?

“If I was Emperor Featherflight, I would never overlook such an enormous flaw in my plans. I would absolutely come up with a way to trick these two sects into a trap.” Jiang Chen put himself in the emperor realm cultivator’s shoes. If it’d been him, he would never let his opponent have the last laugh. That was why Jiang Chen hadn’t touched Emperor Featherflight’s inheritance recklessly, even though they were right behind the cultivator.

“I mustn’t act recklessly. Emperor Featherflight must’ve done this for a good reason. Perhaps he put his inheritance behind him to seduce the people of these two sects to take them.” Jiang Chen could almost imagine the entire palace exploding the second he touched those items carelessly. Looking at how powerful the

restrictions in this palace were, he was sure that he wouldn't be able to resist a full power blow from the restrictions at his current level. In fact, even a Titled Great Emperor might not be able to endure an empyrean cultivator defenses. This palace abode was obviously the work of an empyrean cultivator. Emperor Featherflight had merely owned it for a while.

Although Jiang Chen wanted very much to take these treasures for himself, he suppressed the impulse in the end and decided to find the core of the palace first. Emperor Featherflight must have refined the palace before. The palace had then become masterless once more after Emperor Featherflight had passed on. If Jiang Chen could find its core, he could refine it just like Emperor Featherflight had and become its master. Once he had refined the palace, it would be completely under his control. When that comes to be, all the traps Emperor Featherflight had prepared would come to light.

"Mm, let's do it this way. I cannot act as Emperor Featherflight thought his intruders would, or I will definitely fall into his trap." Jiang Chen was very sober and very rational at the moment. He knew that he must obey his logic rather than be led by the nose by Emperor Featherflight. Although Emperor Featherflight's last message had no obvious signs of guidance, Jiang Chen had deduced that it might be all an act to seduce the Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital into a trap.

If he'd been someone from the two sects and didn't know how this type of portable residence worked, there was a high likelihood that he might've rashly gone forward. If that really was a trap set up by Emperor Featherflight, then the consequences would've been too awful to contemplate.

Jiang Chen made four full patrols of the interior, probing every detail. If it'd been any other Divine Abyss Continent genius, they would have no idea what to do at all. The youngsters of this world possessed limited knowledge. They had no clear recognition of an empyrean cultivator's work. Only an expert would have an inkling of an idea as to what this palace was, and thankfully Jiang Chen's insight exceeded that of even an empyrean cultivator. This was his greatest advantage.

Jiang Chen set his sights on three rather suspicious locations about four hours later. Those particular locations looked rather innocuous, and wasn't particularly distinct from any other part of the palace. From his point of view and analysis, he was sure that one of these three locations was the palace's core. Since he had observed many refinings in his past, he was rather familiar with how artisans were inspired and their trail of thought. There was no doubt that these those three places befitted an expert's mindset the most.

The first place Jiang Chen probed into with his consciousness didn't respond to him. But when he probed into the second spot, he immediately confirmed that it was the right place.

"This is it!" He was overjoyed. Although he had never experienced this feeling personally in the past, he'd heard countless people describing it. He knew that he had discovered the palace's core. As he expected, he felt immediate feedback coming from the palace the moment he filled it with his consciousness and attempted to refine it. Thanks to his past life, he quickly understood how he should proceed. As Jiang Chen continued to refine the core, the palace's response grew incredibly intense.

Reams of information and data related to the palace poured into his mind. It was quite the amazing experience.

"Haha, I knew that this was a portable abode. Mm, as I thought, this residence's creator is an empyrean expert. In fact, he's a mid rank empyrean expert... Unbelievable, this mid rank empyrean expert is actually a Divine Abyss Continent expert from two hundred thousand years ago?! Tsk tsk, the ancient age certainly has an illustrious history." Jiang Chen was amazed as he scanned through the information.

He also guessed that Emperor Featherflight had only managed to refine a small portion of the palace. He hadn't refined the abode completely. Otherwise, he could have used the palace to fight against those two sects. He could've even used the power of restrictions inside the palace to destroy his pursuers. According to the information left behind, the castle possessed tremendously powerful restrictions. No one beneath the empyrean realm could be expected to survive once those were activated. Of course, it wasn't easy to activate the restrictions.

With the amount of resources remaining inside, it could attack three times at most. Once all three times were exhausted, he would have to find a new source of spirit power. Only then would he be able to reactivate the restrictions. It was obvious that Emperor Featherflight hadn't mastered this knowledge when he'd refined the palace.

"The empyrean expert who created the palace was truly amazing. If I hadn't possessed the memories of my past life and known some heavenly level refinement methods, I would have likely been met

with the same fate as Emperor Featherflight. I wouldn't have known about everything the palace contains." Jiang Chen suddenly felt a great sense of contentment. He knew that he had made it big this time. Setting aside the value of the palace itself, its offensive and defensive powers alone were worth a first rank sect in the Divine Abyss Continent.

"It's unfortunate that Emperor Featherflight hadn't spent much time refining the palace. It had been too late when he discovered that it possessed offensive capabilities." Jiang Chen realized this immediately after he'd finished. Emperor Featherflight had mastered the restrictions, but only in the end. His inheritances had been linked perfectly with them.

For a moment or two, Jiang Chen felt fear curl its clammy fingers around his heart, "It was indeed a trap. If I'd given in to temptation and grabbed the treasure immediately back then, I would've ended up taking the hit meant for the Ninesuns Sky Sect and the Eternal Celestial Capital." It would've been a terrible way to die. But now, he had made the palace his own. Every scrap of information about the palace was filtering into his mind, including Emperor Featherflight's misery.

"My apologies, Emperor Featherflight. From this day onwards, the palace shall fall under my surname Jiang. But don't worry, the Ninesuns Sky Sect and I have been enemies for a long time. I'll avenge you. As for the Eternal Celestial Capital, I wouldn't mind taking them out in passing if they're stupid enough to provoke me..." For a time, Jiang Chen was feeling very pleased with this whole encounter.

Taking the palace had benefited him greatly . Unfortunately, the palace's previous master had already used up one of the three restriction attacks set by its creator. It only had two charges left now, Once the two charges were used up, the restrictions would lose their effect. If he wished to activate them once more, the amount of resources required to do so would be absolutely shocking. Even Jiang Chen's current wealth wouldn't be enough to fill one twentieth of the resources needed to activate one attack. It would be literally trying to put out a burning cart of firewood with a cup of water.

Chapter 684: Two Inheritances

Although there were only two charges left, they represented two life-saving chances. As more information about the palace flooded through his mind, Jiang Chen gained a better understanding of the residence and the one who'd created it. The mid rank empyrean cultivator was called Guo Ran. But of course, there was no information about the creator within the residence other than his name. He'd obviously passed on within the palace, and had also left behind his empyrean decree somewhere inside. Apart from his own decree, there was a secret order that looked like a silver key. Its unremarkable design gave no hint of the turmoil that had revolved around it.

"Is this secret order the way to the fate secret realm?" Jiang Chen knew that secret orders used to enter secret realms came in various forms. Some were keys, others talismans, and yet others proofs of identity. If one barged in without a secret order, then the restrictions within the secret realm would activate to attack the unauthorized intruder. If the secret realm really was that amazing, then Jiang Chen decided that he would go adventure in one no matter what. It could lead him directly to the shores of the heavenly law. If he could communicate with it, then maybe he could head for the heavenly planes.

"Whether or not the secret realm really exists, I must keep the order safe. I can't venture forth into the secret realm with my current strength, but with this, I'll be able to enter whenever its corresponding secret realm appears." In Jiang Chen's eyes, the secret order was even more valuable than the empyrean decree. Although the decree would turn Titled Great Emperors into dogs fighting over a bone, it paled in comparison to a genuine secret order.

It was still a mystery currently whether there were any empyrean cultivators in the Divine Abyss Continent. At least, Jiang Chen hadn't come into contact with any yet even given his unique position in the Myriad Domain It was similarly unknown whether there were any empyrean realm cultivators in the first rank sects either. However, even if there were any in the Upper Eight Regions, they would be as rare as phoenix feathers and dragon scales. It was likely that not a single one had appeared in the last thousand years. Many Titled Great Emperors had no hopes of gaining recognition from the heavenly dao through their own cultivation, so refining the empyrean decree left behind from others was the best way to ascend to the empyrean realm. Therefore, a bloodbath would always occur whenever an empyrean decree appeared as numerous Titled Great Emperors stirred to action. This was also why such things had to remain hidden.

The secret order of the fate secret realm, an empyrean order, and the palace abode. These were the three inheritances left behind by the ancient empyrean realm cultivator Guo Ran. Any of them would be an ultimate treasure in the Divine Abyss Continent.

"To think that the Ninesuns Sky Sect's setup for a thousand years ended up benefiting me in the end!" Jiang Chen had the urge to throw his head back in laughter when he thought of this. He didn't have the slightest iota of kindness towards the Sky Sect, particularly after the multiple grudges they'd formed. They'd long since formed a feud to the death. Therefore, not only did Jiang Chen not feel embarrassed about taking their fruits of labor, but he even had the sweet thrill of revenge.

The connection between the palace and Emperor Featherflight was completely erased after Jiang Chen refined the core. This meant that all of the cultivator's defenses had been rendered useless. After Jiang Chen buried Emperor Featherflight's remains, he also picked up the cultivator's inheritance as well. It'd be a waste to just leave it there, anyhow. Although Emperor Featherflight had been a rogue cultivator, he was no simple character to be able to train to the level of Titled Great Emperor just based off his own potential and luck.

There were many reasons behind Emperor Featherflight's fame. The first was his set of wings. Imbued with thunder and wind attributes, they'd allowed him to soar high above the clouds with the speed of thunder and that agility of the wind. His speed was considered top notch even amongst Titled Great Emperors. If the two first rank sects hadn't flung every kind of trap and ambush in his path when pursuing him, they wouldn't have been able to even catch his heels when he fled. Then again, he wouldn't have perished if it hadn't been for his injuries. After he'd been grievously injured, he'd called upon his wings to carry him to safety, without thinking of the price that that would exact. These wings were primarily why he'd been renowned throughout the Divine Abyss Continent.

A method called the "Featherflight Tactics" were to be used in conjunction with the wings. It enabled the cultivator to dash to and fro like a gust of wind or crack of thunder, coming and going like a shadow. It was almost impossible to guard against it. In addition, Emperor Featherflight had a famous blade technique called the "Featherflight Blade" which had complemented his Featherflight Tactics, While still carrying the momentum of wind and thunder, the blade would drift through the air like a feather. An instant was all it took for the blade to morph from heavy to

light, quick to slow, creating a bizarre style of swordplay that had secured its place as one of the most impressive techniques in the Divine Abyss Continent.

Emperor Featherflight had yet another treasure called the Featherflight Mirror. This treasure could greatly decrease the opponent's speed during battle if it could hit them with its light. No matter how fast they were, it had an absolute effect. The Featherflight Emperor had crossed paths with many other Titled Great Emperors back in his day, and the combination of the Featherflight Mirror and Blade had enabled him to kill many opponents on the same level. The Featherflight Mirror had been instrumental in helping him break through the encirclement of multiple Titled Great Emperors when they'd united to pursue him. It was because of all these treasures and methods together that Emperor Featherflight had risen above the pack of countless Titled Great Emperors.

Most ordinary Titled Great Emperors were no match for Emperor Featherflight, even if they were born of rich and powerful sects. Emperor Featherflight had possessed enormous luck indeed, as he'd accidentally obtained the inheritance of an ancient empyrean realm cultivator. This was the opportunity of a lifetime! But it'd because of this that he'd also attracted fatal attention. At least ten Titled Great Emperors had been sent by the two first rank sects to hunt him down. That battle had forced the Featherflight Emperor to utilize every scrap of his ability to escape alive, albeit injured. But he'd managed to throw them off his scent when he entered the Myriad Domain.

They'd speculated wildly, thinking that he'd made it through the Myriad Domain and entered the desolate wilderness. That area

wasn't human territory, so even first rank sects didn't dare enter rashly. They'd also considered the Paramount Realm, but felt that the minuscule amount of life energy within the Myriad Domain wouldn't be able to support a Titled Great Emperor for so long. Add to the fact that it'd been the Myriad Empire's era back then, so it wasn't exactly an easy proposition to bully the Myriad Domain into compliance. Forcefully entering the Paramount Realm might have alarmed the Myriad Empire and started a chain reaction. They might even be forced to expose Emperor Featherflight's secret. Therefore, whether it was the Ninesuns Sky Sect or the Eternal Celestial Capital, both had been very quiet as they covertly started searching, not daring to alarm the local authorities.

It wasn't until a hundred years that the two sects finally thought of planting their own people into the Myriad Domain and having their young geniuses search the Paramount Realm. Their spies had actually made it in during previous Grand Ceremonies, but had come up empty-handed. It wasn't until this particular ceremony when Lin Hai and Jun Mobai drew upon the experiences of their predecessors and avoided the routes previously searched that they'd finally found something.

But it all fell into Jiang Chen's hands in the end. Emperor Featherflight's inheritances were an easy matter, but it took him half a day to refine the wings. He barely managed to put his own stamp on them, and it'd likely take roughly five years to thoroughly refine the wings. Of course, Jiang Chen was in no hurry for results. It wasn't realistic to think that one could thoroughly refine the personal treasures of a Titled Great Emperor in just a few minutes.

When he took stock of the time, he noted that roughly seven days

days had passed since he'd entered the realm. Jiang Chen decided to leave the Paramount Realm early. He was still anxious to know what was going on in the outside world despite being in the Paramount Realm. He had a premonition that something would happen during this ceremony. He couldn't quite put his finger on what, but knew that it wouldn't be pleasant. Hence, he didn't want to waste time after receiving the inheritances.

Once the palace was refined, he could shrink it down to the size of a mustard and put it away. Jiang Chen followed the instructions left behind by the previous owner and turned the palace into a pinprick of light that floated into Jiang Chen's consciousness.

When he walked out of the palace, Jiang Chen kicked Lin Hai and Jun Mobai's remains into the brackish lake waters. With the corrosive ability of the lake water, the two would quickly dissolve into nothing before long. The Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital would glean nothing even if they tracked the disciples down here. They would never find out that Emperor Featherflight had passed here a thousand years ago.

Jiang Chen walked outside once he'd put everything in order. The transcendent region was enormous. He would've very likely gotten lost had it not been for the guidance of the jade token. He wanted to find a transportation point and crush the token to transport himself out of the Paramount Realm. He didn't want to spend a second more than he had to in a place with almost no life energy.

Hmm?

As he was making his way out, he froze. It almost sounded like someone was calling his name. He had to be hearing things. The transcendent region had almost an oppressive silence, with not a hint of sound. And yet, that call was only becoming clearer and clearer.

“Jiang Chen you cowardly bastard! Do you not care about the life of your little lover? Do you still hide now that that wench Ling Bi’er is in my hands? If you don’t appear within twenty four hours, I’ll be the first to enjoy her, and then everyone here will take their turn one after another…”

Jiang Chen had heard it clearly this time, it was Wang Han! Why is it Wang Han? How did this kid get into the Paramount Realm?

Chapter 685: Encounter on a Narrow Path

If I remember correctly, this brat should've scrammed back to the Sacred Sword Palace already. Suddenly, Jiang Chen realized, "Great changes must be taking place in the outside world as we expected. Otherwise, the Myriad Domain sects wouldn't have let the Sacred Sword Palace enter the Paramount Realm."

He felt somewhat anxious when his thoughts travelled up to this point. Killing intent also surged at the same time. Regardless of the nature of this upheaval, Jiang Chen was almost certain that the Sacred Sword Palace was colluding with external forces. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been able to overcome either the Regal Pill Palace and the Dark North Sect with their power alone, let alone the Great Cathedral. It was even less possible for them to act so brazenly in the transcendent region of the Paramount Realm.

"Haha, Jiang Chen, this Ling Bi'er is quite a tantalizing wench. Which youth in the Myriad Domain doesn't lust after her? How much of a commotion would it be if I disrobe her? Tell me, how many lush green hats would be have to wear if the goddess of the Myriad Domain is so promiscuous that any man can be her husband?" Wang Han's tone was filled with extreme resentment. It was obvious that he was filled with hatred for Jiang Chen and wanted to take it all out on Ling Bi'er.

Jiang Chen was immensely incensed. If Wang Jianyu hadn't suddenly intervened during their last battle, he would already have killed Wang Han in the arena. As expected, a snake not beaten to death would swing back for a bite.

“Wang Han you little bastard, it looks like you’ve steeled your heart to go against me!” Jiang Chen’s heart grew flinty as killing intent surged and roared against Wang Han. This move from the Sacred Sword Palace disciple had crossed over Jiang Chen’s bottom line. The kind of opponents Jiang Chen hated most in his life were those who tried to threaten him by taking the people by his side as hostage. As his senior sister, Ling Bi’er was one of the people he had the closest relationship with in the Regal Pill Palace. Although they didn’t share the kind of relationship stated by Wang Han, Jiang Chen knew that this senior sister treated him very well. In his heart, Jiang Chen regarded Ling Bi’er as someone he had to protect.

Regardless of whether or not Ling Bi’er had truly fallen into Wang Han’s hands, the words he’d just spoken were enough to cause Jiang Chen come to a resolute decision—Wang Han had to die! Although he was supremely furious, Jiang Chen did not lose his rationality. Wang Han surely had some sort of support since he’d dared jeer with such unbridled wanton. It was very possible that his backer wasn’t as simple as a mere Wang Jianyu. Jiang Chen believed that Wang Han wouldn’t have been able to enter the Paramount Realm if Wang Jianyu alone was his greatest backer. A stronger patron must have appeared, a force that even the Grand Cathedral’s Xiang Wentian couldn’t resist.

“Can it be that... the Ninesuns Sky Sect had finally discarded all pretenses of cordiality?” Jiang Chen’s heart was full of questions. Considering Emperor Featherflight’s matter, it was unlikely that the Ninesun Sky Sect would erupt in open hostility like this and launch an open invasion. If the Sky Sect were to openly launch an invasion, it would no doubt invite the attention of the other first rank sects. That was completely incompatible with their plans.

“If not the Ninesuns Sky Sect, then... the Eternal Celestial Capital?” Jiang Chen shook his head at the thought of this. The Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital were in similar situations. They would have to scheme in secret if they wanted to become involved. They would never invade blatantly.

Wang Han’s voice and wanton snickering came through constantly. His words were filled with unbearable obscenities, thoroughly displaying his wretched personality. Suddenly, Ling Bi’er’s cold and clear voice cut through the air. “Wang Han, your loud cries only serve to prove your guilty conscience. To think that the vaunted first genius of the Sacred Sword Palace would be so miserably base. What a thorough disgrace! Even if you’ve found yourself an emperor realm backer, it doesn’t change the fact that you’re a failure. Even if you recognize the Great Scarlet Emperor as your godfather, you will always be a failure in front of Jiang Chen.”

Jiang Chen’s expression turned solemn after hearing Ling Bi’er’s voice. It is indeed senior sister Ling Bi’er! Fires of fury surged in his heart along with boundless killing intent intent.

“Wang Han, Wang Han!” Jiang Chen repeated the name under his breath as a murderous chill flashed through his eyes. The bastard had thoroughly enraged Jiang Chen!

He was able calm himself down after some effort without losing his rationality. He knew that Ling Bi’er’s words were actually intended as a warning. The Great Scarlet Mid Region, emperor realm cultivators...

Jiang Chen was shaken; he never thought that the invaders would be from the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Could it be that history from six years ago was about to repeat itself? The situation had become increasingly complex with the invasion of the Great Scarlet Mid Region.

“Great Scarlet Mid Region… Great Scarlet Mid Region,” As the fires of wrath leapt and crackled, his mind calmed down instead. He was now aware of the enemy and the direction he should be taking. Not only was the Great Scarlet Mid Region neighbor to the Myriad Domain, but there was also deep animosity between the two. An open invasion did not come as a surprise.

But, with what kind of pretense were they raising their banner this time? During the invasion six hundred years ago, the Great Scarlet Mid Region claimed to be avenging the Myriad Empire violation of a Great Scarlet sacred girl. Despite being a lousy excuse, it had served as a justification. What would be their excuse this time? However, another question popped up in his mind, “If the Great Scarlet Mid Region has truly invaded, it’s not surprising that the Sacred Sword Palace would shamelessly defect. However, how could Wang Han possess enough prestige to have an emperor level expert from the Great Scarlet Mid Region accompany him while in kicking up this ruckus? Could it be that they’ve come specifically for me?” Jiang Chen didn’t believe Wang Han possessed such charisma.

It was more than likely that the emperor level expert from the Great Scarlet Mid Region had come for him. Wang Han must have tagged along as the cannon fodder leading the charge. Jiang Chen was at solemn attention after thinking it over. Even though he

didn’t know why Great Scarlet wanted find him specifically, he guessed that it probably had something to do with the sky ranked herbs he had obtained from the ancient herb garden. It could even be related to the Longevity Pill.

Being the Great Scarlet Mid Region, they would have surely obtained this information. It would be easy to lock onto him. As for him being in the Paramount Realm, it was most likely that those from the Sacred Sword Palace had leaked the information. Jiang Chen had sensed by this time that Wang Han’s party was gradually approaching his location. They were separated by five kilometers at most.

Receiving absolutely no response after a stream of excessive provocation, Wang Han glared ferociously at Ling Bi’er. “Cheap woman, don’t think that your little tricks will be able to escape everyone’s notice. You want to notify Jiang Chen and help him escape, didn’t you? Tsk tsk, what deep affection. Unfortunately, that bastard has been scared out of his wits and has already forgotten about chivalry. He’s hiding in a corner somewhere with his tail between his legs, let alone caring about your wellbeing!”

Ling Bi’er sniffed disdainfully, “It’s beneath me to talk to such a shameless person.”

Wang Han was infuriated. “You little bitch! Trying to act chaste even now huh?? Just wait 24 hours and see how I’ll train and humiliate you. You’ll want to die from wanting me so much then! Haha, I can’t wait to see that happen!”

Although she shivered with fright within, Ling Bi’er’s demeanor

was just as apathetic. She glanced at Qin Mo indifferently. “Senior, when I agreed to follow you, I stated that my condition wasn’t to be humiliated. If the senior does not keep his word—and since this junior cannot outfight you—I can only detonate my spirit then.”

Qin Mo laughed blandly. “Lass, are you trying to threaten me? Remember that if we do not catch Jiang Chen, I won’t let you die peacefully either, much less Wang Han!”

The old man had been searching the transcendent region for so long, yet Jiang Chen was nowhere to be found. He was filled with frustration at continuously turning up empty-handed. Although he had suppressed his life-force and was able to reduce the drain on his vitality to that of a sage realm expert, he was becoming increasingly upset about the endless expenditure. After all, his losses would be great if he couldn’t capture Jiang Chen. He would have obtained a couple of sky and a great deal of earth ranked spirit herbs if he had chosen to chase after the Regal Pill Palace.

He had come to hunt Jiang Chen because of potential profits. Moreover, Jiang Chen was the person that the Great Scarlet Emperor had specifically wanted. He would’ve lost this gamble if he didn’t end up catching Jiang Chen. This undoubtedly caused him to feel rather dejected.

He had held back from pressuring Ling Bi’er along the way because he was confident that he would be able to thoroughly suppress this first level sage realm junior with his third level emperor realm strength. As such, he felt it wasn’t worth breaking his promise. Those pledges would no longer be important once he captured Jiang Chen. With Sect Head Qin Mo’s violent nature,

how would he then let things be and treat Ling Bi'er nicely?

Ling Bi'er's expression froze slightly after hearing those words. But the resolution in her heart remained absolutely unshaken. She was actually roughly seventy percent certain that she could escape from Sect Head Qin Mo's grasp using Senior Shao Yin's escape talismans. But she didn't want to accept this kind of outcome. She wanted to escape together with Jiang Chen after she found him. And thus, she was fine taking the risk and waiting for Jiang Chen to appear. She would wait until the closing of the Paramount Realm regardless of the cost.

"Master, this base wench has alerted Jiang Chen. Why don't we seal her mouth first?" Wang Han was quite upset and wanted to add fuel to the fire.

Sect Head Qin Mo waved his hand. "No need. Let her cry out, the louder the better. From your description, this Jiang Chen appears to be a person who values friendship and loyalty. He will not flee if he hears her."

Wang Han felt somewhat awkward after hearing this. Even his master was praising Jiang Chen's loyalty. Comparatively, he himself had immediately defected after seeing the experts of the Great Scarlet Mid Region. The difference between them was too great. Ling Bi'er's admonition that he would always be a failure before Jiang Chen stung deep. He also knew it was true, although he didn't want to admit to it. This was why he'd turned to anger in the depths of his embarrassment.

Wang Han's mouth moved as if he wanted to say something.

However, Sect Head Qin Mo's expression suddenly changed, the corners of his mouth shifting into a bizarre smile.

"Wang Han, Wang Jianyu, keep an eye on this lass and make your way west." No sooner had his orders been issued did Sect Head Qin Mo transform into a golden tempest, sweeping towards the distance.

Wang Jianyu cackled evilly as he moved forward to seize Ling Bi'er. Her expression changed abruptly as she crushed the talisman in her hand. With an evasive flash, she vanished into thin air.

Chapter 686: The Stalwart Lin Bi'er

Damn it! When he saw what had transpired, Wang Jianyu immediately chased after the fading light. Wang Han's face also drained of all color. He would've started cursing if Wang Jianyu wasn't his grandfather.

"After her!" Wang Han instructed with a wave of his hand. Those from the Sacred Sword Palace were all ashen-faced and didn't dare to express the slightest dissent. They were all elders of the Sacred Sword Palace and by no means inferior to Wang Han, but Wang Han's position now was even higher than Wang Jianyu's, after becoming Sect Head Qin Mo's disciple. Who would dare disobey him? Everyone left in pursuit of Ling Bi'er.

A majestic palace suddenly appeared in the desert after five kilometers. It towered over the yellow sands and measured over hundreds of acres in area. In the lead, Sect Head Qin Mo halted his pursuit about a thousand meters away and stared at the awe-inspiring palace. His expression was filled with momentary surprise. He hadn't expected that such a magnificent palace would exist within the transcendent region of the Paramount Realm. What's the purpose of constructing such a palace in a realm devoid of life force? He was even more astonished to see the silhouette of a person standing before the palace. The figure appeared young, but possessed a significant presence. "Jiang Chen?" Sect Head Qin Mo cried out with surprise.

Jiang Chen only returned a cold gaze, "And who might you be? If I remember correctly, there is no one of your caliber within the Myriad Domain."

Sect Head Qin Mo laughed loudly. “Good, good, good... I hadn’t expected that someone so courageous could be found amongst the younger generation of the Myriad Domain. I wonder, are you blind or is it ignorant confidence?”

Wang Jianyu’s and his party arrived one after another as they were talking. The former’s eyes were full of terror. “Sir, the... the girl...”

Sect Head Qin Mo’s expression turned frosty. “Where is she?”

“Honored master, that crafty wench actually possessed an escape talisman. She crushed it instantly and escaped in a flash of light.” Wang Han’s tone was both exasperated and irate.

Sect Head Qin Mo glared furiously at Wang Jianyu, “Useless trash!”

Wang Jianyu could only lower his head without a word, he didn’t dare retort at all. He felt rather aggrieved. You were the one who wanted to pretend you’re all that and not put restrictions on her! How would she have the opportunity to slip away otherwise?

However, Sect Head Qin Mo then grinned, “Let it be. The girl is no longer significant since the star of the show has already appeared.”

Wang Han’s eyebrows twitched after seeing Jiang Chen standing

before the palace. He was first astonished, but then ecstatical. “Jiang Chen, you animal! It seems that you do like to play the protector of maidens.”

Jiang Chen’s expression was indifferent. “Wang Han, I would tuck my tail behind me and behave myself if I were you. It seems that I’ve overestimated your moral principles. I didn’t expect that you would immediately defect, and recognize the thief as your father. However, this relationship is quite messed up. Since Wang Jianyu is your grandfather and now you have recognized the Great Scarlet Emperor as your godfather, wouldn’t that make Wang Jianyu the emperor’s father?”

Wang Jianyu’s expression changed drastically after hearing these words. He was filled with terror. How could he not know that Jiang Chen was trying to trip him up? Jiang Chen wanted to roast him on an open fire! Although the bit about Wang Han recognizing the Great Scarlet emperor as his godfather was nonsense, it was an undeniable fact that he had taken Sect Head Qin Mo as his master. Since he was Wang Han’s grandfather, he was indeed Sect Head Qin Mo’s senior. Wang Jianyu immediately began to sweat.

Sect Head Qin Mo was apathetic and unmoved by these words. He stared at Jiang Chen with cold eyes before cackling cruelly, “Brat, you have quite the glib tongue.”

No sooner had he spoken than the corners of his mouth abruptly lifted into an odd smile. Suddenly—seven zither strings shot out with a lift of his hand and rushed toward the sky, akin to the convergence of seven stars. The skyrocketing strings churned up light with boundless radiance as they intersected in the air,

forming a fine, inescapable net which locked down the area.

“Get down here!” Sect Head Qin Mo shouted and pressed down with a single hand. Suddenly, a beam of light in sky crashed into the net of interwoven zither strings.

Sizzle... Sizzle... Ear piercing sounds rang out as the light was deterred by the zither string net. A figure fell out from within the light—Ling Bi’er.

Sect Head Qin Mo laughed loudly as he transformed one of his hands into an enormous palm of spirit energy and caught Ling Bi’er as she fell. Things developed swiftly within the time it took for a spark to fly off a flint stone. It was only a breath’s time from the moment Sect Head Qin Mo took action until Ling Bi’er was recaptured. Even an expert such as Wang Jianyu hadn’t realized who Sect Head Qin Mo was targeting. They only realized what had happened when Ling Bi’er was caught in midair. They were completely taken aback by astonishment and they couldn’t help but admire the strength and abilities of the emperor realm expert.

The distant Jiang Chen had taken precautions the moment Sect Head Qin Mo made his move, but immediately realized afterwards that the target wasn’t him. Ling Bi’er’s light had already been trapped by the time he reacted. He’d originally been delighted after hearing Wang Jianyu’s words, thinking that Ling B’er had already escaped. Unexpectedly, Ling Bi’er had turned back only to be captured once again.

“Haha, this lass is so blindly devoted. You have obviously escaped and yet you come back to die. Could it be that you want to go on

the run with this brat like a pair of mandarin ducks?" Hints of glee could be discerned from Sect Head Qin Mo's laugh. He was overly proud of his extraordinary strength.

He'd been slightly worried that Jiang Chen also possessed a similarly powerful escape talisman. Qin Mo might have been able to hunt Jiang Chen down in the outside world if he'd utilized such a powerful escape talisman to flee, but with the weak life energy within the Paramount Realm, he wasn't fully confident about chasing after Jiang Chen. Now that Ling Bi'er had returned, he had gained another trump card. Jiang Chen wouldn't run away now even if he had the means. This girl returned for you after a escaping successfully. Would you have the heart to abandon your lover and flee?

"Jiang Chen, even this old man can't help but praise the girl's affection and loyalty. You have quite the charisma to be able to gain this exquisite young lady's unwavering devotion. She came back for you regardless of her own safety. Tell me, should this old man fulfill your wishes and let the two of you die together?" Sect Head Qin Mo laughed calmly, his fearless gaze fixed on Jiang Chen.

Ling Bi'er had originally wanted to return secretly and escape together with Jiang Chen. Alas, she had carelessly fallen back into Sect Head Qin Mo's hands. Anxiety burning in her heart, Ling Bi'er cried out, "Junior brother, forget about me and leave quickly! The Great Scarlet Mid Region has launched a full scale invasion and the fate of the Myriad Domain is unknown. Leave quickly and preserve your own life so that you can avenge everyone later on!" Ling Bi'er gave no thought for her survival and even felt somewhat guilty. She felt that her good intentions had dragged Jiang Chen down. At this moment, she only wanted Jiang Chen to leave quickly. It

would lessen her guilt if Jiang Chen wasn't implicated by her mistake.

Wang Han was actually afraid that Jiang Chen would indeed abandon Ling Bi'er and flee. He laughed coldly, "Jiang Chen, didn't you have quite the glib tongue just now? Why not throw your weight around a bit more? This tramp is so devoted to you. Do you have the heart to abandon her?" Despite being rather nervous, he was still composed. Ideas flashed through his mind and he devised a plan in an instant.

"Wang Han, the likes of you who recognizes a thief as your father is not worthy of speaking to me." Jiang Chen's gaze shifted to Sect Head Qin Mo, "What position do you hold within the Great Scarlet Mid Region?"

Sect Head Qin Mo laughed loudly, "Brat, are you trying to get information out of me? In that case, I'll play along with you—this old man is the sect head of the Zither Sect."

"Zither Sect..." Jiang Chen nodded apathetically. "Noted. Now, tell me what you want."

Jiang Chen couldn't use his with Ling Bi'er in the enemy's hands. Sect Head Qin Mo gazed calmly at Jiang Chen, also thinking of what to say. On the contrary, it was Wang Han who spoke. "First, present all the sky, earth ranked herbs and the recipe to the Longevity Pill to my master!"

The corners of Jiang Chen's mouth twitched into a cold sneer,

obviously disdainful of Wang Han. He raised his brows and addressed Sect Head Qin Mo, “Is the Zither Sect master so lacking in successors that he requires this kind of petty person to speak for him?”

Sect Head Qin Mo smiled indifferently, “Kid, there is no need to sow dissension between us. That type of move is useless against this old man. Wang Han’s words are my words—hand over the items.”

The old man was full of schemes and adept at maintaining a poker face. Wang Han was delighted after hearing these words.

It was Jiang Chen’s turn to be contemplative. The old man was impenetrable to persuasion and seemed difficult to deal with. This was Jiang Chen’s first time confronting an emperor realm cultivator. However, he wasn’t flustered and spoke with a tranquil smile, “Do you wish to bully me due to my young age? Or do you think I’m an idiot? You chased me all the way into the Paramount Realm in order to get your hands on the spirit herbs and pill recipe, disregarding all costs. If I handed them over to you just like that, wouldn’t I be throwing my life away?”

Sect Head Qin Mo cackled, “Then you wish to see this old man personally ‘handle’ this delicate and beautiful senior sister of yours?”

Jiang Chen’s expression turned frosty. “I have nothing to lose since things have developed thus. You are an emperor realm expert and we have no means of fighting against you. If you harm my senior sister, then I’ll just destroy all the spirit herbs and go down

fighting. Since my senior sister has chosen loyalty over survival, I will respond in kind. However, if you want to take the herbs from me easily, dream on!”

Jiang Chen’s intention was clear; he would go down in flames with everyone if things came to that. No matter how tyrannical you are, the most you will get out of this is our deaths. Don’t even dream about leaving with all the herbs intact!

Sect Head Qin Mo started. This was what he feared the most. If Jiang Chen wasn’t cooperative and decided to destroy all the herbs, it would be meaningless even if he killed the disciple a hundred times over. Qin Mo’s main reason for entering the Paramount Realm was to claim the earth and sky ranked spirit herbs, along with the recipe for the Longevity Pill. There would be no point to killing the two Regal Pill Palace juniors if all of those things were destroyed. As for humiliating Ling Bi’er, it would only serve to vent the resentment of people like Wang Han. There was no significance in this act for him.

Chapter 687: The Terrifying Power of Restriction

Sect Head Qin Mo's expression sank, "What do you want to do, Jiang Chen?"

Jiang Chen didn't respond and took out a stalk of sky rank spirit herb with a cold laugh instead. Then, he replied in a remote, disinterested tone, "This is the first stalk of a sky rank spirit herb. If my senior sister isn't by my side safe and sound by the time I count to five, I'll destroy it."

Qin Mo frowned, "What nonsense are you spewing in broad daylight, kid? Shall I let your senior sister just walk over only for the two of you to escape via a talisman?"

Wang Ha nodded in agreement, "Honored master, this kid is fond of devious plans and traps. Don't fall for his schemes!"

Jiang Chen didn't bother wasting any more words. He smirked oddly, rubbed his hands together and reduced the spirit herb to dust. Then, he immediately took out another one. "I'll count to five again..." His tone was cold and cruel.

Sect Head Qin Mo trembled, even his organs started spasming. Jiang Chen had destroyed a sky rank spirit herb just like this! That was slicing flesh off Qin Mo's body! Even Wang Han hadn't thought that Jiang Chen would be so resolute. The expressions on all their faces were quite ugly to behold. Each new word of Jiang Chen counting down was akin to a sharp arrow. Each spoken

number stabbed deep into the sect head's heart, making the muscles on his face tic and spasm. "Hold!" Qin Mo flung out a hand.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "You want to talk? Return my senior sister. Remember, no tricks. If I find that any restrictions or some such have been placed on her, you won't be able to get any of the sky rank spirit herbs either."

Said restrictions were precisely what Qin Mo had in mind, and he felt the strength leave his limbs when Jiang Chen voiced the warning. He gritted his teeth and threw Ling Bi'er over with a "Have her!" He then had his zither strings sweep through the air to form an inescapable net, one enclosing all of the air within. This was done to prevent Jiang Chen and others from escaping via talismans. Once the net was complete and the area sealed off, even a powerful talisman wouldn't be able to break through it. Sect Head Qin Mo was very confident that with his strength at the third level emperor realm, he'd be able to capture Jiang Chen, even if with some momentary delays.

When Jiang Chen saw Ling Bi'er fly towards him, he immediately made a hand seal and materialized the Minor Artifice Formation. "Senior sister, this way!"

This formation was something he had projected from the formation disk, so there'd been no need for many preparations to be made beforehand. Jiang Chen pulled Ling Bi'er directly into the residence.

"Junior brother, I've dragged you down with me." Ling Bi'er felt

that she had inadvertently ruined things with her good intentions. “I made you destroy a sky spirit herb... I’ll make it up to you in the future!”

“Heh, don’t dwell on this, senior sister. It was all a trick.” Jiang Chen flashed a smirk that was just a tiny bit sly. “Come on in with me, senior sister. That old bastard is strong, the formation won’t keep him out for long.”

A Minor Artifice Formation was a formation that combined the real and the illusory and it had a psychological battle at its heart. Jiang Chen held no illusions that it could actually confine his opponent. That wouldn’t be realistic at all. All that he asked of it was to delay things a bit so he could prepare his next step. After all, Jiang Chen had been able to find the foundation of this formation back when he’d been sky origin realm. The opponent he was facing now was an emperor realm expert with a level of consciousness that was in no way inferior to his at that moment in the past.

In the meantime, Ling Bi’er’s heart raced as Jiang Chen pulled on her hand. A bit of sweat formed in the palm of her hand, but she still couldn’t help but say, “Junior brother, this palace is very odd.. Are we really going to go inside? I have a sophisticated escape talisman here that can help us get away.”

Jiang Chen shook his head, “It won’t be of any use. That old man’s sealed off the entire area. Although the talisman is strong, we won’t be able to leave without a strong ability to break through the seal.”

An escape glyph was a kind of space talisman that enabled one to

quickly escape without leaving a trace behind. But, the glyph itself didn't contain the power to break through seals making it useless when the area was blocked off, unless one paired it with a strong art to break through the space. Jiang Chen did have the ability to break through seals and owned powerful weapons, such as the Moonshatter Awl he'd taken from Cao Jin, however, he wouldn't take a risk without being one hundred percent certain, not to mention that he didn't plan on leaving at all.

Whether it was this Zither sect head of the Great Scarlet Mid Region or the remnants of the Sacred Sword Palace, both had thoroughly trampled over his bottom line. Killing intent had filled his heart, and he was going to stay in order to do away with all of them in one go. Seeing how resolved Jiang Chen was, Ling Bi'er had no more doubts, albeit there was still a myriad of questions in her heart. She had an absolute trust in Jiang Chen now. She wouldn't fear even a Titled Great Emperor while together with her junior brother, much less a third level emperor realm cultivator.

Thus, the two quickly passed through the palace as Jiang Chen swiftly led Ling Bi'er to the core of the abode. Only there would they find absolute safety.

"Junior brother, have you been here before?" Ling Bi'er couldn't help but ask when she saw how familiar Jiang Chen was with the area.

He nodded and looked coldly in the direction of the outside. "Senior sister, what's the situation outside?" His tone was quite serious.

“I don’t know much, but I’ve heard that many experts have come from the Great Scarlet Mid Region this time. The Zither sect is but one of many that arrived. From their words, it seems that our Regal Pill Palace was warned early and broke through the encirclement. The other sects have been surrounded and things are looking dire for them.” Even someone as calm as Ling Bi’er couldn’t help but feel a bit of panic when she spoke of the Myriad Domain’s current predicament. The current Great Scarlet’s invasion was on a large scale and looked like a complete repeat of the utter annihilation from six hundred years ago. The Myriad Domain had been much stronger then, yet had still found itself hard pressed to escape a disaster. Now… this time… Ling Bi’er didn’t dare to think of the future.

Jiang Chen was silent for a moment, “Palace Head Dan Chi actually anticipated that great changes would come to the Myriad Domain. He had plans of disbanding the Regal Pill Palace and keeping a low profile. I hope he made it out this time. But, I’m worried that the Palace Head might find himself fleeing right back into the hands of the Great Scarlet Mid Region’s forces, if all of them had been sent out to take down the various sects.”

Ling Bi’er could easily see the same future unfolding and nodded with anxiety, “I wonder how the Regal Pill Palace is at the moment?”

“Let’s make it through this situation first before thinking of that. Senior sister, remember not to leave this area.” Jiang Chen’s brows twitched as he was saying that. Then, his eyes suddenly blazed with light that beamed in the direction of the palace’s outskirts. He had already sensed that an emperor realm cultivator had caught up to them.

“Jiang Chen, you little kid, I’ve rather underestimated you.” Sect Head Qin Mo’s sinister cackling danced in the air as he arrived in the palace. The Sacred Sword Palace members trickled in behind him, all of them staring viciously at Jiang Chen.

“Honored master, be careful of this brat’s tricks!” Wang Han spoke up fawningly.

Sect Head Qin Mo waved his hand while looking around and smiling slightly, “To think that such a residence would exist in the transcendent region. Jiang Chen, looks like you were quite lucky. There must be some startling inheritance in this palace.”

The old man’s tone was casual, but he was quite on the alert as he roved around the surroundings with his consciousness.

Jiang Chen flicked a teasing, mocking glance at the old man, “What, this catches your eye as well?”

Sect Head Qin Mo laughed heartily, “Kid, you talk tough even at this time. I rather admire your courage.”

Wang Jianyu and Wang Han both started smirking in a sinister fashion. It was apparent that everyone considered Jiang Chen and Ling Bi’er to be but fish in a barrel. They might have been able flee with the help of escape talismans in the outside world, but the palace was completely sealed off and their wings would be clipped as long as the exit was blocked.

Jiang Chen didn't grace them with a response, but turned to ask Ling Bi'er, "Senior sister, is this all of them?"

Ling Bi'er started but still counted the number of people present, "Yes. This is all of them. We're not missing anyone."

Jiang Chen nodded, smiling leisurely, "As long as they're all in here..."

Sect Head Qin Mo felt very uncomfortable seeing this relaxed smile. He felt that something was a bit off, but he couldn't really put his finger on what was wrong. So instead he turned to his men and said, "Wang Jianyu, you go first. I want him alive!"

He was an exceedingly cautious person. Since the Sacred Sword Palace wanted to defect and come under his banner, this was precisely the place to make use of them. Wang Jianyu sneered, he couldn't ask for anything more. He brandished his sword with the words, "Jiang Chen, let me send you on your way!"

Jiang Chen chuckled easily, "Send me on my way? Why don't you look in the mirror first and check if you're fit to do that? As for me, I've long since made arrangements for you all. The road to the underworld is long, and I won't be seeing you on!"

He didn't waste any more words after this as he sent a mental command, triggering the restrictions of the palace with his consciousness. The palace responded. It immediately went off like a volcano, countless numbers of restrictions exploding with the

force capable of destroying the heavens and earth.

“What?! We need to get out!” Sect Head Qin Mo instantly sensed that things were awry and panicked. But it was too late. The unbound, unending force of the restrictions roiled forth with enough momentum to sweep away any and all obstacles. Wang Jianyu and the rest of the Sacred Sword Palace were unceremoniously pounded into dust whenever the rampaging power touched them. It turned on Qin Mo last.

The sect head felt unspeakable bitterness as he called upon his zither, trying to set up some defenses in front of him. However, the strong restrictions would continuously batter down any defenses he conjured, ripping all of them apart like paper.

Crack!!

The final defenses were destroyed as the tremendous power crashed onto the sect head.

Bang bang bang!

He had the protection of inner armor to call on as well, but was still heavily injured as soon as his defenses were broken. Qin Mo was truly scared witless now. “Jiang Chen... Jiang Chen... we can talk things through. I surrender, I have intelligence...”

However, a new dominating surge ripped apart his inner armor as soon as he finished speaking and pummeled him to nothing. The

soul that departed the obliterated body didn't even have time to flee before it too was turned to dust by another wave of power. That fierce, overweening third level emperor realm cultivator had been reduced to nothing in an instant.

The last enemy alive was Wang Han, a bit luckier than the others by virtue of hiding behind Sect Head Qin Mo. He had still been caught in the wake of the attacks, his injuries weren't fatal, however. At this moment Jiang Chen made a hand seal and deactivated the restrictions. The entire palace returned to its previous, tranquil appearance, as if the hellish assault from just now hadn't happened at all. There was no one by Wang Han's side. There wasn't even a complete corpse on the ground. His face was ashen as he started to contemplate the sudden feeling that although the world was vast, there was no place in it for him at all. He wanted to turn and run, but recalling just how frightening the restrictions had been just now, he didn't dare move.

Chapter 688: Devastating Battle Situation

All of the nightmares that Wang Han had ever experienced in his life combined wouldn't have measured to the fear that he'd just felt. A third level emperor realm cultivator, the backer that he'd just managed to toady up to, had not even been able to put up a sliver of resistance against that terrifying strength. That was a third level emperor realm cultivator!

Wang Han's very organs were shivering in fear, and it almost seemed like his pores were following suit. Terror and despair chased out every whit of feeling from his body. Never mind Wang Han, even Ling Bi'er thought that she'd gone delusional right then. She didn't recover from her shock until after the restriction attack had vanished.

"Junior brother, what... what was that?" She stammered in incredulous, low tones.

"That old man liked to pretend he was all that. So I simply gave him a taste of what it felt like to have thunder and lightning strike him." Jiang Chen smiled faintly and shot a solemn glance at Wang Han.

Wang Han's will was so far gone that he couldn't even keep himself upright at a casual glare from Jiang Chen. His knees weakened and gave way without warning, sending him tumbling to the ground. His mind had completely collapsed into gibberish. All of his urbane confidence, that overweening arrogance and sky high pride were reduced to dust, utterly destroyed.

“Who else can save you now, Wang Han?” Jiang Chen’s tone was ice over steel.

Wang Han’s face went ashen at those words, but seemed to get a surge of energy from some mad trench of his soul. He lifted his head to glare right back at Jiang Chen as he roared. His voice held more than a tinge of madness as he screamed, “And what are you proud of, Jiang Chen!? You’re strong, but are you stronger than the Great Scarlet Mid Region? Did you think only the Zither Sect had invaded the Myriad Domain!? Wrong!! The entire Great Scarlet Mid Region, all of the 20 some fourth rank sects have invaded us. The Myriad Domain is done for! Just what did I bide my time and endure humiliation for if not to save the legacy of the Myriad Domain?!”

It seemed that even in the worst possible situation, Wang Han still believed that he could worm his way out with an excuse. But Jiang Chen was no naïve youngling. “What a noble excuse you’ve managed to come up with this time, hmm? You lead the enemy into the Paramount Realm to hunt down Myriad Domain disciples. This became ‘biding your time’ for the greater cause?”

Wang Han laughed maniacally, “Legitimacy is the prize of the winner, much like the villain is always the loser. Jiang Chen, I have nothing more to say since you beat me. Kill me if you’re going to, but why toy with me?”

Jiang Chen’s expression darkened. “Wang Han, it’s no longer possible for you to evade death anymore. But tell me, what’s going on in the outside world?”

“Outside world? Hahaha, outside world? The various Myriad Domain sects are probably all dead by now! Yes, your Regal Pill Palace was smart and broke through the blockade before it was fully set up, but where else can they run to? Almost 20 fourth rank sects had invaded, and each one of them stronger than the Great Cathedral. What can the Myriad Domain bring to fight against them? Old man Dan Chi might have gotten out, but there was no way that he could actually find a way to live! The other emperor realm cultivators would have already gone to chase him. Hahaha, Jiang Chen! My Sacred Sword Palace has fallen, do you think your Regal Pill Palace can avoid the same fate? Dream on!” Wang Han had completed his mental transition to a mad dog. He knew full well that he was going to die, so he didn’t use the chance to beg for mercy, instead furiously venting his emotions to anyone who could hear.

As he capered around frantically, he suddenly felt a chill by his throat. When he touched his throat, he noticed a sharp arrow had pierced through his neck. Light from a blade flashed the next second as his head shot up into the sky. Jiang Chen gestured, and the corpse ground itself to dust in midair.

“Senior sister, we shouldn’t stay here for long. We need to get out,” Jiang Chen no longer hesitated as he spoke to Ling Bi’er.

Having just experienced the wildest rollercoaster of events thus far in her life, Ling Bi’er found it hard to catch up for a second. She found herself nodding by sheer instinct, and followed Jiang Chen out. When she set foot outside, she turned to take one last look at the palace, only to discover that it had vanished without a trace. “Junior brother… where did the palace go?” She was quite baffled.

Jiang Chen smiled and said, “I put it away.”

“You put it away? Was… was that palace a portable space?” Ling Bi’er was shocked. Portable spaces were just like space rings. Naturally, Ling Bi’er wasn’t unfamiliar with the concept. But where would one find a space ring with such capacity? Also, how could a space ring possibly hold an entire abode inside, and one with such powerful attack restrictions no less? The palace had obviously been a residence, the kind that one could carry around anywhere.

“Senior sister, the matters relating to this palace are extremely sensitive. We will run into many troubles if it’s exposed.” Jiang Chen knew just how vital this matter was, but he didn’t tell Ling Bi’er the details because he didn’t want her to become involved.

Ling Bi’er hastily responded, “Ah? Then I won’t ask or bring it up to anyone in the future.”

“Mm. I’ll tell you about it when the time is right.” The duo no longer spoke, as they both concentrated on leaving the transcendent region as quickly as they could. Along the way, they saw many corpses, the numerous slain Myriad Domain disciples.

“This is all Wang Jianyu’s work!” Ling Bi’er frowned slightly.

Jiang Chen didn’t have time to grow irate at the sight, “We’re almost at a transportation point. Let’s get out of here as soon as possible.”

However, Ling Bi'er was the one to provide a voice of reason, "Don't be in a hurry, junior brother. If we go through the transportation formation now and appear outside, we may be surrounded and immediately captured. In my opinion, it would be best if we returned the way we came. We still have two days anyway, so as long as we travel at full speed, we'll still be able to get out of the Paramount Realm before it closes."

Thinking it over, Jiang Chen saw the sense in her words.

Two days later, the duo arrived at the edge of the Paramount Realm. However, they didn't encounter a single living person along the way. It was obvious that everyone had either been slaughtered by Wang Jianyu and his group, or had left. These geniuses had had no idea what was going on outside, so they had probably been completely defenseless when they teleported away. Their fates were likely rather bleak once they emerged outside.

"Junior brother, if we are surrounded after we got out, we must activate our escape glyphs immediately. We absolutely mustn't stay to fight," Ling Bi'er suggested.

Jiang Chen nodded. How could he possibly choose to fight in such a situation? It was obvious that this wasn't something that could be solved by individual strength alone. Jiang Chen wasn't afraid to fight, but it didn't mean that he would throw himself into a pointless fight either.

After passing through the entrance, the duo calmed the ripples of their consciousness and slowly moved outside. Jiang Chen borrowed power from the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice to slip

through the earth and snuck his way back to the perimeter.

The battle at the perimeter had been tragic and desperate. Corpses were scattered everywhere on the battlefield. Many of those corpses were those of the Myriad Domain cultivators, but some were also clearly from the Great Scarlet Mid Region. It seemed that the battle had reached a conclusion already. A group of Great Scarlet cultivators were sweeping through the battlefield for survivors, while another group interrogated the group of young geniuses who had been captured exiting the Paramount Realm.

Jiang Chen inspected the battlefield for a moment. He discovered that even Honored Master Tian Ming of the Dark North Sect was among the pile of corpses. The Walkabout Sect had also seemed to have suffered tremendous losses. It seemed very, very few of their party were still alive. The Great Cathedral had also suffered many casualties. However, the surprising part was the lack of Great Cathedral senior executives among the dead. Naturally, since the Regal Pill Palace had broken through the encirclement first, they didn't have a presence on this particular battlefield.

"Feck it all to hell, I can't believe these ants of the Myriad Domain possess such strength! They cost us quite some men!"

"I know right? Those from the Great Cathedral could even employ the power of totems to fight. Even Sect Head Xing and Fu couldn't stop them. How unexpected."

"You know what else is strange? The Bamboo Sect still hasn't returned from their chase. I wonder how they're doing against Regal Pill Palace? Don't tell me they've slipped up too?"

Jiang Chen sussed out the situation as he listened in on the discussions happening above him. The senior executives of the Great Cathedral had actually managed to break free and escape with the power of totems. The Regal Pill Palace had made their getaway first, and the results of their rearguard battle hadn't reached this place yet. No matter how pragmatic Jiang Chen tried to be, it would seem that Regal Pill Palace still had a bit of hope left.

Now that Jiang Chen had gained an understanding what was going on, he had a rough idea on what to do next.

On one side of the battlefield, Sect Head Fu of the Golden Glyph Sect and Sect Head Xing of the Qitian Sect were interrogating the geniuses who had emerged from the Paramount Realm. Among them stood Xiang Qin, Yue Baize and Shen Qinghong. The captives numbered roughly thirty, all geniuses of various Myriad Domain sects. However, they had all become captives of the Great Scarlet Mid Region. It wasn't that Great Scarlet had decided to show them mercy. The two sects were simply trying to lay their hands on any information about the Paramount Realm. However, they didn't find anything useful no matter how much they questioned them. It was obvious that those who had exited hadn't run into Sect Head Qin Mo and the rest of his group. If that had happened, they would no longer be part of the world of the living.

"Just kill me already. It doesn't matter what you ask, my answer will always be the same. I don't know anything!" Xiang Qin's unyielding voice rang out, "The heavenly law sees all, you filthy bandits. One day, your Great Scarlet Mid Region will pay the price!"

Smack!

A whip lashed Xiang Qin cruelly as a fierce voice berated him, “You little ant! What right do you have to talk about the heavenly law? Even if there is such a day, the Myriad Domain won’t live to see it!” The whip landed repeatedly on Xiang Qin’s body.

Xiang Qin was stubborn as an ox despite the pain. Not only did he not cry out in pain, but he even started laughing aloud.

Sect Head Xing suddenly raised a hand and stopped the person whipping Xiang Qin. He cast an indifferent glance across the group of captives and asked, “Last chance. Who amongst you has seen Jiang Chen?”

At first, neither Sect Head Xing nor Sect Head Fu had known that Jiang Chen was inside the Paramount Realm. However, the more they thought about it, the more they felt that something wasn’t quite right. They both thought that Sect Head Qin Mo’s actions were far too out of the ordinary. It was only after they’d ruthlessly interrogated and tortured a captive that they accidentally found out that Jiang Chen was amongst the list of Regal Pill Palace disciples who’d entered the Paramount Realm. It was thanks to this captive that they’d also discovered that Jiang Chen had escaped from Mt. Rippling Mirage.

The two sect heads couldn’t help but curse out Qin Mo loudly. They both thought that he had been absolutely despicable. It was obvious that the man had gone inside to take all the spoils for

himself! If the Paramount Realm wasn't about to shut down very soon, they too would have gone inside and fought for their own share. They'd fought tooth and nail to annihilate the two great fourth rank sects that were the Walkabout Sect and Dark North Sect, but they'd gotten very few rewards for their efforts.

The Dark North Sect had been said to possess sky rank spirit herbs, but they weren't able to find anything at all from the leaders of the Dark North Sect. In fact, there weren't even that many earth rank spirit herbs. That was when the duo finally realized that they had been tricked by Qin Mo.

Chapter 689: Jiang Chen To The Rescue

However, none of the geniuses who'd emerged from the Paramount Realm had seen Jiang Chen inside. How would they possibly give any useful intelligence?

"This is your last chance, but it seems that none of you treasure it!" Qitian Sect Head Xing's tone suddenly turned frosty as his killing intent surged.

Jiang Chen and Ling Bi'er looked at each other beneath the ground, a feeling of helplessness rising in both of them. Their strength wasn't enough for the two of them to attempt a rescue. Jiang Chen hardened his heart and began making plans to leave. He was well aware that brashly attempting rescue would not only end up in failure, but might also condemn the both of them to death. Yet precisely at that moment, a voice transmitted through the air to his ears, "Sir Jiang, I'll lure the two emperor realm cultivators away, you save everyone."

Jiang Chen was first startled and then delighted, "It's Miss Huang'er!" Some bizarre confidence rose in his heart when he heard Huang'er's voice. He sent a message to Ling Bi'er, "Senior sister, listen to my commands. We're going to save them."

Ling Bi'er's heart trembled slightly. Save them? Save the group with two emperor realm cultivators standing guard? Just as she hesitated, the heads of both emperor realm cultivators snapped to one side, roaring, "Who's there?!"

The two enormous presences swept towards the northeast as soon as their voices sounded. Jiang Chen whispered harshly, “Let’s go, senior sister!”

The two suddenly charged out from the deep crevice within the earth as he called upon the Lotus. Jiang Chen activated the formation disk and summoned the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven, covering the entire area with it. He was the absolute lord of the formation’s domain once it was activated.

“Junior brother Jiang Chen?”

“Brother Jiang Chen!”

Surprised cries kept resounding, but Jiang Chen didn’t bother with them, “Everyone, this is an emergency. I can’t undo the restrictions on your bodies, so I can only take all of you with me. Don’t resist with your consciousness, otherwise we’ll have no end of troubles.”

He didn’t wait for them to respond as he pressed down and took them all into the palace in a flash of light. At the same time, he turned to Ling Bi’er, “Senior sister, activate the escape glyph!”

The escape glyphs that Ling Bi’er had received from senior Shao Yin were incredibly powerful, ones that surpassed the level of the Myriad Domain. When she heard Jiang Chen’s order, she crushed one of them without hesitation as Jiang Chen retracted the formation disk at the same time, causing the formation to vanish. When light flashed again, Jiang Chen and Ling Bi’er had vanished

from where they'd stood.

The entire process took place in the blink of an eye, with the sage realm cultivators in charge of standing guard over the captives unable to react in time. They only saw a world of glittering white snow abruptly appear in front of them, and disappear just as they were doubting their senses. But along with the snowy world, the Myriad Domain geniuses disappeared as well.

"Someone's rescued the captives!"

"Damn it, it was a diversion!"

"After them! Hurry!"

"After them!"

The scene was soon engulfed in chaos as those cleaning up the battlefield also rushed over. They too were shocked beyond words when they saw how chaotic things had become. However, no one knew which direction to go off in since the flash of light had vanished. Someone roared out, "Split up!" and all the sects split into different groups to start chasing in different directions.

As they did this, they all realized that if their opponent had dared flee in a flash of light, they must've fled for quite a distance. They would be searching for a needle in a haystack trying to chase them down like this. Unless they had an unimaginably powerful methods of searching using their consciousness, it would be an

utter daydream to even hope to catch up to their opponent.

The groups all returned after a short while, each of them hanging their heads. It was obvious that everyone had come back empty-handed.

“Damn it, they got away.”

“That was a strong glyph. They made it out at least a hundred miles. There’s no way to track them down.”

“Sigh, let’s wait for the sect heads to return before making a decision.”

They were all dejected and very frustrated by what had happened. The operation to suppress the Myriad Domain this time was not the success they had envisioned. Apart from the Regal Pill Palace sneaking away ahead of time, a large portion of the Great Cathedral’s skilled fighters had made it out alive. Now that the young geniuses of the Myriad Domain had been rescued, this was just repeated slaps to their face, over and over again. The four sects who’d participated in this operation was likely going to become the laughingstock of the Great Scarlet Mid Region.

Sect Head Xing and Fu returned with dark expressions after half an hour. The two had given chase for a long distance, but had come back empty handed. Those in charge of guarding the captives hardly dared breathe when they saw the sect heads return with dark expressions.

“What’s going on? Where’s everyone?” Sect Head Xing asked darkly.

An oppressive silence answered him. Sect Head Fu flicked an eyebrow as well, “What’s going on? Are you all dumb?”

An elder stammered out at this point, “There... there was suddenly a world of ice here just now. Then the group of captives disappeared into thin air.”

The two sect heads had their expressions freeze over when they heard this. They looked at each other, now understanding what had happened. How could they not realize now that they’d fallen victim to someone’s distraction tactics? The opponent had obviously wanted to lure them away so that others could rescue the geniuses. What was pitiable was that the emperor realm cultivators had fallen for the bait, hook, line and sinker. A single move was all it had taken. They’d underestimated their enemy, plain and simple.

The two were extremely depressed but had no place to vent their rage. It wasn’t their subordinates’ fault. If it hadn’t been for the two sect heads being taken in by the diversion and leaving, nothing would’ve happened here. It was a mistake born of overconfidence.

Sect Head Xing began complaining as the two grew anxious, “Sect Head Leng’s taken the Bamboo Sect to chase down the Regal Pill Palace, but has still sent no word after so many days. Sect Head Qin Mo is even more ridiculous. He headed into the Paramount Realm, but still hasn’t returned even when it’s about to close. What, is he going to take up residence in there?”

It was obvious that the unfavorable situation was stressing Sect Head Xing out to the point where he was taking his anger out on his missing allies. Sect Head Fu also nodded, “Sect Head Leng and Qin Mo both had ulterior motives. They wouldn’t be in their current straits otherwise.”

The battle was basically over at this point, and their evaluation was nowhere close to positive. Therefore, the two were looking for scapegoats. After all, when it came down to things, the Bamboo and Zither Sects did indeed hold greater responsibility. If it wasn’t for the two prioritizing their goals and leaving the group, this situation may never have developed the way it did.

Another person came running in with an urgent report as they chatted, “Sect Heads, another group of people have emerged from the Paramount Realm. We captured them all, but the realm’s already sealed off.”

Sect Head Xing hurriedly asked, “Any news of Jiang Chen?”

The person shook his head and added on, “Sect Head Qin Mo and those from the Sacred Sword Palace haven’t come out either.”

Sect Head Xing’s expression changed rapidly, even Qin Mo didn’t make it out? He looked solemnly at Sect Head Fu. For the first time, a hint of fear rose in their hearts. The Paramount Realm had closed, but Sect Head Qin Mo hadn’t exited yet! This wasn’t a good sign. It was very possible that he’d perished inside. Both of their hearts trembled. If Sect Head Qin Mo had perished, then their

operation this time would be an utter failure.

On the other hand, if this was the case, then they could shove all responsibility onto the Zither Sect. Another scout came back with a report just as they were speaking, “Sect Heads, things are really bad! The Bamboo Sect’s group was discovered about eight hundred miles out. They’re… they’re all dead!”

“What!?”

Sect Head Xing and Fu was shaken all over again as their fear started to grow. “Are you sure!? What about Sect Head Leng…”

“We’ve already brought the sect head’s body back,” The scout responded dismally.

Bamboo Sect Head Leng had set off in proud spirits, but had returned as a cold corpse. Looking at his body, it didn’t even seem like he’d been through a hard battle, with no exterior wounds. However, his expression had been twisted into an extreme grimace, as if he’d weathered unspeakable terror before he’d died, freezing this expression on his face even in death.

Sect Head Xing observed the body for a while his neck began to prickle. The confirmed death of a sect head had finally caused wariness to spark in his eyes. “Sect Head Fu, it looks like we really did underestimate the Myriad Domain. There’s such a strong cultivator in this region! There are no wounds on Sect Head Leng’s body, but his consciousness has completely collapsed. This is an exceedingly sophisticated attack!”

With the collapse of the consciousness, there was no longer any will controlling the body, so bodily functions could naturally no longer continue.

Sect Head Fu remained silent for a long while as he looked at Sect Head Xing. Both nodded at the same time, “Our operations are at an end, we can go back to the Great Scarlet Mid Region and report to the emperor.”

Both of them had made up their mind. Retreat.

……

At a spot roughly four hundred miles to the southeast of the Myriad Domain, Jiang Chen retracted the light around him and released the young geniuses of the various sects. “Everyone, it’s safe for now here. You should take advantage of this moment to refine the restrictions placed on you.”

It was a good thing that the restrictions on the geniuses hadn’t been too strong. They simply restricted movement. It was only a matter of time before they managed to free themselves. Xiang Qin in particular was covered in wounds. Jiang Chen gave him a few additional healing pills.

“Junior brother Jiang Chen, what’s going on?” Shen Qinghong had been one of the first to free himself.

Jiang Chen roughly went over what he knew, stunning all of the geniuses in the telling. They were both relieved that they'd evaded disaster when they heard how the Sacred Sword Palace had betrayed the Myriad Domain and brought enemies into the Paramount Realm to hunt down geniuses, but also extremely infuriated at the same time.

"Everyone, the distance is far and the mountains are high. I hope we meet again in the future. I suspect that you won't be able to return to your sects just yet, as that would only be entering the lion's den. You are all geniuses of your sect, and I trust that I don't need to remind you what needs to be done. This is not a place to linger, so let us part ways here." Jiang Chen had already gone above and beyond the call of duty and morality by rescuing everyone.

Xiang Qin was quite forthright as he raised his hands in a cupped fist salute and spoke seriously, "I will repay your favor of saving my life one day! May we meet in the future!"

Those of the Great Cathedral exchanged glances and immediately left together.

Chapter 690: The Shattered Sect

People from the various sects expressed their gratitude toward Jiang Chen and began to take their leave after the Great Cathedral group departed. They all knew that it was more dangerous to travel as a large group under present circumstances. They recognized that a calamity had befallen the Myriad Domain and they were on the brink of extermination. Fortunately, all these young geniuses possessed unyielding resolution. Even beset by astonishment and fear, they could maintain their composure. One by one, they made their decisions and tendered their farewells until finally, only the three from the Regal Pill Palace were left.

"Junior brother Jiang Chen, what do we do from here on out?" Shen Qinghong had officially accepted his position and now looked to Jiang Chen for orders.

"What plans do you have?"

Shen Qinghong contemplated for a moment. "They said that the Regal Pill Palace broke through the siege. I'm guessing that the palace head must've returned to the sect. I wish to go back and take a look, whatever the case may be."

Ling Bi'er also nodded, "I also want to go back and see how things are."

Jiang Chen didn't object since all of them seemed to have the same idea. He definitely had to go back, especially since all of his followers were still at the Regal Pill Palace. After seeing no sign of

protest from Jiang Chen, Shen Qinghong hesitantly enquired, “Then shall we leave right away?”

Jiang Chen motioned wordlessly with his hands, indicating that they should wait a while longer. Huang’er had drawn the two emperor realm experts away and would surely return to rendezvous with them. As expected, Huang’er’s voice soon transmitted through the air, “Sir Jiang, please go on ahead. Huang’er will follow shortly.”

Apparently, she didn’t want to expose herself yet. Jiang Chen gave it some thought and didn’t oppose her wish. He waved his hand, “Let’s go.”

It was as if the entire Myriad Domain had fallen into an endless inferno. There were signs of savage battle no matter where they went. Close to 20 fourth ranked sects from the Great Scarlet Mid Region had rushed in at the same time, bringing an extinction level event onto the Myriad Domain.

The trio tread carefully, avoiding certain battlefields along the way. Ling Bi’er’s countenance seemed to have iced over while the corners of Shen Qinghong’s lips spasmed repeatedly, mumbling unknown curses. The journey was not without its obstacles. The three finally arrived at the Regal Pill Palace after taking several detours.

However, only a vast field of ruins greeted the three homecoming disciples. They were completely frozen as they gazed upon the post-battle remnants of the sect from the shadows. The smoke and dust hadn’t completely settled over the ruins yet. The great

protection formation to the entrance of the sect had been shattered and the entrance to Rosy Valley completely blasted apart. It was absolute devastation—residences lay collapsed in every direction while corpses of Regal Pill Palace disciples littered the area—no signs of life could be detected.

Ling Bi'er was immensely alarmed and rushed toward her residence to find only rubble with no signs of life. When Jiang Chen arrived outside his own residence, he was surprised to see that even his upgraded Nine Gates Incineration Formation had been destroyed! Jiang Chen felt as if he had plunged into an icy cavern—all his hairs stood on end. The worst case scenario had indeed happened.

He scanned the residence thoroughly with his consciousness, his heart pounding wildly. He was extremely nervous, afraid that he would see the battered corpses of his followers. Fortunately, he didn't find any corpses. There were some signs of fighting within the residence, but not to the point of intense battle. He made some deductions after scanning the place for some time with his consciousness.

"The battle here wasn't intense. It must've been a supreme expert who'd charged in after breaking the formation. They seem to have abducted Gouyu and the others. Otherwise, the battlefield would be very disordered." Jiang Chen's anxiety receded slightly when he didn't find their corpses.

"I'm very sorry, Sir Jiang. Huang'er should've stayed back to protect this place." Huang'er had appeared next to Jiang Chen at some unknown time, her words apologetic and remorseful.

Jiang Chen's eyes were red as he shook his head. "This is not your fault. It's mine... I overestimated the power of this formation."

He was filled with remorse despite knowing that this was because the enemy was too powerful. But it was ultimately due to his own lack of power. If only he was stronger, the formation he put in place would have been more durable. Perhaps it could have even held out until he'd come back. It was too late. Anything was too late.

He punched the ground fiercely with deep emotion. He suddenly remembered something and shot swiftly towards the direction of the wood spirit spring. The sight of swordbird corpses littering the ground greeted his eyes as he arrived at the entrance to the cave, reigniting the flames of Jiang Chen's fury. All the swordbirds had been slaughtered. They had died in a ghastly fashion with their insides blown apart in a mess of blood and gore. Jiang Chen's chest wanted to explode after witnessing this carnage. His body began twitching continuously as his eyes grew red. He found the wood spirit spring empty on further observation. It seemed that even that had been looted by someone.

Long Xiaoxuan could no longer keep his calm at this point, to say nothing of Jiang Chen. He charged out from Jiang Chen's body with a fast whoosh! He circled the wood spirit spring thrice while roaring furiously. Jiang Chen also flung his head back and howled at the skies, unable to contain his wrath. His eyes were so widened in his rage that they seemed on the verge of splitting apart.

“Great Scarlet Mid Region, Great Scarlet Mid Region!” Jiang Chen muttered whilst grinding his teeth. Jiang Chen had formed enmity with many factions and gained several enemies who would fight him to the death since he set foot into the unknown world, but he had never been infuriated to such a degree, not even once. It’d been at most a personal grievance previously, whether with Long Juxue or Wang Han. But the Great Scarlet Mid Region had completely crossed over his bottom line this time, drawing out two lifetimes worth of wrath.

“Sir Jiang, it seems that sister Gouyu and the rest have been captured. We still have a chance as long as they’re alive.” Huang’er patted Jiang Chen’s shoulders in soft consolation. Huang’er was astonished to see Long Xiaoxuan emerge in his true form, but she had no time to give this further thought in this moment. She felt similarly distressed after seeing Jiang Chen’s suffering, wishing she was the one who was captured instead. She couldn’t help but feel a hint of a cruel murderous intent after witnessing this spectacle, despite her calm and tranquil nature. Not to mention, Gouyu and the others were like family to her after living here for a few years—they’d formed deep ties of friendship. Huang’er’s expression suddenly changed, “Sir Jiang, it seems we’ve fallen into a trap!”

Jiang Chen had been alerted at almost the same time. He produced several escape talismans with a grasp of his hands.

“Haha, who would’ve thought that watching a stump for a hare to to dash against it really does work!” An unpleasant voice like a broken gong tore through the air. Following that, several voices of the same repulsive quality echoed in differing volumes as well.

Countless clouds suddenly materialized around Jiang Chen's residence, forming a grand and exquisite phantasmal palace. Jiang Chen activated his consciousness upon seeing this, but his heart immediately sank. The illusory palace had actually sealed off the area in the blink of an eye, effectively isolating the residence from the outside world. The space occupied by Jiang Chen and Huang'er shrank as layers of clouds pressed down on them. Woosh woosh woosh... figures dropped down successively like dumplings.

One, two, three...

There were a dozen in total and five leaders that were all emperor realm experts. A bald and burly man among them was at fourth level emperor realm. Jiang Chen was truly overwhelmed, no wonder that the Nine Gates Incineration Formation hadn't held out! There was an expert amongst them who was at mid emperor realm.

The Nine Gates Incineration Formation could only hold out against experts of initial emperor realm, despite having been upgraded by Jiang Chen. It was also possible to break the formation if several such experts attacked in unison. It would be even easier to break the formation if an expert at the mid emperor realm was added to the equation.

A subordinate standing beside the bald man produced a jade token projecting Jiang Chen's image, "Lord Gong, this brat is probably Jiang Chen."

The bald man burst into laughter, "Who would've thought that the decision I made on a whim would land me such profit?"

Boundless might converged on Jiang Chen as the bald man suddenly fixed his gaze him. “You’re called Jiang Chen?”

Formidable emperor realm power surged out and tamped down on Jiang Chen’s head like a mountain. Even Jiang Chen’s breathing became distressed. Flames of fury roared in Jiang Chen’s chest as he unleashed his own aura to resist the suppressive force.

“Did you kill everyone here?” Jiang Chen’s tone was incomparably cold.

The man rubbed his bald head suddenly laughed. “Interesting, interesting... A mere sage realm brat is actually able to repel my emperor realm aura?”

“Did you or did you not kill these people?” Jiang Chen ignored the bald and burly man’s attempt to act cool and solemnly repeated his question.

“Haha, why would I use a butcher’s knife to kill a chicken? There are naturally people who killed them for me. Why? Judging from your tone, it seems that you’re seeking revenge? Haha, interesting, interesting.” The bald man’s tone was filled with ridicule, amused by the struggles of his prey. He had thought this snivelling brat would be shivering in fear and begging for mercy under the circumstances. But this brat seemed to be growing increasingly bold. This surprised and excited him at the same time. After all, a compliant victim was rather boring.

“Did. You. Kill these people?” Jiang Chen’s eyes were completely red as thick killing intent shot out from his Evil Golden Eye.

The bald and burly man couldn’t help but laugh disdainfully after seeing Jiang Chen’s state. “Brat, I didn’t kill those people. But it makes no difference if you want to blame me. Remember, I am one of the holy kings of the Eternal Celestial Capital, Gong Wuji!” His entourage burst into laughter after hearing these words.

“And we are the Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect of the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Brat, I’ll have you know that we exterminated the Regal Pill Palace and killed all the people here. How does a brat on the verge of death intend to deal with us?”

“Haha… Speaking of which, your Regal Pill Palace is rather fortunate. I heard the Great Cathedral and Dark North Sect were completely wiped out. But because we had some matters to ask, we sent back a batch of prisoners from here. They’ll at least live for a while longer. You, however, won’t be that fortunate…”

The bald and burly man suddenly waved his hand to stop the Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect. He spoke with a slight smile, “Jiang Chen, I believe you also understand that the world of martial dao has always been one where the strong reign mighty. I feel that you have great aptitude and as such, I am willing to give you a chance. As long as you cooperate and put yourself under my control, perhaps you can survive.” The man’s words depicted his delight in being able to control the fate of others.

Chapter 691: Huang'er Makes A Move Again

"A chance, you say?" Jiang Chen stared closely at that bald headed man, the former's eyes as chilly as killing knives. He looked as if he was engraving this Gong Wuji's countenance into his heart.

"Hehe, judging from the look in your eyes, I can see that you're obviously going to squander this precious chance of yours." Gong Wuji shook his head and sighed, "In that case, prepare yourself for judgment!"

Jiang Chen abruptly broke out in laughter, "Does that mean you don't want the sky and earth rank spirit herbs, or even the Longevity Pill's pill recipe anymore? Also... don't you want to know where your sect's spy, Lin Hai, is?"

Gong Wuji's face abruptly darkened when he heard Lin Hai's name. Lin Hai was a pawn he'd mentored personally and planted in the Dark North Sect. He'd never called upon Lin Hai to reap the rewards. So how could he not be shocked when he heard Lin Hai's name from Jiang Chen's lips? He was sure no one knew of his pawn's identity. How did this Jiang Chen figure it out? He admitted that the sky and earth rank spirit herbs were incredibly attractive, but even they had to wait when the great matter the Eternal Celestial Capital had pursued for over a millennium was involved.

"What are you talking about, kid? Who told you about Lin Hai?"

Jiang Chen decided that he might as well start blathering

nonsense, “Isn’t it obvious that Lin Hai’s identity was going to be exposed during the Myriad Grand Ceremony? As the saying goes, the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s bark is worse than their bite. When they raised such a high profile, it was your Eternal Celestial Capital who was the treacherous snake plotting in the dark. If my guess is correct, the Great Scarlet Mid Region must have come under your sect’s control since a long time ago, right?”

Jiang Chen had more or less surmised what was going on. He’d always thought that the Ninesuns Sky Sect was the greatest threat to the Myriad Domain, but it was only now he realized that the Eternal Celestial Capital, keeping a low profile all this time, was the greatest mastermind. Even the insufferably arrogant Great Scarlet Mid Region was controlled by the Eternal Celestial Capital. It was obvious that not even the Ninesuns Sky Sect had realized this.

Obviously, if Gong Wiji hadn’t thought that he had Jiang Chen and Huang’er for sure, there was no way he would’ve exposed his own identity. The Ninesuns Sky Sect had plotted openly while the Eternal Celestial Capital worked their manipulations from behind the scenes. Now, it would seem that the Eternal Celestial Capital would ultimately be the bigger winner.

Gong Wuji smiled indifferently and said, “I see that you know quite a lot of things, kid. The Ninesuns Sky Sect? They thought themselves clever and made up the so-called Imperial Jade Seal and Guardian Dragon Seal so they could get someone else to do their dirty work. We simply followed their line of thought and used their trick for our own gains. Haha, the Ninesuns Sky Sect wanted to play the good guy and mediate things between the Great Scarlet Mid Region and the Myriad Domain, but could we Eternal

Celestial Capital possibly allow this?”

Jiang Chen felt a shiver as he listened to these words. He instantly understood the entire situation. He couldn’t believe that a tiny place like the Myriad Domain would draw such crazy plots from so many forces. The Ninesuns Sky Sect wanted to coerce someone else to do their dirty work and had lured the Great Scarlet Mid Region into attacking Myriad Domain. Once the conflict began, they would make a showing, uphold justice, and take advantage of the opportunity to insert themselves into Myriad Domain. However, they hadn’t realized that the Eternal Celestial Capital was the mastermind behind the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Therefore, the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s plot to use the Great Scarlet Mid Region had only given the Eternal Celestial Capital themselves a chance to play their own plots. Naturally, there was no way the latter would allow the Ninesuns Sky Sect to jump out and uphold ‘justice’.

First rank sects often fought and acted as a restraining force on each other. They often simply canceled out each other in the end. Once he’d figured out the ins and outs, Jiang Chen couldn’t help but feel great sadness for the Myriad Domain for a moment. It was just an unwitting victim from the beginning to the end. The seeds of disaster had been planted back when Emperor Featherflight escaped into Myriad Domain. The many tragedies that happened later was but a continuation of this incident. The Regal Pill Palace and him were just ignorant victims who had been caught up by the push of great forces.

In that moment, Jiang Chen could keenly feel what laws of the jungle meant. Everything was about as cruel and as direct as one could imagine. The strong caused havoc while the weak waited for

their turn to be slaughtered. Jiang Chen forcefully restrained the impulse to use the palace because he knew that the restrictions only had one charge left. If he were to use up that charge, then he wouldn't have this trump card when he went to save Gouyu and the others. That was why he forcefully restrained himself even though he was sure he could kill Gong Wuji and his men.

He could always take revenge later. It was at this moment a gray robed subordinate quickly walked over and reported to Gong Wuji, "Master Gong, there were two wealthy marks, but we only caught one of them. The other one had reacted quickly and escaped."

The gray robed man pushed a person into the place. It was none other than Shen Qinghong! Jiang Chen was dumbfounded when he saw that Shen Qinghong was captured again. However, he felt a bit of relief knowing that Ling Bi'er had escaped.

Gong Wuji's expression darkened, "You let them escape even in this kind of situation?"

The gray robed man stuttered, "That girl seems to carry some sort of powerful escape glyph with her. We couldn't actually stop it. It was strange."

Gong Wuji humphed coldly and waved him off, "You lot are all useless. Go away. I'll be teaching you a lesson if this happens again."

The Thunder Note Hall sect head came forward and said flatteringly, "Master Gong, please allow us Thunder Note Hall to

deal with these two people."

The Great Roc Sect's sect head hurriedly followed, "Master Gong, we Great Roc Sect are willing to serve!"

Gong Wuji nodded coldly, "Don't screw up. I want to deal with that true dragon myself. Unbelievable, to think that a true dragon would appear in the likes of the Myriad Domain!"

Jiang Chen frowned slightly and sent a message to Huang'er, "I'm sorry I caused trouble for you, Miss Huang'er. Stay close to me while I open a path for us."

Huang'er shook her head slightly and replied, "Sir Jiang, this is an emperor realm domain. The average escape glyph may not work against it. Let me try."

Huang'er was normally calm and collected, but right now her tone was a bit more serious than usual.

"Miss Huang'er, the Generation Binding Curse is just waiting for a chance to engulf you. You cannot deploy your consciousness recklessly," Jiang Chen said hastily.

"Sir Jiang, we are in a life and death crisis right now, so we'll just have to deal with that later. Prepare the escape glyph while I attempt to break the enemy's domain. The escape glyph will work if there's even a tiny gap in his domain."

Jiang Chen knew that Huang'er had already made up her mind when he heard her tone. He also knew that his chances of success was actually quite low if he didn't use his final trump card against the enemy's emperor's domain.

"Brother Long, come back quickly," Jiang Chen called out in secret. At the same time, a jade green bamboo abruptly appeared around Huang'er and soared towards the sky like an ancient totem. It dragged a long, jade colored tail of light behind it. The crisp-green light rammed into the walls of the palace on the sky.

Bam!

The palace in the sky shuddered greatly before a hole was abruptly blown open at the center, and Jiang Chen's escape glyph shattered at the same time. A ray of light wrapped around Jiang Chen and Huang'er and chased after the jade light, flying out of the palace and city walls. They were gone in the blink of an eye. This series of changes had happened so quickly that almost no one were able to react in time.

Gong Wuji was among the very few whose reactions were quick. When he saw the jade light charging towards his own domain, he sneered inwardly, thinking that these two little fellows were fools who thought they could break through an emperor's domain with their puny strength. However, his sneer didn't manage to manifest on his face before shock replaced it.

Contrary to his expectations, the jade light actually blasted a large hole in his domain. His opponent's escape glyph followed closely behind the jade light, and his captives vanished right under

his nose just like that. The emperor's domain was connected to his consciousness. When his domain was blasted open, naturally his consciousness was shaken tremendously as well. For a time, he wasn't able to react towards their escape. The light had long vanished when his mind finally recovered. For a time, the scene was so quiet that only some strictly repressed soft breaths could be heard. Be it the Thunder Note Hall or the Great Roc Sect, everyone present in the area bowed their heads and didn't dare reveal a bit of expression on their faces.

Master Gong Wuji had just called them useless for letting a mark escape a moment ago. In the next moment, two bigger marks had slipped right from under his nose. It was almost as if Master Gong Wuji had set himself up to be slapped by himself! A person would have to be crazy to show any expression at this moment. Master Gong could easily misinterpret any kind of expressions as an attempt to ridicule him.

Gong Wuji's eyes bulged, and he roared towards the sky. Then, he punched the ground in front of Jiang Chen's residence.

BAM!

The residence instantly collapsed into a pile of ruins. "After them! You must capture those two bastards no matter what the cost!" Gong Wuji had almost gone berserk when he roared out this order and sent spittle flying everywhere. He nearly lost all self control at this moment. If the news that he, a fourth level emperor realm cultivator had actually allowed a sage realm brat to escape his grasp were to spread, it would be a great stain on his reputation.

Gong Wuji abruptly recalled something and swept a dominating glance across the place, “Remember, you will tell no one about today’s matter. If anyone of you were to squeak even half a sentence about this, I will lead my men and personally destroy the Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect!” Gong Wuji’s tone was overbearing and brooked no disobedience at all.

Even the sect heads of the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect shuddered when Gong Wuji’s ferocious gaze had swept across their body. They could only nod repeatedly in response, even though they were second level emperor realm cultivators themselves.

“Master, about this kid...” The Thunder Note Hall sect head pointed at Shen Qinghong and asked, “Should we just kill him immediately?”

“That can wait. This kid was a part of their group, so they should be pretty close to each other. Let’s interrogate him first. He may have some useful information.”

Shen Qinghong laughed loudly, “A warrior can be killed, but his honor will not stand for humiliation. You can capture or kill me, but you will never see the day I become a traitor and betray my own sect!”

“Tsk tsk, your tough talk is useless here. Let’s see if you can keep it up after we torture you, kid!”

Shen Qinghong was obviously prepared. He spat, “Kill me if you want to, but there is no way you’re getting anything out of me! Remember this well: my junior brother, Jiang Chen will one day return ten times the suffering you’ve inflicted onto Regal Pill Palace! Hahaha, I, Shen Qinghong, am useless and will not live to see that day. But it will come. That day of retribution will definitely come!” Once he said this, Shen Qinghong shouted and pushed his internal energy to the max.

Bang bang bang!

Shen Qinghong had actually chosen to detonate his own spirit!

The scene was filled with chaos for a time. It was obvious that not even Gong Wuji had expected his captive to be so idealistic.

Chapter 692: Huang'er's Affection

The explosion caused by a sage realm cultivator's self detonation was fairly threatening. The young geniuses of Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect standing beside Jiang Chen all suffered moderate to serious injuries and were quite bedraggled by the blast. One of them had even suffered heavy injuries and looked to be on the verge of death. This unforeseen accident caused Gong Wuji's mood to worsen further. He waved his hand and yelled, "After them!"

Jiang Chen and Huang'er used multiple escape glyphs in succession as they made their escape. It was only after they had run for roughly fifteen hundred kilometers that they finally came to a stop at a secluded place.

They stopped not because Jiang Chen didn't have enough escape glyphs on him, but because he could sense something wrong with Miss Huang'er. Jiang Chen's consciousness was extremely sensitive. He noticed that Huang'er was apparently losing control over the Generation Binding Curse. He hastily came to a stop and summoned the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice, tunneling several hundred feet underground. He found a suitable corner and opened up a space that could fit the both of them. Then, he supported Huang'er to a sitting position on the ground.

"Miss Huang'er, please sit quietly for a moment while I chant the 'Sacred Deliverance Mantra' a few times for you." Jiang Chen knew that Miss Huang'er must have triggered the Generation Binding Curse because she used too much mental power. He had given Huang'er some treatment in the past, but unfortunately it had only soothed the symptoms, not the cause. If they were only

looking to suppress the Generation Binding Curse, it could be suppressed for tens or even hundreds of years. But the cursed patient had to refrain from using too much of their consciousness. The moment they did, they would awaken the Generation Binding Curse inside their mind. If that happened, it would grow even more difficult to suppress.

Seeing Huang'er trembling uncontrollably and in a near faint, he recognized them as signs that the Generation Binding Curse was flaring up. He hastily calmed down and chanted the mantra over and over again. The minute trembling that racked Huang'er's body slowly subsided as the 'Sacred Deliverance Mantra' was repeated. Jiang Chen didn't dare stop. He didn't stop chanting even though his mouth was dry. He chanted for twenty four hours straight before Huang'er finally shook slightly once and regained a bit of consciousness.

"Sir Jiang, Huang'er has caused you trouble once more." Huang'er's soft voice sounded a little apologetic.

Jiang Chen smiled wryly and said, "It's I who's caused you trouble."

Huang'er summoned a difficult smile and said, "In that case, let us not bother each other with pleasantries."

Jiang Chen nodded repeatedly, "You're right. Why don't you rest first while I chant the 'Sacred Deliverance Mantra' a couple more times for you."

“You must be tired after chanting for such a long time. Please rest. I am feeling slightly better right now.”

Jiang Chen inspected her condition with his consciousness, and he knew that the curse had been suppressed again for now. However, it was only a temporary thing. It was obvious that Miss Huang’er’s excessive usage of her mental abilities had awakened the rancor of the Generation Binding Curse once more. “Miss Huang’er, the ‘Sacred Deliverance Mantra’ is not as effective as the ‘Ethereal Soothing Melody’. If you still have some strength with you, why don’t you play it a couple of times?”

Huang’er struggled slightly in an attempt to sit upright. Jiang Chen hastily lend her a hand and supported her. This wasn’t the time to care about societal niceties between men and women. When he held Huang’er, he felt as if he was touching a goddess’ body. She would’ve been too thin if she’d been a tad bit thinner, and too fat if a tad bit fatter.

Huang’er gently took out her zither. Even though she was feeling weak all over, she still tried her hardest to play the melody properly. Jiang Chen felt a pinprick in his heart at her current state. He knew that Huang’er wouldn’t be suffering this torment if it hadn’t been for his sake. For a time, Jiang Chen’s heart was assaulted with complex feelings.

“Sir Jiang, do you know anything about music?” Huang’er spoke up to console Jiang Chen, as if she could read Jiang Chen’s remorse.

Jiang Chen’s mind went blank as he recalled his past life. He had

been an expert at almost everything except martial dao. Naturally, he'd been extremely proficient in music as well. It was just that he hadn't had the time nor inclination to delve deeper into the art of music in this life. He didn't know why, but there were some things that Jiang Chen found difficult to say to most people.

But when he was before Huang'er, he always felt an indescribable sense of honesty and frankness. When he looked at Huang'er's sincere eyes, he felt like her eyes wouldn't tolerate any of the filth or lies in this world. Moreover, Huang'er was a sincere person. Her clean temperament made Jiang Chen feel like the mere act of lying to her was no different than committing a sin. Therefore, he scratched his head and answered honestly, "I do know a little about music, but I doubt that my skills are comparable to yours, Miss Huang'er."

Huang'er smiled slightly and stared at Jiang Chen with pure eyes. Then, a vertical bamboo flute suddenly appeared between her hands like magic. "Sir Jiang, may I have the fortune of hearing you play?"

At that moment, Huang'er's intelligent eyes had a naughty spark in them. She was showing Jiang Chen her playful and carefree side. Jiang Chen laughed wryly and forced himself to accept the flute. Surprisingly, the flute looked no different from what he used to play in his past life. After playing around with it for a bit and testing its sound a few times, he roughly found the feeling he usually experienced when he played during his past life. "I hope you enjoy my performance then."

Jiang Chen was not a person to be hobbled by embarrassment.

He immediately started to play a rendition of the ‘Ethereal Soothing Melody’. His performance was a little shaky at first, but he didn’t take long to enter the artistic mood of the ‘Ethereal Soothing Melody’ and displayed the purity and spiritual quality of a flute to its full. When he reached the second half of the melody, Huang’er’s expression had changed from surprise to solemnity. When the song was finally over, the great surprise in Huang’er’s pure eyes stayed for a very, very long time.

A long time later, Huang’er finally smiled softly and said, “Sir Jiang, you truly are a man of many hidden talents. Huang’er actually feels a lot more clear-headed after listening to your flute version of the ‘Ethereal Soothing Melody’.”

“Oh no, you praise me too highly.” Jiang Chen usually accepted other people’s praises as gladly as one would sweets, but he couldn’t help but blush with embarrassment when he was praised by Miss Huang’er. However, he quickly said, “Miss Huang’er, maybe we can try and play this tune together. The ‘Ethereal Soothing Melody’ may be even more effective against the Generation Binding Curse if we play it together.”

Shyness flashed in Huang’er’s eyes. Thankfully, Jiang Chen hadn’t been looking directly at her. Even so, her heart couldn’t help but thump wildly. She never imagined that Jiang Chen would offer to play together. Of course, there was nothing wrong about performing music together, but... memories of times long past flashed through Huang’er’s mind.

When she hadn’t yet left her homeland, countless young and talented men had sought to woo her. However, she’d turned all of

them away. Her suitors had once asked her what it would take to win her affection. Huang'er had told them then that if there came a day she found a man whom she was willing to perform music together with, then he would be the one she fell in love with. Her declaration had just been an excuse to turn down those suitors back then.

However, Huang'er had maintained that belief ever since she made that declaration. She had never played music with a man since learning the art. She really did believe her own words, too. She believed that only a man whose music could win her heart and make her willing to perform with him would have the qualification to become her love.

When Jiang Chen inadvertently made the suggestion, he didn't realize that he had touched on Huang'er's deepest feelings. As elegant as Huang'er was, even she was feeling a little stunned by the offer. Her womanly embarrassment made her panic a little. And yet... Could she really turn him down right now?

Huang'er realized that she actually couldn't turn down Jiang Chen. In fact, there was a kind of expectation growing inside of her. She had locked up her own heart for the longest time, but Jiang Chen had entered her life out of nowhere on her journey to seeking a cure. He'd showed her again and again qualities that set him apart from other men. Those displays had birthed faint ripples in her emotions for a while now. It was just that she hadn't dared or wanted to face this problem directly. That lasted until the moment Jiang Chen's inadvertent words abruptly threw open the doors to her heart. Moreover, Jiang Chen's flute performance had stunned her far more than any amount of sweet and gentle words could. In that one moment, she'd not only felt shock, but also an

infinite amount of happiness.

She had always thought that no one in this world would be able to harmonize with her music. She'd never thought that an inadvertent tune in a hole deep underground would topple her beliefs so utterly. One could say that Jiang Chen's flute performance had firmly planted his presence in Huang'er's heart. From this day onwards, no one else could ever replace him.

However, Jiang Chen had no idea that this fairy-like woman before him was experiencing such a tsunami of emotions. He had even less of an idea that his careless suggestion had triggered an emotional storm worthy of a natural disaster in in Huang'er's heart.

"Miss Huang'er, was my suggestion too rude?" Jiang Chen finally noticed that Huang'er was looking a little off and couldn't help but ask.

Huang'er hastily waved off his worries, "No, it's just that Huang'er just recalled something from the past. Sir Jiang's mastery in music is truly beyond Huang'er's expectations. It will be Huang'er's honor to play the 'Ethereal Soothing Melody' with you."

"Let's give it a try then?" Jiang Chen wasn't thinking nearly as much as Huang'er. Right now he was filled with regret and just wanted to make up for it by suppressing the Generation Binding Curse again. He wasn't thinking of anything else at all.

“Let’s.” Huang’er also nodded.

One zither and one bamboo flute began to harmonize together.

It was a strange thing. The two had never played together before, but the moment they started, they fit each other so well that it was as if they had played together countless times in the past. Their performance, despite lacking an audience, actually turned out absolutely flawless and perfect.

They played the melody once, twice... For a brief moment, the notes of a zither and a flute harmoniously filled this little space underground. Both of them were enchanted by the wondrous atmosphere. The performance finally came to a stop after who knew how long. Huang’er’s eyes suddenly reddened as tears abruptly rolled down her cheeks.

She was a strong woman who hadn’t shed a single tear even when she’d suffered the worst torment in her life at the hands of the Generation Binding Curse. But now, tears were actually rolling off her cheeks, beyond her control.

They weren’t tears of sadness, and yet they were. Those tears that spilled from her eyes like a newly broken dam were also tears of happiness. The happiness that suffused her being that came from finding someone who perfectly understood her. Tears of sadness that tore at her heart for her background and life. At long last, after so much time, she’d finally found a man she was willing to perform with. But because of the Generation Binding Curse, this happiness was also destined to be cut short.

Jiang Chen had never experienced such a scene before in his life. For a moment, he was bewildered and unsure what as to what he could do to make things better. It was a good thing that Huang'er quickly regained control of her emotions. After wiping away her tears, she smiled at him apologetically and said, "Sir Jiang, Huang'er just felt like crying a bit. I'm sorry you had to see me like this."

Something suddenly flickered in Jiang Chen's consciousness, and he exclaimed joyfully, "As I thought, the joint performance of the 'Ethereal Soothing Melody' is very effective. Your Generation Binding Curse seems to have been suppressed by quite a lot!"

Chapter 693: The Counterattack Begins

The two stayed underground for a full two months before finally suppressing Huang'er's Generation Binding Curse, perfecting their duet of "Ethereal Soothing Melody" along the way. The two communicated with each other's souls through their music, and slowly came to understand each other more and more. Jiang Chen also didn't hesitate to use all of his Sage Fledgling Grass to make Heroic Sage Pills. Although he didn't have enough to treat them as everyday snacks, he did eventually accumulate enough for a hundred sage cultivators. Naturally, it was a sweet sensation to have it all to himself. Using them, he diligently trained until he easily broke through second level sage realm, and rose to a step away from third level sage realm. When Huang'er's affliction grew more and more controllable, his desire to leave the underground world grew stronger and stronger.

Huang'er had always been empathetic and naturally knew of Jiang Chen's thoughts. She also felt deeply apologetic that Jiang Chen had kept her company underground for two months out of his concern for her. So, she brought up the matter herself, "Sir Jiang, my curse is no longer in danger of acting up; perhaps this is the time to find out what has happened to sister Gouyu and the others? Why don't we head upwards?"

Jiang Chen knew that Huang'er was trying to save him some awkwardness. He gratefully followed her lead, nodding, "I'm also worried about them as well. I wonder how Palace Head Dan Chi, Elder Yun Nie, junior brother Gaoqi, and senior sister Bi'er are now."

Although the Regal Pill Palace had been destroyed, he hadn't

found any of their bodies. He guessed that whether it was Elder Yun Nie or Mu Gaoqi, all of them had been taken away. They were important witnesses, and were likely taken as prisoners to be interrogated about the sky rank spirit herb and Longevity Pill. As for Palace Head Dan Chi, Jiang Chen surmised that when they'd returned to see the sect razed, they'd come to the conclusion that charging headfirst into the fray would be a futile exercise. That meant that there was a high likelihood that the palace head and the others were still safe for now. As for whether or not they could escape from the grasp of the Great Scarlet Mid Region and Eternal Celestial Capital, that would be up to them. Although Jiang Chen was worried, he knew that there was nothing he could do for now.

He had to look forward. Palace Head Dan Chi had even made preparations to disband the sect before the Myriad Grand Ceremony, but everything had happened too quickly in the end. They'd thought that the greatest enemy was the Ninesuns Sky Sect, but hadn't ever imagined that the Eternal Celestial Capital would manipulate the Great Scarlet Mid Region into invading the Myriad Domain.

The two left their underground cave and took a quick look around. They were still within Regal Pill Palace territory, but cultivators from the Great Scarlet Mid Region were spread throughout the region, guarding every way in and out. It would be quite the feat to escape. But escape was the furthest thing from Jiang Chen's mind at the moment. His sect had been destroyed, and he himself had nearly been captured. The embers of anger that had been slumbering in his belly for the last two months started to grow hotter.

These embers hadn't just slumbered for the last two months,

they'd simply become more potent. Every time he'd remembered the ruins of the Regal Pill Palace, the corpses of disciples and elders, the gore-spattered cave where the swordbirds had resided.... The urge to obliterate the Great Scarlet Mid Region and the Eternal Celestial Capital would rage ever hotter. Even surrounded by enemies as he was, he wasn't afraid. It was high time to collect some interest on this debt they'd accrued.

"Miss Huang'er..." he began to say.

Huang'er smiled, "Sir Jiang, you're the master of the house and I the guest. I will listen to whatever your arrangements may be."

She was quite aware of what the most appropriate action was, but didn't want her thoughts to impact Jiang Chen's dao heart. Jiang Chen nodded, "I plan on collecting some interest before I leave. The Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect are the ones occupying Regal Pill Palace territory at the moment. That Holy King Gong Wuji is just here for moral support. There shouldn't be many from the Eternal Celestial Capital here."

"Mm. The Eternal Celestial Capital is the mastermind behind the scenes. They're not at liberty to freely reveal themselves," Huang'er agreed with Jiang Chen's judgment.

"The Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect are fourth rank sects. Although they're stronger than the fourth rank sects of the Myriad Domain, each sect has only a few emperor realm cultivators. They certainly wouldn't send out all of them out on a single foray. It's highly likely that the emperor realm cultivators we saw that day are all the ones they've sent." Jiang Chen

continued, “Only, that many emperor realm cultivators can’t possibly seal off all of Regal Pill Palace territory. Therefore, we still have a lot of opportunities.”

Huang’er nodded slightly, “We should take one alive and ask where the others are.”

“That’s the plan. We’ll have to be careful in exacting our interest. It won’t be good if they vent their rage on Gouyu and the others.” Jiang Chen had clearly weighed the pros and cons of his idea. The two discussed for a bit and decided to target a young disciple, at least a core disciple. Only core disciples had the right to know more of the bigger picture. Regular minions wouldn’t necessarily know where Gouyu and the others had gone. With this in mind, the two carefully travelled, looking for a good target.

Half a day later, they came across a potential target in a remote territory. Filled with deep and secluded valleys, it was formerly the territory of one of the sixth rank sects that was subordinate to the Regal Pill Palace. At least a hundred invaders had set up camp there, and from a distance, they looked like they were the central hub of search operations in the area.

“The strongest of them ought to be an elder of eighth level sage realm. There’s also a fifth level sage realm true disciple. They’re all from the Thunder Note Hall.”

Although their fourth rank sects were stronger than their Myriad Domain counterparts, that difference in strength was only a hair. In the Myriad Domain, the pinnacle of cultivation was the fifth level sage realm, whereas their counterparts in the Great Scarlet

Mid Region held the sixth level sage realm as their peak. As such, the Thunder Note Hall true disciple at fifth level sage realm was at the top of his class. It was likely that even Xiang Qin wouldn't have been able to defeat him. He had his trump cards, but so did the the geniuses of the Thunder Note Hall. However, Jiang Chen didn't plan on making his move against the fifth level sage realm cultivator from the very beginning. He remained in the shadows with Huang'er, quietly observing all of their moves.

The group had been split into four troops, each with about thirty people. Each troop was further split into patrolling teams. Those teams made their rounds fairly frequently, and often crossed paths with other teams. The frequency and concentration of the teams made it almost impossible to find an opening. But that didn't mean that opportunity didn't exist. While watching them, Jiang Chen ran a couple of detailed simulations in his mind. If he could compress his entire ambush inside ten breaths while preventing them from calling for help, then he could capture one of them alive. The difficulty lay in capturing them alive; killing them would've been a hundred times easier.

"That group of three has one at second level sage realm and two at peak ninth level origin realm. This is the one!" Jiang Chen slowly approached them after he'd locked onto his target.

Huang'er's Generation Binding Curse only limited her consciousness and emperor realm abilities; it didn't affect her movement ability. As long as she kept from using those two abilities, she didn't have to worry about backlash from the curse. However, Jiang Chen knew that he couldn't let Huang'er fight again. If she aroused the violent nature of the curse one more time, she would find it even harder to suppress. The backlash from the

curse awakening each time would only increase in ferocity.

The three Thunder Note Hall disciples had a decent amount of status in their sect and were laughing and chatting with each other.

“Senior brother Hua, we’ve been here for three months. When can we go back to the sect?” One of them asked the youth with the striking brows standing in the middle.

The youth with the striking brows snorted coldly, “Why? You weren’t amounting to much back there, were you? We got lucky this time and were assigned to the Regal Pill Palace. It’s one of the wealthiest marks among the Myriad Domain sects.”

“Yes they’re rich, but it’s not like we’re getting much out of it. Besides, we’re not at headquarters, so what kind of riches can we possibly get?”

“Hmph, the executives have spoken. Whoever can offer up intelligence about that kid Jiang Chen will receive fifty Heroic Sage Pills and an earth rank spirit herb.”

Heroic Sage Pills were the resources of dreams for sage realm cultivators. Although the Thunder Note Hall was a fourth rank sect, it wasn’t that wealthy, so it didn’t have many Heroic Sage Pills to dole out to its disciples. Fifty pills was an astronomical figure, an amount that they wouldn’t normally be even able to dream about in the sect. Senior brother Hua was second level sage realm and naturally had a deep desire for Heroic Sage Pills. The

young man at peak origin realm in front of him however, spoke listlessly, “Senior brother Hua, I’ve heard that Jiang Chen is very strong and difficult to handle. Apparently…”

Senior brother Hua glared at him, “Shut up! Are you tired of living? Stop fecking gossiping about Jiang Chen! What if Jiang Chen is close by? We don’t have to be the ones to capture him, just be the ones who discover traces of him.”

Fifty Heroic Sage Pills and an earth rank spirit herb had been dangled just for some clues. If they captured Jiang Chen themselves, the reward would be five hundred Heroic Sage Pills, three earth rank spirit herbs, and a favor from Gong Wuji himself!

The other peak origin realm disciple had remained silent up until now. He was a scrubby looking shorty, and his face had slipped into a lustful leer, “I heard that apart from Jiang Chen, a beautiful genius called Ling Bi’er also slipped away. Apparently she’s Jiang Chen’s woman. It’ll be much easier to get the woman. We won’t have to worry about Jiang Chen not coming to find us once we’ve got her!”

“Zhang Ole Third, what the feck are you dreaming about everyday? I heard that that Ling Bi’er genius is also in the sage realm! And you’re dreaming of capturing her!? Shut up and do your job well!” Senior brother Hua lectured them loudly.

The three of them were still searching and chatting when the world in front of their eyes suddenly changed. A boundless forest world of vines and leaves filled the sky for an instant. They gaped, but in the very next moment, the world turned black as the entire

world of vines seemed to slam into them.

Chapter 694: A Bold Plan

“No!” Warning bells went off in senior brother Hua’s head as he reached for a warning talisman. He crushed it, but somehow, the warning didn’t transmit! “It’s a formation. We’ve been trapped by a formation!”

“Senior brother Hua, save me!” The skinny man had already been caught by the countless vines. The world within the formation was completely isolated from the world outside. Despite trying the warning talisman several times, senior brother Hua couldn’t penetrate the formation’s barrier. He truly wanted to save his junior brothers, but he could scarcely help even himself amidst the chaos. While quite powerful in his own right, he couldn’t withstand the sudden and unending onslaught of countless vines forever. The three were soon trussed up like chickens.

Jiang Chen had utilized the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven to conjure a woodland realm and trap the group before restraining them with the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice. The Lotus receded into the earth as soon as the formation disk was retrieved. Jiang Chen tossed the nicely wrapped up trio into a dark corner of the cave he’d dug and quickly and easily set up a formation to isolate them all from the outside world. He intended to take every precaution despite being hundreds of meters below the earth.

“Who are you? What nerve!” Senior brother Hua raised his eyebrows and spoke arrogantly. But while he was sizing up Jiang Chen, his pupils suddenly contracted. There was no light underground. But almost everyone had the ability to see in the dark after reaching a certain level of cultivation. He quickly

realized that the person standing before them was, in fact the Jiang Chen they had just been discussing.

"Have you recognized me yet?" Jiang Chen smiled indifferently, "So tell me—should I flay you alive or burn you into ashes?"

The skinny man's teeth chattered uncontrollably. "Jiang... Jiang Chen, we... we were just following orders. Don't... don't kill me.... I surrender!"

"If I didn't hear wrong, it seemed as if you were saying you'd capture Ling Bi'er to threaten me with?" Jiang Chen's voice and gaze were frigid.

The skinny man explained in haste while trembling frantically. "No... I wouldn't dare. I... I just said that for fun! How would I be able to capture a sage realm genius with my meager talent?! You can't take that seriously, not seriously at all."

Senior brother Hua swore loudly, "Shut up, Zhang Ole Third!" He raised his head and glared at Jiang Chen. "Jiang Chen, you're powerful alright. But no matter how powerful you are, can you fight against the entire Great Scarlet Mid Region? Can you overpower the Eternal Celestial Capital all by yourself?"

Jiang Chen had no desire to debate anything with them and only smiled apathetically in response. Great Scarlet Mid Region? Eternal Celestial Capital? These two powers had long since entered his blacklist. He would definitely settle each and every one of those debts one day.

Jiang Chen turned towards Huang'er and suggested. "Miss Huang'er, would you perhaps want to step to the side for a while?"

Huang'er knew that Jiang Chen was about to kill. but only shook her head with a faint smile. She'd been walking the path of martial dao since her childhood. She was no stranger to murder and arson. "Brother Long, please show yourself. I leave this man in your capable hands."

No sooner had Jiang Chen spoken than Long Xiaoxuan appear in a gust of wind. Massive jaws clamped down on senior brother Hua with gusto, spraying blood and gore everywhere. Streams of still steaming blood shot out the corners of Long Xiaoxuan's mouth and splashed on the faces of the other two, causing the skinny man to wail loudly with terror. The ghastly shrieks might've penetrated through the earth to reach the surface if they hadn't been isolated by a formation. Long Xiaoxuan belched with satisfaction after he finished gulping down senior brother Hua. He then turned his sights to the two remaining origin realm cultivators.

The skinny man's face was the picture of terror. "Don't eat me, please don't eat me! I surrender! Is surrender not enough?!"

The other man was as pale as a ghost. It seemed as if he wanted to say something but ultimately held back, swallowing hard instead.

"Do you want to live? Give me one reason to not kill you." Jiang Chen's tone was unsympathetic.

The skinny man hurriedly replied, “I’ll tell you, I’ll tell you! I have intelligence!” He didn’t even pause before continuing; as if he was afraid Jiang Chen would go back on his words, “Nearly 20 fourth rank sects were mobilized this time by order of the Great Scarlet Emperor himself.”

“Then what’s with the Eternal Celestial Capital?” Jiang Chen asked coldly.

“The Eternal Celestial Capital… we didn’t know about it in the beginning. Only later did we find out that the one pulling the strings behind our Great Scarlet Mid Region was the Eternal Celestial Capital.”

The Eternal Celestial Capital was a first rank sect from the Upper Eight Regions. It wasn’t difficult for Jiang Chen to deduce that they were indirectly controlling the Great Scarlet Mid Region behind the scenes. Jiang Chen shook his head, “I already know all this. If you can’t offer anything of better value…”

“I can, I can! I know that… the Regal Pill Palace escaped from the Myriad Grand Ceremony, but they didn’t return to the Regal Pill Palace.”

This information is rather useful. Jiang Chen laughed coldly, “Why should I believe you?”

“It’s… it’s true! I’m absolutely certain of it because part of the reason we were told to establish a base here was to intercept the Regal Pill Palace Head. My superiors claim that he’s in possession

of several earth ranked spirit herbs and perhaps even sky ranked ones. Master Gong Wuji himself had ordered his capture.

"Oh right, there's more—a group led by an elder called Yun Nie was captured by the Great Roc Sect and should already be on their way to the capital of the Great Scarlet Empire."

"Elder Yun Nie? Who else?" Jiang Chen asked with a furrowed brow.

"There's also... well, all the survivors have been shipped to the Great Scarlet Empire."

The skinny man recalled something else with much effort. "Oh right, there was a powerful formation set up around your residence that was extremely difficult to break. It took the combined efforts of Master Gong Wuji himself and the heads of our Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect to finally break through. Master Gong Wuji was so full of admiration for the one who'd set up the formation that he decided to stay back and wait for their, or rather, your return."

The skinny man was scrambling to try and flatter Jiang Chen, "Master Gong Wuji said we had to capture the one who set up this formation, or else he would become a mortal disaster for everyone in the future. Sir Jiang... as expected of a genius feared even by Master Gong Wuji, even with such strict precautions and defense..."

Jiang Chen motioned with his hand, he was no longer willing to

listen to this meaningless bootlicking. “How about the people in my residence? And the wood spirit spring? Who took them?”

“Those people were captured and transported to the capital just like Elder Yun Nie. The wood spirit spring? Did you mean the water spring? I heard that Master Gong Wuji took it away.”

Gong Wuji! Jiang Chen ground his teeth. He carved that name deeply into his heart.

“How long were you supposed to be stationed here?”

The skinny man promptly replied, “I’m not sure. We have to stay here for as long as our superiors command. Sir Jiang, I’ve… I’ve told you everything. Can you be magnanimous and… let me live?”

“Are there any others from the Eternal Celestial Capital here apart from Gong Wuji?”

“Yes!” The skinny man replied swiftly, “There’s a young genius who appears to be Gong Wuji’s grandson. He’s already reached the fifth level sage realm despite only being 13 years old. He’s comparable to the most prominent geniuses of our Thunder Note Hall.”

“A young grandson? What’s his name?”

“His name? Hmm… I hear everyone calling him young master Qi. His name should be Gong Qi.”

“Gong Qi, Gong Qi.” An extremely audacious idea suddenly materialized within Jiang Chen’s mind. “Tell me more about this Gong Qi.”

The skinny man had no idea what Jiang Chen was thinking—his only wish was to survive. Despite not knowing much about Gong Qi, he recounted everything he’d ever seen or heard without holding anything back. “Gong Qi loves a challenge. The top geniuses of our Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect always get a headache whenever he appears. Exchanging pointers aren’t a big deal, but the boy has absolutely no sense of control. The geniuses from our sect don’t dare to fight seriously for fear of wounding him and rousing the ire of Master Gong Wuji. So everyone avoids him out of fear…”

“Are you certain that the information you gave me is all true?” Jiang Chen’s gaze focused upon the skinny man.

“Absolutely! Not one bit false. It’s practically common knowledge at this point. Senior brother Ding Rong for instance, volunteered to guard this remote passage to avoid drawing Gong Qi’s attention. Senior brother Ding Rong is fifth level sage realm and is considered to be in the top three in our sect. Gong Qi had been repeatedly asking for him back at the Regal Pill Palace headquarters, but senior brother had always found an excuse to refuse…”

Ding Rong was the Thunder Note Hall genius assigned to oversee this area, along with an elder at eighth level sage realm. Jiang Chen had originally thought that they had other plans for this area. But it turns out they were here merely to avoid Gong Qi.

“Where does Gong Qi usually spar with others? Does Gong Wuji always spectate?”

After some thought, the skinny man spoke carefully, “I remember that although Master Gong Wuji doesn’t always come to watch, there are always quite a few experts in attendance. Everyone’s afraid… afraid that they would accidentally wound Gong Qi. No one can bear the consequences.”

Jiang Chen pondered in silence. The skinny man was trembling in fear. He wasn’t certain if he could still live despite having divulged so much. Jiang Chen formed a bold plan after a momentary contemplation. A frosty glow from his eyes converged upon the skinny man. “You have been rather compliant. But the Thunder Note Hall invaded my Regal Pill Palace and you, being an accomplice, can’t escape death…”

The skinny man’s face turned green. “Don’t… don’t kill me!”

“Don’t kill you, you say?” Jiang Chen smiled spuriously, “I can give you a chance, seeing as how you provided me with information.”

“Tell me, tell me what you want me to do!” His eyes displayed his desperate honesty.

Jiang Chen shot a pill into the skinny man’s mouth, “Eat it.”

The skinny man grimaced. He didn’t dare decline despite

knowing it was something bad. He could only brace himself and swallow it.

"This pill was refined from Divine Befuddlement Miasma. Without my specific antidote, you'll die within three days. Even a ninth level pill king won't be able to save you without knowing the components of this Miasma."

"Yes... yes..." The skinny man's countenance was wry, knowing that he had no other choice. "Young master Jiang, I'll do whatever you ask of me."

"Very good. First, kill him!" Jiang Chen performed a few handseals, and the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice loosened its grip.

The remaining person screamed, "Zhang Ole Third, have you gone crazy? Do you think he'll let you go? What kind of dream are you still in!?"

Zhang Ole Third's expression was miserable. "Senior brother Feng, please don't blame me..."

And with that, Zhang Ole Third thrust a sword into the man's throat and yanked upwards. To prove his sincerity, he also destroyed the man's dantian and consciousness.

"Good." Jiang Chen's tone was indifferent, "Next, I want you to lure Ding Rong here."

Luring Ding Rong over was a crucial first step.

Chapter 695: Baiting a Fifth Level Sage Realm Genius

"Ah?" A hint of fear leaked out from Zhang Ole Third's eyes when he heard that Ding Rong was the one he was going to bait over.

"What? Is there a problem?" Jiang Chen's expression turned cold.

"You... Senior brother Ding... is with the elder. It's very difficult to lure him out alone."

"What if the bait is a sky rank spirit herb?" Jiang Chen asked indifferently.

Zhang Ole Third looked distracted. Then he asked suddenly, "Will you promise to let me live if I lure out senior brother Ding?"

There wasn't much meaning to killing a small fry like him. Jiang Chen also understood that he had to promise something substantial in order to encourage Zhang Ole Third to take wholehearted action. Moreover, this Zhang Ole Third would become a traitor to Thunder Note Hall anyway if he successfully lured Ding Rong over. His life wouldn't affect the greater picture in the slightest. When his thoughts reached that point, Jiang Chen smiled faintly and said, "I can swear a heavenly oath that I will not take your life. But don't forget that if you fail..."

Zhang Ole Third gritted his teeth in determination and said, “I know. In the end, my life depends entirely on whether I can lure senior brother Ding Rong to this place.”

“Smart,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

“I want you to swear an oath that you will let me live and also give me the antidote if I do lure senior brother Ding Rong over.”

“Don’t worry, I’ve made up my mind, I won’t go back on my own words. However, you will have to find someplace to hide for several months in order to keep my plans from being exposed.”

“I can do that,” Zhang Ole Third had obviously steeled himself. Since the duo came to an agreement, Jiang Chen swore a heavenly oath to set Zhang Ole Third’s mind at ease. Zhang Ole Third was all fired up after he heard Jiang Chen’s oath. He might be a coward, but he was a smart coward. He knew his life depended entirely on his success.

Jiang Chen then turned to Huang’er and said, “Let’s disguise ourselves and pretend to be those two first.”

Huang’er was a master of disguise, and Jiang Chen himself wasn’t lacking in this area either. His Mu Gaoqi disguise had fooled everyone back at the Myriad Grand Ceremony, so it wasn’t a difficult thing for either of them. He quickly disguised himself as the senior brother Hua who’d been devoured by Long Xiaoxuan. Huang’er had disguised herself as senior brother Feng.

“Zhang Ole Third, it’s time for you to find Ding Rong and tell him that you’ve found a clue regarding the sky rank spirit herbs. Whether or not you succeed, and eventually live, will depend entirely on your own skills. Be smart. If this matter is exposed, then not even the gods can save your miserable life,” Jiang Chen reminded Zhao Ole Third once more.

Zhang Ole Third worked hard to try and bring his emotions under control and calm down. “Send me out then.”

Once Zhang Ole Third was aboveground, he took a deep breath to calm himself down and broke into a dead run towards the camp. Many patrol teams that saw Zhang Ole Third along the way, but none of them stopped him for questioning. There was nothing to be gained by questioning one of their own, after all.

Zhang Ole Third successfully returned to camp. In reality, he wasn’t qualified to meet Ding Rong. However, he was senior brother Hua’s follower and thus represented him in some meager way. Therefore, he was able to quickly meet Ding Rong using senior brother Hua’s name.

Ding Rong was very high up on the totem pole as one of the top three geniuses in the Thunder Note Hall.

“Zhang Ole Third? If I remember correctly, you should be patrolling right now. What are you doing here?” While Ding Rong might look genteel on the outside, his actions exuded the authority of a superior officer.

Zhang Ole Third snuck a furtive glance at his peers standing around Ding Rong before grinning, “Senior brother Ding, there’s something that I need to report to you alone.”

Ding Rong had red lips and white teeth, the very picture of an elegant gentleman. However, he couldn’t help but frown at Zhang Ole Third’s request.

The cultivators beside Ding Rong yelled, “Zhang Ole Third, stop being secretive and spit out whatever it is already! Senior brother Ding’s time is precious, and he has no time to waste on the likes of you.”

Zhang Ole Third only smiled apologetically and repeated, “Senior brother Ding, I was sent over by senior brother Hua. This matter is of great importance, and senior brother Hua instructed me to report this to you and you alone.”

Ding Rong looked meaningfully at Zhang Ole Third. He noticed that Zhang Ole Third’s expression was a little suspicious, but knowing his cowardliness and lack of skill, Ding Rong figured that there was just no way Zhang Ole Third could possibly harbor any malice towards him. Therefore, he waved his men away.

“Zhang Ole Third, you know the consequences if I find your words be nothing more than nonsense, don’t you?” Ding Rong warned indifferently.

When he saw that everyone else had gone away, Zhang Ole Third finally spoke in a low voice, “Senior brother Ding, senior brother

Hua and Feng found a spirit herb by accident while they were on their patrol. It actually looks like a sky rank spirit herb, but since senior brother Hua dared not come to a careless conclusion, he…”

“What did you say?!” Ding Rong looked greatly surprised. He was well aware of what a sky rank spirit herb meant. Even the sect head of Thunder Note Hall himself might not necessarily possess a sky rank spirit herb! Only Titled Great Emperors had the right to use them.

One must say that Zhang Ole Third’s acting skills were top notch. He took a step forwards and spoke with a serious expression, “That spirit herb was sealed by a kind of power. Senior brother Hua himself attempted to unseal it, but he was constantly a step away from succeeding. He told me to return and report this, but I did not go to the elder directly for a certain… reason. I came to you instead, senior brother Ding.”

Ding Rong roughly understood the situation after listening to Zhang Ole Third. This Zhang Ole Third was trying to win his favor. That was why he’d told this information to only Ding Rong, a blatant attempt to curry favor. As one of the three greatest geniuses in the sect, Ding Rong’s status was incredibly high. It was normally impossible for someone of Zhang Ole Third’s stature to even have the opportunity to win his favor. Ding Rong quickly came to believe almost all of Zhang Ole Third’s words.

“Who else knows about this?” Ding Rong’s tone was heavy.

“Senior brother Hua and senior brother Feng are the only other ones, but they didn’t dare to move away from the spot. They sent

only me to ask for help. I thought that if this sky rank spirit herb is destined to fall in someone's hands, it might as well be the top genius of our Thunder Note Hall. That's why…"

Ding Rong was a smart person. He understood that Zhang Ole Third was claiming credit for his achievements. Therefore, he patted Zhang Ole Third's shoulder immediately, "You did well. I will treat you well if everything works out."

His words were pretty to look at, but held nothing of substance. Zhang Ole Third cursed Ding Rong on the inside, but he continued to maintain a respectful look on his face. "I'll lead the way and guide you, senior brother Ding."

Ding Rong nodded and said, "Wait here for a moment while I make some arrangements." His so-called arrangements were of course a bluff to keep others from questioning his whereabouts for the next while.

Ding Rong met Zhang Ole Third outside the camp a moment later.

"Lead the way." Ding Rong was confident in his skills, so he wasn't afraid to head out alone. Of course, he was a little wary, but considering Zhang Ole Third's cowardliness, it was unlikely that the latter would lie to him. After all, there was no way a small fry like Zhang Ole Third would dare play such a prank. If he did, then he was obviously suicidal. However, despite his certainty, Ding Rong stayed cautious, not letting his guard down even once along the way.

“How much further to go?” Ding Rong asked.

“It’s just a bit further. We’ll be almost there once we pass this mountain ridge.”

……

“Here they come.” Jiang Chen’s consciousness was fully extended, so he could already see Zhang Ole Third leading a young genius in their direction. Jiang Chen might not recognize this person, but he was sure that this genius was Ding Rong.

“Do you need me to act, Sir Jiang?” If Huang’er were to act, she would definitely have to use her emperor realm domain. It was a surefire method to capture Ding Rong.

“No need,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly in a tone that was full of confidence. So what if he’s a fifth level sage realm expert? Even Cao Jin, an expert half a step away from emperor realm, could do nothing but suffer Jiang Chen’s wrath once he set foot into the trap.

Ding Rong and Zhang Ole Third approached the duo as they chatted. Jiang Chen and Huang’er pretended to be surprised and looked at Zhang Ole Third, “Why did you only bring senior brother Ding?”

Zhang Ole Third was an incredible actor, and looked entirely

embarrassed as he scratched his head, “I... I thought that the matter would be exposed if we told too many people. Senior brother Ding takes good care of us, so I thought that it might be better for the sky rank spirit herb to fall into senior brother Ding’s hands rather than Eternal Celestial Capital’s.”

Ding Rong cast a cold glance over at Jiang Chen and said, “Do you have a problem with that, junior brother Hua?”

Jiang Chen shrugged, a wry smile on his face, “I couldn’t crack that seal myself. I hope that you might be able to do it, senior brother Ding.”

Ding Rong nodded indifferently. He cast a glance at both Jiang Chen and Huang’er, but didn’t see through their disguises.

They walked into the darkness, and Ding Rong immediately noticed a spirit herb brimming with spirit energy between the gaps in front of them.

A sky rank spirit herb! Ding Rong trembled and stared closely at the sky rank spirit herb. He could hardly suppress the hint of greed that flashed across his eyes.

“Senior brother Ding, is that a sky rank spirit herb?” Zhang Ole Third asked shamelessly.

Ding Rong muttered, “Yes, it has to be. Junior brother Hua, none of you shall reveal this to anyone. I will treat you well if this

matter concludes positively." He had already fished out a short sword and was walking towards the sky rank spirit herb.

Suddenly, he sensed something and abruptly paused. At that precise moment, the sky rank spirit herb shook and disappeared before his eyes, and an entirely different scene appeared instead.

A gnarled forest suddenly appeared around him, as countless vines rushed towards Ding Rong. He was furious as the vague suspicion that he was being tricked solidified into fact.

As towering rage engulfed his mind, three rays of golden lights appeared in the air as three sky sage realm golden armored warriors dropped to the ground. They surrounded Ding Rong in a triangular formation and attacked him madly. This was three sky sage realm golden armored soldiers pitted against one fifth level sage realm genius. It was an apt scene of lions using their full strength to fight a rabbit. While Ding Rong had amazing skill and a lot of trump cards, he didn't even get the chance to unleash any of them. The three golden armored soldiers shattered his body to pieces before before he could even let his soul escape.

The scene caused Zhang Ole Third's jaw to drop to the ground. Everything was cleaned up in a trice, and the trio returned underground once more. Zhang Ole Third was still trembling like a leaf. He was stunned beyond reason by what he'd just witnessed. Ding Rong had always occupied a lofty position in his heart. But that lofty person had just been manhandled like a doll, killed in a single blow. The psychological impact of this was far too terrifying for Zhang Ole Third to process.

“You did well this time, Zhang Ole Third. Here are three months worth of antidote. I will scatter the rest of them around the borders of Great Scarlet Mid Region three months later. Whether you can find them all will depend on your fortune. Remember, you must stay underground for three months. If your exposure causes my plan’s failure or even worse, your antidote will be destroyed as well.”

“Y-yes… I’ll be careful…” Zhang Ole Third nodded again and again.

Jiang Chen nodded indifferently before turning to Huang’er, “The next step will be to disguise myself as Ding Rong.”

Great shock appeared in Zhang Ole Third’s eyes. He suddenly thought of something and exclaimed, “Sir Jiang… you… you can’t be thinking of entering the Regal Pill Palace’s headquarters and targeting Gong Qi, are you?”

Zhang Ole Third was a smart guy. When he recalled Jiang Chen’s multiple questions about Gong Qi, the answer abruptly came to him like a thunderclap.

Chapter 696: Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained

“Report for the elder! Senior brother Ding Rong came back just now and said that he’d discovered some clues. He needs to make an urgent trip to the Regal Pill Palace headquarters to meet with the sect head.” A patrolling elder came to make a report to the eighth level sage realm elder standing at the door.

“Oh?” The elder frowned, “Did he say what kind of clues they were?”

“No, and I didn’t dare ask,” the patrolling elder shook his head.

“Did he go alone?”

The patrolling elder hastily responded, “He was with disciple Hua and two of Hua’s followers, Feng and Zhang. However, I didn’t see the two followers.”

Feng and Zhang were all minor characters in the origin realm, so the elder didn’t pay them much attention. He was more curious about the supposed clues Ding Rong had discovered. As curious as he was, he didn’t dare hold the slightest dissatisfaction towards Ding Rong’s independent actions. Ding Rong was the personal disciple of the sect head and had reached fifth level sage realm at his young age. His achievements would be much higher than the elder’s in the future. He thought for a moment and spread out his hands. “I understand. Keep up the high density of patrols; don’t become complacent and careless.”

Jiang Chen and Huang'er had an easy journey to Regal Pill Palace headquarters. Their identities were now Ding Rong and senior brother Hua.

"Miss Huang'er, it's a bit dangerous this time, do you..." Jiang Chen didn't actually want to lead Huang'er into a dangerous situation.

Huang'er however, smiled faintly back at him, "Sir Jiang, we've been through thick and thin so far, weathering life and death together multiple times. It's more interesting if I adventure with Sir Jiang!"

Jiang Chen laughed heartily. He was a straightforward person and felt that those in the jianghu had no need to put on coquettish airs. "I'm afraid that I won't be able to explain myself to Elder Shun if anything happens."

"Elder Shun is an understanding person," Huang'er smiled slightly. Jiang Chen nodded. He really did need Huang'er's support for this undertaking. Although his plan was very bold, it wasn't good enough with just him alone. Their chances of success would be much greater with Huang'er.

The two arrived outside the doors of the Regal Pill Palace four hours later. Security here was noticeably heavier than at the Regal Pill Palace headquarters. However, as a personal disciple of the Thunder Note Hall, Ding Rong's position was high and there was naturally no need for additional checks when he appeared. When

they heard that he had some important clues for the sect head, no one in the sect dared stop him. On the contrary, they all chatted and laughed with him, the very picture of politeness.

Jiang Chen was very careful as he interacted with these people. He was deep in the lion's den now, and could only go forward with his plans.

"Senior brother Ding, Master Gong has summoned the sect head and the Great Roc sect head. They seem to be discussing something very important. You might have to wait for a while." The one who'd gone in to make his report walked back out with a slightly apologetic response for Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen didn't actually want to see the sect head either, so he asked, "What important matter is this?"

His peer shook his head apologetically, "I didn't dare ask."

"Who else is in there?" Jiang Chen asked again.

"Some other heavyweights of the two sects," the peer responded honestly, patently having great respect for Ding Rong.

Jiang Chen nodded and paused again, "Is Master Gong's young grandson, young master Qi, here?"

His peer revealed a bit of a wry smile. "He actually is here, but he's not participating in the meeting. He's inside trying to make a

Great Roc Sect true disciple spar with him. The true disciple... oh no, senior brother Ding, they're out. Take cover!" The disciple thought that senior brother Ding wanted to avoid Gong Qi when he heard Jiang Chen's question, that he didn't want to be harassed by Gong Qi. After all, Gong Qi was a challenge maniac. He would challenge any genius that was a similar strength to him.

Who dared really fight Gong Qi, seeing as he was Master Gong Wuji's young grandson? Therefore, this kind of sparring was all pain and no gain. All of the Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect reacted skittishly to Gong Qi's name, always seeking to avoid him whenever possible. They were deathly afraid that the kid would latch onto them and demand a round of sparring. It was better to take two punches from him than to actually fight with the him. Thus, Ding Rong's peer had the best intentions in reminding Jiang Chen to go into hiding when he saw Son Qi walk out.

Jiang Chen was inwardly delighted but put on a slightly panicked expression, making as if he was about to take cover. However, Gong Qi's eyes were sharp and instantly picked him out. "Haha, Ding Rong you kid! I heard you went someplace else. What brings you here today?" Gong Qi was only fourteen years old, but he was as tall as an adult. He was also styled as a mini Gong Wuji. He had a bald head, yellow eyebrows, and extreme ferocity brimming in his words and movements.

Jiang Chen smiled ruefully, "Young master Gong, I ah, I had some matters to come back and report to my master."

What did Gong Qi care about that for? He walked over and grinned, "I thought I heard someone say you were back when I was

inside just now. I was so happy that I ran out for a look. Yeah it's you! You can't ditch me this time, kid! Come come come. Let's spar!"

Gong Qi was a battle fiend alright. He was also the height of arrogance in calling Ding Rong "kid". Ding Rong was at least twice his age!

"Young master Gong, let's forget the sparring? How would I possibly stand up to your beating with my skills?" Jiang Chen pretended to retreat while actually advancing.

Gong Qi's expression darkened, "What, Ding Rong, you'll deny me face? You had all sorts of excuses the first two times. Do you still plan on not showing me face this time?"

He'd quickly flipped his mood as he was now glowering, the air around him descending a few degrees as well. Jiang Chen was happy with how things were going and retained a wry expression on his face, "Young master Gong, it's not that I'm not giving you face, but I feel quite panicked in sparring with you before Master Gong. His aura is simply too strong."

Gong Qi was quite put out when he heard these words and rolled his eyes. "Ding Rong, the hell you mean? Do you mean that it was because of my grandfather's aura that I defeated all you geniuses?"

Jiang Chen chuckled, "I didn't mean that."

The temperament of a young boy made Gong Qi feel even more humiliated when he saw how Ding Rong was chuckling. “How dare you! Ding Rong, how dare you think so little of me! Fine! My grandfather’s meeting with your master inside, so let’s pick a place far away and have a good fight!”

Jiang Chen looked at the two guards behind Gong Qi. One of them was first level emperor realm, the other half step emperor realm. None of them were easy characters. His expression was quite lively when he looked at the two guards, making it seem like he meant something else by it. To Gong Qi, his opponent was still staying that Gong Qi was bullying others with his superior numbers. He grew enraged, “Don’t follow me, you two! I’m going to teach this kid a lesson today and let him know that I beat their faces into the ground with pure skill!”

Gong Qi was indeed an incredible genius to have such cultivation level at fourteen years old. The pride of a genius made it difficult for him to swallow the “you’re so cheating” look that Jiang Chen was sending his way.

The two guards hastily spoke up, “Young master Gong, this won’t do. Master Gong instructed us that we’re never to leave even a foot by your side.”

Jiang Chen shrugged, “Then another time, young master Gong.”

“No!” Gong Qi was thoroughly enraged. Jiang Chen’s every look and move seemed careless, but they were completely provocative in Gong Qi’s eyes. All other geniuses were beyond polite when they saw Gong Qi. They couldn’t avoid the boy fast enough. But Ding

Rong today dared chat and laugh so casually with him. Gong Qi could feel his blood pressure rise as he looked at Jiang Chen's "I'm not afraid of you, I just don't want to offend your grandfather" pose.

"Let's go!" Gong Qi grabbed Jiang Chen's sleeve and glared at the two guards. "Don't follow us! I'll break the legs of whoever follows us!"

The two guards may be strong, but they really wouldn't dare hit back if Gong Qi was beating down on them. But they also didn't dare obey Gong Wuji's orders. Gong Qi lost his temper, "What?! Do my words not mean anything?"

The two guards were obviously afraid of Gong Qi. They looked at each other. Although they weren't by his side, they still trailed after him. The group walked towards the Regal Pill Palace fighting arena, and Gong Qi landed in the ring with a mighty leap. He spoke impatiently, "Are you chicken now, Ding Rong?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "Young master Gong, I'm worried that your two guards will rip me apart if anything happens. I still feel uncertain and I'm worried I won't be able to give it my all."

Gong Ji leered, "What kind of future would us cultivators have if we can't triumph even over a little bit of fear? Kid, stop making excuses. It's your honor to spar with the genius of a first rank sect. Just think, ten years from now, I might not even be willing to take a second look at you if you throw yourself at my feet and look up at me."

These words were quite arrogant, but they were justifiably so. To have such accomplishments at fourteen years old, he'd be at peak sage realm in another ten years, and possibly even half step emperor realm. He did indeed half the right to look down on a fourth rank sect top genius like Ding Rong. If it'd truly been Ding Rong here, he might've more or less felt a bit humiliated after hearing these words. However, Jiang Chen only laughed coldly. Gong Qi was a kid after all. He was arrogant and full of himself.

Jiang Chen smiled, "Alright, young master Gong is a genius of a first rank sect after all. It is indeed the fortune of several lifetimes that I can spar with you. Therefore, will young master Gong let me have three moves first?"

Gong Qi started and then smiled proudly, "I'll give you even ten moves, much less three."

Chapter 697: Capturing Gong Qi Alive

No sooner had he spoken than did the scenery around him flicker. Gong Qi's eyes narrowed, but soon relaxed as hei sneered, "A formation, is it? This is nothing!"

When he'd looked around, the landscape around him looked like the mouth of a volcano. Lava bubbled ominously as the temperature seemed to jump, the prelude to a volcanic eruption. However, Gong Qi's skill was only surpassed by his confidence. He felt no fear whatsoever as he extended his hand and clenched his fist. A glyph on his palm flickered brightly, about to attack the formation directly. It was precisely at this moment that several rays of golden light abruptly appeared from beneath his feet. In the next moment, the golden light congealed and transformed into six golden soldiers that completely surrounded Gong Qi. He suddenly began to panic as his pupils constricted violently.

An extremely bad premonition struck his heart like a bell. The three closest golden armored soldiers were all at sky sage realm!Any one of these three soldiers could have pounded him down into the dust on their own, much less than three of them working together. Moreover, there were another three earth sage golden armored soldiers eyeing him predatorily just behind them at the perimeter. Gong Qi felt every hair on his body standing on end. He had the vague feeling that he had just fallen into a trap.

Gong Qi was strong. In fact, he was slightly stronger than Ding Rong. However, he had made one crucial mistake from the start to end; he had drastically underestimated his opponent. This was especially true since Jiang Chen had been careful to portray a weak look in the guise of Ding Rong. This caused Gong Qi to grow even

more sure of himself and disdainful of Ding Rong. Since then, Gong Qi's underestimation of his enemy had only grown more pronounced.

After activating the formation, Jiang Chen had then used the Soldier Rosary Beads. This was his strongest lethal move. With this strategy, even a top rank genius like Cao Jin would only have a roughly sixty percent chance of making it out alive. While this Gong Qi was without a doubt a genius, he was ultimately too young and absolutely incomparable to someone like Cao Jin in terms of cultivation. If Jiang Chen hadn't wanted to capture him alive, even two Gong Qis combined would have perished beneath a single blow.

Gong Qi's two bodyguards had already reacted when Jiang Chen activated the formation and prepared to charge into the arena. But Huang'er had not been waiting all this time in vain. She immediately crushed two great offensive talismans in her palm and fired them at the bodyguards. Jiang Chen had acquired these offensive glyphs from Cao Jin. The glyphs' offensive power was top class, forcing even the two bodyguards to step back to evade the attack. This momentary pause in their attack bought Jiang Chen the time he needed to deal the perfect blow.

When the two bodyguards finally found their footing, Huang'er had already leapt up onto the arena and Jiang Chen had trussed Gong Qi up. Jiang Chen suppressed every single one of the young cultivator's meridians and fed him a few exclusive pills he'd created out of the Divine Befuddlement Miasma. Moreover, the Divine Befuddlement Miasma of these pills wasn't at all similar to the one he'd fed to Zhang Ole Third.

Jiang Chen laughed loudly and tore off his disguise, revealing his true face to the bodyguards. “Tell that old fool Gong Wuji to come and see me!”

Jiang Chen’s tone was cold and arrogant. He swept a disdainful gaze around his surroundings and looked down at the two wary-looking bodyguards, “If that old man doesn’t show up in ten breaths, then he can come collect his grandson’s corpse!”

“Don’t you dare, kid!”

“He’s Jiang Chen! Look, he’s Jiang Chen!” Someone recognized him amidst the crowd.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. He had never intended to hide his identity in the first place. The reason he’d entered the lion’s den today was to make a dangerous gamble. He had heard from Zhang Ole Third last time that Gong Qi especially enjoyed challenging the top geniuses of the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect. The information had immediately sparked a flash of inspiration in Jiang Chen’s mind and formed the foundation of his plans. He felt that Gong Qi’s youthful arrogance was a good breakthrough point.

That was why he had executed this plan step by step, first by baiting out Ding Rong, then killing and pretending to be him. After he encountered Gong Qi, he pretended to be hesitant in attempt to incite Gong Qi’s competitiveness. As expected, Gong Qi was arrogant in his youth. He was slowly lured into the arena, allowing Jiang Chen to deal the perfect blow. With Gong Qi in his hands, Jiang Chen had basically obtained a trump card that allowed him to advance or retreat as he pleased. The news quickly reached

Gong Wuji's ears.

He been holding a meeting when Gong Qi was captured, and his face immediately drained of all color upon hearing this. Gong Qi was his grandson and his darling. In fact, he loved this grandson more than his own son. Gong Qi was almost identical to him in terms of both talent and behavior. The child had inherited all of the qualities of his grandfather, and was in fact even more talented. One might say that Gong Wuji had sunk everything he had into Gong Qi. Therefore, how could he not be shocked and angry to hear that Gong Qi had fallen into Jiang Chen's hands?

"Jiang Chen... if you dare touch even a hair on my grandson I will shatter your soul and make you suffer for eternity!!" A mad howl came rolled in from the the distance like countless thunderclaps. Some low realm fighters paled greatly upon hearing the roar. They felt as if their consciousness had boiled over in an instant, and that it was a step away from collapsing on the spot.

However, Jiang Chen continued to stand tall like a demon god who'd descended from the sky. He was perfectly calm in spite of Gong Wuji's earth-shaking aura. His cultivation was far weaker than Gong Wuji's, but his consciousness wasn't necessarily much weaker. If Gong Wuji was trying to intimidate him with his might, then he'd obviously barked up the wrong tree.

Jiang Chen's voice suddenly pierced through Gong Wuji's rumbling roar in an abrupt fashion.

"Anyone can talk big, don't you know, old fool? So what if I hurt your grandson, huh?" Jiang Chen swung his arms and slapped

Gong Qi's face twice in a row, intentionally spreading the crisp sounds to every corner of the Regal Pill Palace.

Slap slap!

The sound frightened the people of the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect so much that they could faint. Although they were enemies, they couldn't help but be shocked by Jiang Chen's actions, and be fearful for his sake. He's offending Master Gong Wuji as much as he can!

This kid is absolutely out of control! The Thunder Note Hall's sect head, Great Roc Sect's sect head, and their respective elders had all rushed into the open. It was obvious that even they couldn't sit still now that something of this magnitude had happened. This was especially true for the sect head of the Thunder Note Hall. The guy was drenched in cold sweat and feeling goosebumps all over his body when he'd heard that Ding Rong was the one who'd lured Gong Qi to the arena.

He was racked with a terrible premonition for a second. If Ding Rong was the one who lured Gong Qi to the arena, how had he suddenly turned out to be the vestige of the Regal Pill Palace, Jiang Chen? This matter was weird all around. Could it be? Is Ding Rong... The sect head of the Thunder Note Hall felt like going on a rampage himself when his thoughts travelled up to this point. However, he didn't even have the time to worry for Ding Rong.

This was because Gong Qi was Gong Wuji's precious grandson! If anything were to happen to Gong Qi because of Ding Rong's involvement, then Gong Wuji's wrath would absolutely descend

upon the Thunder Note Hall. Even if the entire incident had absolutely nothing to do with the Thunder Note Hall, even if they were the victims from the beginning to the end, they would most likely suffer Gong Wuji's wrath and be turned into a scapegoat all the same. The sect head of the Thunder Note Hall quickly scuttled to the edge of the arena.

The sect head of the Great Roc Sect had also figured out the ins and outs of the situation. However, he revealed a trace of a gloating smile when no one was looking. Gong Qi was rude and overbearing, and he had put the geniuses of the Great Roc Sect through plenty of hardships while he was around. Worse, the Great Roc Sect couldn't do anything about it. Moreover, the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect were in fact competing against each other even though they were partners on the surface. If the Thunder Note Hall were to lose favor from this incident, then the Great Roc Sect's reputation would no doubt rise in response. This was literally the most perfect situation for the Great Roc Sect.

But of course, he didn't reveal any of his thoughts and wore a sanctimonious look on his face instead. Not wanting to fall behind, he also ran towards the edge of arena and put on an appearance of irreconcilable differences with Jiang Chen.

Gong Wuji's sucked in a deep breath and forcefully restrained his anger. He glared at Jiang Chen with eyes as cold as a hell magistrate's, "What do you want, Jiang Chen?"

"Are you trying to discuss something with me?" Jiang Chen's tone was indifferent. He sneered and said, "Stop looking like a

dead fish if you really want to discuss something with me."

Gong Wuji hated Jiang Chen so much he could explode on the spot. But still he restrained his anger and said, "Aren't you something! Speak. What do you want in exchange for stopping all this?"

"Do you think you can give me what I want?" Jiang Chen sneered.

"Say it." Gong Wuji worked hard to restrain his anger, but he'd locked his consciousness firmly onto Jiang Chen and was searching for that one bit of opening. If he saw even a tiny bit of opening, he would absolutely deal Jiang Chen a fatal blow without hesitation.

"My Regal Pill Palace lies in shambles and ruins. Can you restore it? Those of my Regal Palace people are dead. Can you bring the dead back to the living? Come on, tell me. Which one of my requirements can you fulfill?" Jiang Chen was filled with righteous indignation as he said this, killing intent growing ever thicker. If his rationale hadn't warned him that Gong Qi was still useful to him, he would've torn this guy into shreds already.

Gong Wuji pondered for a moment before saying loudly, "Let's cut the angry words, shall we? Nothing can be changed at this point already. Jiang Chen, you can hardly escape death yourself if you kill my grandson . Why don't we find a compromise that we both can accept?"

This was the truth alright.

“Jiang Chen, stop persisting in your erroneous ways!” The sect head of the Thunder Note Hall also said loudly.

Jiang Chen laughed loudly, “Persist in my wrong ways, you say? You invaded my sect and killed my peers, but here you tell me that I’m the one who’s in the wrong? Gong Wuji, are you forcing me to kill this brat?”

Gong Wuji immediately swore on the inside when he heard this. He glared fiercely at the sect head of the Thunder Note Hall. The sect head of the Thunder Note Hall felt cold sweat pouring down his back and retreated in haste. Although he knew that Jiang Chen was purposely driving a wedge between him and Gong Wuji, there was nothing he could do to justify his actions. Any justification was pointless to Gong Wuji at this moment. It would do nothing but make Gong Wuji feel even more disgusted by him.

“Jiang Chen, I admit that I’ve underestimated you, but do you seriously think that you can control me just because you captured my grandson? What a joke!” Gong Wuji still refused to admit that he was in a bad spot.

“Oh? Does this mean that we’re parting ways now?” Jiang Chen smiled malevolently suddenly slashed down on Gong Qi’s left arm with his own hand.

Crack!

A broken arm flew towards Gong Wuji. Gong Wuji’s expression

changed greatly as big droplets of sweat rolled down his forehead. Gong Qi also roared out with anger and pain, “Jiang Chen, I swear I’ll kill you!”

Jiang Chen shrugged, “I guess you’ll never accomplish your oath in this lifetime.”

Gong Wuji panicked when he heard this, “Wait!”

“Jiang Chen, tell me anything you want!” Gong Wuji gave up on maintaining a tough outlook. He knew that Jiang Chen had thrown all caution to the wind and wasn’t afraid to go to the extreme. Even if he could kill Jiang Chen after this matter was over, he still wouldn’t be able to save his grandson’s life.

Jiang Chen obviously didn’t plan to kill Gong Qi right now either. He stared at Gong Wuji indifferently and said, “Since you insist, then I won’t be holding back my requests. Remember, and I am only going to say this once: Don’t try to negotiate with me. If you do it even once, I swear that you won’t even get the chance to collect his corpse.”

Chapter 698: More Unexpected Events Arise

“Speak!” Gong Wuji was a senior executive of a first rank sect, a majestic holy king of the Eternal Celestial Capital. He was an existence that could personally dictate the fates of those in the Upper Eight Regions. Who would’ve thought that such a person would be forced to restrain his temper before this sage realm cultivator? It wasn’t difficult at all to imagine the boiling resentment in his heart.

“First, I want all of you to get the hell out from Regal Pill Palace territory!

“Second, you will bring back each and every one of the prisoners you’ve captured with the fastest speed possible. You have one month. For every missing person, your grandson will personally donate an organ to their memory. Remember, you have only one month!

“Third, you will return each and every item you took from this place. If not, your grandson will also suffer for each missing item!” Jiang Chen didn’t want to speak too much. He calmly looked at Gong Wuji silently after stating his three demands. He hadn’t made any absurd requests. All of Jiang Chen’s conditions were fully within Gong Wuji’s authority to agree to and fulfill. Just as Gong Wuji was worried about his grandson, so was Jiang Chen worried about those of his sect and fellow disciples.

Gong Wuji’s countenance turned dangerously dark as he digested the demands. He would’ve retorted straightaway had that infernal Regal Pill Palace disciple not stated that there was no room for

negotiation. He had the ability to fulfill each and every one of these three conditions, but it would cause him a great deal of humiliation. He would've made this trip in vain if he agreed to all three demands, not to mention the disgrace he would be subjected to when he returned. But this was his only grandson. If he didn't agree to the terms and the other party decided 'to hell with it all', it would be too late for regrets.

"Jiang Chen, this seat can consider fulfilling your conditions. But how can I trust you to release Gong Qi afterwards?"

Jiang Chen replied indifferently, "I told you already not to haggle. Pull back all these useless troops and deliver the prisoners and items—then we can negotiate. Remember, you have one month." He gave a leisurely peal of laughter and left the arena looking completely at ease. Gong Qi was dragged along behind him, and Huang'er demurely followed. He didn't go anywhere, but headed directly for his own residence in the Rosy Valley.

He had an obligation to remain at the Regal Pill Palace now as one of its only remaining disciples in residence. The ones who should be showing themselves out were those people, now that he had a bargaining chip in hand. "Oh and one more thing—if these people don't get the hell out, I don't mind coming out to kill a few of them every now and then. Feel free to stick around if you lot have no fear of being killed or maimed."

Gong Wuji really wanted to rush in and murder Jiang Chen after watching the young man walk off cockily into the sunset. But he didn't dare take the bet. He knew he had a good chance if he charged in, but he could not afford such a gamble. If for some

reason, he slipped up even once, then he and his beloved grandson would be forever parted by death.

“Sir Gong, this brat is far too insolent...” The sect head of the Thunder Note Hall approached with hopes of currying favor.

“Get out of my sight!” Gong Wuji was not in a good mood. It was just as the sect head of the Thunder Note Hall had thought, the former had decided to take it out on them. The sect head of the Thunder Note Hall was the very picture of wry acceptance—he dared not retort and could only retreat obediently.

“Master Gong, please set aside your anger. Saving the young master takes the utmost priority,” The head of the Giant Roc Sect stood out at this point to play the good man.

“Jiang Chen!” Gong Wuji’s eyes seemed to spout flames as he gazed at Jiang Chen’s fading silhouette. He clenched his fists so hard that his joints cracked, as loudly as stirfried beans. “Your two sects will move your men out of Regal Pill Palace territory!” Despite his overwhelming fury, Gong Wuji dared not challenge Jiang Chen’s temper.

“Yes, sir.” The two sect heads dared not disobey. It was very possible that Gong Wuji would personally kill them if Jiang Chen mentioned that he wanted them dead. Leaving this troublesome area at the fastest possible speed might not be a bad thing for them. Moreover, Jiang Chen had announced that he didn’t mind coming out to kill anyone who remained. This was likely not a bluff, considering his strength.

“Leave everything you have plundered. Remember, don’t even think about playing petty tricks. If any part of this goes wrong, I don’t mind sacrificing both your sects,” Gong Wuji’s tone was frost and steel.

The two sect heads were near helpless, but could only respond with due respect, “Yes, sir.”

The head of the Great Roc Sect still wanted to gain some favor. “Sir, those captives should have arrived at the capital by now. I suggest we contact them right away. If we drag on and encounter some setback, we might delay the more important matters.”

Gong Wuji nodded rigidly and motioned with one hand. “Understood. The two of you may withdraw.”

Jiang Chen observed the retreat of the Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect from a high vantage point in his residence. Killing intent still surged in his heart. “I’ll let you lot leave for now. But the day that I take the fight to the Great Scarlet Mid Region will be your doomsday!” His killing intent did not recede, but instead concentrated, growing ever more potent. He repeatedly reminded himself to endure; to be patient, to bide his time. Even so, he still had to fight the urge to rush out and start a massacre.

One had to look at the greater picture!

Jiang Chen could only pinch his nose and endure for now.

……

While Jiang Chen was silently resisting his urge to kill every Scarlet Mid Region cultivator in sight, the flames of fury burned uproariously amidst those of the Thunder Note Hall when they learned that Ding Rong had perished. The sect head's wrath surged to the skies. He stood at the border of the Regal Pill Palace territory and gritted his teeth, "Jiang Chen, you killed our successor! You and our Thunder Note Hall now have an irreconcilable feud, to the death!!"

The Thunder Note Hall sect head did not mind the deaths of Zhang Ole Third and the disciple surnamed Feng. But Ding Rong was his successor, one of the three strongest geniuses of the Thunder Note Hall. Ding Rong's death was as painful to him as having half his heart gouged out.

"Sect head… things don't look encouraging. We have news from the capital," An elder hurriedly approached the sect head during his outburst.

"What is it now?!" The sect head of the Thunder Note Hall had a distorted expression as he lamented the loss of Ding Rong.

"Those at the capital have tortured and interrogated the prisoners already. They found two sky ranked spirit herbs and a batch of earth ranked ones. The recipe to the Longevity Pill has also been obtained." The elder's expression was grave.

“Isn’t that a good thing?” The sect head of the Thunder Note Hall replied absentmindedly.

“But... But after getting everything they wanted, the prisoners were no longer of any value...”

“Don’t tell me they’ve been killed?!” The sect head’s tone grew heavy.

“They haven’t been killed... yet. But they were all sold to the Veluriyam Capital just a few days ago.”

“Veluriyam Capital?” The sect head’s voice hitched., “Do you mean the Veluriyam Capital from the Upper Eight Regions?”

“Yes.” There was only one Veluriyam Capital beneath the skies.

The expression of the Thunder Note Hall sect head turned rigid after receiving this confirmation. But contrary to expectations, an evil smile split his face, “That also means that the deal between Master Gong Wuji and the brat has... gone down the drain?”

The elder nodded with a complicated expression, “That would inevitably be the case.”

The sect head more or less held some resentment towards Gong Wuji after being repeatedly humiliated. It was just that he dared not express it. But now, he was feeling secretly delighted since the deal had gone awry. He almost rejoiced at Gong Wuji’s plight.

Aren’t you very capable? Didn’t you scold us like dogs? Now that things have turned out this way, you can only wait to collect your grandson’s corpse!

The Thunder Note Hall sect head was not a placid and easygoing person. There was no way he wouldn’t bear a grudge after being humiliated so by Gong Wuji. He was a sect head after all, and it was certain that he would feel upset. He couldn’t vent this resentment directly, but it was natural for him to gloat in secret. He decided to throw caution to the winds now that things had reached this stage.

The Giant Roc Sect also received the news from the capital soon afterwards. The news, of course, reached Gong Wuji even faster than either of the two. Gong Wuji almost fainted after receiving this information. It was still possible for him to rush over and make amends if the prisoners had been sold to any other major power. But the Veluriyam Capital was one of the top powers in the Upper Eight Regions. Their formidable strength wasn’t the least inferior to first rank sects, despite not being one themselves. They might even be more powerful!

The Veluriyam Capital was a bright and transcendent pearl embedded in the map of the Upper Eight Regions. No first rank sect, kingdom or empire dared to provoke it, since it was almost a legend in the Upper Eight Regions. No one clearly knew how many Titled Great Emperors they had, and no one was privy to its inner workings. History spoke of many first rank sects challenging the Veluriyam Capital. Yet, there they stood, as strong and mysterious as ever, while their challengers had disappeared or suffered irreparable losses to the point where they were removed from the list of first rank sects. As such, even first rank sects dared not provoke the Veluriyam Capital.

There were a number of publicly recognized major powers in the Upper Eight Regions, and the Veluriyam Capital ranked among the very top. So much so that the Veluriyam Capital was recognized by those in the region as having the foundation and strength of two first rank sects! Therefore, Gong Wuji did not entertain any thoughts of redeeming the prisoners after they'd been sold to the Veluriyam Capital.

He knew it would be nothing but a fool's errand. The Eternal Celestial Capital was a first rank sect, but the Veluriyam Capital had no need to earn their favor.

Sudden apprehension struck deep within his heart. He could not fulfill Jiang Chen's terms if he was unable to bring back all the prisoners—that meant the doors had closed on any possibility of negotiation. The only way left was to outsmart him.

As soon as the idea struck him, he rushed towards the border of the Regal Pill Palace territory and rounded up the experts of the Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect. He stared meaningfully at the sect head of the Thunder Note Hall and said indifferently, "Sect Head Lei, everything happened because of Ding Rong from your Thunder Note Hall. I can overlook this transgression, on the condition that Gong Qi is safely rescued. I believe that both of you have received news from the capital. The possibility of negotiating with Jiang Chen is now no more. Our only path left is to rescue the hostage by force. I hope both sect heads will prove their sincerity in this regard."

The sect head of the Thunder Note Hall had already cursed all of

Gong Wuji's ancestors several times over in his mind before Gong Wuji finished. But he could only spout compliant reassurances, promising that he would spare no effort to rescue Gong Qi. Someone in the crowd spoke up, "Sir Gong, this Jiang Chen schemed against us all by pretending to be Ding Rong. Why don't we pretend to be prisoners from the Regal Pill Palace?"

Gong Wuji laughed coldly. "Do you think that devious rogue Jiang Chen doesn't have a mouth? Do you think he won't ask questions of his friends? You'd be exposed after a mere couple of questions if he had the mind to check!"

Gong Wuji immediately overruled the proposed strategy.

Chapter 699: Consecutive Blows

“Veluriyam Capital?” Jiang Chen received the Goldbiter Rats’ secret report almost immediately. The Goldbiter Rats race had undergone multiple bloodline evolutions, and some of them had even reached the human sage realm. The Goldbiter Rat King, in particular, was almost at the level of human earth sage realm. His cultivation speed was just as quick as Jiang Chen’s.

However, Jiang Chen didn’t feel envious of the Goldbiter Rats.

They were a race of ancient saint beasts, and their bloodline was ludicrously powerful. In comparison, Jiang Chen held no advantages over them other than the fact that he possessed the memories from his past life. Moreover, the Goldbiter Rats were guaranteed to become powerful because their bloodline could evolve, and their inherited memories would awaken as they grew stronger. Unfortunately, the Goldbiter Rats were limited by the resources that they could scavenge, and the fact that they hadn’t evolved into a fierce form yet. But once the Goldbiter Rats completed their evolution, they would be an impressive trump card!

Even a couple hundred thousand or so Goldbiter Rats were enough to destroy countless experts. An almost unstoppable force of nature that was tens of millions strong. Even an emperor realm expert could only run on sight when faced with a crazy race like this one.

Of course, Jiang Chen wasn’t in a hurry. He had raised the Goldbiter Rats with the idea of long term investment in mind.

When the time was right, the Goldbiter Rats would definitely become his ace! For now, they were more than qualified to act as his eyes and ears. Gong Wuji had summoned the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect to the fringe of Regal Pill Palace territory. Jiang Chen had in turn heard of the news through the Goldbiter Rats. He was both shocked and angered.

What angered him was that Great Scarlet Mid Region had traded the people of the Regal Pill Palace like common goods. This was obviously slavery! What surprised him more was that he had read a little about Veluriyam Capital from the book 'The Annals of Mountains and Rivers'. He knew that this mysterious force was very powerful among the Upper Eight Regions. This was an organization that not even Gong Wuji would dare to provoke. It might be far, far more difficult to save his people from Veluriyam Capital than from Great Scarlet Mid Region.

"Great Scarlet Mid Region!" Jiang Chenès fists were clenched tightly.

"Sir Jiang, Veluriyam Capital is quite far away from here. Even if we were to travel non-stop towards them, it would still take us a couple of months. If we wish to save your people, then it may be prudent to act as soon as possible." Huang'er was also worried when she heard that Gouyu and the others had been sold to the Veluriyam Capital.

Jiang Chen nodded, "We should head out immediately, but Gong Wuji and the bastards of those two sects are still plotting against me. I need to teach them a lesson they won't soon forget."

He pondered for a moment, and a plan slowly formed in his mind. “Miss Huang’er, I’ll need your help again this time,” Jiang Chen’s smile was rather mysterious.

“Sure,” Huang’er didn’t even bother to ask how.

“Take Gong Qi with you and make some noise. It’d be best if you can make this kid scream. You’ll definitely be able to lure Gong Wuji and a couple of experts to you. I’ll then attack while they’re away and kill a couple of cultivators from the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect. Let’s reap some more interest before we go.”

This was no problem at all for Huang’er. She possessed a number of powerful escape glyphs. Not even Gong Wuji could say with assurance that he could catch up to Huang’er. Even if he did, he wouldn’t need to worry for her safety since she had Gong Qi in hand.

“Let’s coordinate meeting spots once the matter is done. First day will be this location. If no one shows up, the second day’s location is here. If we run into trouble, day three’s location is...” Jiang Chen pointed at several locations on a spread map of Myriad Domain and made his arrangements patiently.

Huang’er was extremely smart. She understood Jiang Chen’s plan with a quick glance.

“Be careful, Sir Jiang. Your safety is of the utmost priority,” Huang’er gave him a rare reminder before she left.

“You too,” Jiang Chen replied gravely. After the duo parted ways, Jiang Chen waited until Huang’er had left and slowly counted. Then, without the slightest warning, he vanished into thin air.

At the borders of Regal Pill Palace territory, Gong Wuji and the two sect heads was almost done making their plans to ambush and kill Jiang Chen. It was obvious that they were determined to kill him this time. “Don’t worry, Master Gong. If your drugs work as intended, then we will definitely capture this Jiang Chen. When that happens... hehe,” The Thunder Note Hall’s sect head laughed sinisterly.

“Don’t underestimate our enemies. My drug is just one part of our plan. If the first plan doesn’t work, then we must immediately move on to the backup plan. Both of you must prepare all necessary arrangements by then.” Gong Wuji had prepared three plans in total, and if the first one didn’t work, he would immediately move onto the second plan. He would not brook any mistakes.

A bloodcurdling scream suddenly cut through the air as they went over the plan once more. The pitch of the scream clearly revealed its owner as a youth. It didn’t take long for the scream to register as belonging to Gong Qi. Gong Wuji’s face turned cold, “Was that Qi’er?”

The sect head of the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roct Sect exchanged glances with each other. They had obviously realized that it was Gong Qi’s voice too. The atmosphere on the scene

immediately turned oppressive and serious. Then——

Another bloodcurdling scream cut through the air, “Jiang Chen, you bastard, I swear, if you ever fall in my hands I’ll… Ah!!!”

This time, no one could mistake this voice for anyone else’s but Gong Qi’s. Everyone was stunned by this turn of events. Wasn’t Jiang Chen at the Regal Pill Palace? That was incredibly far from them, so how did Gong Qi’s voice transmit all the way to their meeting spot? It couldn’t be that their plans had been… exposed, could they? Had Jiang Chen brought Gong Qi out into the open as a show of strength? Gong Wuji couldn’t just sit by and do nothing. He charged out of the door, leaving behind a command, “Let’s go take a look.”

The sect head of the Great Roc Sect cast a glance at the sect head of Thunder Note Hall and said, “Let’s go.”

Although both sect heads felt that this whole thing might just be a ruse, they didn’t dare not show their support since Gong Wuji himself had gone. If they didn’t go after him and seek out the source of the voice, then Gong Wuji would be even more irate when he returned later. However, the two sect heads were very cautious and warned their subordinates, “Keep your heads about you just in case this is a trick to lure us away!”

The elders of both sects chuckled and said, “Don’t worry, sect head. If that kid dares to show his face here, we’ll make sure that he never returns!”

The elites of both sects had all been gathered at this place. Considering how numerous their experts were, they weren't afraid of just one Jiang Chen. In their view, the reason Jiang Chen had even managed to capture Gong Qi was because he'd relied on dirty tricks and sneak attacks. They thought that Jiang Chen would have to be insane to attack their elite team head on. Unless he was suicidal!

Although that was what the elders told their respective sect heads, they didn't dare to neglect their defenses either. All of the elders stood up and personally patrolled the grounds, yelling, "Stay on high alert, everyone. If that Jiang Chen is stupid enough to charge into this place, then it'll be the perfect opportunity for us to score some merits!"

"Hehe, I'm only afraid that he wouldn't come!"

"It'll be perfect if he shows up. We can capture him ourselves!"

"No way! There's no way he has the guts to show his face around here!"

"Yeah, that kid ambushed senior brother Ding Rong and captured young master Gong only because he was using a couple of dirty tricks. But how powerful could he possibly be in true face to face combat?" There were plenty of people who didn't see Jiang Chen as their equal or superior. Although Jiang Chen was a fourth rank sect disciple just like them, they'd always had this feeling of superiority that a fourth rank sect in the Great Scarlet Mid Region was far better than a corresponding sect in the Myriad Domain.

Jiang Chen was just a fourth rank sect genius in the Myriad Domain. He may have been in the limelight for the past few days, but that certainly didn't put him on their level. Cultivators of both sects were frustrated with the amount of attention he'd been getting recently, and were only too eager to receive an opportunity to teach him a lesson. A sudden burst of laughter rang out in midair as they happily trash talked. An indifferent voice entered everyone's ears, "Oh? Then, guess what? Here I am!"

Countless rampaging vines burst out of the ground before the voice's echo had even dispersed. Lotuses started to bloom, and they whipped towards the crowd, maws gaping.

"Calm down, don't panic!"

"Hold your ground. He's just one person! Don't be afraid!"

"Yeah, don't be afraid. He's only one person! What could he do even if he has three heads and six arms?"

Words were comforting in their own right, but the carnage that several hundred berserk vines can create is more than enough to make the most persuasive of arguments seem hollow. Some low realm cultivators even immediately fled from the scene. But there were also plenty of sage realm experts who leaped headlong into battle, unsheathing their blades as they hacked at the vines.

One slash, two slashes...

Swords and blades danced everywhere as hundreds of people defended themselves against the vines at the same time. They might not be able to cut down the vines in one cut, but they weren't alone. The successive attacks of both swords and blades hacked apart countless vines. However, the vines themselves were rather flexible. As soon as the cultivators started to feel like they were about to gain the upper hand, all of the vines dived deep back underground. In a blink of an eye, they'd vanished.

"Eh? What's going on?"

"Did he leave?"

"Don't fall into his trap. This is a harassment tactic!"

"Yeah, we shouldn't lose our own footing." The unpredictable attack had vanished as quickly as it came. The two sects waited for the next wave to arrive with great suspicion, but it never did show up. It really seemed to just be a harassment tactic. Its only objective was to annoy them. However, a couple of origin realm cultivators started to collapse to the ground. Before long, more and more started to fall to their knees, clutching at their chests.

"Oh no! Poison!"

"I can't move my body at all!"

"Ah! I'm poisoned too!" A dozen or so people standing near the

edge of the battlefield cried out.

A couple of elders hastily yelled orders with ashen faces, “Leave this place now! Quickly!”

“Hold your breaths and don’t use your consciousness! We must evacuate this place quickly!” These elders had come to the realization that this attack wasn’t a probe or harassment at all. It was an absolutely lethal attack under the cover of a diversion. The vines were simply the delivery mechanism for the fatal poison. Chaos once engulfed the scene. The cultivators who showed the first signs of poison were all origin realm cultivators, but it didn’t take long for sage realm experts to begin to show symptoms too. The elites of both sects totaled several thousand people. Within minutes, the number of poisoned people reached eighty, and it only looked like it would increase from there.

The group quickly evacuated the scene under their elders’ commands. Suddenly, a volley of arrows sped through the air, aimed at their flank. Approximately thirty arrows, the elders flew up to deflect the arrows away, stopping a large majority from hitting their people. These elders were all sky sage realm cultivators. Some of them were even half step emperor realm. Naturally, these non-lethal arrows were nowhere near powerful enough to be a threat to their defenses. However, they immediately noticed that the arrows were just a trap. As the arrows landed harmlessly in the ground, they each discharged a burst of poison powder into the air.

“This is bad!”

“Retreat, retreat!”

“Don’t stay in one place, keep moving!” Every second they stayed inside the poison cloud meant an increase in casualties. At this moment, everyone of them felt a sudden sense of apprehensive fear. They’d originally thought that the Regal Pill Palace would be easy pickings, with the promise of a fat reward for little effort. But now, gloom and regret were the only emotions that filled their minds.

Chapter 700: Immense Losses

The poison within the arrows latched onto nearly thirty unprepared cultivators as it spread through the chaos. It was absolutely tyrannical. Once inhaled, it swiftly infiltrated the ocean of qi in the cultivator's dantian, spelling their doom. Once that happened, the cultivator could no longer mobilize their inner energy, since doing so would only speed up its spread in their bodies.

The thousand strong group finally escaped the range of the poisonous arrows and arrived in a fairly spacious area. Intense killing intent was clear in the eyes of the several elders. They gazed in the direction from which the arrows had been shot from before exchanging surreptitious glances with each other. They were debating whether or not they should just charge out and kill that brat! It wasn't that they didn't want to go. It was just that they were restrained by the seemingly endless tricks up Jiang Chen's sleeves. Any one of these elders was superior to Jiang Chen on the basis of pure strength. But as things stood, the enemy was in the dark while they stood in the light. They truly didn't dare to casually provoke Jiang Chen after seeing all the methods at his disposal.

If only a couple of them sallied forth, not only would they be unable to catch Jiang Chen, but they might be picked off instead. On the other hand, there would be no one to protect the group if all of them charged out. The elders were momentarily wracked with indecision. They wanted to obtain the credit of capturing Jiang Chen, but were also worried about leaving their group unprotected. After all, Jiang Chen's tactics were too convoluted. They feared that he was creating a diversion, like luring a tiger away from his mountain. If he returned to deal with the group

while they were focused on a diversion...

Their impulse to charge out gradually receded as caution started to rear its head. Just when they thought they were in the clear, a ghastly cry rang out from their midst.

“Ah, my dantian... I’ve also been poisoned!”

“No! It seems this area is also poisoned...”

“Poison formation... this is a poison formation, it’s all around us... we’re dead!” Panicked screams rang out from the crowd once more. The elders felt a chill run through their hearts—it felt like an endless nightmare. Another poison formation had actually been set up around them!

The deployment of this formation was rather ingenious and its destructive potential far more lethal than the previous one. Hundreds of disciples fell to the poison within a few breaths. There were no shortage of sage realm cultivators within the victims.

“Retreat, keep moving!” Will this never end? The few elders were almost losing their minds from the continuous onslaught that came in wave after wave. Was this Jiang Chen aiming to exterminate them with this relentless rhythm of attacks? Even the experienced elders were momentarily overwhelmed by his methods.

They closed off their consciousness, evidently fearing that the

poison would penetrate their dantian. They had learned from their mistakes this time and sent some men to scout ahead before moving the entire group. The group finally had a chance to reorganize roughly fifteen minutes later.

The three consecutive assaults had left the two sects in a state of great alarm. They felt terrified at the merest rustle of grass in the wind, like a bird intimidated by the sound of a bow. It felt like every tree and brush was an enemy. After a quick head count, they realized that their casualties had reached over a hundred between the two sects. Most of them were origin realm cultivators, but a dozen or so sage realm cultivators had also fallen. This was undoubtedly an enormous loss for the two sects. Although not to the point where it undermined the constitution of the sect, but it was definitely painful. There were no shortage of talent within the two sects, but the number of sage realm cultivators was very limited. They had mobilized their elites in full force for this invasion, deploying most of their experts to the Regal Pill Palace, but who would've thought that they would take such terrible losses. The most depressing thing was that their casualties had not been a result of their assault on the Regal Pill Palace, but rather from the lone attacks of Jiang Chen. He had them all in a constant state of anxiety, completely on tenterhooks.

Gong Wuji rushed back after half an hour with two bodyguards and the two sect heads in tow. He returned empty handed, with nothing to show from this excursion. Gong Wuji's expression was so gloomy that it'd sunk to new lows. After being tricked and having his face slapped repeatedly, this fourth rank emperor realm cultivator had somewhat lost his calm demeanor. The two sect heads also felt their hearts sink after seeing the chaos and hurriedly inquired about the situation. They cursed loudly after finding out what had transpired, feeling as if their hearts had been

gouged by blades.

"This beast is truly cunning!"

"Jiang Chen, you and our Thunder Note Hall are absolutely irreconcilable!" The Thunder Note Hall sect head was burning with fury after the recent string of misfortunes. He roared at the skies, unable to suppress his frustration.

Gong Wuji's temper was worse. As things stood, he realized that Jiang Chen must have gotten wind of what had transpired at the Great Scarlet Capital. He wouldn't have launched an attack like this otherwise. This was no longer a simple demonstration of might, but an obvious eruption of hostility.

"Master, Jiang Chen is extremely crafty. Since he already knows that those from the Regal Pill Palace are no longer in our hands, I think we should immediately pursue him and attack. Every moment we delay adds to the young master's peril..." one of Gong Qi's bodyguards mustered the courage to voice a suggestion.

Although Gong Wuji was angry at their failure to protect Gong Qi, he was in dire need of manpower at the moment and found himself unable to rebuke them. He nodded with a deep sigh, "Time is of the essence. Give chase!" He glanced at the two sect heads, "What say you?"

Sparks spat from the eyes of the Thunder Note Hall sect head, "We chase. Of course we have to chase him down! I'll burn him to ashes when I capture him!"

The Thunder Note Hall had first lost Ding Rong, and then suffered heavy casualties. All of this had no doubt wounded the foundations of the Thunder Note Hall. The Giant Roc sect head also nodded, “We’re willing to follow Master Gong! We pledge with our lives to chase down and kill this little thief Jiang Chen! If this scum doesn’t die, none of us will be able to live out our days in peace!”

The elders from the two sects all nodded in succession, evidently in agreement with the Great Roc sect head. Just the nightmare that Jiang Chen have given them a while ago was enough to haunt them for half their lives, to put talk of all else out of their minds. Rather than wait for Jiang Chen to ambush them repeatedly, it would be better to mount an active assault and kill the child.

“Master Gong, Jiang Chen has many tricks up his sleeves. He is adept at camouflage, able to control vines and has a number of golden armored warriors at his command. He can set up formations and possesses sophisticated escape talismans. If it wasn’t for all this, he wouldn’t be able to cause any trouble at all, being at just mortal sage realm.”

“Those golden armored warriors are not to be trifled with. His formations, on the other hand, aren’t particularly advanced and so pose no threat to us. But it’s more than enough to sow chaos and disruption.”

“Mm hmm… if we want to capture him, we need to figure out how to deal with his escape talismans. We need to either lock him down with an emperor realm domain or use a powerful restriction

talisman." They were able to come to this conclusion after suffering a beating. Each person weighed in with the methods that Jiang Chen had used during this time. Ultimately, they came to the conclusion that the most difficult thing to deal with were the escape talismans. There were thousands of variations on the dao of glyphs and talismans. If there was an escape talisman, there would naturally be a restriction talisman to counter it.

Some of the higher grade restriction talismans could lock down space, effectively preventing escape talismans from tearing through them. Of course there was no easy way to compare two talismans. It all came down to their ranks. It was a battle between the grades of the talismans themselves. However, the restriction talisman was intrinsically designed to restrain the escape talisman.

It was just that the difficulty of refining a restriction talisman was much higher than that of an escape talisman. As such, the restriction talismans available on the market were mostly of low quality and wouldn't be able to restrain a high level escape talisman. It was also difficult to find a high grade restriction talisman. There weren't many people who could afford to use an advanced restriction talisman unless they absolutely required it. An emperor realm domain would usually do the trick.

However, Master Gong Wuji's emperor realm domain had obviously locked down the entire area last time. But the expert beside Jiang Chen had been able to tear a hole through it, allowing them to escape. This particular memory was enough to cast a shadow over their hearts. It would be too difficult to kill Jiang Chen when his companion couldn't be contained even by an emperor realm domain. After all, the only surefire way to deal with the escape talisman was to deploy an emperor realm domain.

Gong Wuji was at fourth rank emperor realm, while the other two sect heads were second rank emperor realm. There were also a few half-step emperor realm elders who were barely able to exert their own domain. Everyone's gaze landed on Gong Wuji in the end. They would follow his commands. Gong Wuji himself found it difficult to understand what had happened previously. After giving it some thought, he concluded that it was impossible for the Regal Pill Palace to have someone who could break through an emperor realm domain in their ranks. He felt that the opponent must've utilized the power of a formidable talisman. This type of talisman most likely couldn't be used multiple times. Even if that wasn't the case, Jiang Chen himself didn't possess the power to break through an emperor realm domain. If only he could be separated from that expert, then they would definitely be able to lock him down and kill him.

"Wait for an opportunity to defeat them individually," Gong Wuji led the two bodyguards in pursuit of Jiang Chen after deciding on the strategy. Even if they couldn't find Jiang Chen, they could still track Gong Qi. Hidden within his body was a bloodline mark that only Gong Wuji could track. The sect heads of the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect followed suit along with the elites of their sect after making arrangements for the remaining disciples.

Now that things had escalated to this point, it was obviously no longer a simple dispute between Jiang Chen and Gong Wuji. This much was clear to the two sects. Their two sects were also now embroiled in a vendetta that would only end in death. Jiang Chen had killed their disciples while they had also killed those from the Regal Pill Palace. This vengeance would only end with the death of Jiang Chen. Otherwise, Jiang Chen would become an eternal

nightmare for their sects. He was already such a thorny problem in the sage realm. They could foresee with certainty that the calamity of annihilation would descend upon the Thunder Note Hall and the Giant Roc Sect if he was allowed to ascend to the emperor realm. Thus, it was imperative that they chase down and kill Jiang Chen as soon as possible.

Gong Wuji suddenly stopped two days later. With a wave of his hand, he whispered, “I sense Qi’er’s blood within fifty kilometers. We will split up—Thunder Note Hall will circle around to the left and the Great Roc Sect to the right. The two of you will charge straight in while I go around to his rear. We’ll form a complete blockade this way.”

After locking him down from all sides, Gong Wuji wanted to see just how many escape talismans Jiang Chen had left. Considering the resources available to the Regal Pill Palace, there was definitely an end to his supply! The day that brat uses up all his escape talismans is the day he will be executed!

Fifty kilometers… twenty five… fifteen…

Everyone’s emotions became more and more agitated, and all of deployed their domains slightly when they entered within five kilometers of the mark. Everyone charged forward at the same time when Gong Wuji gave the order, furiously expanding their domains to its maximum area.

“Let’s go!” Loud yells exploded out, all directed towards the target they’d chosen.

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