SOVEREIGN OF THE THREE REALMS

BOOK 10

Plow Days

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

Sovereign of the Three Realms

(三界独尊)

by

Plow Days

(犁天)

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 701: Bounty, Pursuit

When they charged into the core area, the crowd's footsteps abruptly came to a stop. Everyone's expression turned extremely dark and stiff in an instant. They couldn't stop their hearts from spasming. A few cowardly fighters couldn't help but look at the sky. They were afraid that Gong Wuji, high up in the sky, would suddenly go berserk and slaughter them all.

Indeed, they'd seen Gong Qi.

More accurately speaking, they saw a partial Gong Qi.

Gong Qi was hung on a tree and swaying slightly in midair. He was barely alive, and his back was engraved with words that had been made by a sharp weapon. "Gong Wuji, this is but the start of my revenge for the destruction of my sect. Neither the Eternal Celestial Capital nor the Great Scarlet Mid Region will escape Jiang Chen's wrath!"

These bloody words appeared incredibly sinister as they were engraved directly into Gong Qi's back. To add onto that, his arms had been completely hacked off, and his meridians and dantian completely shattered as well. Even if he were to survive, he would just be trash. In any case, he was dead for sure with those kinds of injuries. Gong Wuji's bitter screams rained down from the sky. He immediately landed beside Gong Qi and held his grandson in his arms. The burning fury in his eyes looked like they could reduce the entire Myriad Domain to ashes. "Jiang Chen!!"

Gong Wuji threw his head back and howled, his unbridled anger and killing intent sweeping through the entire area and causing passing birds and land animals to explode into masses of bloody gore. The landscape in a two kilometer radius around him were completely decimated. Gong Qi's two bodyguards were also absolutely terrified by this revelation. They were Gong Qi's bodyguards, but they had failed to protect him and allowed him to fall into Jiang Chen's hands, even if it had been a consequence that Gong Qi had brought unto himself. It was undeniable that they had neglected their duties as Gong Qi's bodyguards. Therefore, they were infinitely afraid that Gong Wuji would sacrifice them as an offering to Gong Qi.

Gong Wuji finally lifted his head once more a long time later. His entire being felt so sharp like a blade that the people around him couldn't help but pull away from him.

"Come over, you two," Gong Wuji beckoned the bodyguards. "Take Qi'er's body away and bury it properly. One of the Gong family cannot be exposed like this," Gong Wuji's tone was heavy and dark.

He absolutely wouldn't minded slaughtering everyone here in exchange for his grandson's life, if that could've revived him. But he also knew that venting his anger on others by killing them would only make him an even greater laughingstock than he already was in the eyes of those present. Right now, the most important thing to do was to hunt down Jiang Chen. Now that Gong Qi was gone, they no longer needed to fear for his safety. They would be able to chase and hunt down Jiang Chen without any concerns.

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Jiang Chen had kept his promise. He had left plenty of Divine Befuddlement Miasma antidotes around the borders of Myriad Domain. If that Zhang Ole Third could leave the Myriad Domain alive and reach the borders, it was entirely possible for him to find the antidotes. Once he was done with all this, Jiang Chen took a deep look back at the Myriad Domain before exchanging a glance with Huang'er, "Let's go."

The two figures drew extremely long shadows beneath the sunset before they gradually vanished along an ancient path. Although Jiang Chen was racked with worry after learning that Gou Yu and the others had been sold to the Veluriyam Capital, he was at least comforted by the knowledge that their lives weren't at risk. Even though he had figured out their rough locations, Jiang Chen had decided to visit the Great Scarlet Mid Region first. He had no doubts that the news he learned was genuine. He was just afraid that not everyone had been traded to the Veluriyam Capital, and that someone might have been left behind.

After all, the Regal Pill Palace were not lacking in geniuses. Mu Gaoqi was one such example. There was also Elder Yun Nie. He might not be a pill king, but his talent in pills was absolutely deserving of a seat in Great Scarlet Mid Region. At the same time, he was hoping to test his luck and see if he could find the missing sect head Dan Chi, Ling Bi'er and more.

The road to the Great Scarlet Mid Region didn't really count as a detour. If someone wanted to make their way to the Veluriyam Capital from the Myriad Domain, passing through the Great

Scarlet Mid Region was a must. One would also have to go through another two lower regions and one middle more region after crossing through the Great Scarlet Mid Region, before they could enter Upper Eight Regions territory.

They would also have to pass through the territory of quite a number of factions after entering Upper Eight Regions territory before they could finally enter the Veluriyam Capital. Even if they were to encounter no obstacles whatsoever along the way, the trip would still take a minimum of several months time. Plus, he didn't doubt for a second that they would encounter countless hardships and obstacles on their way to the Veluriyam Capital.

There were countless wandering cultivators in the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Both Huang'er and Jiang Chen had disguised themselves as such, and although they encountered countless roadblocks and were questioned many times along the way, they had unique methods that could suppress the ripples of their internal energy. This kept any outsider from figuring out their true strength. And so, they calmly entered into the capital of Great Scarlet Mid Region as earth origin realm cultivators.

The Great Scarlet Mid Region was absolutely bustling with activity. Even the old Myriad Empire couldn't compare to the current Great Scarlet Mid Region. Except, Jiang Chen couldn't appreciate the Great Scarlet Mid Region's prosperity at all. If saving his sect members from the Veluriyam Capital wasn't top priority, he would've caused rivers of blood to flow in the streets from the slaughter of these citizens. However, his rationality warned him that this was not the best time to take revenge. The Great Scarlet Mid Region royal household alone contained an unknown number of experts.

After entering the capital, the duo frequented many taverns and tea shops. These were the easiest places to learn about the latest news. On this day, the duo appeared at the empire's most reputable tavern, the Dragon & Phoenix. Of course, they couldn't just book a private room outright with their current disguises. It so happened that there were many southern guests making a trip to the north gathered in the lobby, and so Jiang Chen requested a table that was close to the edge of the room and ordered some dishes.

The great hall was noisy and bustling with activity. He extended his consciousness a little and continuously gathered information from the surrounding tables. But although some of these people were talking about Myriad Domain, the content of their discussion were rather unimportant as it was of lower importance. Jiang Chen didn't rush things. He continued to extend his consciousness slowly. Suddenly, he locked his consciousness onto a particular table. There were four of them, and they were all dressed like sect disciples.

"Hehe, the commotion is quite big this time. Thank goodness we haven't been sent to the Regal Pill Palace, or it would've been a great misfortune."

"I know, right? Everyone thought at first that the Regal Pill Palace was rich and easy pickings. They were all lamenting their bad luck for not getting a chance to tag along. Now it would seem that it was a deadly task, hahaha."

Jiang Chen had figured out that these four people were probably

part of a sect that had assigned to attack Myriad Domain. It was just that their target hadn't been the Regal Pill Palace.

"That's why they say risk and return are two sides of the same coin. If the Regal Pill Palace didn't have an unknown factor like Jiang Chen, they would've been a rich mark to rob. Did you see what we got from the Walkabout Sect? They had nothing but a bunch of poisonous stuff."

"Hehe, speaking of the Walkabout Sect, I heard that the poison Jiang Chen used to ambush the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect was none other than the Walkabout Sect's Spirit Restraint Powder."

"Yeah, I heard about that too. How weird, I thought Jiang Chen is a Regal Pill Palace disciple, so how did he know how to use Walkabout Sect poison?"

"Who knows? C'mon, drink up!"

Jiang Chen sneered inwardly. He wasn't lacking in Spirit Restraint Powders alright. He'd picked up quite a bit of this poison back when he killed the Walkabout Sect's elder Wei Wudao and confiscated his space ring, and had obtained even more from killing Wei Qing. He'd used up most of it after he had set up the traps and attacked the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect in that offensive barrage. However, Jiang Chen could easily mass produce more given enough time when it came to poison.

"The Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect is so out of luck

this time. I heard that a holy king's grandson of the Eternal Celestial Capital died, alarming even our Great Scarlet Emperor himself. This definitely is one hell of an incident."

"Yeah. But weird, how did the Eternal Celestial Capital get involved?"

Jiang Chen was first surprised by this dialogue, then realized immediately after that the Eternal Celestial Capital had kept its involvement hidden in the beginning, but the truth had gradually spilled out into the open as their clash against the Ninesuns Sky Sect had gradually escalated. It would appear that the Eternal Celestial Capital had fully emerged into the open now.

"I guess the situation of the Divine Abyss Continent is just so mysterious. Sigh, in the end a fourth rank sect like us is just too weak."

"Yeah, we're nothing in front of a first rank sect."

"I heard that the Great Scarlet Mid Region's bounty is about to come out today. I'm so curious! What kind of bounty do you think the empire will give out this time?"

Bounty? Jiang Chen immediately understood that the bounty must be directed at him.

"Hehe, everyone, I heard that this Jiang Chen may very well come to our empire in an attempt to save his sect members. Who

knows, maybe we could use this chance to rise to the top!”

“Stop dreaming already! Just us alone? Jiang Chen killed even Ding Rong of the Thunder Note Hall!”

“Even a holy king of the Eternal Celestial Capital was played like a fool, much less Ding Rong! There’s no way people like us could deal with that Jiang Chen.”

“Ssh! Be quiet. Do you want to die, talking about a holy king of the Eternal Celestial Capital like that?” The group of people immediately fell silent and drowned themselves in alcohol. They obviously all thought that their conversation had gone a little overboard and decided not to gossip any further.

It was at this moment a couple of energetic-looking cultivators rushed into the restaurant. The leader of the group yelled loudly, “Boss, bring us a couple of jugs of alcohol, quickly!”

“Haha, boss, the empire is definitely sparing no effort to capture Jiang Chen. Any person who manages to capture that guy would be granted the title of duke, a thousand acres of land, and awarded the Great Scarlet Patriot Order. They would also gain five million sage spirit stones, three thousand Heroic Sage Pills, one sky rank spirit herb and the chance to found a sect and be ruler of his own territory in the Great Scarlet Mid Region.”

“Boss, this is the our chance as the Ghost Cave Five!”

These noisy wandering cultivators were actually quite powerful. One of them was actually at earth sage realm while the remaining four were all at mortal sage realm. The leader of the group was a one-eyed man. He gripped his wine cup and said slowly, “I didn’t think that we would encounter such a great opportunity travelling to the Great Scarlet Mid Region this time. Considering all the years we’ve spent wandering around the lands, it is probably time to find a good place to settle. Are you guys sure you want to do this?” The one-eyed boss looked at his brothers and asked for their opinions with a serious expression on his face.

“Let’s do it!”

“Of course we’re doing it, the one who freaking thinks otherwise is a coward!”

“This is a rare opportunity for wandering cultivators like us. We must make this gamble no matter what!”

wandering cultivators had always been more rough and direct type. When the table of sect disciples heard of their discussion, they all walked over and asked, “Hey brothers, has the bounty came out already?”

Chapter 702: New Journey, Veluriyam Capital

These wandering cultivators were all fierce people. They instinctively wanted to yell at the newcomers who'd butted in on their conversation. However, when they noticed that the strangers' attire seemed to identify them as sect disciples from the Great Scarlet Mid Region, they forcefully swallowed the abuses that had formed on the tip of their tongues. The one-eyed man cast the strangers a glance, then nodded indifferently. "It just did. That's what everyone outside is talking about at the moment. Haven't you heard?"

The sect disciples weren't as strong as the wandering cultivators, nor did they have any wish to cause unnecessary trouble. As such, they quickly stepped outside to check the bounty notice for themselves. Jiang Chen wasn't surprised to learn about the bounty on his head. After so many conflicts, he and the Great Scarlet Mid Region were at complete odds with one another. It was only natural that the Great Scarlet Empire had issued a bounty for his head.

The crowd that was checking out the bounty notice was enormous. Thankfully, the empire had stuck similar notices in several different places. As he was just one of the many people checking out the bounty notice, Jiang Chen didn't stand out at all. He sneered inwardly as he stared at the bounty notice. A bounty on my head, eh? He wasn't afraid of this sort of thing in the slightest. It was true that a bounty such as this would draw many desperate cultivators like hungry wolves. However, despite this, Jiang Chen wouldn't be afraid of trash like them, no matter how many of them there were.

Jiang Chen returned to the Dragon & Phoenix once he'd checked out the bounty notice on him. He'd only just returned when he noticed a group of people walking down from the second floor. A young man dressed in oriental clothing stood in the center of the group, while bodyguards stood closeby both in front of and behind him. The bodyguards were obviously on high alert as they eyed their surroundings with hawk-like eyes. Besides the young man's group, there was also another group of people, who were obviously of high status as well. The head of that group was actually a first level emperor realm cultivator.

"I'm really sorry, Elder Gui. I would've saved him for you if you'd notified me earlier. It's this prince's fault for not noticing that he possessed an innate wood constitution of high order." The young man in oriental clothing had called himself a 'prince'. Could it be that he was a prince of the Great Scarlet Empire?

The person next to him seemed to be called 'Elder Gui'. He had an average build, and was dressed in light blue clothing. He didn't look special at all. However, his first level emperor realm cultivation caused an aura of natural dignity and power to radiate off of him.

"Forget it. There's no point in talking about this any further since you've already sold it. It's simply unfortunate that we missed out on that innate wood constitution;it was already too late when I heard the news." Elder Gui sighed softly and looked incredibly regretful.

Even though the duo had conversed in hushed tones, Jiang

Chen's consciousness was extremely powerful. He'd heard every word of what they said. An innate wood constitution of high order? Could it be that they're talking about Mu Gaoqi?

"Indeed. I might not have agreed to sell all of those people to them so quickly if they weren't from the Veluriyam Capital. Even this prince can't afford to offend the Veluriyam Capital, not to mention the fact that we've more than likely already forced all of the information out of them that we could," The third prince explained.

Elder Gui nodded, then casually asked, "I've heard that you've obtained the recipe for a pill called the Longevity Pill. The Great Scarlet Empire is planning to gift it to the Eternal Celestial Capital, is it not?"

Eternal Celestial Capital? Jiang Chen immediately understood who this Elder Gui belonged to when he heard this. As he'd guessed earlier, the elder was a member of the Eternal Celestial Capital. It was no wonder that even the imperial prince had to speak so cautiously in front of him.

"Well... my father is in fact preparing to gift the recipe for the Longevity Pill to the Eternal Celestial Capital. However... the empire's finances have been a little tight in recent years. As such... it would be wonderful if Elder Gui could put in a good word for us so that we can share in the Longevity Pill's profits as well."

Elder Gui smiled calmly and replied, "The sect master has already declared that the empire shall receive twenty percent of the total profits. Don't worry, the higher-ups of the Eternal Celestial Capital

aren’t unreasonable.”

The third prince murmured in agreement, but internally felt quite skeptical. The Great Scarlet Empire was the one who would obtain the recipe for the Longevity Pill, yet not only was the Eternal Celestial Capital taking it for free, they were also only doling out twenty percent of the total profits. How could this be anything but unreasonable? Yet despite this, he could only complain about this silently.

Meanwhile, Jiang Chen had rage had grown to towering heights as he sat at his table. The Longevity Pill was his exclusive recipe, yet these bastards were going to divide the proceeds amongst themselves! How dare these bastards talk about dividing their ill-gotten gains so openly and shamelessly in public! However, it wasn’t like it was entirely bad news. Judging from this third prince’s tone, everyone in the Regal Pill Palace had likely been sold to the Veluriyam Capital.

Jiang Chen had originally planned to inquire about details of the trade, but after a moment of careful consideration, he decided that it would be easy enough to find such a large group of people when he entered the Veluriyam Capital. He immediately withdrew his consciousness from the group and moved his gaze away from them. Now that he’d confirmed that there weren’t any Regal Pill Palace members left in the Great Scarlet Empire, he no longer had any need to eavesdrop on their conversation. On the off chance that his enemies discovered him eavesdropping, he’d simply be putting himself in danger instead.

This was the capital of the Great Scarlet Empire; if his identity

were to be exposed, his movements would be greatly obstructed. Jiang Chen and Huang'er departed from the capital the next day, and headed for the Veluriyam Capital. However, he felt slightly depressed at the fact that he hadn't been able to wreak absolute havoc and bloodshed in the capital. At the same time, the divulgence of the Longevity Pill recipe, the wood spirit spring falling into Gong Wuji's hands, and the fact that so many of his sect members were sold to Veluriyam Capital were all simultaneously clouding his mood. Only Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie were privy to the recipe. As such, the Longevity Pill's recipe must 've been forced out of Elder Yun Nie. This revelation caused Jiang Chen to feel quite dejected, as he hadn't thought that of Elder Yun Nie as a cravenly person. Huang'er consoled him when she saw that Jiang Chen was feeling a little down, "Sir Jiang, everything will turn out alright in the end. It's better that they were sold to the Veluriyam Capital than falling into the Eternal Celestial Capital's hands."

This was also true. Since they'd been sold to the Veluriyam Capital, he still at least had some leeway to rescue them. If they'd fallen into the Eternal Celestial Capital or the Great Scarlet Mid Region's hands, then he wouldn't have had any leeway. Jiang Chen had originally wanted to exchange Gong Qi for his sect members, but unfortunately... he'd been a step too late.

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Meanwhile, Gong Wuji and his men had just returned to the capital of the Great Scarlet Empire. Almost all of the important figures in the Great Scarlet Mid Region were present for this meeting. Amongst them were three third-rank sect heads and even some important royalty from the Great Scarlet Empire. While it

was undeniable that these third-rank sect heads were at least equal to or stronger than Gong Wuji, they didn't dare to act rudely in front of him. Even though Gong Wuji was only at the fourth level emperor realm, he held a prominent level of status as the holy king of the Eternal Celestial Capital; he represented the Eternal Celestial Capital itself! As such, even the emperor of the Great Scarlet Mid Region had to show him some respect.

"Holy King Gong, we're also much aggrieved by this news. No one could've imagined that a mere Regal Pill Palace could produce such an irregular cultivator. However, we've already issued bounty notices for him throughout the region. We'll capture him even if he grows wings," The Great Scarlet emperor spoke with a heavy tone.

Gong Wuji nodded indifferently. "I appreciate your kindness. However, while it's true that the bounty notice can draw the public's passion, I doubt that they'll actually be able to hunt Jiang Chen down. That bastard is as cunning as a fox; he was able to slip through my grasp even when I'd laid down flawless plans."

"He can run for now, but he can't run forever. Someone will definitely keep an eye on him the moment he appears, and when that happens, the news will quickly pass from one person to the next. It will be extremely difficult for him to escape when that happens."

Gong Wuji nodded noncommittally, then spread open a map. His gaze swivelled back and forth between the Myriad Domain and the Veluriyam Capital. "This kid must be heading towards the Veluriyam Capital. How many routes are there between the

Myriad Domain and the Veluriyam Capital?”

Everyone started looking when they heard his question. In the end, several main routes were identified.

“Here, here, and here,” Gong Wuji noted and circled several important places on the map. “If Jiang Chen plans to escape, he’ll eventually consume whatever resources he has on him. Once he’s used up all of his resources, he’ll have to resupply somewhere, not to mention the fact that items such as high rank escape talismans can’t be reused. Furthermore, the Regal Pill Palace doesn’t have the ability to create high rank escape talismans. As such, he’ll have to go to one of these places if he wants to buy more. That’s why we must pay close attention to these few important points.”

Gong Wuji’s analysis was quite logical. Everyone nodded in agreement with his assessment. Suddenly, a person stood up and smiled. “Master Gong, this prince has a plan in mind. May I offer my thoughts?”

This man was none other than the third prince of the Great Scarlet Empire that Jiang Chen had seen earlier at the Dragon & Phoenix. “Hehe, please allow me to introduce myself first: My name is Yan Wanyu,” The third prince hastily introduced himself when he saw the doubt and evaluative look that had appeared in Gong Wuji’s eyes.

The Great Scarlet Emperor hastily added, “Holy King Gong, this is one of the princes of the Great Scarlet Empire, and is our third son. He’s always been resourceful, and is the one who was responsible for the interrogation of the Regal Pill Palace’s

captives.”

Gong Wuji couldn’t help but feel a bit of discomfort when he heard about the captives, even though it had been a while. If the Great Scarlet Empire hadn’t sold the captives to the Veluriyam Capital, his grandson Gong Qi might yet still be alive. Of course, hypothetical situations like these held no meaning whatsoever, but the knot in his heart couldn’t be resolved that easily. That was why his expression had become a lot frostier when he heard that Yan Wanyu was the person responsible for the captives. In fact, Yan Wanyu had stood up to present his plan exactly because he knew about the entire situation and was worried that Gong Wuji might hold a grudge towards him; he was trying to make up for this mistake.

Seeing Gong Wuji’s noncommittal response, Yan Wanyu continued brazenly, “Considering how much Jiang Chen values the relationships of his sect, I believe that we can use this to target his weakness. Didn’t we fail to capture the Regal Pill Palace’s sect head, Dan Chi? We could absolutely pretend that we’ve captured Dan Chi at one of the strongholds, then lure Jiang Chen into a trap. According to the intelligence I’ve acquired, Jiang Chen owes a debt of gratitude to this Dan Chi. There’s no way that he wouldn’t come and save his sect head when he hears that Dan Chi is in captivity.”

This suggestion caused everyone’s eyes to light up. It was true that they might not necessarily be able to capture Jiang Chen if they simply tried to track him. It would be akin to searching for a needle in a haystack. As such, it would be far easier to make him come to them.

This was both a covert and an overt scheme. This scheme was doable so long as Jiang Chen and Dan Chi hadn't met each other yet. The only flaw in the plan was that they had no idea if Jiang Chen and Dan Chi had met up yet. Regardless of this, it was still worth a shot. Logically speaking, Jiang Chen and Dan Chi shouldn't have run into each other yet. Considering their current circumstances, it wouldn't be easy for them to meet up since they'd split up. With everywhere being under strict lockdown, it wasn't too likely that they'd coincidentally met up either. A message glyph could only work within a certain range, and only if they both knew each other's locations. If they were located at two different corners of the world, it would be impossible for them to communicate with each other.

Chapter 703: Dan Chi Captured?

Jiang Cheng and Huang'er were far away from the Great Scarlet Mid Region half a year later. But because of the bounty notice issued by the Great Scarlet Empire, there were fanatic bounty hunters hunting for them everywhere they went, even though they were a long distance away from the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Therefore, Jiang Chen and Huang'er weren't able to make their way to the Veluriyam Capital at top speed. That being said, since they were dressed as origin realm wandering cultivators, they weren't suspected even though they were questioned a few of times along the way.

Since he had a sufficient amount of Heroic Sage Pills, Jiang Chen achieved a breakthrough once more during this time. He'd successfully ascended to the third level sage realm. Since Jiang Chen didn't wish to attract any attention while he was undergoing his ascension, he activated a formation and completed the ascension inside of it. Huang'er watched over Jiang Chen outside the formation. The entire process thankfully progressed without a hitch.

After associating with each other for half a year, the duo quite enjoyed journeying in each other's company. In fact, their joint flute and zither performance of the 'Ethereal Soothing Melody' had practically reached perfection. Compared to the time she'd spent at the Regal Pill Palace, Huang'er found that she didn't dislike this kind of wandering life at all. In fact, she reveled in it. Talking with Jiang Chen had also given her a better understanding of this mysterious young man. Thanks to the unparalleled memories he possessed from his past life, he spoke and acted with superior knowledge and manner, even though he didn't try to show it off on purpose. Huang'er had to hide her surprise many

times because of it.

The duo arrived at a small city today. Jiang Chen's bounty notice was hung on the city gates, and Jiang Chen had long since become numb to this fact. Their plan had originally been to avoid densely populated cities as much as they could. They couldn't skip this small city, however. If they did, they would be forced to make even more wandering detours, not to mention that they wanted to enter a densely populated area and receive word of the latest news. After entering the city, they'd just found a tavern to sit down at when they heard a group of wandering cultivators chatting with each other with great gusto.

"Have you heard? The Regal Pill Palace's palace head, Dan Chi was caught not long ago!"

"Pfft, that's old news already. It's been seven to eight days since then, hasn't it been?"

"Hehe, the Myriad Domain's fate is truly tragic. I wonder how they'd offended a first rank sect in the first place. This was literally an annihilation."

"What do you mean tragic? In the world of martial dao, the laws of the jungle apply. A first rank sect is powerful, and the Myriad Domain is weak. It's only natural that they are devoured by the powerful."

"You're right, but as wandering cultivators we may be even worse off than the Myriad Domain if we somehow provoked the ire

of a powerful force too.”

Jiang Chen was shocked when he heard the news.Palace Head Dan Chi was captured? The shocking news struck Jiang Chen so hard that his mind almost went completely blank. Out of everyone in the Regal Pill Palace, the person he respected the most was Palace Head Dan Chi. Whether the news of his capture was real or not, Jiang Chen still couldn’t help but be worried about it.

Huang’er hurriedly sent him a silent message, “Sir Jiang, rumors are just rumors. They cannot be believed until they’re proven to be the truth.”

Huang’er’s voice sounded ever so soothing and warm like the sun in March. Jiang Chen fought back his anxiety and continued to listen in on the conversation.

“What’s the point of capturing Palace Head Dan Chi? I hear that the Eternal Celestial Capital and Great Scarlet Mid Region fear Jiang Chen the most, not Dan Chi.”

“Yeah, I heard that Jiang Chen killed a lot of Great Scarlet Mid Region people. In fact, he even killed off the grandson of a holy king in the Eternal Celestial Capital. This Jiang Chen is truly monstrous. I can’t believe that an insignificant fourth rank sect disciple in Myriad Domain can be this insane! If this person was picked up and nurtured by another first rank sect, then it is only a matter of time before he becomes a huge threat.”

“Forget it all. All this has nothing to do with us. Let’s not bother

ourselves with those things and drink instead."

What annoyed Jiang Chen was that they'd stopped talking about the subject at this point. The pause caused his heart to itch restlessly. An idea came to his mind as he lifted his cup and walked up to the group of wandering cultivators, "Good day, fellow brothers."

Jiang Chen was dressed like a wandering cultivator, and his apparent strength was lesser than the rest of them. This was why those cultivators didn't look guarded or wary when he approached them.

"Mm? What do you want?" the wandering cultivators looked at him and asked.

"Oh, I accidentally overheard you talking about the Regal Pill Palace. Dan Chi being caught is an excellent opportunity, don't you think?" Jiang Chen purposely spoke with an exaggerated tone.

"What opportunity? Go scram somewhere else and stop bothering us from drinking!" a wandering cultivator said impatiently.

"Look, if Dan Chi is captured, then Jiang Chen will definitely come out to rescue him, right? If he shows up, and we work together to take down that Jiang Chen... the bounty is amazing, you know! The mere thought makes me itch with anticipation," Jiang Chen said with a rapt look on his face.

“Pfft!” A cultivator immediately spat out the mouthful of alcohol in his mouth when he heard Jiang Chen’s words.

“Hahaha!” The rest of the cultivators also laughed loudly after they were stunned for an instant after hearing Jiang Chen’s words. One of them was even slapping his thighs repeatedly while laughing, looking he had just heard the funniest joke in the world.

“What are you laughing at, brothers?” Jiang Chen scratched his head like a simple-minded fool.

It took a long while before these people finally managed to restrain their laughter and stare at Jiang Chen with a teasing look on their faces. “Look, younger brother, I’m not trying to insult you, but do you think that you’re more capable than the Eternal Celestial Capital? Do you think that you’re more capable than those sects in the Great Scarlet Mid Region? These are people who’ve failed to capture Jiang Chen. What makes you think that you’ll succeed?”

Jiang Chen chuckled and said, “What if we get lucky?”

“Alright, if you think that your luck is so good, why don’t you go give it a try instead of bothering us? You’re a pretty funny guy though, so here’s a toast for making us laugh,” The wandering cultivator raised his cup casually. He obviously wasn’t trying to raise a toast to Jiang Chen. He was just mocking the younger man.

“So, erm… may I know where that Dan Chi is being held, brothers?” This was the information Jiang Chen was really trying

to fish for.

"He's at Tai-ah City, Swordland Mid Region. Dan Chi will be executed publicly in a month. Alright, go now. I hope that your lucky stars explode for you and help you catch Jiang Chen in one go!" The man's reply was completely perfunctory. It appeared to be a blessing, but the thick sarcasm behind the words couldn't be ignored.

Tai-ah City, the Swordland Mid Region. Jiang Chen wasn't unfamiliar with this place because they had to pass through the city on their way to the Veluriyam Capital. Plus, it wasn't too far away from where they were right now.

Jiang Chen chuckled and said, "Tai-ah City? That isn't too far away from here. Is it really there? I guess I'll have to go there and test my luck then. Even if I failed, it would be nice to watch from sidelines."

"Alright go away now, I've already told you all you need to know. Now scram and stop pulling me away from my drink."

Jiang Chen continued to radiate with delight when he returned to his seat, but the rock in his chest only grew heavier and heavier. The wandering cultivator's explanation was right and proper, and as the saying went, there is no smoke without fire. It was very likely that this rumor was not unfounded. Jiang Chen and Huang'er drank gloomily for a while before they finally left.

"Sir Jiang, Tai-ah City is not really far away here. If we are quick,

then we will reach there in half a month's time. We can head over there and take a look."

He absolutely had to make a trip. He owed Palace Head Dan Chi his patronage, and his life had been greatly influenced thanks to the palace head taking him away from that miniscule sixteen kingdoms alliance to the Regal Pill Palace. Jiang Chen hadn't been able to do anything when the Regal Pill Palace collapsed. He was already feeling a lot of regret about this matter already, so it was literally impossible for him to ignore even the rumor that Palace Head Dan Chi might be in trouble.

"We must check out whether or not it's the truth." Jiang Chen nodded, "However, the Eternal Celestial Capital has always been good at plotting. This rumor may not necessarily be real. If I have to guess, it might be a trap to lure me to them." Jiang Chen didn't have a one track mind. He quickly deduced many possible scenarios of what might have truly happened.

Huang'er had actually thought of this too. It was just that she knew just how much Jiang Chen respected Palace Head Dan Chi. While Dan Chi might not be Jiang Chen's master, the duo shared a relationship that was akin to a master-disciple or even friends. She had no reason to object to Jiang Chen's desires in this matter.

"If it's fake, then it must be a trap. They know about your relationship with Palace Head Dan Chi, and that you'll show up because you're unwilling to bet on the off chance they do have him in captivity."

"Mm. Tai-ah City will be very interesting when the time comes.

However, I don’t mind teaching them a lesson again if this really is just bait.”

……

Jiang Chen and Huang’er entered Tai-ah City twenty days later. The duo acted with great caution, and decided to split up and enter Tai-ah City separately before meeting up later inside the city. This way, they would be less likely to make a mistake when questioned at the city gates.

Seeing that Jiang Chen was alone and a wandering cultivator, the guards didn’t question him too closely before letting him in. However, Jiang Chen also knew that Tai-ah City only looked calm on the surface. He was sure that many undercurrents were running deep inside it. Entering Tai-ah City was easy, but exiting it would be an entirely different matter.

Jiang Chen had just walked through the city gates when a few groups of people suddenly emerged from the roadside and blocked his path completely. Jiang Chen’s heart sank as he stood still and extended his consciousness.

“Relax, brother, relax!”

“Brother, I see that you’re alone on your journey. Would you like to join us?”

“Brother, ignore what he says and join our team instead. We have

three sage realm cultivators in our team!”

“Blech, what’s the use of just three sage realm cultivators? My boss is an earth sage realm cultivator, brother. I think you should join us instead.”

“Don’t listen to them and join us! Our team is evenly split in strength so no rewards will be monopolized by a sage realm cultivator even if we do catch Jiang Chen.”

Jiang Chen relaxed when he’d listened up to this point. He wasn’t sure whether to laugh or cry on the inside. As it turned out, these people were the groups of wandering cultivators who were chasing after him. A simple sweep of his consciousness revealed that there were at least seven to eight teams of cultivators among these people. In fact, there were a lot more teams further ahead. It was just that those teams consisted of stronger members who thought little of his ‘earth origin realm’ level strength.

He’d never thought that someone would want him even though he had disguised himself as an earth origin realm expert. It would seem that this bounty truly was the latest fad amongst wandering cultivators right now.

“Everyone, I am weak and of average combat ability. I’m afraid that I would only drag you all down if I join your team,” Jiang Chen made up a random excuse. However, he had obviously underestimated these people’s passion.

“Come on, aren’t most of us at origin realm too? We wandering

cultivators are different from those big sects in that we rely on our numbers! United we stand, I say!”

“Yeah, even ants can kill an elephant if there are enough of them, plus it’s not like Jiang Chen has three heads and six arms. If five aren’t enough, then twenty should enough, right? If twenty aren’t enough, then 30, 50 or even 100 people should do the job, right?”

Jiang Chen was going to turn him down again, but in the end he recalled something and didn’t turn them down completely, “Slowly, slowly. Allow me some time to think, okay?”

He suddenly thought that joining a team of wandering cultivators was an excellent way to cover up his tracks. Plus, considering how many wandering cultivators there were, he might be able to listen in on some useful intelligence from them.

Chapter 704: The Tyrannical Eternal Celestial Capital

After meeting up with Huang'er through use of the secret signal they'd established, the two were actually in no hurry to join a team. They'd realized these teams were everywhere in Tai-ah City. There were at least a couple thousand of them floating about the city in various groups.

"Money can make even ghosts turn millstones. What a true saying," Jiang Chen sighed secretly, despite knowing that these so-called wandering cultivators posed no threat to him at all. Jiang Chen couldn't help but feel some remorse after seeing a single bounty notice cause such a chaotic scene. Birds die for food while men die for wealth.

Resources were scarce in the world of martial dao, a fact particularly obvious for wandering cultivators. That's why bounty notices from major sects or empires always caused an immense stir within the Divine Abyss Continent. Things had been no exception this time.

Only ten days remained until the announced date of Dan Chi's public execution. Although Jiang Chen was nervous, he couldn't ask around carelessly. The numerous wandering cultivators each had their own opinion, and the news they offered were often hearsay at best. Jiang Chen and Huang'er joined a team later on in order to avoid drawing attention.

There were only eight people in the team before they joined. The leader was a burly middle-aged man called Ke Ding, a cultivator at

the third level of the sage realm who claimed to have come from the Upper Eight Regions.

"These two brothers, you chose to join my team out of the so many out there. I'm not one for flowery speeches but I promise you this—if we do get the reward, you will not be mistreated!" This Ke Ding laughed in a forthright manner, seemingly a role model of great friendship and loyalty. Jiang Chen however, didn't take the declaration very seriously. These were people willing to sell their lives for bounty—he found it hard to believe they had any sort of bottom line.

"Boss Ke, we trust you!" the other wandering cultivators declared heatedly.

Jiang Chen also replied with a smile, "We greatly admire Boss Ke's strength. By the way, since there are so many wandering cultivator groups here, do we have a specific plan?"

"They have a point, boss. There are too many groups out there. It's an absolute mess. It'll be hard for us to get any benefits without an organized plan."

Ke Ding chuckled, "There's no way to form a plan with all this happening. Let's just play it by ear."

Clamorous noises traveled in from the outskirts as they were talking. "All wandering cultivator groups listen up! Have your leaders immediately come forth to to be interrogated!"

Interrogation?

There were tens of thousands of wandering cultivators on site, and a large number of teams as well. The entire area erupted in hisses and boos after hearing this tyrannical voice. It was evident that it was a great humiliation for them to be interrogated.

“Silence!” A thunderous voice reverberated through the air. A powerful emperor realm aura swiftly crashed down on the whole plaza.

All the wandering cultivators immediately quieted down in the face of this suppression. It was almost as if the area had been cleared out—not a sound was to be heard.

An emperor realm cultivator! From looks of this aura, it was evident that the cultivator wasn’t any old initial emperor realm cultivator. He was at least mid emperor realm, anywhere between fourth and sixth level emperor realm. Row after row of uniformed sect disciples poured into seal off the plaza from all sides. It was clear that one batch was from the Eternal Celestial Capital, while many more were from the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Although this area was under the jurisdiction of the Swordland Mid Region, it was obvious that the latter was on good terms for the Eternal Celestial Capital. Not only had it not imposed restrictions on the forces from the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Great Scarlet Mid Region, but it’d also sent a large force to assist them.

A weighty atmosphere suddenly descended upon the plaza. Although they were inwardly upset, the team captains all walked up to be interrogated. Jiang Chen and Huang’er remained in their

group. They weren't very apprehensive despite encountering such a large scale of operations.

There were tens of thousands of wandering cultivators. It would be a difficult task to obtain any useful information by interrogating them all. Moreover, the two felt confident that they hadn't any flaws in their cover. Ke Ding returned after a while, followed by some disciples from the Eternal Celestial Capital. He addressed Jiang Chen and Huang'er, "I'm truly sorry, brothers. All cultivators who showed up in pairs are to be interrogated to the Eternal Celestial Capital. Apologies, but our group no longer needs you two."

This Ke Ding had been brimming with loyalty and friendship just a short while ago. But now, he was falling out as readily as flipping a book. He couldn't wait to kick them out, as if they were gods of pestilence.

"Step out," the leader of the group of disciples said while sizing them up. Jiang Chen secretly surged with killing intent, but managed to forcefully suppress it. He glanced indifferently at Ke Ding as he walked out of the group but didn't say anything. Fortunately, there were no shortage of wandering cultivators who had come in pairs. Even still, the nearly tens of thousands of cultivators had been cut down to something slightly over a thousand after calling out all the pairs. The thousand strong group was then gathered together.

"Holy King Gong, this should be all of them." A supervisor from the Eternal Celestial Capital reported respectfully. This was Jiang Chen's first time seeing Gong Wuji in half a year—the man's

killing intent had grown even denser than before. It was apparent that he hadn't gotten over Gong Qi's death.

"Take them away," Gong Wuji said nothing else. He only gestured with his hand and issued the order.

The wandering cultivators were all indignant now.

"What gives you the right to do this?!"

"We are all wandering cultivators. What grievance do we have with your Eternal Celestial Capital? What gives you the right to take us away?"

"You've completely failed to recognize our goodwill. We are all here to help capture Jiang Chen! What wrong have we done?"

"That's right! Brothers, they are willing to kill a thousand in order to capture a single person! We can't leave with them. Only death awaits otherwise!" The thousand wandering cultivators all protested together. They weren't idiots; it was obvious that they would definitely lose a layer of skin once they were taken prisoner, if not end up dead. Jiang Chen also played along with the crowd and protested furiously.

"Be quiet!" Gong Wuji's expression became frosty. The surrounding temperature suddenly dropped as if countless icy mountains had descended from the sky. His ice-cold gaze swept across the thousand wandering cultivators. "The reason for

detaining you is that we suspect some stragglers from the Myriad Domain are in your midst. As long as you can prove yourselves innocent, I promise everyone will return safe and unharmed."

"Hmph, why should we trust you?"

"That's right, empty words are meaningless. Do it here if you want to interrogate us!" These wandering cultivators were unwilling to submit readily. After all, their survival was at stake. Who even knew how they would interrogate the prisoners? If the Eternal Celestial Palace resorted to extreme methods, they'd be crippled even if they managed to survive!

An emperor realm cultivator beside Gong Wuji snorted and jumped into the crowd. He single-handedly plucked out the protesters yelling the loudest and tossed them out one after another. He was like a lion capturing sheep; the victims had no ability to resist at all as he hurled them out.

Large flowers of blood blossomed wherever they landed as the victims splattered into a mess of blood and gore. The cruel method caused the hooting cultivators to quiet down in fear. Gong Wuji's expression was cold and detached. "Who else doesn't want to accept the situation?"

This bloody scene infuriated the wandering cultivators, but no one dared voice anything else. Some of the cultivators who hadn't been detained stood out to persuade their arrested brethren, "Friends, this type of inspection takes place once every few days. Your lives will not be endangered as long as you have no relationship with the Myriad Domain."

“Yes, just comply.”

Seeing that even the other wandering cultivators weren’t on their side, the morale of the thousand captives hit rock bottom.

“Move!” The sect disciples came to urge the detainees forward.

These ruthless disciples were more than enough to kill these wandering cultivators, not to mention an emperor realm cultivator like Gong Wuji. Although the prisoners were full of resentment, they could only adhere to the rules as they followed the group further into the city.

Jiang Chen was secretly shaken as he followed along with the group. Although he didn’t know how things would turn out, he was certain that the methods used by the Eternal Celestial Capital would not be easily overcome. But, he still had the time to escape if he wanted to.

If he chose to stay, it might become more difficult to escape once they reached sect territory. The Eternal Celestial Capital could confine all of them by simply laying down a formation. But if he fled right now, what would become of Palace Head Dan Chi?

Jiang Chen was seriously suspecting at the moment whether everything was just a ruse set up by the Eternal Celestial Capital, and whether Dan Chi’s execution was just a pretense.

As Jiang Chen was hesitating, a huge commotion stirred up ahead. An abrupt voice suddenly rang out from the front.

“A ferocious fight has broken out east of the city! Jiang Chen has appeared and is currently surrounded by a group of wandering cultivators!”

“Powerful, that Jiang Chen is so powerful! He instantly tied several hundred wandering cultivators with countless vines!”

“Fellow cultivators, let’s go to their rescue!” Many voices rang out pell-mell after hearing the news as countless wandering cultivators charged frantically towards the east.

The group from the Eternal Celestial Capital all looked at Gong Wuji. He was also stunned. He’d been tricked by Jiang Chen so many times that he subconsciously felt this to be fake news. But after hearing about the countless vines, his heart started racing. He turned towards the emperor realm cultivators beside him, “Let’s go take a look.” However, he’d learnt from past mistakes. He left two emperor realm cultivators in charge and reminded them, “This group of people must not allowed to escape. Bring them back and proceed with the interrogation.”

After that, he flew swiftly toward the east with a group of elites. Tens of thousands of wandering cultivators were also madly making their way toward the eastern side of the city. Someone from the detained roared. “Brothers, Jiang Chen’s appearance proves our innocence! Why should we follow them to be interrogated? If they can go to the eastern side of the city, why can’t we?”

“That’s right, let’s go!”

“Let’s go!” One person shouting was enough for the others to follow suit. The thousand-strong wandering cultivator group began to rebel. They immediately dispersed into the tens of thousands of other cultivators and very soon, the thousand detainees had vanished into the torrential crowd.

It was very much like a bowl of water being poured into the river. Who would be able to differentiate between the original bowl of water and the river after one surge of the waves? Thus, Jiang Chen and Huang’er easily merged into the crowd. They felt rather odd—how could a Jiang Chen have appeared out of nowhere towards the east of the city? Although he had no idea who was behind this disinformation, it had indeed helped him out. But who could be the one helping him? It would be difficult for even Palace Head Dan Chi to recognize him after he’d changed his appearance.

Chapter 705: Encountering Old Acquaintances

Jiang Chen recalled the voice he'd heard earlier, but felt it to be rather unfamiliar. It probably belonged to someone he didn't know. That being said, a person's voice could be changed. Although Jiang Chen looked like he was pushing his way out along with the bustling crowd as best he could, he eventually split away from the traffic and fell to the back of the crowd on purpose. Suddenly, he glimpsed a man and a woman standing at the city gates. These two figures caused him a great deal of shock.

The woman wasn't tall, and her countenance wasn't one that Jiang Chen recognized. However, the curve of her full breasts gave Jiang Chen a distinct sense of deja vu. He was further shocked when he swept his consciousness across the man and found out who they were. Why are they here?

He never would have imagined that he would encounter them in this place! No wonder the curve of that woman's breasts had seemed so familiar to him. She was none other than Ling Hui'er! Moreover, the man next to her was none other than Ling Hui'er and Ling Bi'er's father, Ling Su!

Ling Hui'er had disguised herself slightly, but her awe-inspiring breasts were still eye-catching. Jiang Chen naturally wasn't unfamiliar with them. Although he'd never observed Ling Hui'er's wonderful breasts on purpose, the woman herself had once daringly grabbed his hand and pushed it onto her own breasts. This incident had left a deep imprint in Jiang Chen's mind. That was why it was almost impossible for him to mistake Ling Hui'er's

curves. Ling Su himself hadn't changed much in temperament, although he had gone to the effort of altering his appearance too. Jiang Chen naturally recognized him with a single glance.

Jiang Chen had always thought that the father and daughter duo had been killed back when the Regal Pill Palace had been destroyed. If not dead, he'd thought that they'd at least been captured and sold to the Veluriyam Capital already. How had they possibly turned up here?

For a while, Jiang Chen almost suspected that this was yet another ploy by the Eternal Celestial Capital. However, upon closer inspection, he discovered that the presence they projected was absolutely genuine. He immediately used his consciousness to send them a message, "Junior sister Hui'er, is that you? If it is you, then please head to the eastern side of the city. Don't say anything or change your expression. I'll watch over you two."

Ling Hui'er had obviously been paying attention to the exiting cultivators. She was overjoyed when she heard Jiang Chen's voice out of nowhere, but immediately calmed down after hearing the instructions that came after. She led her father Ling Su in a dead run to the eastern side of the city.

The Ling father and daughter duo stopped at a certain corner at the eastern side of the city roughly fifteen minutes later. By now, roughly one hundred thousand people had gathered at this part of the city. Jiang Chen and Huang'er took advantage of the crowd to walk up to them. It was obvious that no one was paying attention to them, and they hadn't drawn any suspicion despite now gathering as a group of four.

“Is that you, senior brother?” Ling Hui’er’s eyes overflowed with expectation. She looked like a lost child who had suddenly found a relative and could hardly hold in her excitement.

“Why are you here, junior sister Hui’er? How did you escape the destruction of the Regal Pill Palace?” Jiang Chen was also curious.

Ling Hui’er’s eyes were dim when she spoke, as if she was about to cry, “When the Regal Pill Palace was destroyed, father and I happened to be picking herbs away from the palace. We heard of the Great Scarlet Mid Region’s invasion when we were outside. I wanted to go back, but father wouldn’t allow me to. Wahhh, senior brother, I miss big sis so much…”

Ling Su stood beside Ling Hui’er. He knew that the person standing right in front of him was Jiang Chen, his benefactor. “Little brother Jiang, Ling Su has not had the chance to thank you for saving my life. I didn’t allow Hui’er to return to the Regal Pill Palace during its plight, and I hope that you won’t blame Hui’er for it. You can place the blame firmly on me…”

Jiang Chen shook his head, “Uncle Ling, you did the right thing. You couldn’t have changed anything even if you had returned. There is more meaning to keeping the hopes of the Regal Pill Palace alive than heading towards certain death. I’m just wondering if the news of the Eternal Celestial Capital capturing Palace Head Dan Chi is real…”

“It’s most likely false. I’ve also heard about this, which is why I’d

come to Tai-ah City at the first sign of those rumors. I wasn't afraid of their inspections since I'm not part of the Regal Pill Palace to begin with. I've observed the situation in secret for a while, and believe that it's a trap set up by the Eternal Celestial Capital. To put it bluntly, they've set up a trap right in the open and waited to see if you would step into it," Ling Su analyzed the situation skillfully.

Jiang Chen nodded, "I too suspected that this is a trap for me. You were the one who shouted just now, right?"

Ling Su chuckled, "I saw that they were moving a large group of wandering cultivators away and worried that you might be inside that group. It would be extremely troublesome if you were taken away by them. I had the idea to announce false news so that things would become just chaotic enough for you to escape. To be honest, it was a pure gamble, but you really were part of that group!"

Jiang Chen was inwardly impressed by Ling Su's ability to adapt and deal with unexpected situations. While he wasn't a member of the Regal Pill Palace, he wasn't lacking in worldly experience in the jianghu at all.

"Oh right. Little brother Jiang, you attended the Myriad Grand Ceremony too, right? How is my daughter Bi'er doing?" Ling Su was obviously worried for his other daughter.

"Senior sister Bi'er and I got split up from each other, but she'd already escaped danger when we parted ways. I'm not sure where she is either right now." Jiang Chen was sad as well when he recalled the destruction of the Regal Pill Palace, and how everyone

had become separated from each other once again.

Ling Su's worries abated when he heard that Ling Bi'er had escaped danger and hadn't been captured by their enemies. "Bi'er is a lucky girl. I believe that she is fine as well," Ling Su consoled himself.

Jiang Chen nodded and asked, "Uncle Ling, you've just recovered. Why did you suddenly think of picking herbs?"

Ling Su looked a little embarrassed, "Well, I'm not afraid if you laugh at me for this. Back then, I had gotten greedy and accidentally gotten poisoned with the Divine Befuddlement Miasma, right? But this time I have the antidote you made, which is why I thought of going back to check if the fortuitous occurrence I found back then was still around."

A single stroke of fortune could change a person's life forever in the martial dao world. It was common for cultivators to take risks in order to discover their fortune. Jiang Chen naturally wouldn't judge Ling Su's desire to do so.

"Did you find anything?" Jiang Chen asked curiously.

"That place is fra too dangerous, and there were a lot more poisonous things in there besides the Divine Befuddlement Miasma. Although I am a spirit alchemist, I was unable to go any deeper. I was going to head back and make some more preparations, but the news of the great changes happening in the Myriad Domain reached us right after we emerged from that place.

That was why we didn't dare return. We've been roaming around for the past half year until we heard of Palace Head Dan Chi's capture. That's why we came to Tai-ah City," Ling Su sighed when he recounted this experience.

"Wait. Where is that place you mentioned earlier? Is it very close to Tai-ah City?"

"It's not far. It's at best a three to four day journey from here. Are you interested as well, little brother Jiang?" Ling Su asked curiously.

Jiang Chen's response was noncommittal. He asked again, "What's that place called? Do you have a map?"

"I do." Ling Su took out a simple map while he said this, "This place is a valley called Infant Shriek. Eerie, strange noises that sound like howling and crying babies echo all year long . At the same time, it's a deserted place that's very difficult to find. Most cultivators aren't willing to enter that place at all because of how much yin energy there is. However, this is a characteristic that actually attracts spirit alchemists. The thicker the yin energy, the more likely there are to be valuable spirit herbs."

Jiang Chen accepted the map and looked at it for a moment before returning it to Ling Su. A valley called Infant Shriek. Jiang Chen memorized the name. He suddenly asked again, "Uncle Ling, were you poisoned by the Divine Befuddlement Miasma in the valley?"

Ling Su smiled wryly, “Indeed. As the saying goes, the goose hunter had his eyes poked out by a goose instead. I had only entered the outskirts back then, but was poisoned before I’d known it. If I had gone any deeper, I may have been lost entirely.”

“Did you notice anything amiss after you were poisoned?” Jiang Chen asked curiously.

“It was impossible for me to detect anything. I wouldn’t have left at all if I hadn’t hurt my leg. In fact, I didn’t even realize what was going on even after the poison took effect, much less detected that it was the Miasma. It was only after I woke up that I learned from Bi’er it was the Miasma. Speaking of which, your skills are amazing, little brother Jiang.”

Jiang Chen nodded quietly. Ling Su’s experience actually shed some light on certain things. He didn’t delve any deeper into the topic. Ling Hui’er walked up to Jiang Chen and asked, “Senior brother, can we travel together from here on out?”

Jiang Chen smiled wryly, “Junior sister Hui’er, Uncle Ling and you are already safer without anyone interrogating you. You may be in more danger if you come along with us.”

This was the truth. Jiang Chen had a bounty on his head, and who knew how many pairs eyes were watching out for him. Even the slightest mistake could trigger an endless onslaught. Ling Su and Ling Hui’er were both origin realm cultivators. They hadn’t even reached the sage realm yet. If they were to come with him, they would actually become a large burden if the group were ever to be hunted. Ling Hui’er pursed her lips and asked, “You wouldn’t

have turned my sis down if she was the one asking, would you?”

Jiang Chen smiled wryly, but wasn’t sure how to answer. Ling Su took over the conversation and scolded her, “Stop making trouble, Hui’er. Little brother Jiang is right. We are both safer if we part ways.”

Ling Su had a wealth of experience and naturally understood that they would only be burden if they were to join Jiang Chen. They wouldn’t draw attention if they were to part ways. Jiang Chen didn’t remain conflicted on this matter. Instead, he took out several high rank escape talismans, “Uncle Ling, here are three high rank escape talismans. If you encounter any forces that you can’t battle, you only need to crush one to escape. I will be heading to the Veluriyam Capital next. If possible, let’s meet there.”

Ling Su wasn’t one to put on airs, but he still accepted only one escape glyph, “Little brother Jiang, these escape talismans are far more useful to you right now. The two of us only need one.”

The quartet had been conversing with each other through silent transmission. That was why they hadn’t drawn anyone’s attention. However, a clamor of swearing suddenly broke out from the front, “Bloody hell, which bastard sent out that fake news just now? There isn’t any great battle on the eastern side of the city at all!”

“Damn it! I’ll dismember that heartless bastard alive!”

“Alright, alright, time to go back. Who knows, maybe Jiang

Chen's already slipped into Tai-ah City and rescued Palace Head Dan Chi already!"

"Hehe, is this another diversion?" There were plenty of furious looking wandering cultivators returning back to the city, cursing loudly as they jockeyed for the best position.

Jiang Chen threw Ling Su a glance and parted ways with the father daughter duo. He wasn't being cruel, but that it really wasn't convenient for them to stay in contact with each other for much longer. If he was discovered, he would only implicate the Ling father and daughter as well. It was at this moment an enormous amount of sect disciples suddenly appeared in this area. The leader of the group cried out, "All wandering cultivators are not allowed to leave the city! You will all enter the city! Only those who have been inspected will be allowed to leave! All those who do not heed our orders will be killed!"

The overbearing Eternal Celestial Capital was obviously planning to lock down the entire city!

Ling Su's use of "little brother" here is actually a mark of great respect, he means to call Jiang Chen his older brother, but obviously it's a little weird to call someone your kid's age "older brother", hence the translation.

Chapter 706: Dog Eat Dog Between First Rank Sects

The Eternal Celestial Capital had locked down the entire city. Almost all of the wandering cultivators were gathered in a five kilometer area east of the city with no means of escape. They were soon driven back into Tai-ah City amid loud objections and complaints. Ling Su and his daughter were no exception as they were also forced to return. However Jiang Chen wasn't overly worried about them. The difference in gender and age would make it rather easy for them to be ruled out during the interrogation.

The inspection processes had become noticeably more stringent upon their return. Entry was simple, but if one wished to leave, they would have to undergo several rounds of inspections and interrogations. Apparently, the Eternal Celestial Capital had not yet given up on the search for Jiang Chen. The commotion just now had renewed Gong Wuji's feeling that Jiang Chen was already in Tai-ah City. Moreover, he was likely within the group of a thousand wandering cultivators. How could such fake news have spread otherwise?

It was obviously a programmed diversion to help Jiang Chen slip away during the confusion. This was why they had doubled the severity of their inspections.

Another commotion started to become heard above the noise. Furious curses were being thrown about, "The Eternal Celestial Palace has business here. Everyone else, get the hell away!"

A seemingly effeminate voice was immediately heard afterwards,

“Tsk tsk… If I remember correctly, this isn’t your Eternal Celestial Capital’s domain. Does our Ninesuns Sky Sect require your permission to be here?

The Ninesuns Sky Sect? The crowd became somewhat restless. They were stunned by this new and sudden development. One first rank sect within the Swordland Mid Region was terrifying enough already. Now that another group from a first rank sect had appeared—this was beyond odd. Jiang Chen was also astonished as he witnessed this scene from within the crowd. He slowly waded his way forward to get a better look. The two forces in conflict had no shortage of manpower. There were hundreds from the Ninesuns Sky Sect and hundreds from the Eternal Celestial Capital facing each other. They stood to each side like two fighting bulls grunting at each other.

“The Ninesuns Sky Sect has come as well?” Jiang Chen was happy after his initial surprise. He knew that the arrival of the Ninesuns Sky Sect likely had something to do with him. As things stood, Jiang Chen was not afraid of itches when he was already covered in lice. He had already thoroughly offended the Eternal Celestial Capital; adding the Ninesuns Sky Sect to the list made no difference. In fact, his enmity with the Ninesuns Sky Sect had been established much earlier.

But after seeing the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s hostile attitudes towards each other, Jiang Chen was quite astonished. It appeared that the two first rank sects were really not on the best of terms. They might even have a death feud with each other. It all became clear to him after some pondering.

The two sects had pursued Emperor Featherflight ages ago with limited cooperation. But their relationship had largely been that of competitors in all other scenarios. Two first rank sects erupting in hostilities over the inheritance of an ancient empyrean cultivator was no big surprise. It appeared the Ninesuns Sky Sect had come to deliberately upset the Eternal Celestial Capital's operations. Jiang Chen was suddenly in a position of cheering them on in secret.

Dogs eating each other will only result in mouthfuls of fur all around. Its best you bite each other even more ferociously! Jiang Chen already had bad impressions of both sects and was filled with disgust and overflowing loathing. It was true that the Eternal Celestial Capital was sinister, but those from the Ninesuns Sky Sect were no saints either. They were the ones who had first spread rumors about the Imperial Jade Seal and the Guardian Dragon Seal, undoubtedly to lure the Great Scarlet Mid Region into dealing with the Myriad Domain. Frankly speaking, they were just getting another to do their dirty work.

However, the crafty Eternal Celestial Capital had beaten them at their own game. They had long since taken control of the Great Scarlet Mid Region, allowing them to stay one step ahead of the opponent and take control of the whole situation. The Ninesuns Sky Sect now could no longer get involved in the affairs of the Myriad Domain.

Gong Wuji strode in with long strides after hearing about the disturbance. He gazed indifferently at the people from the Ninesuns Sky Sect. "It seems that your Ninesuns Sky Sect is so tyrannical that you wish to cause a ruckus in someone else's domain?"

A mid emperor realm cultivator from the Ninesuns Sky Sect walked out with a laugh. “Holy King Gong, I don’t quite understand. What’s this about the Ninesuns Sky Sect being tyrannical? Is your Eternal Celestial Capital made up of saints? If I remember correctly, the ones who caused an upheaval in the Myriad Domain were your people. Besides, this is the Swordland Mid Region, not your Eternal Celestial Capital’s domain. Why can’t our Ninesuns Sky Sect come over?”

These words stung deep and left Gong Wuji absolutely no face. He was even being mocked for acting wildly in the Myriad Domain and losing his beloved grandson in the process. Gong Wuji’s face turned dark purple as he glared daggers at the cultivator from the Ninesuns Sky Sect. “Elder Hao, have you made up your mind to oppose us?”

Elder Hao laughed. “Holy King Gong, you’re overthinking things. Our Ninesuns Sky Sect is also here in pursuit of an enemy. How could this be considered opposing you?”

“What enemy are you after?” Gong Wuji inquired with fury.

“Some disciples from our Ninesuns Sky Sect have gone missing and all clues point to the Myriad Domain. Now that you lot have annihilated the Myriad Domain, we can’t even find a single shadow. We heard that you captured the palace head of the Regal Pill Palace and thought you might be able to lure out a few survivors that we can interrogate.” Elder Hao’s voice was without the slightest inflection, “We’ve said what we will. Holy King Gong, it isn’t up to your Eternal Celestial Capital to criticize how our Ninesuns Sky Sect operates.”

Gong Wuji had been in a violent rage, but surprisingly, he regained his composure upon hearing Elder Hao's words. It made no sense to accuse the Ninesuns Sky Sect of being ornery to spite him. Could it be that... the Ninesuns Sky Sect had found some leads regarding Emperor Featherflight?

Not everyone within the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect knew about the affair regarding Emperor Featherflight. Only a select few of the upper echelon who were a part of the original operation were privy to this information. As a holy king of the Eternal Celestial Capital, Gong Wuji was also one of its directors. As such, he was very familiar with that operation. In fact, the ultimate goal of taking control of the Great Scarlet Mid Region had been to investigate the fate of Emperor Featherflight. As for how overblown the circumstances had gotten with the Regal Pill Palace and the bounty on Jiang Chen's head, they were secondary grievances that had been brought about incidentally.

"Since this is the case Elder Hao, why is your Ninesuns Sky Sect sabotaging our search for the enemy?" Gong Wuji had realized the intricacies of this situation and sought a platform to negotiate, suppressing his anger.

"We're merely spectating. What sabotage were you talking about?" Elder Hao smiled faintly.

Jiang Chen suddenly had an idea after seeing the two sects' verbal spar. He could clearly sense the undercurrent of hostility between them. He secretly left the crowd, unnoticed by all. He entered a well hidden corner before momentarily walking out with

a completely different appearance. He didn't go toward the hostile area this time, but toward the city gates where he approached a disciple of the Eternal Celestial Capital. "Greetings, senior brother."

The disciple from the Eternal Celestial Capital glanced at him. Jiang Chen was clad in a disciple's uniform and appeared just like a citizen of the Great Scarlet Empire.

"Eh? What business do you have?" The people from the Eternal Celestial Capital naturally felt a sense of superiority over those from the Great Scarlet Mid Region. It was a natural arrogance of someone who belonged to a first rank sect.

"Senior brother, I have been tasked by Great Scarlet royalty to return an important item to Master Gong. He forgot it in the palace and thus the Great Scarlet emperor ordered me to travel this vast distance and deliver it with all haste, lest the holy king have need of it. However, a conflict seems to have taken place over there, and us low level disciples are unable to enter. I humbly beseech this senior brother to return this item to Master Gong Wuji in my stead."

"Is that all?"

"That would be all. I'll also have to trouble senior brother to explain things personally to Master Gong. Please." With that, Jiang Chen produced a sword and offered it with both hands.

The disciple received the blade and was full of praises after a

single glance. “A good blade indeed.”

“Master Gong’s sword is definitely of supreme quality. I hope the senior brother will deliver it with all due haste. Conflict appears to be brewing even as we speak—Master Gong might require it if a battle breaks out.”

The Eternal Celestial Capital disciple was alarmed after hearing Jiang Chen’s reminder and nodded quickly. “Since that is the case, I’ll complete this mission for you. You’ve done well!”

“Thank you very much. Please convey the Great Scarlet emperor’s greetings to Master Gong,” Jiang Chen left with a bow, turning back to wave repeatedly.

The Eternal Celestial Capital disciple didn’t dare neglect this task. It was indeed a good sword and the unsuspecting disciple had found no traps or mechanisms on it. He promptly carried the sword towards the central area. The disciple was delighted to accept such a task since it was, after all, a good opportunity to present himself to Master Gong. Moreover, he would be able to personally deliver Master Gong’s weapon to him. This should more or less gain him some favor, right?

The ecstatic disciple squeezed through the crowds and met no resistance, swiftly arriving before Master Gong. “Sire Holy King,” the disciple bowed ceremoniously.

Gong Wuji glanced at him. He was wondering why this low level disciple had come to join the excitement and even dared to appear

before him! But he found it difficult to berate his sect's disciple under the current circumstances and merely let out a nasally "hmm" in acknowledgement.

The disciple didn't mind at all. With his identity, it was normal for the holy king to maintain a dignified air. He would surely be delighted after being presented with the treasured sword. "Sire Holy King, the Great Scarlet emperor dispatched a messenger to deliver the sword you forgot at the Great Scarlet Empire. Please accept it, sir." The disciple raised both hands as he spoke and presented the treasured sword to Gong Wuji.

Gong Wuji was baffled; when had he ever left his sword at the Great Scarlet Empire? But he noticed that it was an extraordinary blade at first glance. Gong Wuji supposed that the Great Scarlet emperor must have felt that he had let Gong Wuji down and thus had sent this sword as a form of apology. He swept his consciousness over the blade, and after making certain there were no hidden traps, accepted the sword and nodded lightly, "Understood. What is your name?"

"This disciple is called Zhao Neng." The disciple replied hurriedly, positively bursting with delight.

"Zhao Neng, this seat will remember you. You may withdraw," Gong Wuji was perplexed by the brief interlude but didn't comment on it. Since this sword had no problems, why wouldn't he accept the gift? It was, after all, a true emperor realm weapon. Zhao Neng left in high spirits after hearing Gong Wuji's words. Gong Wuji raised the sword to examine it once more, and was about to put it away when Elder Hao's expression changed

abruptly, his eyes fixed on the sword, “Hold!”

Chapter 707: The Tragedy Caused By A Single Sword

Elder Hao's sudden command caused Gong Wuji to arch an eyebrow. He said with an obviously displeased tone, "What do you want now, Elder Hao?"

Elder Hao ignored Gong Wuji completely. He stared closely at the sword Gong Wuji was holding, "Holy King Gong, did you say that this sword is yours?"

Gong Wuji's patience had already reached its limit. Elder Hao's impolite question only added fuel to his rage. "What the hell does it have to do with you?!"

He didn't expect Elder Hao's anger to be worse than his, "So you mean this sword is really yours?!"

Gong Wuji was so furious that he had started to smile, "What, is it yours then? Is your name on the sword or something?"

Elder Hao stared closely at Gong Wuji, "So, you're saying that you really are the one who left this sword in the Great Scarlet Mid Region?"

"So. What. If. I. Was?" Gong Wuji still thought that Elder Hao was purposely picking a quarrel with him. "You're not going to say that this sword is yours, are you? If I remember correctly, you don't even use a sword, Hao!"

Elder Hao nodded with an extremely ugly look on his face. He said, “Good, very good! So you admit that this is your sword. How very good of you to take responsibility of your actions! Dare you to tell me where you got this sword?!”

Gong Wuji had lived as a tyrant all his life. He had always been the interrogator, never the recipient. Therefore, his anger soared when he heard this tone, “Where, you say? Do I have to report to you where I’ve gotten this sword? Let’s just say I killed someone and took his property. What are you going to do about it!?”

The moment he said that, a look of enlightenment immediately sprung to Elder Hao’s face. It was quickly overwhelmed by a look of terrible grief and indignation. He abruptly unsheathed a cruel looking warblade with both hands and cried out, “Heed my order, disciples of the Ninesuns Sky Sect! Gong Wuji is the murderer of our Ninesuns Sky Sect true disciple, Cao Jin! The Eternal Celestial Capital is now the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s sworn enemy!”

Even before his words had the chance to ring through the air, Elder Hao slashed fiercely at Gong Wuji.

The momentum behind his blade and the aura of a powerful emperor realm cultivator immediately enveloped everyone within a thousand meters around him. All of them were instantly shoved several hundred meters away from Elder Hao.

Gong Wuji himself hadn’t expected that Elder Hao would start a fight just like that. Rage clouded his mind as he swung his own

weapon, a golden short axe, with both hands. A sharp blade beam with a rainbow like tail met his axe's fierce upswing.

Two middle level emperor realm cultivators had actually thrown aside any pretense of talk and started a fight in the most crowded area of Tai-ah City! Naturally, the disciples of both sects were triggered when they saw their best experts clashing against each other. They all joined the fray with a roar.

For a while, the cries of battle shook even heaven itself.

The two great sects hadn't seen eye to eye to begin with. The Eternal Celestial Capital felt that the Ninesuns Sky Sect was undermining them on purpose, and the Ninesuns Sky Sect was naturally filled with hatred towards the Eternal Celestial Capital when they heard that Gong Wuji had killed Cao Jin. They were all from first rank sects, so no one was inclined to try and bow to the other. The battle spun out of control the second it began. Even some wandering cultivators who were standing a little too close were dragged into it.

The battle became crazier the moment blood was shed. Cultivators fell left and right as the fighting grew madder. As their fellow disciples fell, the eyes of the survivors only grew more bloodshot. They fought ever more recklessly as the situation started to take on the uncontrolled atmosphere of a true battlefield.

The wandering cultivators had taken shelter far, far away, but they weren't willing to leave just like this. A battle between sects was something they would normally never have the chance to

witness. Now that they finally had the chance, they weren't going to give it up just because they hadn't the slightest clue what was going on. In fact, they even hoped that the battle could grow even more intense.

After all, the wandering cultivators had always held a kind of enmity towards sect disciples. This enmity was born out of envy, even jealousy. They had always been incomparable to sect disciples in every way. The sects laid claim to most of the resources for themselves, standing right at the top of the status quo. They could order the wandering cultivators around however they liked. The power imbalance that was brought about by the monopolization of resources and training caused no small amount of resentment to build within the wandering cultivators. As a result, it was only natural for them to find joy in the fierce battle between the sects. They were extremely happy to see sects tearing each other apart. They would only hope that things would become more desperate and bloodier.

Meanwhile, Jiang Chen had changed back to his original clothing and was calmly watching the battle unfold as part of the rapt audience. He only felt boundless elation as Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect disciples fell one after another. More and more people started to join the fray. Although the Eternal Celestial Capital had the advantage of numbers, it was obvious that the Ninesuns Sky Sect had sent out their elites this time. No matter how desperate the battle got, the deadlock continued.

Jiang Chen cast Huang'er a glance. The duo didn't tarry any longer and made their way to the city gates.

Many cautious wandering cultivators were also heading towards the city gates. It was obvious that these people had realized that Tai-ah City was so chaotic right now that it was better to leave as soon as possible. Otherwise, it was only a matter of time before wandering cultivators like them were dragged into the mess. There was no way these two great first rank sects had erupted into battle over something as simple as a sword. Something bigger lay underneath all this. Therefore, the wise ones weren't willing to be turned into cannon fodder for a cause they didn't even know about.

Tai-ah City was hosting at least two hundred thousand wandering cultivators, and at least a couple of thousand of them were heading towards the city gates. While there were plenty of Eternal Celestial Capital disciples guarding the gates, they had dispatched their elites to join the battle against the Ninesuns Sky Sect. The remaining disciples were obviously incapable of stopping several thousands of cultivators on their own.

While Tai-ah City's forces had provided the Eternal Celestial Capital the leeway to go about their business, the city weren't willing to deal with these wandering cultivators itself. This was the city's territory after all. If they offended these wandering cultivators too much, Tai-ah City would be the one to suffer when they exacted their revenge. Therefore, Tai-ah City officials turned a blind eye and allowed the wandering cultivators to dash outside.

It didn't take long before the Eternal Celestial Capital's blockade was swept away. Several thousand wandering cultivators broke through the gates in an instant. Jiang Chen and Huang'er were easily able to dash away from the city as well, hiding amidst the crowd.

Ling Xiao had also seized the opportunity to exit the city with Ling Hui'er. Jiang Chen didn't meet up with them. He simply bid them goodbye with his consciousness and made a promise to meet up at Veluriyam Capital. Their journey was already ripe with danger. Jiang Chen knew very well that he would only be putting the Ling duo in danger if they were to follow him.

After they had left Tai-ah City, Jiang Chen mentally revisited the battle between the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect and finally couldn't restrain his laughter any longer. He began to laugh loudly. Even Huang'er couldn't help but smile, "That was truly an amazing ploy, Sir Jiang. I suppose the Ninesuns Sky Sect true disciple who was causing trouble at the Regal Pill Palace has already been eliminated by Sir Jiang?"

Jiang Chen knew that he couldn't hide this from Huang'er, and nodded, "That person was called Cao Jin, and it was true that he was almost unparalleled at the level he was at. If it wasn't thanks to various coincidences, it would've been infinitely difficult to kill him."

Cao Jin's death was the result of many factors that had come together at precisely the right moment. It wouldn't have happened if any single factor had been absent. Yet, ultimately, it had been Cao Jin's own fault for entering Mt. Rippling Mirage and trespassing on Jiang Chen's domain. It would've been quite difficult for Jiang Chen to kill him if he hadn't presented himself so.

"These two sects plotted and schemed, but they were all danced

to Sir Jiang's tune with a casual trick. That was quite the display of intelligence!" Huang'er smiled. She was rather impressed by Jiang Chen's ability to think on his feet.

Jiang Chen didn't think that highly of himself. It was just a sudden inspiration, and while it had both sects fighting each other, it hadn't actually solved his problem. In fact there was a flaw in this ploy, and that was that he had just exposed the fact that he'd killed Cao Jin.

The two sects might be embroiled in a costly battle right now, but it would not take much to calm them down. Once they analyzed the situation, they would soon come to a realization that they'd been tricked. Resolving the misunderstanding would only take a matter of moments once that happened. When that happened, these two first rank sects would join forces and come after him together. That being said, the two sects were likely to target him even if he hadn't driven a wedge between them. So in that case, he might as well plot against them a little. This terrible battle must have been a very expensive misunderstanding. On a certain level, the casualties from this battle would more or less relieve the pressure on him as well.

"Sir Jiang, the two sects may put more effort into hunting you after this incident is over. We should quicken our pace. Veluriyam Capital is still some distance away."

Jiang Chen nodded slightly, but revealed the hint of an eerie smile as he answered, "Miss Huang'er, the journey must go on, but I would like to wait a little longer before we continue."

“We’re waiting some more?” Huang’er was slightly surprised by his decision, but she smiled and asked nothing about his plans. She knew that Jiang Chen must have something else up his sleeves if he was choosing to wait in this situation.

After being in his company for a couple of years, Huang’er had to admit that even she couldn’t see through this young man. He always managed to pleasantly surprise her.

……

Two hours of battle had passed before most of Tai-ah City’s reputable experts made their way to the scene. This also included some top experts native to Swordland Region who happened to be nearby. The two first rank sects finally stopped fighting after a good amount of persuasion.

Tai-ah City was a local hegemon that possessed many experts, some were even stronger than Gong Wuji and Elder Hao, but it was ultimately just a mid region faction. They were still a long way from competing with a first rank sect in the Upper Eight Regions. Although city leaders were enraged by the chaos, they could only wear a smile and do their best to mollify the two participants. They didn’t dare to put on a tough front in front of these two first rank sects.

Once the two sects were done calculating their casualties, they realized that this had been a far more expensive battle than they’d first thought. The Eternal Celestial Capital had lost at least a hundred people, whereas the Ninesuns Sky Sect had also lost dozens of men. In fact, two emperor realm experts had driven each

other to death due to the ferocity of their battle.

The losses could only be described as horrific. But although the battle was ultimately halted, neither Gong Wuji nor Elder Hao looked like they truly wanted a cease fire. They were still glaring and snorting at each other. They looked like they would restart the fight at any moment. It was obvious that both parties had completely fallen out with each other.

“Please, please, listen to this old man for a bit,” The one who spoke up was the city lord of Tai-ah City, a seventh level emperor realm cultivator.

Tai-ah City was one of the five great cities of the Swordland Region. Naturally, its city head possessed a powerful cultivation. Gong Wuji and Elder Hao had no choice but to give the city head of Tai-ah City some face since he had come out to meet them personally. Moreover, he was a high level emperor realm cultivator to boot.

Chapter 708: Tricked by Jiang Chen

“Holy King Gong, would you like to start?” The head of the Tai-ah City suggested with a laugh. He couldn’t take sides since he was here to play the mediator, and neither could he afford to offend either side when all was said and done.

Gong Wuji snorted coldly, “The Ninesun Sky Sect came with the intention of picking a fight, greatly affecting our Eternal Celestial Capital’s search for Jiang Chen. It became even more ludicrous later on—they claimed I killed their true disciple—what bullshit! I’ve killed countless people in my life and I’ll admit to whoever I’ve actually killed. But this old man has never even seen this so-called true disciple of theirs! How could I have killed him?”

Gong Wuji was absolutely furious at this point in the conversation. The head of Tai-ah City smiled and turned to Elder Hao of the Ninesun Sky Sect. “Elder Hao, you insist that Holy King Gong killed a true disciple from your Ninesuns Sky Sect. Do you have any evidence to back that claim?”

“Evidence?” Elder Hao was almost apoplectic with anger as he pointed at the sword on Gong Wuji’s back. “That sword is proof. Its name is ‘Ocean Cover’ and is our true disciple Cao Jin’s personal weapon. That man and sword acted as one in this life. Their separation signifies the death of the wielder or the destruction of his blade. Cao Jin’s soul lamp has long since shattered and today we find ‘Ocean Cover’ in Gong Wuji’s possession. He’s also admitted that he killed the owner to obtain the sword. Who else could be the murderer if not him!?” Elder Hao’s temper had only grown with his accusations. He was ready to make a move at the slightest disagreement.

The head of Tai-ah City was placed in a difficult position after hearing Elder Hao's explanation. After all, the latter's reasoning was fairly justified. Gong Wuji, on the other hand, flew into a rage, "This sword is absolutely not mine!"

Elder Hao sneered, "You claimed it was yours just a moment ago. How come you're afraid to admit it now? Wasn't the sword delivered by a disciple from your sect, saying that you forgot it at the Great Scarlet Mid Region? Can you deny that?"

Gong Wuji's anger had reached its peak. He had a faint suspicion that he'd been made a fool of. Not only himself, but he had the feeling that everyone here had been toyed with as well. It was just that he refused to offer any explanation in order to maintain his dignity. It would give others the feeling that he was afraid of the Ninesuns Sky Sect if he persistently attempted to clarify the matter. His eyes turning cold, Gong Wuji turned around and issued an order, "Summon Zhao Neng."

Zhao Neng was soon brought before him. The disciple was still thinking he would be praised and promoted as he bowed. "Sire Holy King, disciple Zhao Neng..."

Gong Wuji gestured angrily, "Who asked you to deliver this sword to me?"

Zhao Neng took a moment to think before he recounted, "It was a certain sect disciple from the Great Scarlet Mid Region. I don't quite remember which sect he was from. He claimed to have been

entrusted by the Great Scarlet emperor to return this sword. He said the blade must be delivered directly to Sire Holy King and asked me to convey the Great Scarlet emperor's greetings."

"What did this courier look like?" someone beside Gong Wuji inquired.

Zhao Neng scratched his head nervously. He was no idiot and had already caught on that something about the sword was amiss. But how was he supposed to accurately describe a person? He suddenly became tongue-tied and was unable to describe the person's appearance. He stammered, "I only remember that this person said the sword was of the utmost importance..."

"Then why didn't he deliver it himself?"

Zhao Neng replied with a miserable expression, "He claimed that the security at the site was too strict for an inferior sect disciple such as himself to enter. Hence, he entrusted me with its delivery."

Increasingly irritated with the explanation, Gong Wuji yelled at the disciple. "Get lost!"

He understood immediately that Zhao Neng had been tricked. Moreover, the perpetrator had done so deliberately, at the most opportune moment, in order to draw the two sects into a conflict. The enemy tactics were clearly as effective as they was sinister. Pale and trembling in fright, Zhao Neng duly took his leave.

The head of Tai-ah City forced a smile, “Gentlemen, I suspect that someone deliberately sprung a trap for you. Their aim was to instigate a battle between the two of you.”

Elder Hao was also no fool. He had determined from Gong Wuji’s expression that there was more to this incident than was immediately apparent. After careful thought, if it really was Gong Wuji who had killed Cao Jin, he would’ve kept this matter firmly under wraps. There was no way he would display the sword publicly, let alone leave it in the Great Scarlet Mid Region. More suspicious points about the whole matter started to appear as he contemplated everything he’d seen and heard. But even so, it wasn’t enough to completely dispel Elder Hao’s doubts. Although things were rather ambiguous, it was insufficient to rule out Gong Wuji as a suspect.

A sect head from the Great Scarlet Mid Region suddenly asked, “Elder Hao, may I ask when it was that the soul lamp of your sect’s esteemed Cao Jin shattered?

Elder Hao could not be bothered to reply. However, someone from the Ninesuns Sky Sect stepped in to answer. All those from the Great Scarlet Mid Region laughed ruefully after the date was announced. “Elder Hao, this means that the demise of your esteemed sect’s Sir Cao indeed has nothing to do with Master Gong. Both Master Gong’s arrival at the Great Scarlet Region and his subsequent departure for the Myriad Domain were obviously after Sir Cao’s death. The dates just don’t match up.”

Elder Hao also felt that the dates didn’t conform as he took in this information. Moreover, the Ninesuns Sky Sect had several

agents throughout the Myriad Domain. If a big shot like Gong Wuji had in fact appeared, it would have been impossible to not hear of it.

The city lord of Tai-ah City promptly spoke, “Elder Hao, there are obvious indications of a third party involving themselves in this matter. Zhao Neng admitted a moment ago that a sect disciple had given him the sword. Things will be made clear if we call out all the sect disciples from the Great Scarlet Mid Region and have Zhao Neng identify them. If there is such a person, he’ll be easily recognized. If there isn’t, we can confirm this as a case of impersonation.”

This method also received the approval of the neutral parties standing around. “Yes, this method is good.”

Those from the Great Scarlet Mid Region were happy to cooperate. They were not being compliant for the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s sake, but for the Eternal Celestial Capital. They were unwilling to see Gong Wuji doubted. From their standpoint, they definitely did not want to fall out with the Ninesuns Sky Sect. Hence it would be for the best if Master Gong Wuji was cleared of suspicion.

The sects of the Great Scarlet Mid Region had brought no small amount of people. They each stood there to be identified by Zhao Neng, who went through them for several times before shaking his head. “He’s not among them.”

The head of the Tai-ah City enquired, “Are all of your sect disciples in attendance?”

“They are. No one is absent,” the various sects replied.

The head of the Tai-ah City glanced at Elder Hao. “Elder Hao, this matter is basically confirmed. You have all been tricked.”

Elder Hao was also already ninety percent certain at this point. But, it was impossible for him to admit his mistake in public. He walked over to Gong Wuji huffily and extended his hand, “Hand over the sword.”

Gong Wuji was incensed. “What gives you the right to attack people on a whim? Do you think everything you do is justified? You have the audacity to demand now that I hand over the sword?”

“The sword belongs to the Ninesuns Sky Sect! It is only right and proper that I take it back.” Elder Hao went tit-for-tat, convinced that his demand was rational.

“Nonsense! You come to pick a fight without cause or reason and inflicted severe casualties on my Eternal Celestial Capital. Now, you want to take back this sword without a single explanation?! What kind of pushover do you think I am, ah!?” Gong Wuji was obviously not going to let this slide.

Elder Hao laughed coldly, “How do you suggest we settle this with strength, then?”

Gong Wuji replied indignantly, “You think I’m afraid of you?!”

The head of Tai-ah City hastily interjected. “The two of you, please calm down! We all know this incident was instigated by a third party. What good would it do to fight each other anymore? You will only injure yourselves and make the enemy happy. Please, give this old man some face and talk this over peacefully. Elder Hao, you attacked the other party without clarifying things and should offer Holy King Gong an apology. As for Holy King Gong, you should return the sword since it belongs to the Ninesun Sky Sect.”

The head of Tai-ah City was actually not willing to play the mediator. However, since the two heavyweights were threatening to start a battle in his territory, the role had been thrust on him and no one else. Hence he had to brace himself and attempt to broker some kind of peace.

Gong Wuji laughed coldly, “Apologize first.”

“Return the sword first,” Elder Hao was also stubborn.

The two were diametrically opposed—the dispute had turned into a matter of pride. Reports started to come in from the surroundings as they glared at each other. “Master Gong, the wandering cultivators have broken our blockade and are escaping by the thousands. At least two thirds of the hundred thousand have run.”

“Master Gong, at least half of the people we were monitoring

have escaped…”

Bad news trickled in as each report only made Gong Wuji’s expression grow increasingly uglier. He hadn’t just been tricked this time, but made an absolute fool out of! A face suddenly appeared within Gong Wuji’s mind. Jiang Chen!

Although he didn’t know who had actually delivered the sword, Gong Wuji immediately thought of Jiang Chen. The kid could’ve easily disguised himself as a sect disciple from the Great Scarlet Mid Region and completely fooled that moron Zhao Neng. The unsuspecting disciple had then delivered the ominous blade into his hands, inciting this whole bloody incident. Gong Wuji felt a sudden surge of sweetness well up in his throat. He was on the verge of spitting out a glob of blood. Jiang Chen had made an utter fool of him once again, without a doubt! He no longer paid attention to Elder Hao and instead led his sect elites towards the outskirts. “More importantly, exactly how many among the monitored wandering cultivators have escaped?” Gong Wuji asked with a dark expression.

“Sire, the pairs we detained from among the wandering cultivators numbered over four hundred. Among them, two hundred teams have escaped, but we were able to recapture over a hundred pairs. That leaves over a hundred teams still loose. Although they have gone pretty far, we have people chasing after most of them.”

Gong Wuji asked with a long face, “How many of those pairs are headed in the direction of Veluriyam Capital?”

“There are seven in total.”

Gong Wuji nodded. “Prioritize tracking those seven pairs. Don’t forget to bring any pair you capture to me. Report immediately if anyone resists or goes missing.”

“Everyone, chase down those traveling in the direction of the Veluriyam Capital!” Gong Wuji, for all his faults, possessed a flexible and mature mindset. His greatest target at the moment was still Jiang Chen. The grievances with the Ninesuns Sky Sect would have to be settled at a later date. He had a strong premonition that Jiang Chen had already come to Tai-ah City and had personally delivered the sword. Gong Wuji couldn’t help but burn with rage at that thought. Not once, not twice, but Jiang Chen had made fun of him several times now! This deeply offended Gong Wuji’s dignity. He was certainly amongst the seven pairs that were headed toward the Veluriyam Capital!

Gong Wuji was almost completely certain of this. “Jiang Chen, I want to see how you can escape my grasp! You think you’re so smart but what you don’t know is that once someone is marked by the eternal imprint of our sect, he can only dream of getting away!” Gong Wuji gnashed his teeth while his cold eyes looked in the direction of Veluriyam Capital. His frosty countenance was brimming with killing intent. Gong Wuji was enraged beyond words after successive failures and repeatedly falling victim to Jiang Chen’s schemes.

Chapter 709: Gifting Huang'er an Opportunity

As for the Ninesuns Sky Sect, Elder Hao also brought a large group of elites back to the inn they were staying at.

"Elder Hao, are we really just going to let it go like this? Venerated elder Chen Lei has declared that he will seek revenge for Cao Jin's death..."

Elder Hao sneered as he answered in a dark mood, "Let it go? Of course not! However, Cao Jin's death probably has nothing to do with the Eternal Celestial Capital."

"Are they really not responsible for this?" The Ninesuns Sky Sect crowd were all surprised by this revelation.

Elder Hao frowned and said, "What's the current situation of the Eternal Celestial Capital?"

"They're acting suspiciously, like they've found a clue. They all look very confident in themselves. Could it be that they've found something about Jiang Chen?"

Elder Hao nodded, "Watch them closely regardless of what happens. I suspect that Cao Jin's death may have something to do with that Jiang Chen."

“Ah?” The crowd were taken aback when they heard that. It was obvious why they couldn’t quite wrap their heads around that revelation. They had heard a lot about Jiang Chen lately. He’d been trapped in Mt. Rippling Mirage, but had somehow appeared at the Myriad Grand Ceremony. They’d heard that the entire Myriad Grand Ceremony had been blockaded, but he’d mysteriously slipped through Great Scarlet Mid Region’s grasp with ease. They’d even heard that Jiang Chen had returned to the Myriad Domain and dealt a severe blow to Gong Wuji, killing the man’s most beloved grandson. These first rank sect disciples had to admit that Jiang Chen’s repeated, almost legendary performances had stunned them greatly.

Once upon a time, Jiang Chen had just been a small fry in the sixteen kingdom alliance. If it hadn’t been for the murder of Long Juxue, no one would know of his existence. It was because Jiang Chen had murdered Long Juxue and ruined the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s plans for the sixteen kingdom alliance that they’d first heard mention of this character.

Of course, the reason they remembered Jiang Chen wasn’t because he’d successfully destroyed their plans, but because Long Juxue had been the cultivation furnace that senior brother Yong Xingyun had selected for himself. Yong Xingyun was the third ranked out of the top ten true disciples in the Ninesuns Sky Sect. The fact that Jiang Chen had dared destroy senior brother Yong Xingyun’s plans was the biggest reason why everyone in Ninesuns Sky Sect had committed this name to memory. They’d never imagined that Jiang Chen could grow so swiftly in just a few years. But how could he possibly kill one of their ten true disciples, Cao Jin?

Why did this sound so utterly ridiculous?

However, Elder Hao wouldn't be so bored as to create an imaginary enemy after that large battle not long ago. With his temper, such acts were beneath him. Everyone exchanged looks with each other; he was serious.

"Elder Hao, Jiang Chen was said to be at the initial stage sage realm. Even if he did run into some fortune, he still shouldn't be a match for Cao Jin."

"Indeed, Cao Jin is half step emperor realm. He may be ranked ninth among the top ten true disciples of Ninesuns Sky Sect, but even an initial stage emperor realm wouldn't dare claim that they could beat him with absolute certainty." The crowd threw in their opinions one after another. The meaning behind their words was quite obvious. Jiang Chen might be a monstrous genius, but he shouldn't be able to threaten Cao Jin at his current level. They didn't even think that a person who could kill Cao Jin existed in the entirety of the Myriad Domain.

Elder Hao sighed, "Under normal circumstances, I too would believe that Jiang Chen is absolutely not a match for Cao Jin. However, according to the latest results of the sect's investigation, Cao Jin once suffered a loss when he visited the Regal Pill Palace. After that, he joined hands with the second rank pill king Shi Zhen and formation genius Wu Heng, and all signs point to the fact that they headed to Mt. Rippling Mirage. I don't need to tell you that Jiang Chen was the only living person present there at the time. Even if Jiang Chen hadn't killed Cao Jin personally, he must've used a restriction or killing move already present inside Mt.

Rippling Mirage. If we then factor in today's incident where the Eternal Celestial Capital's hunt for Jiang Chen was coincidentally interrupted by Cao Jin's Ocean Cover being delivered to Gong Wuji... It's obvious that the purpose of the delivery was to antagonize the two sects into fighting each other. Therefore, there's a ninety nine percent chance that the mastermind behind this all is Jiang Chen!"

Although Elder Hao had not seen any of this with his own eyes, the plethora of clues were almost all pointing towards Jiang Chen. Moreover, none of the deductions he'd made based on these clues contradicted each other. Accounting for all the factors, Jiang Chen's name practically bent over backwards to present itself as the answer. Everyone's expressions was ugly as they processed Elder Hao's analysis.

"I can't believe that brute Jiang Chen is so cunning!"

"Sigh, as much as a genius as Cao Jin was, he was too reckless in the end. What a shame!"

"If that Jiang Chen really is this despicable, then we cannot possibly let him off easy, Elder Hao!"

Elder Hao sneered, "Let him off easy? Of course not! Have you forgotten what we're here for?"

The crowd came to a sudden realization. Indeed, what exactly are we here for? They were here to take advantage of the confusion! They were here to capture the Myriad Domain geniuses who'd

made a trip into the Paramount Realm! Without a doubt, Jiang Chen had just made the top of their target list.

They'd originally had a lot of targets to capture, such as the Great Cathedral's Xiang Qin, Yue Baize and more. But now, Elder Hao realized that Jiang Chen was their true top target. In fact, he was even more important since they had lost all contact with the spy they had sent into the Regal Pill Palace after he entered the Paramount Realm.

According to their intelligence, Jun Mobai hadn't come out of the Paramount Realm. They'd also heard that the Great Scarlet Mid Region sects that'd attacked the Myriad Grand Ceremony and locked down the Paramount Realm had captured a bunch of geniuses who'd emerged. However, Jun Mobai was not amongst that group of captives. As a pawn of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, Jun Mobai possessed many trump cards that could've helped him escape unhindered. Moreover, the group of captives had ultimately been rescued by someone else. They deduced that the person most likely to have rescued them was also Jiang Chen.

If Jun Mobai really had been amongst those freed captives, he would have tried to contact the Ninesuns Sky Sect. However, they hadn't received any such signal. All the clues pointed to Jun Mobai's death in the Paramount Realm. But he'd entered the Paramount Realm to carry out a special mission. He would not have involved himself in pointless conflict. So, why had Jun Mobai perished in the Paramount Realm?

Elder Hao deduced that Jun Mobai had most likely discovered some clues inside the Paramount Realm. If the clues really were

related to Emperor Featherflight's inheritance, then the situation would be complicated. Just who had killed Jun Mobai?

The Ninesuns Sky Sect's upper echelon had made their deductions, and they all thought that the Great Cathedral's Xiang Qin and Yue Baize were the only ones who had the raw power to kill Jun Mobai. Of course, Jiang Chen was one of the suspects as well. After all, Jiang Chen did defeat Xiang Qin in the Myriad Grand Ceremony. But he'd just been a secondary suspect. But after this incident, Elder Hao was now listing Jiang Chen as a primary suspect and their number one target. Whether or not Jiang Chen had really discovered Emperor Featherflight's inheritance in the Paramount Realm, Elder Hao felt that he had to capture Jiang Chen as soon as possible!

"Everyone, your mission is to do all you can to capture Jiang Chen. We absolutely must not allow Jiang Chen to fall into the Eternal Celestial Capital's hands!" Elder Hao wasted no time in giving out new orders when his thoughts had travelled to this point. "Remember, Jiang Chen must be captured alive at all cost!"

"Also, deploy all the available forces we have to obstruct and hunt down Jiang Chen along the routes to Veluriyam Capital. If necessary, you may shed all pretenses of cordiality with the Eternal Celestial Capital!" Elder Hao was this operation's highest authority. Naturally, his words were law.

Someone came in with a report at this time, "Elder Hao, Gong Wuji has departed personally towards the northwest with a large group of men."

After a moment's astonishment, Elder Hao hurriedly ordered, "We depart immediately."

They had failed to track down Jiang Chen, but there was a dumb tactic they could use; chase after the Eternal Celestial Capital wherever they went. He would definitely be able to find Jiang Chen as long as he stuck close to Gong Wuji.

……

Huang'er was slightly surprised as the two of them travelled. This was because Jiang Chen had slowed down so much that they weren't even travelling at half their usual speed. In fact, it didn't look like they were escaping a pursuit. They looked like they were on a vacation. After watching the sun dip below the horizon, Jiang Chen found a relatively secluded spot and entered deep underground as usual. This time however, he summoned the little cicada.

"Hi~ Do you need anything, big brother Chen?" The little cicada's life had been pretty comfortable as of late. Ever since it'd been baptized by the wood spirit spring, its bloodline had been improving by leaps and bounds.

Jiang Chen chuckled and said, "Little cicada, I want to borrow a drop of blood from you…"

Jiang Chen was prepared to haggle with the little cicada, but to his surprise it grinned and answered without hesitation, "Big brother Chen, I'll give you anything you ask for."

Jiang Chen was slightly surprised by its words. He discovered that the little cicada's tone and expression were growing more and more like a human's. Could it be that this little cicada was about to assume human form?

"Teehee, big brother Chen, I've already entered the sage realm, but I planned to cultivate some more before attempting my transformation! Here you go! Here's a drop of blood for you." The little cicada had bartered a couple of times with Jiang Chen and had haggled greatly with him at the beginning. But after the baptism of the wood spirit spring, the little cicada had taken Jiang Chen for its master and the two of them had gotten closer. It was obvious that the little fellow understood that a race like it needed a powerful patron to survive. Jiang Chen was without a doubt its best choice.

Jiang Chen was about to say some more after he received the droplet of blood, but the little cicada didn't give him a chance to say a word, "Big brother Chen, I'm going to cultivate now. When I can transform I'll talk to you and relieve your boredom then, okay?"

The little fellow flashed and vanished immediately. Jiang Chen chuckled and shook his head. He looked at Huang'er. She was no longer surprised by Jiang Chen's various fortuitous encounters. It wasn't really surprising that a man who possessed even a true dragon would possess a Thundercloud Cicada too.

"Miss Huang'er, this is a drop of cicada blood. Please refine it."

“Me?” Huang’er was slightly surprised by this.

“Mmhmm. This cicada blood will ensure that you’re immune to poison and lightning. It is incredibly precious,” There were no arrogance in Jiang Chen’s eyes, just complete sincerity.

“I... I haven’t done anything to earn it though,” Huang’er was shocked when she heard of the benefits of refining cicada blood. Even in her world, there were very few people who dared to claim that they were immune to poison and lightning.

“Miss Huang’er, I would never hurt you,” Jiang Chen’s eyes were sincere.

They could both see the sincerity in each other’s eyes. Huang’er was a worldly child, and wasn’t the type to play coy. After a moment’s thought, she nodded, “Okay. I owe you a great favor again, Sir Jiang.”

Jiang Chen also smiled cheerfully when he saw Huang’er accepting his gift without hesitation.

Chapter 710: Huang'er's True Face Is Revealed

Huang'er's comprehension ability and talent far exceeded Jiang Chen's imagination. The speed at which she refined the cicada's blood was so fast that it left him stupefied. Jiang Chen himself had spent quite a lot of time to refine the cicada's blood, but Huang'er actually completed it in just a few hours. Moreover, Jiang Chen had checked the degree of her assimilation and found it to be no poorer than his.

"Miss Huang'er, I'm not a gossipy person, but sometimes I really can't help but wonder just where on the Divine Abyss Continent could someone as smart and talented as you be raised?" Jiang Chen's exclamation wasn't just empty praise; his breath really had been stolen away by the surprise that Huang'er had brought him. Huang'er's bearing, temperament and talent couldn't be found in even the first rank sects of the Upper Eight Regions, much less the Myriad Domain.

Jiang Chen had seen plenty of first rank sect disciples in the past, such as Cao Jin and Gong Qi. Setting aside Gong Qi, while Cao Jin's composure was decent and not as frivolous as the geniuses of the Myriad Domain, it was still a far cry from Huang'er's. The difference between them was night and day, like the gap between Wang Han and Cao Jin. There was an enormous gulf between the two.

Huang'er's expression turned stiff for a brief moment, as near indiscernible sadness flashed across her eyes. It was there only for a fleeting instant, but Jiang Chen didn't miss it. He couldn't help

but be startled, before a bit of regret surfaced in his heart. He realized that his question might have been a little too forward, and that it would be difficult for Huang'er to answer. After the time they'd spent together, Jiang Chen had come to admire Huang'er's character and conduct. This was especially true when they were performing music together. It made him feel like he'd found a soul mate.

He had never experienced this feeling from any other woman. In fact, Jiang Chen had almost forgotten about her background and her looks. It was as if her mortal shell no longer mattered to him.

Huang'er suddenly let out a sigh. "Sir Jiang, there is something I've wanted to apologize for, actually, for the longest time now. It all started because a silly thought of mine that I've perpetuated to this day..." She looked up and stared at him with eyes that shone with sincerity. Then, she raised a hand, and wiped off the disguise she wore on her face in one pass. A face that was as exquisite as a painting abruptly appeared in front of Jiang Chen.

He was completely flabbergasted for a moment. Countless words used to describe a woman's beauty flashed through his mind, but at that moment, they all seemed so dull and lacking. He was a loss for words; nothing seemed to encapsulate his feelings right then. No turn of phrase, no metaphor or analogy could describe how shocked he was right then. Just what kind of force of creation did it take to create such a perfect and flawless human fairy? Her skin was creamy white, her breath the scent of orchids. She was as beautiful as a bright flower blooming through the mist, a painting within a painting. Even if the beautiful women of his past life were to descend to this realm he was in right now, they would still be inferior before Huang'er.

“Sir Jiang, back when Elder Shun took me along to find a cure for my sickness, I was timidly worried that I would encounter many lechers. That was why I changed my appearance on purpose. But I didn’t realize that Sir Jiang is a true gentleman until later on, and it would appear that it was I whose thinking was too narrow-minded. Please forgive my past mistakes, Sir Jiang.”

Jiang Chen broke free of his reverie and sighed softly, “Unbelievable, truly unbelievable. It is entirely normal that you would decide to hide such an unworldly, exquisite countenance, Miss Huang’er. Otherwise, you would attract attention wherever you go.”

Huang’er had heard countless words of praise as she’d grown up, but she’d never been so pleased to hear them as she was today. Praise from someone one disliked was only torture. Only the praise from someone beloved would elicit true happiness. On the other side, Jiang Chen’s composure slowly returned. He may have been somewhat startled at the transformation, but he hadn’t completely forgotten himself. .

“Sir Jiang, it wasn’t that I wanted to hide things from you. It’s just that my background and origins involve too many complications. If I were to tell you, then I may bring trouble upon you instead.”

If a regular people had said these words, then they were likely just maintaining a half-hearted pretense. However, Jiang Chen knew that Huang’er was absolutely not such a person. Moreover, Huang’er’s clear, endlessly pure eyes were proof of her sincerity.

The clarity in her eyes brooked not even the slightest inkling of lies. Jiang Chen had never seen such a pure and clean pair of eyes in either his past or current life. He nodded and didn't ask further into her background. Instead, he smiled broadly, "Miss Huang'er, I was simply blurting out my thoughts without thinking just now. I wasn't trying to inquire into your background on purpose."

"Mm, I know," Huang'er smiled faintly at him.

"In any case, it's about time. We should be going now," Jiang Chen stood up and revealed a trace of a meaningful smile. "I think they've almost caught up to us."

"Oh?" Huang'er was startled for a brief moment before she smiled faintly in response, "I thought that you hadn't noticed it yet, Sir Jiang. Does this mean that you sensed them from the start?"

Jiang Chen smiled and nodded to her, "That little trick of theirs might have been well hidden, but they can't fool my senses just yet. That being said, I couldn't have stopped them from applying a mark on me in that kind of situation anyway."

"Mm, I took a look at this mark just now. I believe that it will be rather troublesome to wipe it off. It might be very difficult to erase it without at least three days of time," Huang'er's slender brows raised slightly.

"Hehe, it's true that erasing it won't be a simple task, but I have my own ways to conceal it from detection. That being said, we

don’t need to do that right now.” Jiang Chen was familiar with this kind of tracking mark from his past life. He had also seen marks that were at least tens or hundreds of times better than this one. But he was loath to give up such a good opportunity.

Back when they had hidden amongst the thousands of wandering cultivators, they had been singled out by the Eternal Celestial Capital because they were travelling as a pair. There, they’d been tagged with unique tracker mark. Jiang Chen was different from the other wandering cultivators. He knew very well what they had done to him and Huang’er. He’d just been incapable of stopping them from doing so at the time. Doing so would only reveal their identities.

Considering that there were thousands of people who had been tagged with the same tracker mark, it was unlikely that the Eternal Celestial Capital would quickly hone in on him. That was why Jiang Chen had chosen to wait patiently. However, as time passed, the Eternal Celestial Capital would remove more and more suspects from their lists. He figured that it was about time they’d narrowed their targets to the two of them. Moreover, Jiang Chen had purposely left behind many clues along the way because he wanted to draw his pursuers over.

He had a new plan.

After the duo emerged from the ground, their relationship didn’t change just because Huang’er had revealed her true appearance. Everything was as usual. However, Huang’er was feeling like a weight had just been lifted off her shoulders. She was no longer burdened by self-blame and guilt. She didn’t think to ask Jiang

Chen where they were going at all. She simply thought that travelling and adventuring with Jiang Chen like this was the happiest and most pleasant experience she had ever had in her twenty years of life.

The duo travelled in secret for an entire day, eventually arriving at a dark valley. Almost entirely covered in shadow, the valley seemed to sink into the depths of darkness, with no way to tell how deep or long it was. It looked like the personification of hell in the Divine Abyss Continent. An eerie atmosphere pervaded its outskirts, and it only seemed to grow more sinister further in.

“What is this place?” Huang’er asked curiously.

“A valley called Infant Shriek,” Jiang Chen answered calmly.

Its name alone sent chills down one’s spine.

……

Gong Wuji appeared on an open plain about three hundred kilometers away from Infant Shriek. This open plain was rather large, serving as a crossroads for many travellers who sought to cross the region. Roads lined every cardinal direction, with many splitting off in the distance.

“Master Gong, we have tracked down four out of the seven pairs of solo cultivators who were travelling towards Veluriyam Capital. We’ve also homed onto another two pairs who’ve entered another

city. The last pair has strayed slightly away from the path leading towards Veluriyam Capital, but only slightly."

Intelligence flowed in steadily to Gong Wuji. He spread open his map and looked at it for a moment. Then, he ordered, "Contact the local forces of those cities, and send some men to arrest the two pairs who've entered the city!"

"Aren't we going after them, Master Gong?"

"We will be heading towards the northwest. I have a strong feeling that the pair on the northwest path is the real target!" Gong Wuji smiled savagely. He pointed at the map and searched up and down, finally pointing at a certain location, "This is the place. There's no way they could bypass Infant Shriek no matter how hard they try!"

Some expressions changed slightly when they heard the name 'Infant Shriek'. "Master Gong, I've heard that that Infant Shriek contains an enormous amount of yin energy. Even the locals don't visit it too often. These kind of places are only frequented by spirit alchemists."

Gong Wuji sneered, "Locals? Are there any places we cultivators are afraid to travel to? If someone like Jiang Chen isn't afraid of that place, then why should we be afraid of it?"

Jiang Chen had become Gong Wuji's internal demon. Be it for revenge or for the secrets of the Paramount Realm, Gong Wuji had more than enough reason to capture Jiang Chen. He was tired of

this endless tug-of-war already. This time, he would kill Jiang Chen no matter what the cost!

"Anyone amongst you afraid to go can stand forth now!" Gong Wuji's cold gaze swept across everyone's faces.

Their group was extremely powerful in their own right. Three thousand strong, they were all elites from the Eternal Celestial Capital as well as the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Which cultivator would admit to cowardice? This was especially true when they were standing right in front of Gong Wuji. The Great Scarlet Mid Region forces only wished that they could demonstrate on the spot just how courageous they were. What better opportunity was there to flatter Gong Wuji than now? They all cried out, "There's nothing to be afraid of! We're willing to follow the holy king and kill that little rat Jiang Chen as soon as possible!"

"We will listen to the holy king and grind that maggot to pieces! If we fail to catch that little rat Jiang Chen, then what joy is there to be found in our purposeless lives?"

"That's right, I will not be able be able to sleep or eat well if I don't catch this kid!"

"Let's go, we'll all go! Anyone who doesn't go is a coward!"

A tiny smile finally appeared on Gong Wuji's face. He nodded, "Alright, I'll say this to all of you. I have not forgotten your hard work, and if we really manage to catch Jiang Chen, then I will owe all of you a favor. I will not stand by in the future if anyone

troubles your sects in the future!”

Every Great Scarlet Mid Region sect became highly motivated upon hearing Gong Wuji’s promise. Obtaining the favor of an Eternal Celestial Capital holy king was no different from finding a patron who was willing to support their sects!

Chapter 711: Gathering at Infant Shriek

“Is that Jiang Chen kid trying to commit suicide? Infant Shriek is a one way street. The deeper one goes, the more terrifying it becomes. If he really entered Infant Shriek, then he’s only cutting off his own path of retreat. Even if we don’t kill him, he won’t be able to hold out on his own. He’ll scurry out by himself,” an Eternal Celestial Capital member was quick to point out the advantages. While he sounded like he was talking about Jiang Chen, he was actually trying to give Gong Wuji a reminder. At the same time, he also doubted if the pair of wandering cultivators they were chasing was really Jiang Chen and his companion. If he really was Jiang Chen, he should be speeding along the path to Veluriyam Capital, not dallying around Infant Shriek. He couldn’t shake the feeling that Holy King Gong Wuji might have made an error in judgment this time.

Naturally, Gong Wuji understood the connotations as he coolly glanced at the man, “You don’t need to doubt anything. I don’t speak without good reason. If I wasn’t confident in my decision, would I have left the other two pairs behind and focused the bulk of our forces on this target?”

Gong Wuji couldn’t be bothered to explain any further. He waved his hand and said, “We depart!” This time, he had made better plans and brought more men with him. Moreover, he had made all kinds of preparations to capture Jiang Chen. He had even prepared restriction talismans to specifically counter escape talismans. Gong Wuji refused to believe that he would fail to trap Jiang Chen again with such powerful talismans in hand and the help of so many emperor realm domains!

He'd brought five emperor realm cultivators from the Eternal Celestial Capital alone and about a dozen or so Great Scarlet Mid Region sect heads as well. Each one was an emperor realm cultivator. Although these sect heads were only initial stage emperor realm, that didn't change the fact that they were still emperor realm cultivators. An emperor realm cultivator could crush a sage realm cultivator as easily as snacking on beans. Even if Jiang Chen was an exception to this rule, Gong Wuji refused to believe that he could escape again!

The Eternal Celestial Capital hadn't travelled far before the Ninesuns Sky Sect showed up in droves. It was obvious that the Ninesuns Sky Sect had requested reinforcements from all sides and gathered many experts in just three days time. They too boasted a dozen or so emperor realm cultivators. Two more cultivators around Elder Hao's level had joined the group as well. One of the middle-aged cultivator had a sharp countenance and eyes that brimmed with the greatest killing intent of them all.

"Elder Hao, are you sure this direction is right?" The middle-aged cultivator asked.

"Are you not confident in my abilities, ole brother Cao? We Ninesuns Sky Sect may not have a clue where Jiang Chen was, but following Gong Wuji's men is still well within our abilities." Elder Hao was obviously wary of this middle-aged man.

"I hope that idiot Gong Wuji isn't chasing after the wrong person!" This middle-aged man was named Cao Meng. He was Cao Jin's uncle and the strongest person in the Cao clan. His cultivation wasn't in any way weaker than Elder Hao's.

Cao Jin had been the Cao clan's brightest hope, their chance to rise within the Ninesuns Sky Sect. However, he had suddenly perished for seemingly no good reason. Naturally, Cao Meng had been thrown into utter despair by this outcome and had a bone deep hatred of Cao Jin's murderer. Although he still wasn't sure if Jiang Chen was the murderer of his nephew, Cao Meng wasn't going to let a suspect go free!

Elder Hao reminded him, "Ole brother Cao, Jiang Chen is of the utmost importance. We need to capture him alive and interrogate him later. We must place the sect before our personal grudges. Once we've figured out all the mysteries behind this kid, the sect won't stop you from doing whatever you want to him."

Cao Meng paused for a moment and nodded, "I understand my priorities."

Elder Hao seized the opportunity to add, "Our main obstacle in catching Jiang Chen this time is the people of the Eternal Celestial Capital. That Gong Wuji..."

Cao Meng harrumphed coldly, "If Gong Wuji doesn't recognize the situation, I don't mind sending him on his way to the next life. What do you say, big brother Sun?"

A fat man next to Cao Meng chuckled, "Of course I will obey your instructions. After all, you've so kindly invited me to fight alongside you. Gong Wuji? Do us brothers really need to fear someone like him?"

This fat man was Cao Meng's sworn brother. They shared almost the same level of strength, and he was a good friend that Cao Meng had purposely brought along to help him. The Ninesuns Sky Sect's overall strength now surpassed Gong Wuji's side. Cao Meng was pleased to see his old friend showing him this much face. He responded to Elder Hao, "We shouldn't tarry any longer. Let us catch up to them quickly."

Elder Hao nodded, "Judging from their route, they're probably heading for the northwest. According to our map, there's a dangerous valley in that direction. I believe it was called Infant Shriek."

"Who cares about some dangerous place? I refuse to believe that the Swordland Region would a place dangerous enough to threaten first rank sect experts of the Upper Eight Regions like us," Cao Meng was so anxious to take revenge for his nephew that he couldn't wait even a moment longer.

……

At the entrance of Infant Shriek, Jiang Chen carefully extended his consciousness and displayed a gratified smile on his face. "Gong Wuji, ah Gong Wuji, thank goodness you're not completely stupid. You've actually shown up according to the clues and flaws I'd intentionally left behind for you. Good, very good."

Jiang Chen smiled slightly. He had arranged countless Goldbiter Rats along the way to act as his eyes and ears. Even if Gong Wuji

had somehow headed off in the wrong direction, Jiang Chen would've figured out a way to bring him back to the his carefully baited path. "Hmm? There's another party of pursuers other than the Eternal Celestial Capital? The Ninesuns Sky Sect! I knew it would be them. Haha, just as I thought, these two sects haven't given up on me. I guess they've temporarily set aside their grudges to aim their wrath at me?"

Even as Jiang Chen's thoughts spun, he immediately guessed that the Ninesuns Sky Sect and the Eternal Celestial Capital must not have reconciled with each other. This also meant that it was impossible for them to cooperate perfectly with each other. The situation had become even better for Jiang Chen. After all, the two sects would now be tripping over each other.

"Miss Huang'er, are you interested in venturing into this dangerous valley with me?" Jiang Chen very courteously asked for Huang'er's opinion.

Huang'er smiled charmingly, "We have travelled through countless rivers and mountains. Why would I possibly fear a single valley?"

They exchanged smiles and then shot straight into the valley as two rays of light.

The Eternal Celestial Capital showed up roughly fifteen minutes later.

Gong Wuji unleashed his consciousness in full and inspected the

surroundings for a moment. A joyful look sprung onto his face, “This is the place. They were here just fifteen minutes ago. The tracker mark shows that they have already entered the valley.”

“Are we really going inside, my lord?” The cautious Eternal Celestial Capital expert asked again.

Gong Wuji was furious, “Are you afraid?”

The man smiled wryly, “I’m just worried that…”

“There’s nothing to be worried about. I’ve arranged everything properly this time, so what is there to be worried about? The biggest reason we failed to capture Jiang Chen again and again was because we were overcautious! This time, we must be firm and see our plans through to the end! We must capture Jiang Chen at any cost!” Had Gong Wuji just been on a path of personal revenge, his emotional state may have denied him the charisma to lead a group two thousand strong into this dangerous place. However, he knew very well that one of the reasons he desperately needed to capture Jiang Chen was because of the boy’s connection to the Paramount Realm.

He might not be completely sure that Emperor Featherflight’s inheritance was in the Paramount Realm, or that Jiang Chen even had anything to do with Emperor Featherflight’s inheritance. But even if there was the tiniest connection between the two, he had all the reason in the world to take Jiang Chen into custody!

The expert noticed that he wasn’t going to be able to stop Gong

Wuji. He also knew that he might be killed on the spot if he were to go against Gong Wuji's wishes right now. Left without a choice, he could only charge into the valley with Gong Wuji. Those of the Great Scarlet Mid Region sects didn't think too deeply about it. If Gong Wuji himself had gone in, what reason did they have to stay outside?

The people of the Eternal Celestial Capital hadn't entered the valley long before the Ninesuns Sky Sect's group charged into the valley as well. The normally desolate and uninhabited Valley of Infant Shriek instantly became rather crowded and noisy.

Jiang Chen and Huang'er quickened their pace for a little. After scanning their surroundings, Huang'er couldn't help but remind Jiang Chen, "Sir Jiang, this place is incredibly dangerous. There are dangers lurking around every corner."

Jiang Chen smiled, "That's exactly why I had you refine a drop of cicada blood. Otherwise, I wouldn't have dared to let you accompany me into this dangerous place."

The cicada's blood was immune to all poison, and this valley was chock full of poisonous things and creatures. However, the stranger a place was, the higher the likelihood that it contained all sorts of precious and rare herbs. It was no wonder that some pill masters couldn't resist entering such places even though they knew of its dangers. Huang'er was just about to say something when something registered on her consciousness. She blurted out, "They've caught up with us."

Huang'er's consciousness was extremely powerful. She quickly

discovered that a large group of Eternal Celestial Capital members was approaching them.

"Mm, I've been waiting for quite a while now. Let's keep walking." Jiang Chen extended his consciousness fully and searched his surroundings. At the same time, he told Huang'er, "Miss Huang'er, please don't use your consciousness unless we don't have a choice. You only need to follow me for now."

Jiang Chen didn't wish for Huang'er to use her consciousness. Hearing how certain Jiang Chen was, Huang'er found herself very willing to believe in him at this moment, even though she normally didn't like relying on other people. She followed Jiang Chen as they travelled faster and faster.

The pursuit went on for a while, and before they knew it, they'd progressed several hundred kilometers into the valley. Jiang Chen observed the surrounding terrain and found that they were surrounded by dense forest and valley mist. It looked like a world of illusions.

"About time," Jiang Chen suddenly smiled as he halted.

"Hahaha!" Gong Wuji's wild and cruel laughter suddenly rang through the air. "Jiang Chen, you brat! I have no idea what you were thinking by coming into such a place, but I guess it no longer matters. You will not escape me this time!"

Coming out of the valley mist, Gong Wuji stretched out his hand, holding the restriction talisman in his hand. At the same time,

shadows shot out of the mist to land around Jiang Chen and Huang'er, sealing off the land within a five kilometer radius. One, two... a total of twenty or so emperor realm cultivators had completely sealed off their escape routes. Gong Wuji stared straight at Jiang Chen, "Don't bother trying to hide yourself or talk your way out of this, brat!"

Jiang Chen laughed leisurely. He wasn't surprised at all by Gong Wuji's appearance. "I guess you aren't too stupid after all, Gong Wuji. I thought it'd take you a while to find me here," Jiang Chen didn't bother trying to deny things.

When Gong Wuji heard this, his blood pressure skyrocketed. Although he was a fourth level emperor realm cultivator, he had been played for a fool again and again. He'd been truly enraged for a long time. And now this kid was obviously up a tree, but he was still putting on an act as if he was impervious to everything. This only made Gong Wuji even more furious. You are just a small fry in a fourth rank sect. How dare you still pretend to be calm before me, a holy king?

He felt that Jiang Chen should be trembling all over and begging for mercy on his knees. He should be the epitome of disgrace, snivelling for his life. But no, Jiang Chen had chosen to speak with a tone that suggested that he had been waiting for them for a very long time already. How could Gong Wuji not be enraged by this? "Brat, you think talking tough is going to save you!? Fine, let's see how long you can keep up the act! I'll soon make you regret being born in this world!"

Gong Wuji cackled sinisterly as he started to walk forward.

Chapter 712: A Three Way Match-Up

Not only had Jiang Chen killed his beloved grandson Gong Qi, but the former had also tricked Gong Wuji repeatedly during the past half year. Unintentional or not, the constant vexation had coalesced to the point where it was nearly an internal demon. Gong Wuji was no fool. He would take this opportunity to vent out everything.

Unexpectedly, Jiang Chen laughed with disdain. “Gong Wuji, it seems you have not lost your penchant for boasting. I still remember your insufferable arrogance back at the Regal Pill Palace when you claimed that you didn’t kill anyone, but it was all the same if I wanted to blame you. Isn’t that right? Didn’t you also say something about the strong preying on the weak while demanding my obedient surrender? Later on, when your grandson fell into my hands, what was it that you said? You said that if I touched a single hair of his, you would shatter my mind and leave me in a state of utter despair where I can neither live nor die. Do I remember all of that correctly?”

Words that had once been proudly spoken by Gong Wuji were recited back verbatim in a very similar tone of voice. The bystanders were shocked silly. This was absolute face slapping!

Jiang Chen laughed, and continued talking in that same leisurely tone. “But as you can see, I’m still doing rather well. What can you do to me, hmm?”

Even as enemies, the Great Scarlet Mid Region sects couldn’t help but admire Jiang Chen’s boldness. How was he still able to

maintain such an imposing attitude in these circumstances?!

Jiang Chen swept a cold look across the various sect heads of the Great Scarlet Mid Region. “Sect heads of the Thunder Note Hall and Great Roc Sect, you both had a hand in killing my fellow disciples and exterminating the Regal Pill Palace, no?”

The Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc sect heads were both emperor realm cultivators. But when Jiang Chen’s glacial eyes swept across them, a chill rippled across their hearts. It was as if every secret of theirs had been laid bare. The sensation caused their hair to stand on end. If they weren’t convinced before, they were now absolutely certain that they needed to kill this evil brat then and there, otherwise endless misfortune would snap at their heels in the future. If he was able to invoke such a terrifying sense of peril at mere initial sage realm, it was likely that he’d be able to threaten the fate of their entire sect if he was allowed to develop further.

Kill! We must kill this brat! Killing intent surged in the hearts of those on Gong Wuji’s side. The head of the Thunder Note Hall laughed. “Brat, so what if we exterminated your Regal Pill Palace? So what if we killed your fellow disciples? Do you still think you’ll be lucky enough to escape today?”

Jiang Chen was furious, but concealed his fury with a laugh instead. “Very good. As long as you dare admit to your crimes. Killing Ding Rong that day was just a small advance payment on interest. I’ll have you all repay both principal and interest today! But don’t worry, I’ll also raze the Thunder Note Hall to the roots so that you won’t be lonely on the road to the underworld!”

“Brat, what insolence!” The moment Ding Rong was brought up, the head of the Thunder Note Hall felt bitter pain grip his heart. He turned toward Gong Wuji and said, “Sire, please give the order!”

Just as Gong Wuji was about to give the order, Jiang Chen suddenly laughed again. “Friends from the Ninesuns Sky Sect, if you’re already here, why stay hidden? You want to hide and reap the benefits, playing the oriole while the mantis stalks the cicada? Isn’t the strategy a little too cliche?”

Gong Wuji also knew the Ninesuns Sky Sect was behind them, but he hadn’t wanted to expose them yet since his primary objective was Jiang Chen’s capture. He didn’t want to bother thinking about the aftermath. If he could capture Jiang Chen and glean clues about the Paramount Realm, he would’ve rendered a great service to the sect. If by any chance the Paramount Realm was truly related to Emperor Featherflight’s inheritance, they would benefit greatly! He couldn’t care less about anyone else’s survival. Sacrificing some cannon fodder was necessary in order to achieve big aspirations!

Gong Wuji’s heart sank after seeing Jiang Chen expose the presence of the Ninesuns Sky Sect. Most of those from the Eternal Celestial Capital were bewildered. They had no idea that the Ninesuns Sky Sect had been tailing them.

“Hahaha, it is indeed that new talent springs forth in the lands with every generation. It truly amazes me that a mere Myriad Domain was able to produce a devil like you!” As Elder Hao spoke,

the emperor realm cultivators from the Ninesuns Sky Sect descended into the open space. They approached the central area with large strides, completely ignoring the group from the Eternal Celestial Capital. Cao Jin's uncle, Cao Meng, stood beside Elder Hao with a solemn expression. His gaze was locked on Jiang Chen, calculating and appraising, all the while completely ignoring those from the Eternal Celestial Capital. This arrogant attitude elicited nothing less than complete fury from the forces of the Eternal Celestial Capital.

"You, Hao! Why are you still clinging to us like a leech?!" Gong Wuji asked furiously.

Elder Hao shot a glance at Gong Wuji before replying with an expressionless face. "Gong Wuji, I have no time to exchange superfluous words with you. Hand over Ocean Cover, round up your men and get out of my sight!"

The two had actually held back a lot during their conflict in Tai-ah City. While they had been angry with each other, they had still maintained a modicum of decorum. But that intense battle had established an obvious enmity between the two, despite the knowledge that it had been instigated by a third party. Moreover, each side was fully aware of the other's true motives. Hence, Elder Hao no longer had any reservations, but his attitude invited a plethora of curses from the Eternal Celestial Capital.

"Bullshit, you're the ones who should scram!"

"What the hell are you on, huh?! Do you think the Ninesuns Sky Sect is so great? You think we're afraid of you!?"

Elder Hao laughed coldly and shot Cao Meng a meaningful glance. “Ole brother Cao, it seems those from the Eternal Celestial Palace aren’t convinced?”

Cao Meng cackled nastily, his frosty gaze sweeping across everyone as h e released his emperor realm aura. “Who’s not convinced? Step out and we’ll have a chat!”

Cao Meng’s sworn brother possessed strength that was more or less equal to Cao Meng. He naturally wouldn’t stay idle after seeing Cao Meng take action and promptly released his aura as well. Together, a double wave of emperor realm aura swept outwards crashing against the Eternal Celestial Capital cultivators like raging tides against the shore.

The two cultivators were no weaker than Elder Hao, and were about the same level as Gong Wuji. Although Gong Wuji was powerful, the Eternal Celestial Capital had no other mid emperor realm cultivators on their side. However, the large number of initial emperor realm cultivators by his side were not to be trifled with either. They also activated their emperor realm auras to resist Cao Meng. Elder Hao snorted. “Are you trying to oppress us with superior numbers?”

With a whistle, reinforcements from the Ninesuns Sky Sect appeared one after another to join their ranks. The Ninesuns Sky Sect also possessed a fair number of initial emperor realm cultivators. They took the lead as reinforcements as hundreds of cultivators poured into Infant Shriek.

Both Cao Meng and Gong Wuji were taken aback when their auras clashed, each realizing that the other was a formidable adversary. Jiang Chen was also dumbfounded after seeing the sudden development. He wasn't expecting the two forces to start fighting immediately after he exposed the Ninesuns Sky Sect. The scene playing out before him was well beyond his expectations.

Elder Hao, on the other hand, hadn't moved a single inch. He stood there seemingly observing the battle while, in fact, his consciousness was securely locked onto Jiang Chen and was observing his every move. The moment Jiang Chen revealed the slightest signs of trying to escape, Elder Hao would capture him with swift ferocity.

But contrary to his expectations, Jiang Chen seemed to have absolutely no intention of fleeing and was instead calmly observing the ongoing battle in the midst of chaos. From beginning to end, it was as if the entire incident had nothing to do with him. He was like an outsider who was only there to spectate. Elder Hao's mind was full of suspicions. Is this brat simply thick-skinned or absolutely reckless? He still has the mood to watch the show even at this critical juncture? The more Jiang Chen acted this way, the more Elder Hao felt that he shouldn't be treated lightly.

Gong Wuji had been on Jiang Chen's trail ever since the latter killed his grandson. Yet even after so long, he had not been able to touch a single hair on Jiang Chen's head and had been enraged to the point of vomiting blood. This brat definitely can't be taken lightly. He has so many trump cards in his arsenal, truly a unique entity of the Myriad Domain. Could it be...

Elder Hao's thoughts jolted into action as he suddenly thought of a certain possibility—his heart spasming with the implications. Can it be... this brat has long since obtained Emperor Featherflight's inheritance, which has led to his stunning rise? Otherwise, how else could a mere Myriad Domain have produced such a perverse genius?

This sudden thought, despite being far-fetched, took root in Elder Hao's mind. It was unremovable and only increased in magnitude. "No matter, I definitely have to capture this brat alive and rip out all of his secrets one by one!" Elder Hao produced a restriction talisman with a thought. Just when he was about to take action, Gong Wuji shouted loudly. "Stop Hao! I'll pin these two down!"

Although Gong Wuji was clashing auras with Cao Meng, he had been mindful of Elder Hao's every move. He was shaken after seeing signs that the latter was about to take action. Even though Cao Meng's party was powerful and Gong Wuji couldn't handle a two on one for long, it wasn't a problem to occupy their attention for a while. Meanwhile, the others would have to contain Elder Hao at all costs.

Huang'er tugged lightly on Jiang Chen's sleeves and transmitted. "Are we leaving yet?"

Jiang Chen suddenly laughed. "This play hasn't ended yet; we're in no rush to leave."

Gong Wuji groaned abruptly as he expanded his domain forcefully so that he could take a few steps back. He glared firmly

at Elder Hao. “Hao, are you certain you want to fight to the death against my Eternal Celestial Capital?”

He was genuinely angered now. Gong Wuji had wanted to preserve his strength at first and had refrained from going all out. But he would be hard pressed to hold back his true power at this rate. In truth, Elder Hao had only wanted to suppress the other party through his aura and intimidate them into pulling back. But the situation at hand had proven that the enemy was not easily subdued. Instead, this might escalate into another bloody battle like the last time. If that happened, the benefits would be outweighed by the losses. Their main target today was Jiang Chen. It was obviously not a good idea to exhaust all his strength in fighting with the Eternal Celestial Capital.

The silence that followed was quickly broken by Elder Hao’s shout. “I’m not afraid of you if we are to fight, but we can negotiate if you don’t wish to fight.” He refused to lose out in terms of posturing despite hoping to end the fight.

Gong Wuji only laughed coldly; he had no interest in such conversations. “I can return Ocean Cover to you and have no need of an apology from you. But I want all of you to pull back after the sword is returned. How about it?”

Elder Hao laughed heartily, as if he had just heard a good joke. His voice dropped to an indifferent tone. “Gong Wuji, let’s speak frankly. You want to avenge your dead grandson but our Ninesuns Sky Sect also wishes to avenge Cao Jin.”

“Hao, we give you an inch and you take a mile!? There is an order

of priority to everything! Jiang Chen was captured by the efforts of our Eternal Celestial Capital. You want to benefit so easily out of this?! Don't you think this goes against convention?"

Elder Hao's expression was indolent, "So your Eternal Celestial Capital has the means to track him down, what makes you think our Ninesuns Sky Sect doesn't also have that ability? What a joke!"

The rascal had actually denied the charge flatly. Even Jiang Chen, who was listening from the sidelines, couldn't help but laugh at their bickering.

Chapter 713: The Crimson Heavens Formation Disk Reveals Its Might

The hostility in the atmosphere was palpable as everyone had their blades drawn. But when Jiang Chen suddenly burst into laughter, the ambience turned awkward.

“Brat, what are you so pleased about when your death is near at hand?” Gong Wuji glared at Jiang Chen.

Elder Hao didn’t bother sniping at Gong Wuji this time, casting an angry look at Jiang Chen. His countenance was the very picture of deep hatred and bitterness. “Jiang Chen, were you the one who killed our sect’s true disciple Cao Jin?”

The simultaneous questions from the two mid emperor realm cultivators was accompanied by a surge of emperor realm aura that weighed down on Jiang Chen like the Taihang mountain range and Mt. Wangwu.

Even the cultivators surrounding him felt their breathing hitch and their movements flag, as if the might of heaven and earth were weighing down on them, much less than Jiang Chen. All eyes were on him. They were also curious to know if the Ninesuns Sky Sect’s true disciple had truly died in Jiang Chen’s hands. If that was indeed the case, then this brat was really too perverse! True disciples—especially those at the level of the ten great true disciples—were all at peak sage realm. Some were even half step emperor realm.

Those from the Great Scarlet Mid Region fourth rank sects suddenly developed a trace of apprehension in their hearts. The invasion of the Myriad Domain had supposed to be a steamrolling massacre, a delightful journey of annihilation. It was exactly because of the appearance of Jiang Chen that this joyful, plundering excursion had become overcast. If they failed to eliminate Jiang Chen today and allowed him ample time to develop, an unfathomable calamity would befall the sects of the Great Scarlet Mid Region.

This was especially true for the heads of the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect. They cast encouraging glances at each other—they had to uproot this potential threat today no matter the cost! They were also secretly delighted at the same time. Fortunately, Jiang Chen had offended both first rank sects with his insufferable arrogance. It would be difficult to survive after drawing the attention of both Gong Wuji and Elder Hao!

“Brat, do you think I have no means to verify the truth as long as you don’t admit to it?” Cao Meng glared at Jiang Chen with eyes full of killing intent.

Jiang Chen rolled his eyes, “And who the hell are you?”

Cao Meng was greatly incensed upon hearing this. If it wasn’t for Elder Hao repeatedly warning him about the Jiang Chen’s significance in the grand scheme of things, he would’ve killed the latter with one grand move already. He took a deep breath in. Glaring daggers at Jiang Chen, he grimly enunciated word by word, “Brat, listen up! Cao Jin is my nephew. I can immediately tell if you’ve killed a member of my Cao clan. Don’t even think

about denying it!”

Jiang Chen slapped his forehead, “Then that means you’re Cao Jin’s elder?”

“Trying to kiss up to me, brat? Stop playing such tricks before it’s too late!” Cao Meng snorted coldly.

“You’re thinking too much. I just wanted to tell you that I was indeed the one who killed Cao Jin along with another fatty and a pill master.” Jiang Chen smiled faintly and was actually rather calm while admitting to the murders.

A layer of frost instantly crept over Cao Meng’s face. His eyes erupted with violent intent as he cited repeatedly, “Good, good, good… brat, it’s good that you admit to things!”

Jiang Chen replied leisurely, “Oh and by the way, that Ding Tong is also one of yours right? I also killed him. Oh right, I almost forgot about the agent you planted in my Regal Pill Palace. He thought himself well hidden, but he’d long since been exposed. After entering the Paramount Realm, I conveniently sent him on his way.”

Elder Hao was shaken after he heard the words ‘Paramount Realm’ and hissed, “You killed Jun Mobai?!”

“You can put it that way,” Jiang Chen raised his hand and gestured toward everyone present, “Similarly, I have to shoulder

the responsibility for all your deaths today. Do I make myself clear?”

Everyone was stunned. Cao Meng laughed heartily, “Brat, you’re having quite the pleasant dream in broad daylight!”

Gong Wuji shouted, “Don’t waste words with this brat. Suppress him first and let’s discuss things later!”

Elder Hao also nodded—he was somewhat taken aback after hearing Jiang Chen’s claims—a rush of agitation surged through his heart for unknown reasons. This kind of sensation wasn’t reasonable. However, a baffling sense of urgency had also materialized abruptly and inconceivably within his consciousness. He formed a resolute thought at that very moment. He would suppress Jiang Chen first and deal with the Eternal Celestial Capital later!

“Ole brother Cao and ole brother Sun, restrain that brat first!” Elder Hao transmitted towards Cao Meng and the cultivator surnamed Sun. All emperor realm cultivators suddenly found a clear target in the form of Jiang Chen and began to approach him.

Jiang Chen performed a series of hand seals with a single maneuver in the next moment, transforming the entire world.

“Eh? What just happened?”

“Oh no! It’s a formation!”

“Where’s that brat?!” Everyone tensed up as the inconceivable had happened. Jiang Chen really had no shortage of tricks up his sleeve and had even able to activate a formation right under their eyes. Activating a formation usually necessitated certain deployment procedures and some traces of it would be observable at the site. However, they definitely hadn’t discovered such clues in the vicinity.

Gong Wuji gestured while shouting, “Don’t move around recklessly. This formation isn’t simple!”

The emperor realm cultivators behind him didn’t dare lower their guard. Elder Hao and Elder Meng’s party were off to one side, searching for Jiang Chen.

“Ole brother Cao, this little rogue actually has this level of method! It must be a powerful formation disk that can immediately simulate a formation,” Elder Hao warned. “We must be careful.”

Two masses of dark energy swept toward them like a tornado across the ground just as they were speaking. A somewhat startled Elder Hao worked in concert with Cao Meng to release a series of palm strikes. Powerful energy was thrust out amidst thunderous roars, sallying forth to meet the two incoming attacks head on.

Boom!

The released energy shot through the void but connected with

nothing. The two shadowy masses, resembling venomous dragons, vanished with a flicker. The energy they released bombarded Gong Wuji's camp.

Thump! Thump! Two initial emperor realm cultivators were suddenly struck amidst dazzling lights, sending their qi and blood into turmoil.

"Hao, what's the meaning of this?!" Gong Wuji was greatly incensed. Although he clearly saw what had happened and knew it was likely a misunderstanding, he couldn't sit by after seeing his men wounded.

Elder Hao sneered, "You're not blind. Didn't you see what happened?"

Cao Meng snorted coldly and didn't even bother to explain, as if it was all right and proper. It didn't matter to him whether the injury was accidental or intentional. Fortunately, Gong Wuji's primary focus was on Jiang Chen. He only glared at the two without further debate and sniffed coldly, "Watch yourselves."

Gong Wuji was extremely frustrated right now. He had previously received reports that Jiang Chen was somewhat proficient in formations, and that his level of expertise wasn't particularly high. The formations he deployed formerly were only at a stage capable of causing some disruption, far from being able to trap enemies within. But as things stood, it seemed that their intelligence had grossly underestimated Jiang Chen's talent in formations!

He was simply a devil!

Fortunately, Jiang Chen would also be unable to escape under the powerful suppressive effects of their emperor realm domain. Gong Wuji still had a restriction talisman in hand that could restrain Jiang Chen, should the latter attempt to use an escape talisman. Although the formation was extremely profound, it was obviously still an illusory formation without any destructive power. Gong Wuji's sharp eyes swiftly discerned a few of the formation's characteristics. He sent a mental message to his subordinates, "Don't panic. This is only an illusory formation without any offensive power. We can break out as soon as we find its core."

He also observed Elder Hao's party slowly arrive at a similar conclusion. After all, they had three mid emperor realm cultivators on their side who possessed more or less the same powers of observation as Gong Wuji.

"Ole brother Cao, this Jiang Chen is truly perverse. I suspect the fortune that our sects had been seeking for thousands of years is already in his hands," Elder Hao sent Cao Meng a voice transmission.

Cao Meng was overwhelmed, "How can that be? This brat doesn't look at all like the heir of Emperor Featherflight's legacy at all. Moreover, according to legends, the fortune that Emperor Featherflight obtained doesn't have much to do with formations."

Elder Hao also felt there was something amiss with this

reasoning and gave it much thought. But, he still felt that there was no other way apart from this fortuitous encounter for the Myriad Domain to rear such a perverse talent like Jiang Chen.

“Ole brother Cao, do you still remember how an unusual phenomenon once appeared in the Myriad Domain a few years ago? An inspector of the Ninesuns Sky Sect was also visiting the sixteen kingdom alliance that day. The phenomenon was almost fully concentrated around the Precious Tree Sect, and it so happens that Jiang Chen was at the Precious Tree Sect that day!”

Cao Meng also felt rather skeptical after hearing Elder Hao’s words. “Is that really the case? If so, we have to capture this brat at all costs!”

The two arrived at a tacit understanding and became even more resolute.

Meanwhile, Jiang Chen and Huang’er were standing side by side at a hidden part of the formation.

“Sir Jiang, I think I’ve seen you use this formation before. Although the mysteries remain the same, it appears to have become more than ten times more powerful,” Huang’er was greatly puzzled.

How could the same formation have undergone such an absurd degree of change? This went against all convention. Jiang Chen laughed and explained honestly. “There are two formations that follow the same path of theory.”

The one Huang'er had seen before was the Minor Artifice Formation. Jiang Chen had simulated the formation using its formation disk. It was able to slightly confuse sage realm cultivators at most. But this current one was the Major Artifice Formation, one of the ten powerful formations of the Crimson Heavens formation disk. Jiang Chen was only able to draw on a twenty percent of its power. It was insufficient to entrap and kill emperor realm experts, but more than capable of confusing them.

After all, the Crimson Heavens formation disk, along with the medallion and the formation flag were the three core treasures of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. As a legacy treasure of an ancient sect, even twenty percent of its might was sufficient to deal with these people. But much to Jiang Chen's chagrin, he had able to only simulate the Greater Artifice Formation from the formation disk and nothing else. Because this formation was an extension of the Minor Artifice Formation, its complexity was the same.

That was also the reason why Jiang Chen was able to wield twenty percent of its power. As for the remaining nine powerful formations of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, it was impossible for him to activate them with his current strength. Jiang Chen laughed after checking the time. "It seems these mid emperor realm cultivators do deserve their reputation. They're about to find the core. This formation can't hold them after all!"

The formation disk was activated again just as he was speaking. Slight changes ripped through the Great Artifice Formation.

These are very impressive, grand mountains/ranges in China.

Chapter 714: Complete Annihilation?

Formation could be split into death and life formations. Although Jiang Chen couldn't manipulate the formation disk that flexibly, the Major Artifice Formation did possess some variation of changes. The formation disk vibrated slightly and switched the core of the formation into a different direction. This completely wasted all of Gong Wuji and Elder Hao's previous efforts.

However, a simple change like this wouldn't hold the enemy down for long. This was because the enemy had figured out the real intention behind the formation and that it was illusory. That was why they could search for the formation's core without the slightest concern. As expected, the formation core couldn't be hidden from the scans of an emperor realm consciousness, no matter how he moved it.

"It's unfortunate that I can only use twenty percent of this formation's true power. If it was a fully powered Major Artifice Formation, I would confound even a Titled Great Emperor." Jiang Chen himself was feeling sorry for the formation. If the ancestors of Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect learned how he was using their Major Artifice Formation, they would probably shed tears on its behalf. He was humiliating the great formation the way with his current usage.

Jiang Chen didn't mind this for now. The real Major Artifice Formation at its peak contained all sorts of real and fake artifices that were ultimately all illusory. It could captivate a person and make them lose themselves forever in the long river that was the formation. In fact, it could even crush a person's consciousness directly. Of course, Jiang Chen could only dream of conjuring such

effects with the formation right now.

"Kid, I'll admit that you have some skills! But this is all your final struggles!" Gong Wuji's voice rang crazily in his ears.

Cao Meng's sinister and hoarse voice followed right after, "Brat, I will extract your soul and refine it for 49 days straight for the killing of my nephew! I will make you suffer to the point you'd wish that you were dead!"

His hatred was not in anyway less than Gong Wuji's. The scene before their eyes suddenly blurred as the formation vanished in the blink of an eye. The valley appeared before the crowd once more in the next instant. It was as if what they'd gone through just now was just a dream. The formation vanished, and the space returned to normal.

Everyone returned to their original place, but felt that they'd gone through an innumerable amount of time between entering and exiting the formation. When these emperor realm cultivators landed back on their feet, they were all dumbfounded by what they saw.

Out of the three thousand men both sects had brought over to hunt down Jiang Chen, all those were not at emperor realm or above had collapsed to the ground. Every one of them looked like they'd fallen into deep sleep. Their faces were peaceful, and they looked like they were in a deep and comfortable slumber.

"Why is this?" The sect heads were all emperor realm and had

been pulled into the formation just now. They never expected to see this scene after exiting the formation. They all looked stupefied like they had just seen a ghost.

Gong Wuji was furious, “What are you doing? All of you, on your feet now!”

Cao Meng was also shouting over the other side, “Are you all pretending to be dead or something? Get up, get up!”

It was no wonder they were yelling the way they did, because a single sweep of their consciousness informed them that these people were very alive and in control of their minds. It was true that their consciousness were quite weak, but it was normal to have a weak consciousness when a person was asleep. However, they couldn’t help but feel a chill in their hearts as they yelled at their men.

Every one of these people were sect elites. They wouldn’t have fallen asleep without good reason. There must be a trick behind all of this! Gong Wuji had fallen for Jiang Chen’s tricks countless of times. Already used to Jiang Chen’s schemes, a nightmarish feeling blossomed from the bottom of his heart once more.

Could it be…

Gong Wuji abruptly recalled of the day Jiang Chen had single handedly taken out hundreds of Great Roc Sect and Thundernote Hall disciples with three successive attacks.

“Poison?” This terrifying word was something Gong Wuji absolutely didn’t wish to face, but it’d still popped up at first light. This situation couldn’t possibly be caused by anything else by poison!

As expected, they weren’t able to wake their men no matter how they tried. Moreover, their consciousness were growing dimmer and dimmer like candles burning to the very end. They were all rapidly being extinguished.

“Jiang Chen!” Gong Wuji could finally restrain himself no longer and vomitted a mouthful of blood! The Major Artifice Formation hadn’t dealt him any harm, but it’d completely triggered the fury that was stored beneath his bones. The clot of blood that had been stuck inside his chest for a very, very long time had finally came spewing out of his throat! A first rank sect holy king and a middle level emperor realm expert had literally vomited blood out of sheer anger!

This scene shocked all the Eternal Celestial Capital and Great Scarlet Mid Region emperor realm experts. They all cried out, “Lord Gong!’

“My lord, please take care of your health!”

Elder Hao and Cao Meng actually couldn’t find the urge to take joy in Gong Wuji’s misfortune. On the contrary, they were actually feeling sympathy for a fellow caught in a similarly miserable situation. Elder Hao’s heart was bleeding when he stared at the floor of unconscious people. Everyone he had brought with him were elites of the sect.

If they couldn't wake up in the valley, then it wouldn't be long before countless vicious beasts would pounce over and devour their bodies to the bone. Even if there were no vicious beasts around here to feed on them, they were most likely dead without a doubt without the right antidote, judging from the way they were being attacked by the poison.

"Elder Hao, the only way we can explain ourselves is to capture that brat!" Cao Meng said fiercely.

Elder Hao nodded, "That brat must be nearby! Use your emperor realm domains and cover the space. He can't have gone far."

Gong Wuji roared loudly, "Find him! Find him now! Find that brat right now!"

It was at this moment Jiang Chen appeared on a stone slab several hundred meters away from them.

"There's no need to look for me. I'm right here," Jiang Chen's smile was as collected as ever.

However, his calmness was incredibly offensive to Gong Wuji. Gong Wuji grabbed his restriction talisman and crushed it immediately. There was a resounding boom as in the air in the vicinity emitted ear piercing noise. It sounded like countless giant locks had been bolted around the place. Every bit of space in the surroundings was locked down completely.

“Kid, you won’t escape this time even if you grow wings!” Gong Wuji said through gritted teeth.

“You sure are a big spender, Gong Wuji. You would waste a restriction talisman even when you are at death’s door. You really live a good life, hmm?” Jiang Chen smiled casually and then shot a glance at Elder Hao, “Hao, I know you have a restriction talisman too. This is the moment of final brilliance in your life, so you better use it now before you miss the chance to do so.”

“Utterly shameless boasting!” Blood rushed to Cao Meng’s head as he clenched his fists and yelled, “Allow me to deal with you!”

Jiang Chen stood unmoving as he stared down Cao Meng with a disdainful look on his face. It was as if Cao Meng was just a prancing clown that was absolutely beneath his attention. It was at this moment an emperor realm cultivator abruptly clutched his head with both hands and stumbled on his feet. He almost sounded like he was talking in his sleep, “Not good, why do I feel so sleepy? My consciousness is a complete mess… Ah!”

Bam!

Another person joined the crowd on the ground. Where there is a first, there will be a second. The emperor realm cultivators behind Gong Wuji began collapsing on the ground continuously, like plague-ridden chickens and ducks.

“You…” Although Gong Wuji was a mid emperor realm expert, a

holy king of a first rank sect and an experienced and knowledgeable person, even he was stunned by the bizarre sight happening right before him at this moment. The initial emperor realm cultivators behind Elder Hao weren't faring any better than Gong Wuji's men either. They were all staggering about like drunk people before they ultimately collapsed on the ground.

"Not good! We've all been poisoned!" The Sun surnamed expert next to Cao Meng abruptly blurted out as his face turned pale. He hastily assumed a sitting position after saying this and attempted to drive out the poison invading his body.

The moment Cao Meng's consciousness probed outwards, he immediately noticed a near indiscernible shadow surrounding his consciousness like black clouds covering the sky. They had enclosed his consciousness completely. "The hell are these things?" Cao Meng was scared out of his wits. He too assumed a sitting position and fought to drive out the bizarre poison that was invading his consciousness.

Gong Wuji and Elder Hao had also sensed the same thing. They turned as pale as if they'd seen a ghost. Gong Wuji raised his eyebrows and glared at Jiang Chen, "Are you the one who caused all this?"

Jiang Chen smiled indifferently, "Don't you think your question is a little too naive?"

Gong Wuji said furiously, "What are you looking so pleased about, brat?! I still have the power to kill you even if I'm poisoned! Hand over that antidote right now if you're smart about it!"

“Jiang Chen, give us the antidote and I will guarantee your survival!” Elder Hao also said heavily.

Jiang Chen laughed and said, “Oh dear, I’m soooo scared! Are you two threatening me?”

Gong Wuji could sense that that shadow encroaching steadily closer. The moment it entered his mind would be the moment the poison took him. “Elder Hao, let us not fight each other anymore. Let’s kill this kid and snatch the antidote first before we discuss anything else. Is that fine?”

No matter how much enmity they shared with each other, they had no choice but to set aside past grievances and work together in order to survive. Elder Hao nodded seriously, “That is how it should be!” He then stared closely at Jiang Chen, “You have one last chance, Jiang Chen. Hand over the antidote, and we will guarantee your life! Otherwise, not even ten of you can endure the full power attack of two mid emperor realm experts!” His words might be fierce, but it was obvious that it was more bark than bite. They weren’t even sure at the moment if they could kill Jiang Chen, even if attacking at full force. If he simply activated his formation again and delayed them for a little, their attacks wouldn’t land on Jiang Chen, forgetting thought of all else.

As expected, not only did Jiang Chen not look afraid in the face of their threats, but he even stared mockingly at them. “The antidote? You guys are still daydreaming about the antidote with the current situation? Did I hear you wrongly, or are you simply too naive?” Jiang Chen’s expression abruptly turned cold, “Did

you ever imagine that you would one day struggle between the line of life and death when you attacked Myriad Domain and destroyed my sect? If you haven't, then this is your last chance to experience it!"

The duo wore extremely ugly looks on their faces when they heard this.

"You can stop dreaming about an antidote. Not even the greatest pill master in the Continent could make an antidote in time to save you now! This is the poison of Divine Befuddlement Miasma. It is colorless and odorless, and this place contains a high concentration of it. Are you satisfied with the burial ground I've chosen for you all?"

The Divine Befuddlement Miasma? Elder Hao and Gong Wuji shook as all color drained from their face the second they heard this. Cao Meng and Sun abruptly abruptly opened their eyes. There was actually deep fear in them. Sun sighed sorrowfully, "Cao Meng, you've killed me this time!"

However, Gong Wuji was shouting madly on top of his lungs, "Impossible! If this truly is the Divine Befuddlement Miasma, then why aren't you poisoned? Don't tell me that the antidote you created at Mt. Rippling Mirage works here as well?"

The Divine Befuddlement Miasma was special in that each strain possessed a different toxicity. It had to be treated accordingly as different miasmas required vastly different antidotes. It was very true that the antidote he created at Mt. Rippling Mirage wouldn't work on the mutations here. However, Jiang Chen didn't need an

antidote in the first place. That was because both Huang'er and him had refined the cicada's blood and was impervious to poison!

Chapter 715: None Left Alive

This crazy plan had woven itself into existence when Jiang Chen encountered Ling Su and learned of the valley from him. However, it'd only been a random thought that needed quite the refining to become a proper plan. It was only when he left Tai-ah City in chaos that he decided to execute this crazy idea.

He knew from Ling Su that the Divine Befuddlement Miasma inside Infant Shriek was extremely deadly. At the time, Ling Su had been poisoned shortly after he'd set foot into the outskirts. But Jiang Chen had led this group at least fifty kilometers straight into the interior of the valley, where the Miasma was the thickest! The terrifying Miasma was undetectable to even emperor realm experts. Moreover, since everyone's focus was on Jiang Chen, they'd never even stopped to any threat posed by the location itself. They were on guard against Jiang Chen's tricks, formations or ambushes.

So things progressed just as Jiang Chen had predicted, the group had expended every iota of attention on him and not the valley. It was this psychological blind spot that Jiang Chen had taken full advantage of in his ambush. The reason he'd engaged them in a back and forth, let them bicker with each other and activated the Major Artifice Formation was all a means of buying time, just enough time for the poison to seep in! Everything turned out exactly as Jiang Chen had predicted. Without spilling a drop of blood, he had signed the death warrants of every pursuer in the two groups.

Gong Wuji's face was ashen while Elder Hao's lips were trembling like a leaf. They looked like defeated dogs, just waiting

for the final blow. Even in the depths of despair, Elder Hao's eyes still held a final glint of optimism, "Jiang Chen, our grudges are not irreconcilable. If you save me, then I promise to recommend you to the Ninesuns Sky Sect. With your talent, you are definitely qualified to become one of the ten great disciples! As for Cao Jin's death, we can just push it all on the Eternal Celestial Capital," Elder Hao was desperate to live even as his eyes threatened to close on him.

Gong Wuji couldn't hold himself back, "You're a coward, Hao!"

The Divine Befuddlement Miasma had invaded their consciousness by now, and they realized to their dismay that they couldn't even pull off one final attack. Elder Hao ignored Gong Wuji's insults completely and begged Jiang Chen with all his might while he still had a bit of strength left in him. "Hero Jiang, Sir Jiang! I swear in the name of the Ninesuns Sky Sect that I, Elder Hao, will absolutely help you gain entry to the Ninesuns Sky Sect if you save my life. With your talent, even Yong Xingyun is not a match for you, much less Cao Jin. Just think, you will become the youngest and strongest disciple of a first rank sect in ten years. You will attain such heights that you'll be able to look down upon all the young geniuses in the Upper Eight Regions, or even the entire Divine Abyss Continent..." One had to say that Elder Hao was quick witted to offer such enticing things.

However, Jiang Chen revealed nothing but ridicule towards the offer that was completely useless to him. Elder Hao grew even more anxious as the fear inside his heart threatened to overtake his reason. His desire to live had surpassed all dignity and sense of honor. Elder Hao actually knelt on both knees and begged, "Sir Jiang, I am willing to serve you as my master! I am willing to serve

you as a servant or even a slave! I guarantee that I will stay loyal to you, and to be judged by the heavens if I even think about turning traitor."

He was willing to become even a servant or slave?

Cao Meng was so disgusted that even he broke out in a round of abuse, "What the fuck, Hao Yi!? Are you seriously that much of a coward? Are you going to throw our sect's dignity to the winds?"

"Shut up! We wouldn't be in such straits if not for your troublesome nephew!" Elder Hao retorted furiously.

But no matter what he said, Jiang Chen remained immovable. Even if he wanted to acquire some servants or slaves, he absolutely wouldn't pick someone like Hao Yi. If Hao Yi could surrender to Jiang Chen now out of cowardice, then there was no telling when he would betray him in the future as well. Jiang Chen had no intention of keeping a potential threat like that around.

"Elder Hao, there's a saying here, 'you won't die if you don't kill yourself'. If you weren't so set on hunting me, you wouldn't have set foot on this path of no return. May you rest in peace." Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "Because you begged me, I'll make an exception and leave you with an intact corpse." Jiang Chen's cold eyes glanced at Gong Wuji, those of the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect.

Gong Wuji paled. His strength had completely left him since the Divine Befuddlement Miasma had taken over his consciousness. He

couldn’t move at all. When he saw Jiang Chen’s unfriendly gaze, Gong Wuji couldn’t help but feel go numb. He had been a cruel and ruthless person for half his life, he could very well imagine what Jiang Chen could do. There was no other future left, Jiang Chen was going to kill him now.

“Gong Wuji, Wasn’t it fun to destroy my Regal Pill Palace? Wasn’t it fun to slaughter the disciples of my sect? Didn’t you believe that my Myriad Domain was just an ant beneath your boot?” Jiang Chen’s voice grew colder and colder, “So how is it? How does it feel to be an ant yourself?”

No matter how strong one was, fear would always come when a butcher’s knife hung over one’s head. Gong Wuji was no exception. But most of all, he couldn’t accept it. This situation, this entire trap was so ridiculous that it verged on the unbelievable. I am a first rank sect holy king and an emperor realm expert. I am an important person who rules over the Divine Abyss Continent. But am I really going to die by the hands of a lower region kid today?

I do not accept this! Gong Wuji’s eyes were bloodshot. He roared at the top of his lungs, “Don’t go strutting around, brat! You’ve offended my Eternal Celestial Capital, and although victory is yours today, one day you will learn the meaning of regret!”

Jiang Chen said coldly, “Even if such a day exists, you won’t live to see it.”

Moonshatter Flying Daggers flashed and suddenly cut through the air. A bright golden light wrapped itself around Gong Wuji’s neck.

Crack!

With an audible snap, Gong Wuji's large head separated from his shoulders. His eyes were wide, disbelieving; rage and resentment clear in his eyes. Elder Hao trembled all over when he saw Gong Wuji's decapitation.

Jiang Chen didn't stop there. One by one, he beheaded every one of the Eternal Celestial Capital and Great Scarlet Mid Region's senior executives and stored their heads. Naturally, he also took away all of their storage rings without hesitation. Unfortunately, all of those who had come to hunt down Jiang Chen had been smart enough to leave their valuables at home aside from a few spirit stones for basic necessities. The only exception was once again Gong Wuji! Gong Wuji had plenty of valuables squirreled away. Jiang Chen naturally took them for himself.

Jiang Chen left those of the Ninesuns Sky Sect alive, though. He didn't need to kill them since the Divine Befuddlement Miasma had already penetrated deep into their minds. Unless an antidote was concocted right this moment, not even the gods themselves could save them.

After all, the strain they were suffering from was different from Ling Su's. Ling Su had been infected with the Divine Befuddlement Miasma on the outskirts of the valley, but he had also exited the valley immediately. These people had stayed at the place where the Divine Befuddlement Miasma was the thickest for a much, much longer time. Only the heavens knew exactly how much Divine Befuddlement Miasma had seeped into their bodies. One could say

that their poisoning was several thousand times worse than Ling Su's.

After he was done sweeping through the entire battlefield, Jiang Chen exchanged a glance with Huang'er and left the valley. Hao Yi and Cao Meng of the Ninesuns Sky Sect struggled for a couple of days in the Valley of Infant Shriek, but no miracle came to save them. Roughly ten days later, Infant Shriek was no longer bothered by the cries of the living.

……

Half a month later, Jiang Chen and Huang'er appeared at a big city to the north of Swordland Region, Prospering Dragon City. However, since they had changed their disguises yet again, no one could identify them. News of the troops of the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect disappearing mysteriously had gotten around, becoming the hottest piece of gossip in the neighborhood.

Jiang Chen sought out a mercenary organization in Prospering Dragon City.

"Do you need our services, my lord?" This mercenary organization was one of the largest in the city. Bluntly put, it was a gang. But by necessity, their organization was far less rigorous and strict than a sect. In fact, they even accepted wandering cultivators into their ranks. This faction often skirted the gray areas of the law and society, conducting business that weren't necessarily legal. However, this mercenary organization was very large. As a result, it was also more law abiding and friendly to customers.

Jiang Chen nodded, “I wish to transport something to the Great Scarlet Empire.”

“Oh? How many packages? Do you want to have their value appraised?”

“There’s no need. These things are absolutely worthless to anyone else,” Jiang Chen shook his head.

“The Swordland Region is rather far away from Great Scarlet Mid Region. If these items are worthless, then the cost of transportation will be quite high.” This mercenary organization looked disinterested when they heard that the items weren’t worth much. They often acted as couriers for a price. The fee for the service often depended on the value of the item, but was normally quite high. They didn’t particularly appreciate transporting items of poor value, even if they were paid for it.

“They are quite worthless, but I would like to request that they be delivered to their destination as quickly as possible. If you can deliver them in a month’s time, I am willing to pay you five hundred thousand upper rank origin spirit stones.”

Five hundred thousand origin spirit stone was the equivalent of fifty thousand saint spirit stones. This price obviously caught the other party off guard. He’s willing to pay this much to transport these things? Things that are worthless, no less?

The representative struggled to find words, “My lord, although

we have a rule that forbids us from asking about the nature of the goods you're planning to transport, this fee of yours for the transportation of something valueless is..."

"As I've told you before, while these things may be worthless to everyone else, they are of great value to the Great Scarlet Empire. So can you deliver it in a month's time?"

After pondering for a moment, the other party finally made his decision, "Alright. I'll undertake this job and deliver it in a month's time!"

Although the Great Scarlet Mid Region was quite far away, they had their own ways of doing things. If they were to rush at top speed towards the Great Scarlet Mid Region, it was definitely possible to make it in a month's time! Jiang Chen put down a storage ring "This contains all of the valuables. Remember, every one of these items has my unique seal on it. The seal will be broken if you sneak a peek, and I will know it."

"Don't worry, we understand the rules of business.," The person accepted the storage ring and swept his consciousness inside. Inside the storage ring were box after box, nothing else. As Jiang Chen had stated earlier, these huge boxes were all wrapped in special seals that prevented him from seeing inside the boxes.

"Here's your fee. Please check it," Jiang Chen pushed the storage ring containing the payment of spirit stones to the representative.

"I'll remind you that these things are extremely important to

Great Scarlet Mid Region. You must deliver them properly. Otherwise, you will be facing the anger of the entire Great Scarlet Mid Region!”

Obviously, a mere mercenary organization couldn’t endure the fury of the entire Great Scarlet Mid Region should they earned the region’s ire.

Chapter 716: Famed Throughout the Regions

The person in charge immediately became more cautious after hearing Jiang Chen's words and cautiously put away the storage ring in front of Jiang Chen.

"Please rest assured that we will deliver these items to the Great Scarlet Mid Region within a month, no matter the cost. Speaking of which, to whom specifically should we deliver this package?"

"The Great Scarlet Emperor," Jiang Chen replied indifferently.

The other party was startled. He glanced at Jiang Chen but refrained from speaking further. Delivering things to the imperial household was no big deal for them—it was simply another bit of business. They would have to put in some extra effort to bring the package into the palace, but there would be no problem. There was no reason to refuse this easy business, especially since the commission was so generous.

Jiang Chen did not tarry at Prospering Dragon City after he finished his business. There was still much ground to cover between Prospering Dragon City to the Veluriyam Capital. He didn't have the luxury of taking it easy right now. Now that the pursuing forces from the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect had fallen at Infant Shriek, any lead or piece of information linked to him had been extinguished. This was a rare opportunity for the duo to pick up the pace and leave their eventual pursuers in the dust.

Jiang Chen and Huang'er's journey had become much more relaxed without the two first rank sects clinging onto him like maggots. But he was well aware that this respite was merely temporary. The two sects would soon muster up another group and the journey would once again become arduous. They had to take advantage of this period to cover more ground.

Although the two first rank sects had been temporarily cut off at the knees, the wandering cultivators were still as passionate as ever. The hefty reward was obviously still very tempting.

Even though news of the two sects' demise at Infant Shriek hadn't yet spread, Jiang Chen reckoned the news would start circulating pretty soon. The higher-ups of the two sects would surely dispatch men to investigate the sudden disappearance of their people. By then, it wouldn't be too hard to trace their footsteps to Infant Shriek. There was simply no way to keep it hidden. Jiang Chen deduced that the higher-ups had probably finished investigating this matter by now. It was just that such news needed to be kept under wraps. After all, this matter was an enormous disgrace for the two first rank sects. No less than three thousand men and several emperor realm cultivators from the two sects had been wiped out in their entirety. This matter would surely did them to become a laughingstock if word were to spread.

Therefore, Jiang Chen had not relaxed his vigilance during this peaceful phase. There was bound to be even more trials on the journey ahead. Fortunately, Jiang Chen and Huang'er were able to enter closed door cultivation for a few days after leaving Infant Shriek, during which they refined and erased the Eternal Celestial Capital's tracker mark. Otherwise, they would become living

targets for the Eternal Celestial Capital wherever they went.

……

Time drifted by. Over twelve days had passed by the time Jiang Chen appeared at Prospering Dragon City. Great changes were taking place again at this very moment. Information regarding the annihilation of the two sect's forces had finally leaked out from the communication blockade. This news immediately caused an enormous uproar in all the neighboring regions.

Two first rank sects, along with a large batch of fourth rank sect cultivators from the Great Scarlet Mid Region, with a force that totalled three thousand strong had been completely obliterated! And they'd only been chasing two! Jiang Chen's fame immediately spread across the entire realm. The two supreme first ranked sects instantly lost all prestige. They had been dragged down from their high pedestal for the moment and pummeled down the earth. They soon became an object of ridicule for the wandering cultivators.

The wandering cultivators were frantically rushing to capture Jiang Chen for the bounty, but deep down, they were still sympathetic towards the weak. The first rank sects were abusive and tyrannical. They had invaded the Myriad Domain to ravage its sects and demolish their foundations, killing and pillaging without restraint. This was an undeniable fact. And as such, to the wandering cultivators, Jiang Chen's counterattack was a cause for admiration and worship. He was an absolute god of retaliation!

Jiang Chen's name was soon on everyone's lips. This also caused

most of those bounty hunters to have second thoughts about hunting Jiang Chen and eventually dispelling their ambitions. It became clear to them that this bounty was not for them to claim. What could these wandering cultivators do against someone who was able to decimate even a first rank sect's army of three thousand? What qualifications did they have to hunt him down?

Jiang Chen's name resounded above and below the streets, taverns and teahouses. He soon became the most discussed topic among wandering cultivators, so much so that he became a bonafide legend. However, many were pessimistic about Jiang Chen's future. His chances of survival were rather slim after provoking the absolute fury of the two sects. But then again, what of it? The future notwithstanding, a youth of the Myriad Domain being able to perform so many magnificent feats was sufficient for his name to be spoken of throughout the generations! It was enough to become a legend of the Divine Abyss Continent!

"A true man should be like this, living life on a grand scale!" A wandering cultivator slapped the table in a tavern and exclaimed with great contentment as he emptied a large bowl of wine. Tens of thousands of similar scenes were playing out everyday in all the neighboring regions. Jiang Chen had suddenly become a figure of worship to the countless wandering cultivators, a hero to the discontent masses who were resentful of the mighty sects—a shining beacon of grassroots retaliation!

In contrast to the wandering cultivators, the sects of the various regions were overcome with unspeakable astonishment and shock. The journey from the Myriad Domain to the Veluriyam Capital spanned territories of many major powers, several of which were invited by the Eternal Celestial Capital and Ninesuns Sky Sect to

help them pursue Jiang Chen. Many of them were delighted to accept the invitation of a first rank sect. There was no logical reason for them to refuse. The positive returns were obvious if they could get a first rank sect to owe them a favor through easy effort. The Swordland Region's Tai-ah City was a prime example. They'd cooperated wholly with Gong Wuji and the Eternal Celestial Capital, offering them much assistance. But all the invited forces were shaken after this incident.

This was especially true of Tai-ah City, but the time for regrets had past. Although Tai-ah City had not dispatched troops into Infant Shriek, they had put in significant effort towards Jiang Chen's capture within the city. It was clear that they had mortally offended Jiang Chen, and although Jiang Chen didn't seem to have the power to retaliate at the moment, if by any chance he was able to survive this tribulation and grown into his own, Tai-ah City will inevitably reap the retribution they had sown today.

Perhaps in ten, twenty, fifty years...

The head of Tai-ah City was extremely depressed, obviously unable to accept this truth. Gong Wuji and Hao Yi were both mid emperor realm. The troops with them were all elites of their respective sects. They were much more powerful than the elites of Tai-ah City. Although investigations had reported that they were poisoned by the Divine Befuddlement Miasma, it didn't change the fact that they were completely wiped out. This Jiang Chen, whom he'd never met before, had taught the head of Tai-ah City a lesson that would forever leave a deep impression on him. From delivering the sword to playing the two sects off against each other, he'd held everyone in the palm of his hands. All his schemes had fallen into place one after another, locking together perfectly.

Jiang Chen's methods, level of foresight, and degree of situational control caused the head of Tai-ah City to shudder with fear. This doesn't look like a young man's methods at all! This was even more terrifying than the Titled Great Emperors who'd roamed the world for hundreds of years. The head of Tai-ah City had to admit that he'd accidentally provoked a potential calamity that might one day annihilate the city. In addition to his worries, the continuous investigation from the Eternal Celestial Capital and Ninesuns Sky Sect were also causing him great distress.

As soon as the two major powers discovered the fate of Gong Wuji and Hao Yi, they immediately dispatched men to investigate the matter. Although they didn't levy blame on Tai-ah City, they were evidently dissatisfied. The valley of Infant Shriek fell under Tai-ah City's jurisdiction. The destruction of the forces from the two major sects could more or less be attributed to Tai-ah City's failure to provide them with sufficient information. Although the two sects had brought this calamity upon themselves, Tai-ah City couldn't absolve themselves of all responsibility.

Comparatively speaking, the Great Scarlet Mid Region was even more anxious. The moment news of Gong Wuji's death reached them, the entire Great Scarlet Mid Region was plunged into a state of incomparable shock. Gong Wuji's demise signified the death of all the troops they had sent to hunt Jiang Chen. Those groups consisted of a major portion of the Great Scarlet Mid Region's elites.

All fourth rank sects had mobilized at least two thirds of their elites, while the third rank sects had also sent a token force consisting of several experts to assist. Even the royal family had

dispatched some supporting personnel. If all of them had truly met their end, then the foundations of the Great Scarlet Mid Region would be severely undermined with an immediate reduction of a third of their strength.

The Great Scarlet emperor was also quite restless after hearing the news and wanted to ask the higher-ups of the Eternal Celestial Capital about this matter. But, he was ultimately unable to muster up this courage.

A report was delivered to the royal palace that day. “Your Majesty, we have reports from the Swordland Mid Region. Someone has come to deliver an item that he claims is of the utmost importance to the Great Scarlet Mid Region and requires Your Highness to receive it personally. Due to the significant nature of this matter, we await Your Majesty’s decision.”

“The Swordland Mid Region?” The Great Scarlet Emperor immediately thought of Gong Wuji and Jiang Chen. He enquired hurriedly, “Where is that person?”

“He’s already outside the palace.”

“Send him in immediately!” The Great Scarlet Emperor surmised that it should be some important information from the Swordland Region. He couldn’t wait a moment longer to hear it.

“This humble messenger from the Coiling Dragon Mercenary Group of Prospering Dragon City greets the Great Scarlet emperor.” The messenger was not from the Great Scarlet Mid

Region. He didn't prostrate, but merely bowed in greeting.

The emperor wasn't in the mood to fuss about formalities at the moment and only asked, "Honored messenger, we've heard that you come bearing an important item?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. About one month ago, a certain person tasked us to deliver an important item to the Great Scarlet emperor. He warned us repeatedly that the item must be delivered into Your Majesty's hands."

"What is it?" the Great Scarlet emperor inquired.

"Our rules forbid us from checking the items entrusted to us unless the client explicitly allows it. The seals within are intact. Please inspect it, Your Majesty."

The Great Scarlet emperor knitted his eyebrows. "Where is it?"

"The item is within. Please accept upon inspection," the messenger respectfully passed over a storage ring.

The royal guards immediately took the ring. They reported to the emperor only after repeated inspections for restrictions or hidden attacks. "Your Highness, there are no abnormal restrictions or poison within."

"Open it. Let's see what's inside," the Great Scarlet emperor ordered with a wave of his hand.

The mercenary messenger cupped his hands, “Now that the item has been delivered with their seals intact, this humble one would like to be excused.”

The emperor naturally didn’t keep him. He gestured for the guest to be shown out. Stored within the ring were a number of large crates. In fact, there were a full ten of them. The several large crates had intact seals on them, indicating that they hadn’t been probed.

“Open it,” the emperor ordered.

Chapter 717: The Final Hurdle

Ten guards stepped up and broke the seals on each box. The seals themselves posed no threat, so they were easily removed. When the guards were done, the box was slowly opened.

“Eh?!”

“What’s this?!” When the boxes were opened, all ten guards had a drastic change in expression. They shuddered as if lightning had run through them.

Inside the boxes were neat rows of heads. Each box contained roughly thirty, all of them still marred with blood. It seemed they had been specially processed as they remained incredibly lifelike even after a month. There was not a sign of decay. But one thing they all had in common was an expression of terror and despair. Even at first glance, it was obvious. These men hadn’t gone quietly!

As the ruler of a region, the Great Scarlet Emperor held immense authority and occupied a lofty position. His path to the throne had been paved by the blood and bones of all those he’d killed, so he was no stranger to bloodshed. The number of people he’d killed numbered in the millions, but at this moment, as hardened as he was and to his eternal shame, his body shuddered a single time.

It wasn’t that he was a coward or afraid of seeing dead people, but that he was intimately familiar with each head. The first head in the first box was Gong Wuji! He was followed by the heads of the

various sects, their elites, and the royal experts that he'd sent. He was undoubtedly familiar with each face twisted in fear. And now, only their heads remained, and this grisly spectacle had been meant for him!

What was this?

Face slapping!

A show of power!

A warning!

The emperor's expression immediately turned quite ugly, to the point where it seemed even blood would drip out from his eyes. His hands tucked away in his sleeves also trembled uncontrollably. He knew that Jiang Chen must've had these heads delivered, showing off his power to the emperor and giving a firm warning! Although the emperor had never seen Jiang Chen, a hint of fear suddenly flashed through the depths of his heart. Yes, fear!

He hadn't regretted invading the Myriad Domain, and had felt quite accomplished when he'd ordered the annihilation of all their sects. But now, he really did regret his actions. He had the premonition that the Great Scarlet Mid Region had played with fire this time, and the consequences were only coming. When he'd first heard of Jiang Chen, the emperor had only thought of him as a kid with a bit more skill to his name, a negligible character. But now, he'd finally realized that this was an unfathomable genius with a potential even he couldn't measure! This was a genius who

absolutely had the power to make the Great Scarlet Mid Region pay a heavy price one day!

For some reason, the images of destroying the Myriad Empire six hundred years ago suddenly floated upward in the emperor's mind.

What if... what if one day Jiang Chen found his footing and started over again, then would the Myriad Empire's history become the Scarlet Empire's future? I absolutely can't allow that to happen!

Although the emperor put a seal on the news, visitors from the various Great Scarlet Mid Region sects came to visit him everyday and ask for updates. Rumors trickled down, each one more fantastic than the last. An atmosphere of fear and worry blanketed the entire Great Scarlet Mid Region for a time. The mounting grudge between Jiang Chen and the sects continued to fester. Yet no expense was spared as the rumor mill continued to grind out various pieces of intelligence on Jiang Chen. All of this made Jiang Chen and Huang'er's trip a bit more difficult.

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After a long time spent on the road, the two finally drew close to Veluriyam Capital. Looking at the map, they were but half a month away. But this last half month of travel held a final, difficult hurdle. It would be down to how they managed this hurdle that would determine if they could successfully make it into Veluriyam Capital.

On the map, the Capital stood to the north, and Jiang Chen and Huang'er directly south of it. Three main paths lead to the capital, and each required passage through a different city. Passing through any of those cities would place one in Veluriyam Capital territory, only ten day journey from the core of the capital. However, none of the three cities answered to the Veluriyam Capital. These three cities were, without a doubt, the last line of defense for the two sects who wanted to stop him. When he reached Veluriyam Capital territory past those cities, neither the Eternal Celestial Capital nor the Ninesuns Sky Sect would dare flout the Capital's authority.

As he examined the three paths, Jiang Chen frowned, "We have to enter one of these three cities, there's no way around it. If I were the Eternal Celestial Capital or the Sky Sect, I would concentrate a majority of my resources to these three cities."

Huang'er nodded, "Our journey's been rather calm recently. I'd guess that they're placing all their hopes on these three cities."

Although these cities weren't under the sway of the Ninesuns Sky Sect or Eternal Celestial Capital, the first rank sects could easily persuade the local authorities to give way. Of that there was no doubt.

Jiang Chen stared at the map for a second, his fingers moving from point to point without a word. But in the end, he couldn't come up with anything, and chose a city at random. "Let's take this path. No matter what, we have to make it past this final hurdle." His finger had landed on Myriad Peoples City.

Huang'er had no objections. She'd quite enjoyed Jiang Chen being in charge along the way, and time had proven that his decisions and plans had been very reasonable. They were sometimes a little risky or radical, but there were never any major sidesteps. Now that he'd decided on his direction, Jiang Chen was in no hurry to set out. He'd gained much inspiration from this long journey, born from his observations of the world. He'd read more than a million books in his past life, but his greatest regret had been that he couldn't travel the world with the identity of a cultivator. Although he'd traveled, he'd always done so on dragon or phoenix back, with countless experts by his side. That was a procession, not a training experience.

The journey this time had garnered the greatest gains of his current and past life. These gains had continuously manifested themselves in various ways, such as comprehension of martial dao, formations, and pill dao...

In terms of formations, he had made great strides in the legacy from the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. In particular, The Heart of Formations had given him a deeper understanding of the foundations of formations. He'd also tried out some of the formations from the ancient sect, and noted the differences between setting up their formations and using the formation disks. A formation disk could be instantly deployed, whereas one set up by hand needed to be engraved on and controlled with a formation flag. All sorts of factors had to be considered. In comparison, a formation that had actually been set up would be more complete and lethal. A formation flag was also far more malleable, with many more variations available than a formation disk..

However, not everyone had the right to use a formation disk either. The costs to make one were simply astronomical, so not even a supreme formation master of a first rank sect would have the right to use a high level one. It was almost impossible to create a divine level formation disk given the current level of the Divine Abyss Continent in resources or formations. The strong formation disks floating around were all treasures passed down from ancient times.

Jiang Chen had improved even more rapidly in martial dao. He was now at peak third level sage realm, just one step away from fourth level and the ranks of earth sage realm! His God's Eye was at the twenty seventh level, only six levels away from the peak of thirty three. Zephyr's Ear was similar, and Buddha's Heart sat at the twenty fourth level, while Psychic's Head was at the twentieth level. The Cicada Wing art that he'd learned from the golden cicada had also continued to rise, granting Jiang Chen much more agility in flight.

However, the Cicada Wing was a delicate and exquisite art, and it didn't necessarily hold the advantage when it came to pure speed. This was where Jiang Chen's other choice kicked in, Emperor Featherflight's wings. The tool the Great Titled Emperor had used to dominate the world, along with his Featherflight Tactics, Jiang Chen would greatly outstrip all of his peers. And yet, Emperor Featherflight's legacy was too sensitive. Jiang Chen wanted to make them his own, but he still decided to put it aside for now after thinking for a while.

If these items and techniques were revealed, everyone would know that he had come into possession of Emperor Featherflight's legacy. Then, real trouble would come for him. The Titled Great

Emperor's legacy wasn't earth shattering, but the legacy from empyrean cultivator Guo Ran was the true treasure. If anyone else knew that Jiang Chen had an empyrean cultivator's legacy, an empyrean decree, and a secret order to a fate realm, then there would be only one result.

He would be hunted throughout the entire Divine Abyss Continent. So after much thought, Jiang Chen still decided not to make use of the wings for now. Instead, he could use something else, Emperor Featherflight's mirror! This treasure could impact and slow down an opponent in battle. It actually had the same effect as the power from the magnetic golden mountain. It was just a lot more convenient to use. The mirror was also of the wind attribute instead of metal. It manipulated wind velocity, which directly controlled the speed of air currents. That could then create invisible restraints on the opponent, slowing them down. It was rather discreet and definitely within Jiang Chen's capabilities to refine for his own use.

Jiang Chen only set out after three days, after making all the necessary preparations. His goal, Myriad Peoples City! Although entering Veluriyam Capital territory didn't mean absolute safety, it did mean a check on the first rank sects' ability to brazenly kill people in broad daylight. The Capital wouldn't give any face to a first rank sect, and in fact had very cool relationship with many of them.

It'd been a long time since his peers and followers had been sold. Jiang Chen's heart was afire with anxiety. If it hadn't been for all the obstacles along the way, he would've discarded all caution and rushed to the Veluriyam Capital to rescue them.

“I hope that good people will be favored by the heavens.” Jiang Chen slowly brought himself back to the calmness of still water. There was no point to worrying. Instead of spending time needlessly fretting, he should make it through Myriad Peoples City as fast as possible!

Chapter 718: Many Troubles

The city lord of Myriad Peoples City, Ji Geng, was nursing a particularly strong headache these past few days. His usually peaceful city was being trampled by unwelcome guests from the Eternal Celestial Capital. Myriad Peoples City was just a border city of the lower regions. Since it was right next to Veluriyam Capital's domain, this area had always been relatively prosperous, so the city had become quite large. As a result, the city lord had always enjoyed a comfortable life despite technically being part of a lower region. He possessed more than enough authority, and accumulated plentiful profit from his position. The benefits he had managed to squirrel away was no lesser than those who held sway over big cities of middle regions. All in all, Ji Geng had been quite content with his life.

Although Veluriyam Capital loomed over his city, they had never exerted their considerable might to bully him. He was also rather friendly to them, so he enjoyed an amiable relationship with Veluriyam Capital. He lacked for nothing; even immortality would be enough to tempt him into trading lives.

However, a group of people had came to Veluriyam Capital half a month ago. Leading them was a powerful holy king of the Eternal Celestial Capital. Moreover, this newcomer was at peak eighth level emperor realm, but a one step away from ninth level emperor realm. His power made the initial emperor realm expert Ji Geng feel tremendous pressure.

Although the lower region they belonged to didn't have any ties with the Eternal Celestial Capital, no one amongst them dared ignore someone from a first rank sect of the Upper Eight Regions.

Naturally, there was also no reason not to curry favor with a first rank sect if the opportunity presented itself. However, the Eternal Celestial Capital's demands this time were obviously over the top. They wanted to take over Myriad Peoples City's northern gate for the entire year.

The northern gate of Myriad Peoples City was a vital checkpoint that couldn't be avoided if someone wished to travel to Veluriyam Capital. It was also the most popular and most profitable entrances in Myriad Peoples City. Veluriyam Capital was akin to an unblemished pearl in the Divine Abyss Continent. Reputed as the land of freedom, it was also one of the preeminent factions of the Upper Eight Regions. There were countless people who travelled to Veluriyam Capital every year. As a result, the tolls from that gate was a significant portion of Myriad Peoples City's revenue. Therefore, the city lord of Myriad Peoples City subconsciously wanted to reject the Eternal Celestial Capital's unceremonious request the moment he heard it.

Thankfully, the Eternal Celestial Capital wasn't completely unreasonable despite their oppressive ways. They offered compensation that exceeded what the northern gate would earn in a year. If the city lord of Myriad Peoples City had been a shortsighted person, he would've had no reason to turn down such an extravagant reward. However, even in the face of such profit, he hadn't accepted the offer at first glance. As a city lord, how would he not know of the grudges between the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Myriad Domain in the past half year? He'd also naturally heard of the rumors that a group led by Eternal Celestial Capital's Gong Wuji had been utterly annihilated.

As a city lord, he had no intentions of commenting on the

grudges between the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Myriad Domain. He wanted even less to be involved in them. If Gong Wuji had not been killed, Ji Geng would've agreed to this request without any hesitation.

But after Gong Wuji had been killed, anyone who had paid even the slightest attention to this affair would know that the Eternal Celestial Capital had suffered a huge loss at Jiang Chen's hands. That monstrous genius of the Myriad Domain was capable of eliminating even someone like Gong Wuji! Naturally, a place like Myriad Peoples City absolutely didn't have the ability to become involved in something like this. In addition, this matter had become quite the hot potato issue.

If he somehow offended that Jiang Chen over this matter, then there was no telling if his city would be met with endless troubles in the future. As a man who had gotten used to living a peaceful life, it was natural that Ji Geng had no wish to get involved in this conflict. However, he had obviously underestimated the Eternal Celestial Capital's determination. When Ji Geng revealed a reluctant expression, this holy king of the Eternal Celestial Capital had tripled the rewards without a second's hesitation. Furthermore, the words he had used when presenting the offer had a clear underlying meaning. If he refused this offer, Myriad Peoples City would become the Eternal Celestial Capital's enemy. The city lord of Myriad Peoples City had no choice but to accept the offer in the face of such a threat. However, he had also openly declared that the city was not getting involved in their conflict. Moreover, he demanded that the Eternal Celestial Capital must announce publicly that the Myriad Peoples City had relinquished their control over the northern gate only because he had been forced to, and not out of cooperation with the Eternal Celestial Capital.

The Eternal Celestial Capital knew that Myriad Peoples City was trying to absolve themselves in this matter. Although they were dissatisfied with this lack of full cooperation, they had no wish to cause further trouble either. Therefore, they accepted the city lord's demands. And so, the city lord of Myriad Peoples City reluctantly turned over the control of the northern gate to the Eternal Celestial Capital.

However, since he had washed his hands clear of the matter, anything that happened from then on was the Eternal Celestial Capital's business. He neither needed to worry about Jiang Chen's vengeance, nor did he need to worry about Veluriyam Capital's potential wrath. After all, this northern gate lead towards Veluriyam Capital. The mere fact that the northern gate had been taken over by the Eternal Celestial Capital was in a way, a provocation to Veluriyam Capital. If they decided to split hairs over this matter, it would result in quite the quarrel.

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In due time, Jiang Chen arrived at the southern gate of Myriad People's City. Once they entered the southern gate and exited the northern gate, they would reach the Capital's borders. If he was correct about this city being the last line of defense, the city should be strictly locked down. However, there didn't seem to be any signs of that as he passed through the southern gate. He had only faced a few routine questions from the city guards before being allowed to pass. The heavy fortifications and rigorous checking he had anticipated was nowhere to be seen. It was a completely different sight than what he'd encountered outside Tai-ah City.

“Was I mistaken?” Jiang Chen was very surprised. In his opinion, the city should’ve been so heavily guarded that not even a fly would be allowed entry without being verified. But since he was inside the city already, Jiang Chen didn’t want to look a gift horse in the mouth. He might as well go with the flow. He simply needed to be more careful.

Although Myriad Peoples City belonged to a lower region, it wasn’t actually too far behind Tai-ah City in terms of prosperity. In fact, they were superior to Tai-ah City in certain facets. Jiang Chen was able to learn much from a different land with a different culture.

Since the two were posing as wandering cultivators, naturally they gravitated towards a place where more of their kind congregated. It didn’t take long before Jiang Chen and Huang’er arrived at a spot where wandering cultivators rested. For the purposes of legality, it was called a training ground. But it had been opened specifically for wandering cultivators, so it acted more as an inn than a training ground. But, it also provided a private place for cultivation. To put it bluntly, it was a place where wandering cultivators were provided holistic, high level hospitality.

As the saying went, it took wealth to be able to cultivate martial arts. Therefore, even wandering cultivators were willing to enjoy high level service and not stay in inns like the rest of the commoners. That was why this training ground enjoyed great business. The moment the two walked in, they glimpsed a wide public square filled with many tables. There were at least a thousand wandering cultivators clumped in groups of three or five

scattered here and there as they enjoyed delicious wine and alcohol.

"F*cking hell, what the hell is going on with this Myriad Peoples City! Why have they suddenly barred passage through the northern gate?"

"I know right? I must've gone through this northern gate at least ten times in the past, but this is the first time I've encountered something this f*cked up!"

"I heard that the northern gate was taken over by a certain force. In the future, we will have to inspected by them whenever we attempt to pass through the northern gate. I heard that the inspection is very strict."

"Which power's gotten so bored to do such a f*cked up thing?"

"Ssh! Quiet! I heard that it's a first rank sect from the Upper Eight Regions."

"Bah, so what if they're a first rank sect? Are they stronger than Veluriyam Capital? Seriously, what is this!?" The majority of the wandering cultivators in this area were proud and unrestrained people. Most of them also had a bad temper that emboldened their unyielding spirit. If it wasn't for their temperament, they would've entered a sect long ago instead of remaining wandering cultivators. It was exactly because they were so bad tempered that they couldn't endure the suffocating air of a sect. That was why they were willing to become a wandering cultivator. Naturally,

these wandering cultivators did little to watch their mouths.

Jiang Chen happened to overhear their conversations as he walked past. His heart sank as he realized the implications. As I thought, it's easy to get in but difficult to get out. Getting into the city was a simple task, but leaving by the city's northern gate and entering Veluriyam Capital's domain wasn't going to be nearly as easy. Even if he were to leave now, the Eternal Celestial Capital would likely keep an eye on him. Exiting the city right after they entered was practically a confession. Moreover, there were three paths leading to the Veluriyam Capital, with each one requiring passage through a city. The other two cities must be facing the same situation.

We have to get through that gate no matter what. But I wonder how strict their inspection is? They obviously can't track me down using the mark they left on me. Jiang Chen had already refined the tracker mark on his body a long time ago. However, if the mark could be erased, he guessed that the Eternal Celestial Capital knew about this as well. That was why their inspection wouldn't be as simple as checking for the mark.

All kinds of things could happen in the martial world. This was the final opportunity for either the Eternal Celestial Capital or the Ninesuns Sky Sect. They would most likely have covered every base in their inspections. It wouldn't be easy to pass.

The duo passed through the public square and went into the great hall. They booked two rooms and asked for a table. After ordering some dishes, they made their way back to the public square. Where there were people, there was information. It wasn't

convenient for Jiang Chen to ask about things because this place might not necessarily be completely free of the Eternal Celestial Capital and Ninesuns Sky Sect's eyes and ears. He would be getting himself into trouble if someone paid attention to him because of his questions.

"Everyone, I heard that the inspection this time is really strict. But it seems that women are fine. They're almost always let through. But young men between twenty to forty years must first have their cultivation base and age inspected. They then have to go through a series of intense interrogations. Apparently they also possess a strange kind of treasure that can check if someone has disguised themselves. They must reveal their true faces the second they are confirmed to be wearing a disguise."

"What? This is too much. They're looking for Jiang Chen, but won't others who have a bounty on their heads also be exposed as well? Isn't this a little too unfair?"

"Hehe, like they care if they're being fair or not. They're a first rank sect, you know." The crowd bandied rumors and information freely with each other, but Jiang Chen was secretly frowning on the inside. If the inspection really was as strict as they claimed, then this would really be quite the hurdle. It would be unbelievably difficult to get through the roadblock.

The reason they were able to come all the way here was exactly because they had altered their looks constantly and sealed off their consciousness from detection. But if the enemy could detect if he had altered his looks, then it really would be difficult to pass through the roadblock. After all, a picture of his features had been

plastered on every city gate for quite some time now. Even the people with the poorest memories would know what he looked like.

Chapter 719: Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder

Huang'er was also slightly surprised to hear that. There were treasures that could detect disguised faces, and many experts with strong consciousness could do the same without the use of treasures. But for the Eternal Celestial Capital to give out treasures capable of doing so mean that they were going all out. It would be nearly impossible for the two to pass through the gates, unless they could transform themselves in the same manner as dragons.

The two looked at each other, dejection clear in each other's eyes. Just as they were momentarily downcast, a racket started outside. It soon drew closer, and soon a group of thirty people surged inside. Most of them were dressed in warrior garb, and were led by a middle-aged man wearing a blue robe. On the whole, they resembled a butler leading a set of household guards. They exuded killing intent, and their bodies bore the marks of an intense battle. Yet their faces seemed to hold barely hidden anxiety, and the guards seemed to be protecting the hastily constructed stretcher that was being carried in the middle. They didn't seem to want to take any chances, each one on high alert. Their heads seemed to be on a swivel, their eyes never still they searched for threats.

The butler walked up to the approaching training ground associate with quite a bit of flair, "Hurry and prepare one of your good rooms; make it the best!"

The associate was obviously someone who knew how to size up the situation. He could tell from their attire alone that this group had an extraordinary background that set them apart from

wandering cultivators. He immediately called out, “We have honored guests, prepare one of the sky rooms!”

The butler pulled the associate aside, “Don’t bother, we’ll take all of the sky rooms.”

The associate was startled and laughed ruefully, “This will be difficult to do, friend. There are many reservations for the sky rooms.”

This time, it was the butler’s turn to start. He frowned, “Then cancel them all? We’ll pay double.”

The associate smiled wryly, “Honored guest, it’s not a matter of money, but that no one does business this way. We wouldn’t be able to explain ourselves to those customers.”

The butler was thrown for a loop, but immediately thought of something and furrowed his brow, “We’ll reserve all of the remaining sky rooms then.”

“Understood, immediately.” The associate relaxed inwardly when he saw the customer’s attitude soften. He was most afraid of guests with power and authority who became stubborn. It was always a nightmare to deal with someone who just wouldn’t listen to reason. After all, they were just one small training ground in Myriad Peoples City, they couldn’t withstand the retribution of a major faction.

“Hold!” The butler called out again when he saw that the associate was about to leave.

“What else does the guest require?” The associate’s heartstrings tightened again.

“Are there any renowned pill kings in Myriad Peoples City?”

Pill kings? The associate laughed self deprecatingly, “Honored guest, we’re but a small border town. How would a true pill king bear to spend time here?”

The Myriad Peoples City was indeed a bustling city, but that was due to its advantageous geography and not the innate superiority of the city itself. No true pill king would be willing to take up long term residence in such a place.

“Not even one?” The butler’s expression darkened.

“Well, we’ve had them come through before, but most of them were visitors. They would take up temporary residence, but there really aren’t any who maintain a residence here.”

“Then have there been any visiting pill kings lately?” The butler struggled to control his temper as he continued his line of questioning.

The associate shook his head, “Not according to what I know, but you can also ask around as well. I am of a lowly station and may

not know of matters higher up."

News of a pill king was indeed a matter that would be best circulated among people of a higher station. Naturally, an associate didn't travel in those circles. The butler waved his hand, "Go on and prepare the room then." His face was grave as he turned back to look at the person on the stretcher. A hint of anxiety and deep worry flashed through his face. He turned back to give some orders, "Go ask around at the various pill factions in Myriad Peoples City to see if there's a pill king within the city. If there is, invite them here no matter what you have to do. If you have to..."

A particular light shone out of the butler's eyes. His men were all smart people and nodded, quickly walking out. Jiang Chen was sitting in the plaza, observing the group with no small amount of astonishment. These household guards all boasted powerful cultivations; it was clear they weren't ordinary cultivators. Moreover, while the butler was dressed in the robes of a servant, he was an emperor realm cultivator. Even the aura he unintentionally radiated was enough to make Jiang Chen treat him with wariness. This group was definitely not a hodgepodge of wandering cultivators.

He observed them carefully, uncertain of their origins and not daring to use his consciousness to scan them. What if this group was from the Ninesuns Sky Sect or Eternal Celestial Capital? Even if they weren't, attracting their attentions wouldn't be a smart thing to do. What if they were on good terms with the two sects?

The group soon sorted out their arrangements as the butler gestured to have his men take the stretcher to one of the better

rooms. He remained waiting anxiously at the door to the training ground. This matter had also impacted many of the wandering cultivators present, so they were all quietly observing the situation as well. However, they soon lost interest after a while, returning to their drink and conversation. The premises soon returned to its normal hustle and bustle. Since nothing else had happened, the small interlude hadn't made too much of an impact on those present.

After half an hour, the men that the butler had sent out returned with various pill masters. Young pill masters, middle aged pill masters, even ones with long flowing beards made their appearance. Yet, not a single pill king was among their number. The butler looked a bit depressed, but he didn't say anything. He had all the pill masters go into the room, ostensibly to take a look at the injuries of the man on the stretcher.

In direct contrast to the confidence with which they'd entered, all of the pill masters exited one by one with various expressions of disgust and helplessness. Some of them also looked furious, yet didn't dare voice their feelings. It looked like they'd all been thoroughly berated. Jiang Chen's sensitive ears caught the muttering of one of the pill masters, "It'd be tough for him to live after being hit with that poison. Even the gods will find it tough to save him."

"Sigh, he's been struck with such a rare poison at such a young age. What could even a ninth level pill king do if one was here?" The pill masters didn't dare speak openly, but it was inevitable that they would grumble to themselves.

Jiang Chen grew curious as he listened in on them. What poison could be so incredible that they claimed that even the gods couldn't save the victim? Out of all the disciplines he had studied, his studies in pill dao had gone the furthest. Moreover, poisons were but a branch of pill dao. There was almost no poison that truly lacked a cure in the world. Even the strongest poison had its counter. The only limiting factor was time; whether one could find the antidote in time, or whether the patient had enough time left for the antidote to work. There were incredibly few poisons that guaranteed death.

"Let's hurry and go. As sure as tomorrow's sunrise, this group has an extraordinary background. We'll be in for it if they decide to take their anger out on us."

"That's right, let's go. Who can cure the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder?" The invited pill masters hastily took their leave without tarrying. They absolutely couldn't afford to offend those who had invited them.

The Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder? Jiang Chen found this hilarious. If there really was a ninth level pill king present, he was certain that they would be able to cure this poison. However, the matter was nothing to do with him, so he didn't speak up to correct them. The butler was quite anxious as he called over another guard and handed him a calling card, "Go pay a visit to the city lord and see if he has any connections who can cure this poison."

"Understood." His men were very loyal and efficient. The man broke into a jog as soon as he had open space, clearly making for

the city lord's manor. The butler watched him leave with a frown on his face, obviously not having a lot of hope.

Jiang Chen was speechless at seeing the fellow barking up any tree he could in his desperation. If one couldn't properly treat the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder, then the victim would die after laughing nine times. However, Jiang Chen still didn't know where they were from. If these people had something to do with the Eternal Celestial Capital and was here to hunt him down, then not only would he not sympathize with the victim, he would actually applaud the situation.

The person sent to visit the city lord didn't take long to return. "Lord Seven, the city lord is also at a loss."

The butler was quite dejected and his tone quite displeased, "Since when has the city lord put on such airs? Even he can't cure it, he doesn't even bother to pay a visit after receiving our calling card? Looks like he's filled out his wings, huh!" He had a belly full of anger and nowhere to vent it on. A thick sense of displeasure suffused his tone.

His man responded, "Lord Seven, it wasn't that the city lord was putting on airs, but that there's a sacred holy king from the Eternal Celestial Capital at his place right now. He couldn't leave and said that he would come visit as soon as he gets the chance."

"As soon as he gets the chance? Everything will be over by the time he finds the chance! Eternal Celestial Capital? Sacred holy king? Hmph! When did the Eternal Celestial Capital command more face than our Veluriyam Capital!" The butler's rage flared.

He clearly wasn't buying the city lord's act. He thought for a moment and gritted his teeth, murmuring to himself, "Must we really travel back to the Capital right now?"

The man hastily said, "Lord Seven, I'm afraid we can't do that The northern gate is under Eternal Celestial Capital control and is only open for four hours a day. We must pass through their screening in order to pass. They seem to be hunting down an enemy."

"Screening?" The butler arched an eyebrow, as if the rage in his belly had finally found an outlet. "Motherf*cker! Who the f*ck does the Eternal Celestial Capital think it is in the Upper Eight Regions?! When was it their turn to investigate us Veluriyam citizens?! Pack up, we leave immediately!"

"But... the young master's injuries might worsen with the journey," the man hastily spoke up.

"Will he get better if we stay in this dump?!" The butler also knew that the hardships of the road might worsen the poison, but to stay here was also to await death! How would they possibly keep on living if something happened to the young master?

Chapter 720: A Transaction Style Medical Consultation

“We check out and leave, now!” The butler was a fairly decisive person. He’d originally planned to find a pill king around Myriad Peoples City to treat, or at least delay the poison from fully taking over his young master’s body. However, he couldn’t believe that he couldn’t find a single person in the vast Myriad Peoples City who wasn’t a useless trash. Helpless, he had no choice but to rush towards Veluriyam Capital without even stopping to rest.

Veluriyam Capital possessed a territory that was more than one million square kilometers. Even if they were to rush back right now at full speed, they still wouldn’t make it to the capital of Veluriyam Capital. However, any place within Veluriyam Capital’s borders had to at least be better than Myriad Peoples City.

“Wait.” A voice suddenly sounded after the butler barked his orders. The hundreds of wandering cultivators currently present knew very well by now that this group hailed from Veluriyam Capital. No one dared continue gossiping while they were around, and so pretended to be chatting and drinking away. However, they were surprised to hear someone calling out to the group at such a time. Who was it? How were they so bold? Speaking up at such a time would only bring trouble to themselves, wouldn’t it?

These wandering cultivators would rather offend the Eternal Celestial Capital than someone from Veluriyam Capital. It didn’t matter what status these people possessed in Veluriyam Capital. As long as their identities involved these two words, then these people were automatically better than anyone else in the outside world.

Just take a look at those pill masters. Had anyone retorted after being scolded by the butler? No, they had only left with their tails between their legs. What did this mean? It meant that this group of people was absolutely not to be trifled with. Everyone looked towards the source of the voice the moment they heard it. They saw a wandering cultivator standing up and walking towards the butler.

The butler cast a sideway glance at the wandering cultivator who was drawing closer. He obviously didn't expect to find someone among these wandering cultivators who would dare to interrupt him. "Who are you?" The butler stared at the person walking towards him with cool eyes.

Naturally, the person who spoke up was none other than Jiang Chen. When Jiang Chen heard that they hailed from Veluriyam Capital, an idea suddenly popped up in his mind. There was a possibility, but he would have to gamble on these people. "Who I am is not important. What's important is that I'm a pill master."

Jiang Chen real age was indiscernible from his outer appearance after going to the effort of disguising himself. From what the butler could see from Jiang Chen's appearance and body language, he didn't feel that this pill master was that skilled. So his response was a little cool, "Are you sure you're better than all the pill masters in Myriad Peoples City?"

Jiang Chen laughed once and brandished his sleeves. He took out an item and flashed it at the butler, "I'm just introducing myself. If you cannot trust me, Lord Seven, then we can just forget about it."

He withdrew the item while he was speaking. However, Lord Seven had a sharp eye. Even if it was just a cursory glance, he saw clearly that the item that had been briefly flashed at him was a pill king's medallion. He didn't manage to glimpse any other information about it, but a pill king's medallion had a unique shape to it. He naturally identified it at first glance. The butler's body shook for a moment, but he was quick to raise a cupped fist salute, "I apologize for my rudeness. I had not imagined that we would find a pill king right here after searching high and low for one in the city."

"You flatter me," Jiang Chen smiled faintly. He had acquired this pill king token from the second rank pill king Shi Zhen when he'd taken out Cao Jin and his group back at Mt. Rippling Mirage. He'd kept it with him all this time, and had decided to borrow its reputation right now. At any rate, exploiting it like this wouldn't be a stain on Shi Zhen's reputation. One could even say that Jiang Chen's use of his token to fool someone meant that Shi Zhen must've cultivated ten lifetimes of good fortune. After all, Jiang Chen's pill talent was more than a hundred times greater than his.

"My lord, I apologize again for my rudeness. Please, let us speak inside." That butler immediately switched his attitude from arrogance to deference, his expression impossibly polite.

Jiang Chen smiled, "Let me go in and take a look. Whether or not I can actually treat him is another story."

"My master and I will still be infinitely grateful for your aid. No matter if your treatment succeeds or not." Butler Lord Seven lead

Jiang Chen in with an expression of great gratitude.

Although Jiang Chen had overheard the pill masters saying that the young master had been poisoned by the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder, there was no reason to take that as fact before he had a chance to see the patient himself. Once he met the patient, he would be able to tell if the rumors were true. When he entered, he saw a young man lying on the bed with a purple cast to his face. He looked like a human eggplant, and was so purple that it sent chills down one's spine. Jiang Chen sighed immediately; all he needed was just a single glance, "It seems that the poison has spread throughout his body. If you were to head to Veluriyam Capital right now, he probably wouldn't make it past three days."

The butler trembled all over when he heard Jiang Chen's words. He hastily said, "Please help us, my lord."

Jiang Chen was immune to poison, so he wasn't afraid of getting poisoned anymore. He sat on the couch and grabbed the sickly young man's wrist without any misgivings. He placed his fingers on the patient's wrist and began checking the latter's pulse. Everyone was surprised by how brazen his actions were. After all, the pill masters who'd come earlier had all inspected their master very cautiously for fear of being infected themselves. But this fellow was so fearless as to grab their young master's wrist directly? Was he really a pill king?

The butler Lord Seven looked a little awkward. In fact, he was starting to view Jiang Chen in a suspicious light. He had seen many pill kings, but he had never seen such a careless pill king until today. This person didn't possess the bearing a pill king should

possess at all. How could a pill king be this nonchalant? Wasn't he afraid that the poison would spread to him too?

"Don't worry, the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder is spread through air. You haven't been contaminated because it doesn't transmit through skin, blood or saliva," Jiang Chen explained indifferently after seeing the odd looks on their faces. Everyone let out a sigh of relief after hearing his explanation. Lord Seven still looked skeptical, but his expression relaxed by a significant margin. "My lord, can... can the young master be saved?"

After inspecting the man's condition thoroughly, Jiang Chen sighed, "He really would've been beyond hope in a few hours. But now, he can still be saved. First though, I need to slow down the poison. The medicine to treat him can come after we buy some time."

In reality, Jiang Chen could treat the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder right now, but he absolutely had to refrain from doing so. That wasn't to say that he wasn't going to save the young man. However, Jiang Chen had an ulterior motive in saving this person. He needed these people to pass through the northern gate. If he saved their master now and they turned against him right at the gates, wouldn't he have done all this for nothing?

"Do you have a brush and paper?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Yes, yes!" The butler personally located a brush, ink and paper for Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen wrote many ingredients across the paper in bold, cursive calligraphy. Most of these ingredients couldn't actually be used to cure the poison; they were there only to obscure people's eyes. "Obtain the ingredients written in this recipe. Make sure you prepare spares since this poison cannot be cured in a short time," Jiang Chen instructed.

"Go, go get these ingredients according to the pill king's orders," Lord Seven hastily instructed one of his men standing to the side. "May I ask of your distinguished name, my lord?" Lord Seven asked carefully. He was a butler from a prominent force and thus wasn't completely lacking in insight. Although Jiang Chen was dressed poorly, his bearing was absolutely extraordinary. He was completely immune to the pressure that the butler exuded. It wasn't a bearing that just anyone could possess, and factoring in the pill king medallion, Lord Seven believed that this man must be of a prominent background.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and said, "Must you know, Lord Seven?"

Lord Seven was startled for a moment, and he hastily laughed apologetically, "Oh no, oh no. It's just that I would never imagine running into a pill king in a small place like Myriad Peoples City. It appears that my young master possesses great fortune, and that he is not destined to depart this world just yet."

Jiang Chen nodded without trying to be modest at all, "He is quite fortunate. Had it been anyone else, they might not have been able to save him." Jiang Chen wasn't boasting either. Had he been anyone else even a pill king, they might not have been able to

produce the antidote to the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder.

"Yes, you're right." Of course Lord Seven wouldn't refute his words at such a time. It was true that the many pill masters he had invited could do nothing, and yet this volunteer actually looked more reliable than them all. Although he couldn't be sure that his young master would escape danger just yet, Lord Seven did feel a bit more confident when he looked at Jiang Chen's bearing and heard his steady tone. It would be wonderful if his young master could be saved. If his young master were to pass away, he literally couldn't imagine the consequences. "My lord, if you really can treat my young master, we will definitely reward you greatly once we return to Veluriyam Capital. In fact, everyone in my young master's household would reward you greatly."

Jiang Chen smiled and looked at this Lord Seven with deep eyes. He suddenly said coolly, "I wouldn't have taken up this job if I were only looking for some great reward. Treating a patient is not without its risks after all. My reputation would be damaged if I failed to cure him."

"Then..." Lord Seven was surprised. Why are you helping us if not for a reward?

"I'll be frank. I may be a pill king, but I have some enemies that make it inconvenient to show my real looks in public. Since the Eternal Celestial Capital has sealed off the northern gate, it's become slightly inconvenient to enter Veluriyam Capital without being exposed. I may not be the person they're looking for, but if I were to expose my real looks while entering Veluriyam Capital, my enemies will most definitely catch up to me... Do you understand

what I'm saying, Lord Seven?"

Lord Seven was a butler for a powerful faction, so of course he possessed an extremely quick wit. He immediately understood what Jiang Chen wanted after hearing his words. "Do you wish to borrow our power and pass through the northern gate, my lord?" Lord Seven asked tentatively.

"Is that a problem? If you cannot afford to provoke the Eternal Celestial Capital, then forget I ever said anything. We can part here and bid each other farewell right away," Jiang Chen responded diffidently.

Lord Seven hastily grabbed Jiang Chen's hand and said proudly, "The Eternal Celestial Capital may be mighty, but they are not yet qualified to interrogate those of Veluriyam Capital! When do you want to leave, my lord? I am afraid that my young master wouldn't be able to endure the hardships of travel!"

Jiang Chen chuckled when he heard the generous proclamations. It was obvious that the butler hadn't trusted him fully yet, or he wouldn't have brought up his young master's condition.

"Don't worry, I'll find some ways to slow the poison in his body. However, some of the accompanying ingredients can only be obtained in Veluriyam Capital. Without these herbs, his poison ultimately won't be able to be cured completely." He wants to play at schemes, does he? Jiang Chen naturally wasn't afraid of him. They could hardly go against his demands as long as he was in control of the poison.

Countless thoughts passed through Lord Seven's mind, but he said nothing in the end.

"Alright, we shall do as the lord says! From now on, you will be a visiting pill king of the Wei family! What do you think?"

A visiting pill king? The Wei family? Jiang Chen simply smiled. He had no idea who the Wei family was. "I heard that the Eternal Celestial Capital is willing to hunt down a young man at any cost. Can we really bypass inspection when we pass through the northern gate?" Jiang Chen asked tentatively.

Lord Seven sneered, "Our Wei Family may not be a top force in Veluriyam Capital, but we are a ninth rank aristocratic family. We represent the face of Veluriyam Capital itself. The Eternal Celestial Capital can dream on if it wants to inspect someone from Veluriyam Capital! There's no way they will succeed unless they wish to start a war against our Veluriyam Capital!"

Lord Seven's tone was matter of fact. Jiang Chen didn't know exactly how much confidence he had, but he could only make this gamble and await results. At the very least, the butler looked confident. He didn't have a better idea besides this one anyway.

Chapter 721: Young Master of the Wei Family

Those sent to retrieve ingredients swiftly returned with their prizes. Jiang Chen took them to his room where he concocted a few pills capable of slowing the poison's progress. Although the "Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder" was indeed powerful, its poisonous attributes were not especially violent. With these pills, the poison's effects could be suppressed for at least half a month.

Jiang Chen could even provide a complete cure right away, but decided to play his cards close to his chest. He had no choice but to let the young master of the Wei household suffer for a few more days. Moreover, Jiang Chen assumed this Lord Seven would also be speculating about his identity. Lord Seven might've even be wondering if this mysterious pill king was the Jiang Chen that the Eternal Celestial Capital was so desperate to catch. Jiang Chen might encounter some unexpected trouble if he didn't keep a hold of the other party's fate. They might not necessarily betray him, but they could easily extricate themselves from a potentially sticky situation. Frankly speaking, this was simply a case of mutual exploitation. It was crucial to retain one's value in such an exchange and Jiang Chen's current significance lay in the fact that he had the means to treat the poison. He had no need to fear being sold out as long as the other party was dependent on him.

After refining the pills, he duly delivered them. "Lord Seven, the young master's ailment will certainly be alleviated after these pills. He will definitely regain consciousness today. Please make arrangements to leave the city tomorrow morning." Jiang Chen didn't stay to exchange superfluous words. He turned around and left swiftly. It was meaningless to speak too much. He'd rather let

them figure things out themselves. They had no reason to inquire into the root of the matter unless they were completely out of their minds.

Lord Seven held the pill in his hands and was momentarily caught in indecision. He still hadn't been able to see through this person who had mysteriously appeared to offer his services.

"Lord Seven, this person... what are his intentions?"

"Lord Seven, could he be the one the Eternal Celestial Capital is after? Perhaps he wishes to borrow our strength to leave the city?"

"That might be the case. He'd better not be deceiving us and worsening the young master's illness." The people began to voice their opinions and concerns one after another.

Lord Seven gestured, "As matters stand, we can only observe the young master's condition after he takes the pill."

They were left with no other alternative. With the poison already at this stage, the future was already guaranteed to be catastrophic unless immediate treatment was administered. No one wanted to admit it, but they were ready to grasp at any straw in their desperation. They promptly placed the pill into the young master's mouth and helped him swallow.

Everyone was in attendance, all eyes on the young master. The young man lying on the stretcher opened his eyes with much effort

after fifteen minutes. “This… am I home?”

“Young master, you’re truly awake?” Lord Seven was overjoyed.

“Qixia, where am I?”

“Young master, we’re still at the Myriad Peoples City. We’ll return to Veluriyam Capital soon.”

The young master’s voice was faint. “Qixia, if I don’t make it, you have to warn father of the conspiracy within the family walls; brother turning on brother…”

Lord Seven hurriedly replied. “Young master, you won’t die. We’ve managed to invite a pill king to help us, and your poison is under partial control. You’ll be cured as soon as we return to Veluriyam Capital. Young master, you have to hold on.”

Although it was uncertain whether he understood everything, the young master nodded weakly and slowly closed his eyes without replying. Lord Seven hurriedly leaned forward to listen for signs of breathing. Relief flooded his body as he felt the young master’s breathing and pulse becoming stronger.

He waved his hands. “All of your withdraw; don’t disturb the young master’s rest.” Lord Seven kept watch alone after sending everyone out. The young master woke up once again after two hours of rest. His mind had recovered much of its clarity, and his consciousness had also been restored to its normal state.

“Qixia, am I really not dead?” The young master’s eyes were becoming increasingly spirited.

“Young master, you’ll be fine! That pill king’s intervention is indeed extraordinary!” Lord Seven was truly convinced of Jiang Chen’s skills now.

“Which pill king is he? No ordinary pill king can deal with this poison.” The young master apparently had some misgivings. Lord Seven thus summarized recent developments for him.

The young master was slightly taken aback. “How extraordinary! Could he be the Jiang Chen that the Eternal Celestial Capital is after?”

Lord Seven laughed wryly, “That Jiang Chen is merely a youth from the Myriad Domain. It’s also common knowledge that they haven’t birthed any pill kings. Although I had my suspicions, I feel that this person is unlikely to be Jiang Chen.”

How would it be so easy to nurture a pill king? How could a pill king rise from a backwater like the Myriad Domain, not to mention one of such a caliber? Lord Seven had previously suspected that the other party was Jiang Chen looking to borrow their influence to pass the northern gate. Now after seeing the latter’s methods and the young master’s subsequent recovery, Lord Seven no longer felt that the pill king was Jiang Chen. He was sure that there was no way Jiang Chen would possess such miraculous skill in pill dao. He had also never heard of the Myriad

Domain boasting of such a pill king. But it went without saying that as a citizen of Veluriyam Capital, Lord Seven had very little interest or understanding regarding the affairs of the Myriad Domain.

Jiang Chen massacring Gong Wuji's party was hot news in the various neighboring regions. But to those of Veluriyam Capital, it was nothing of special concern. After all, even the Eternal Celestial Capital was an unremarkable existence to Veluriyam Capital.

"His identity notwithstanding, such a person must be recruited at all costs. Don't offend him." Feeble as he was, the young master still possessed a resolute charisma.

Lord Seven replied swiftly, "Please rest assured, young master. This subordinate understands. Even if he is taking advantage of our power to pass through the northern gate, it's not necessarily a bad thing to build a good relationship with such a man."

"Indeed. We'll have to see how much gall they have if the Eternal Celestial Capital wishes to inspect House Wei!" Although still recovering, the bearing with which this young master spoke commanded much esteem. "One more thing, Qixia. Upon our return, don't disclose the news of my recovery even if I'm cured. Something about this poisoning is extremely peculiar. I suspect..."

"Young master, could it be that you've some speculations about the source of the poison?" Lord Seven was alarmed.

"I'm quite certain that I was poisoned even before I left home. I

suspect treason within our walls! The question is who and from which branch?" The young master's tone was ugly. "Who would've thought our great House Wei would actually raise a traitor!"

"Young master, are you certain?" Lord Seven was overwhelmed.

"Although not fully certain, I'm at least nine parts certain of this. Let this be for now, we can discuss this further upon our return. The most important matter at hand is to build an amiable relationship with this pill king. Our Wei family had always lacked talent in that field. If we can build a good relationship with this master, perhaps he will lend us some assistance in the future.

"The young master is indeed wise. Although this pill king is mysterious, this subordinate feels that he is a true master of his trade." Jiang Chen's extraordinary methods had brought about swift and dramatic results, which was enough for Lord Seven to sing constant praises. His assessment of Jiang Chen had increased tremendously as a result. Master and subordinate chatted for a while longer before Lord Seven reminded his charge, "Young master, your poison has yet to be completely cured. You should rest and recuperate for now. Leave matters regarding the pill king to this subordinate."

The butler's devotion was evident to anyone passing by. Despite being a mere subordinate, he obviously held the young master's life in higher regard than his own. Jiang Chen received a multitude of odd glances when he returned to the plaza. These wandering cultivators were obviously curious about his identity. According to Lord Seven, it appeared that this unassuming fellow was actually a

pill king? Pill kings were a rare sight in Myriad Peoples City, especially for the wandering cultivators. To them, pill kings were nothing short of divine existences. A pill king's worth was not something these wandering cultivators could compare to. An abundance of emperor realm cultivators existed in the Divine Abyss Continent, but there were less than a tenth of that number who could call themselves pill kings.

From this, one could see how high a pill king's worth and status was in the Divine Abyss Continent. Jiang Chen had already grown accustomed to these astonished looks. He'd been on the receiving end of such looks since he'd first joined a sect. But he didn't wish to further complicate things at this time. Many of the wandering cultivators who wanted to approach him tactfully backed off after seeing Jiang Chen's indifferent attitude. Obviously, no one was willing to rashly disturb a pill king for fear of rousing his ire and landing in hot water. To be frank, a single word from a pill king could move countless people on his behalf.

"Sir Jiang, have you found a way to leave the city?" Huang'er asked with a smile.

"Let's talk inside." Jiang Chen narrated everything that had happened after he'd entered the room.

"Huang'er is not overly familiar with Veluriyam Capital. I've only heard that they're led by seven Titled Great Emperors, who oversee twenty eight major clans beneath them. Every major clan oversees a large tract of territory with countless aristocratic families, sects and factions beneath them. That should be the basic administrative structure of Veluriyam Capital." Although

Huang'er didn't know many specifics, she was well acquainted with the general picture.

"This means that House Wei is an aristocratic family under one of the major clans? They are a third rate force within the Veluriyam Capital?" Jiang Chen became somewhat hesitant, "Are they reliable?"

"A third rate force from the Veluriyam Capital is still no weaker than the average second rank sect. Furthermore, they represent Veluriyam Capital. I highly doubt that the Eternal Celestial Capital would willingly butt heads with them. After all, it's a well known fact that Veluriyam Capital protects its own," Huang'er analyzed coolly.

"I hope so. Who knows how long it'll take to pass through the northern gate if we miss this opportunity," Jiang Chen sighed. It was somewhat of a gamble this time, but they had no other choice. If they were to wait and prepare until the outcome was certain, everything would be over and done with.

Their original projection for the journey had already been delayed quite a bit. The agents who had been sent to buy the Regal Pill Palace prisoners should have long since returned to Veluriyam Capital. And yet, Jiang Chen was still on the road. If too much more time passed, there would be no telling how much more tangled the situation could get. He could wait no longer.

Huang'er suddenly spoke, "Sir Jiang, I'm not certain about this Wei family's prestige and whether they can suppress the arrogant Eternal Celestial Capital. Why don't we split up? You go with them

and I will move on my own. That way we'll draw relatively less attention."

"How can I allow this?" Jiang Chen shook his head, "I promised Elder Shun that I would take care of Miss Huang'er..."

Huang'er smiled sweetly, "And you take care of me very well indeed. However, Sir Jiang needs to listen to Huang'er this time. They won't interrogate me if I'm on my own. I'm a girl after all, and completely different from their target. I'll find a way to meet up with you right after we pass through the northern gate."

Jiang Chen wanted to protest, but Huang'er's eyes glimmered with determination. "Sir Jiang, this time you must yield to Huang'er's temper! It's been so decided; I'll return to my room now. You leave with them tomorrow morning and I'll leave a while later." Huang'er's usually easy-going demeanor had been replaced by firm resolution. She didn't allow Jiang Chen the slightest opportunity to refuse.

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Qi is the Chinese character for "seven"

Chapter 722: Barred At The Northern Gate

Jiang Chen woke up early the next morning with the intention of seeking out Huang'er and continuing their conversation. However, he was a step too late. She'd left behind a note telling him that she was going for a stroll. She also mentioned that there would be no need to wait for her, but to leave the city first. Jiang Chen knew that Huang'er had done this on purpose, and he was greatly touched by the kind gestures of this considerate girl. Although she was an incredibly beautiful, highly prestigious, and extremely talented young lady of a noble house, she was also extremely considerate and possessed none of the headstrong and unruly temper a noble lady usually had in spades. Instead, she had a open and natural bearing. Since Huang'er was rather insistent on this course of action, he naturally wouldn't continue to turn down her offer.

He arrived at Lord Seven's doorstep on time. The butler had been waiting at the door since daybreak. He looked noticeably more enthused than he was yesterday when he'd glimpsed Jiang Chen. "My lord, we have prepared the ingredients."

When he heard Lord Seven's tone, Jiang Chen immediately knew that the Wei young master was doing well. He nodded indifferently, "Let us depart then. Allow me to confirm with you one last time: are you sure you can do this?"

Lord Seven naturally knew what Jiang Chen meant. He smiled, "I wouldn't make a joke at my young master's expense, no matter what."

While they conversed, the door to the neighboring room opened to reveal a young man whose face was tinged with a faint purple hue. He staggered for a brief moment before making his way unsteadily towards the two.

“Why have you come out, young master?” Lord Seven hastily went over to support the young man.

“I’m fine,” The young man waved Lord Seven away. He nodded kindly at Jiang Chen, “You must be the venerable pill king who cured me of the poison?”

“It seems that you’re recovering quite nicely.” Jiang Chen examined this person with a critical eye before smiling faintly.

This young man obviously knew how to conduct himself. He dropped into a deep bow in front of Jiang Chen, “I am Wei Jie, the descendent of a ninth rank aristocratic family in Veluriyam Capital. I thank you for saving my life, venerable pill king.”

Jiang Chen smiled indifferently, “It’s nothing, we just happen to have what each other needs. Besides, your current state is only temporary.”

Wei Jie didn’t take offense at Jiang Chen’s words. He smiled slightly, “I believe that I will definitely make a full recovery with your aid, venerable pill king.”

Seeing that this Wei Jie didn’t possess the arrogance that most

aristocratic descendants did, and that he was extremely cognizant in how to interact with others, Jiang Chen's impression of Wei Jie improved slightly. "Let's go," Jiang Chen nodded, not wanting to talk more than necessary.

Lord Seven looked surprised, "Don't you have a companion, my lord?"

"He was just a friend of mine from the city. He purposely came to visit me when he heard that I was here. He's since left."

The reason Jiang Chen purposely mislead them was because he didn't want them to know that he was the person the Eternal Celestial Capital was hunting for. As expected, both Lord Seven and Wei Jie exchanged a brief glance after hearing Jiang Chen's words. The last bit of suspicion they held in their hearts vanished completely. However, truth be told, they didn't really care if this venerable pill king was Jiang Chen or not. Wei Jie's life was more important than anything else, so even if he really was Jiang Chen, there was nothing wrong with using each other to fulfill their respective needs.

As they walked down the streets of Myriad Peoples City, Jiang Chen felt rather calm as he took in the culture and customs of Myriad Peoples City. He had already made up his mind to make this gamble; there was no point worrying over it now.

They arrived at the northern gate an hour later. As they had imagined, the northern gate had became a lot different after the Eternal Celestial Capital had taken over. Sentries flocked everywhere, and the gate itself was enveloped in all sorts of

restrictive formations. It practically looked like a dragnet of sorts.

There was no less than a thousand people queuing up to exit. It was obvious that the inspection process was incredibly complicated and quite time consuming. However, it was obvious that those from Veluriyam Capital wouldn't bother to wait in a line. While the group might have looked helpless and passive when Wei Jie was hurt, their sense of superiority as a person from Veluriyam Capital was all too obvious at the moment.

Under Lord Seven's guidance, they ignored the line and cut right through the crowd to the city gate. The queuing wandering cultivators were obviously used to such groups already. After all, all parties from Veluriyam Capital never had any intention of lining up for their turn, no matter what their status was. The Eternal Celestial Capital wouldn't force them to stand in line either, so they hadn't stopped Veluriyam Capital groups from jumping the line. When Lord Seven walked up to the inspection point, some Eternal Celestial Capital disciples were already holding up strange-looking mirror fragments, wanting to flash them across Lord Seven's face.

Lord Seven immediately pushed them out of the way and hectored, "What are you doing?"

Those belonging to the Eternal Celestial Capital quickly surrounded them as a middle level manager walked over to meet Lord Seven. He looked Lord Seven up and down several times before politely saying, "Please cooperate with us, sir."

Lord Seven grinned widely, "Are you someone from Myriad

Peoples City?”

“I am an inspector from the Eternal Celestial Capital. I have been ordered by my superiors to hunt…”

“The Eternal Celestial Capital?” Lord Seven interrupted brusquely before the other could finish, “Is the Myriad Peoples City part of Eternal Celestial Capital’s territory now?”

“Sir, the Myriad Peoples City is not part of the Eternal Celestial Capital’s domain, but we have already come to an agreement with the city lord of Myriad Peoples City about this temporary situation with the northern gate. Please cooperate with us, sir.”

Lord Seven laughed loudly, “Cooperate? And why should we cooperate with you? I’ve passed through this northern gate at least eighty times already, but this is a first for me. What, the Eternal Celestial Capital comes all the way to the doorstep of Veluriyam Capital to inspect Veluriyam Capital citizens? What kind of colossal joke is this?”

The expression of the person in charge darkened, “Please don’t make this difficult for us, my friend. If you are someone from Veluriyam Capital, then you are definitely not our target. So what’s the harm of cooperating with us? Just think of it as doing us a favor.”

They had encountered several groups from Veluriyam Capital over the past few days. After some negotiation, the majority had shown the Eternal Celestial Capital some face. The Eternal

Celestial Capital also prepared a small gift in return as a show of their thanks, leaving both sides happy at the outcome. However, Lord Seven obviously had no plans of showing the Eternal Celestial Capital face. He sneered, “Do you a favor? Who will do us a favor then? You’re blocking the entrance to Veluriyam Capital and you’re expecting me to show you face? You’re funny, real funny!”

Lord Seven was in an extremely combative mood. He obviously didn’t plan to give an inch of ground. The noise from their argument alerted the higher ups of the Eternal Celestial Capital. A big man dressed in rich robes walked over, a few stragglers accompanying him. The entire scene fell silent the moment this person appeared. All whispers and gossiping stopped instantly, as if they had agreed to do so beforehand. A late level emperor realm cultivator?

“Venerable saint holy king!” Those who belonged to the Eternal Celestial Capital all greeted and saluted him respectfully. They obviously respected the big man a lot.

A venerable saint holy king? Jiang Chen’s heart sank a little. He had also heard that the Eternal Celestial Capital had sent an eighth level emperor realm expert and a saint holy king to oversee this mission. A saint holy king’s status was extraordinary within the Eternal Celestial Capital. They could be considered the top leaders of the sect, just like the venerated elders of regular sects, an extreme heavyweight. In terms of status and authority, these saint holy kings were absolutely part of the top twenty, or even the top ten of the entire sect. They were much more respected than a holy king like Gong Wuji.

“Which family in Veluriyam Capital do you belong to, my friend?” The saint holy king smiled faintly as he stared at Lord Seven. His eyes were so deep that he looked like he would see right through Lord Seven.

Lord Seven was also an emperor realm expert. However, he was only at initial emperor realm. He could feel a slight pressure fall on him as he stood up to a late level emperor realm. However, he was used to big scenes in Veluriyam Capital, so he wasn’t frightened speechless. He smiled calmly, “Venerable saint holy king, you sound like you’re going to make a decision based on who we are? What would you do if I say that I am a servant of one of the emperors?”

The saint holy king laughed, “if you are, then naturally I would have to show you respect. But you don’t look like one.”

This saint holy king named Mu cast a glance at the warriors behind Lord Seven. He possessed some level of insight, and obviously knew a little about the class and strata of the forces in Veluriyam Capital. He could see that these people were quite powerful, but it was also equally obvious that they were absolutely not direct subordinates of one of the emperors.

Lord Seven obviously had no wish to be led about by the nose. He smiled widely, “I have no interest in talking nonsense with you. My young sir is grievously injured, and we must go back to Veluriyam Capital immediately to treat his wounds. Moreover, he also carries an incredibly important and time-sensitive message for Veluriyam Capital. If you know what’s good for you, you’ll let us through right now.”

“Of course I can let you through, but please cooperate with us.” This saint holy king was obviously not a pushover. Veluriyam Capital was stronger than a first rank sect, but that was only when comparing the two overall. A first rank sect might be afraid of Veluriyam Capital, but they might not necessary be afraid of every force in Veluriyam Capital. If every person belonging to Veluriyam Capital refused to be inspected, then his inspection would completely lose its meaning.

Lord Seven retorted decisively, without a single shred of hesitation, “Impossible!”

Saint Holy King Mu said coolly, “Then my apologies, please choose a different path to return to Veluriyam Capital.”

Lord Seven’s face stiffened, “So the Eternal Celestial Capital plans to butt heads with Veluriyam Capital to the end, are you? I shall report every word to my patriarch then. Mu, I sure hope you can endure the consequences if Veluriyam Capital and the Eternal Celestial Capital come to blows in the future.”

It was true that a saint holy king of the Eternal Celestial Capital’s status was esteemed, and this one’s strength was much higher than Lord Seven’s. However, Lord Seven was a denizen of Veluriyam Capital, and thus held the psychological advantage in this matter. Plus, it wasn’t like Lord Seven had never seen a cultivator at Holy King Mu’s level in Veluriyam Capital. In fact, he had seen quite a lot of cultivators who were stronger. That was why Lord Seven wasn’t afraid of the saint holy king at all in this game of brinksmanship.

Saint Holy King Mu's expression sank slightly. If he was to be honest with himself, he didn't wish to make the situation any bigger than it was already either. After all, they were already risking the wrath of Veluriyam Capital with their current actions of blocking the gate. If these people really went back and twisted his words, it might actually turn into an immense misunderstanding. The Eternal Celestial Capital had absolutely no intention of provoking a giant like the Veluriyam Capital.

"Can we speak somewhere else, my friend?" Holy King Mu's attitude softened just a little.

"There's no need. We will pass through this Myriad Peoples City northern gate in precisely the manner we used to in the past. You don't need to go fishing for our identities either. House Wei has never been inspected in Veluriyam Capital, but now you're saying that we have to be inspected in a tiny place like Myriad Peoples City? Dream on!" Contrary to his looks, this Lord Seven was apparently an expert when it came to borrowing his force's prestige.

Chapter 723: A Narrow Escape Through The Northern Gates

House Wei?

The wandering cultivators around them shifted in surprise. House Wei was truly one of the greater factions in Veluriyam Capital. Although not a personal faction of one of the emperors, nor one of the most preeminent powers, it was nevertheless still a first rate power. It was one that stood out even amongst other first rate powers. Everyone knew that seven Titled Great Emperors stood at the peak of Veluriyam Capital. These were powers that stood far above all others. Beneath them were twenty eight great clans. These twenty eight great clans were the twenty eight most preeminent powers. Below these twenty eight great clans were the noble houses, among which was House Wei.

While it seemed on the surface that these noble houses came third in the power structure, factions like these were undoubtedly first-rate influences in Veluriyam Capital. These factions had the right to speak even in front of the seven emperors.

The wandering cultivators started whispering amongst themselves.

“That’s House Wei! House Wei, that’s not a small, ordinary faction.”

“Things are getting interesting now. It’s not hard to understand that a power like House Wei wouldn’t be happy about submitting

to questioning."

"Right. They'd have to lower their heads and submit if this was Eternal Celestial Capital territory. However, we're at Veluriyam Capital's doorstep at the moment. To make them willingly submit to questioning, this is truly..."

"Exactly. The preeminent factions of the Veluriyam Capital are all very touchy about their dignity. To make them submit to questioning would be a slap in the face. It's hard to fault their dissatisfaction."

"Let's keep watching, it seems a good show's about to unfold!" The wandering cultivators chatted amongst themselves. They didn't take any great pains to avoid being overheard. They hadn't said anything particularly biased, so they weren't afraid of offending any of the parties involved.

With someone playing the part of the villain, there would naturally be someone to play the part of the hero. The young master of House Wei walked forward, his strides calm and leisurely. He cupped his fists in a salute to Holy King Mu, "Holy King Mu, I am Wei Jie."

Holy King Mu clasped his hands in response, careful to be respectful. "So it turns out to be the young master of House Wei from Veluriyam Capital."

As an aristocratic family of the Capital, their name travelled far, enough to reach Holy King Mu's ears. It might not be a faction he

had to avoid offending, but if he did have a falling out with them, their words could potentially sway the decision of one of the emperors. If they went so far as to complain to the emperor, they might actually put the Eternal Celestial Capital on the defensive.

"Holy King Mu, in the grand scheme of things, one could make the argument that you're my senior. If I were an insignificant child with no fame to his name, then of course it would be of no matter if I had to submit to questioning. However, here, this young one represents his entire house and the dignity of Veluriyam Capital. I would be the first to find such questioning unacceptable, much less everyone else in this world. If anyone was to say that my House Wei fears your Eternal Celestial Capital, or further, that my Veluriyam Capital fears your Eternal Celestial Capital, it would be impossible to prevent these words from spreading." Wei Jie's words seemed very peaceful on the surface, but there was no mistaking the underlying tone. An interrogation was out of the question. To be questioned was to be slapped on the face. That was something impossible to accept, whether for House Wei or for Veluriyam Capital. An ordinary faction wouldn't even have the gall to say they represented Veluriyam Capital, yet a family like House Wei was entirely entitled to do so. No one would think they weren't qualified to say such words.

Holy King Mu found himself in a quandary. House Wei was being very assertive, and they were a faction he couldn't afford to fall out with.

He would never have wasted so many words for an ordinary faction. You can't accept this? Don't even think about passing through then. If you want to pass through, then you need to submit to an interrogation. He wouldn't even shy away from using

force if push came to shove. But he truly couldn't afford to take a hard line against a faction like House Wei.

"Wise nephew Wei, since you recognize me as a senior, then please extend me some face. I will personally conduct a questioning, simply symbolic in nature, and we can all go on our way. I will certainly offer my heartfelt thanks after that." Holy King Mu still wanted to try and convince him.

Wei Jie smiled faintly. "Holy King Mu, you still haven't understood me. Gratitude isn't something my House Wei is short of. What I want right now is to pass through the city gates in broad daylight with every part of my dignity intact. Naturally, I would cooperate if we were in your domain. However, we're on Veluriyam Capital's doorstep. Even if you were to offer a hundred thanks, I would still categorically refuse to lose my honor at the entrance to my home."

House Wei's words were reasonable and well-founded, and he'd said them loud and clear. Holy King Mu was at a loss. He threw a charged glance at their group, "Worthy nephew Wei, it's possible for you yourself to pass through without questioning, but the others..."

"The same goes for the others. Since they travel together with me, then they're all old friends and brothers of House Wei. There's no difference between them being interrogated and House Wei being interrogated." Wei Jie had no thought of yielding a single step.

Holy King Mu frowned. "Worthy nephew Wei, you're putting me

in a difficult spot."

Lord Seven smiled faintly off on the side, "Do what you need to do. If you're going to use force, we will respond in kind."

They wouldn't win if it came to a fight, but Lord Seven didn't seem to believe that at all. Holy King Mu nearly lost his temper at Lord Seven's words. His jaw tightened in anger, but he still kept his emotions in check. He kept admonishing himself, don't lash out, don't lash out. Things would erupt into a major event if he were to give vent to his anger.

"Ah well. I will give some face to House Wei. However, I have a single request. Since these people are old friends of worthy nephew Wei, there's no harm in introducing them to me so that I may be acquainted with them as well, is there?" Using their treasure to interrogate the group was out of the question, but asking their identities should still be permissible, yes?

Wei Jie beckoned with his hand with a laugh. "Come then, each of you introduce yourselves to Holy King Mu."

Lord Seven was the first to step forward. "Wei Qixia, servant of House Wei for forty years. Holy King Mu, I wonder if I may pass through?"

The other warriors also stepped forward one by one and gave their names. Holy King Mu watched them go past one by one with a sour face, no expression showing on his face. Jiang Chen was the last. Secretly taking a deep breath, he said when his turn came,

“Second level pill king, Zhen Shi, a guest of House Wei.”

His words were neither fast nor hurried, and his bearing was calm and indifferent. He introduced himself and was about to leave when Holy King Mu gestured with his hand, “Hold.”

Holy King Mu stared at Jiang Chen, speaking to Wei Jie, “Worthy nephew Wei, this isn’t this friend’s true appearance, am I correct? I wonder whether he can reveal his genuine self?”

Wei Jie responded indifferently, “Holy King Mu, even my father has to give some respect to this venerable pill king. If you were to interrogate him, then the consequences would be far more dire than interrogating me.”

Holy King Mu’s cold eyes at Jiang Chen. “This person is suspicious.”

“Suspicious in what way?” Wei Jie said, his face the picture of indifference, “Is he suspicious merely because he’s changed his appearance? Before seeking refuge with my father, this venerable pill king unfortunately offended many friends of his dao. Even my father has never commanded the pill king to reveal his true appearance. Does Holy King Mu desire to leave the pill king with no way out?”

Holy King Mu was half-skeptical. “How many years has it been since this person sought refuge with your father?”

Wei Jie laughed out loud. “Does even my House Wei’s guest pill king need to account for themselves to your Eternal Celestial Capital?”

Holy King Mu was also inwardly hesitant. He could clearly tell that the person in front of him had changed his appearance. Yet, Wei Jie had already said that he’d served House Wei for many years, so it clearly couldn’t be Jiang Chen.

Holy King Mu muttered to himself for a while, in a quandary. It was a subordinate of his who actually suddenly proposed, “Since this venerable pill king is a guest of House Wei, then he should have an pill king medallion, shouldn’t he? This pill king medallion is a widely known token in the world of pill dao; it can’t be faked.”

Holy King Mu was delighted when he heard this, “Indeed. If this friend could take out his identity medallion, I will have done my duty by examining it.”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. He shook his sleeves and produced a medallion. “Take a good look.”

This pill king medallion was as authentic as they came. On its face were clearly written two words, “Zhen Shi.” Holy King Mu looked at it closely again and again. This medallion wasn’t a fake, and it didn’t show any signs of being a forgery either. “Pill king Zhen Shi?” Holy King Mu frowned. He thought for a moment, but still couldn’t find any flaws. He cupped his hands in a salute and said with a sour face, “Worthy nephew Wei, apologies for the offense.”

Wei Jie let out a faint smile, “Then goodbye.” He gestured, and the entire group walked out of the northern gate, all strut and swagger without a look back. There was no pretense of any courtesy towards Holy King Mu and his men. There was no need for citizens of Veluriyam Capital to humble themselves in front of people from the Eternal Celestial Capital. Holy King Mu stared at House Wei’s procession. He watched them for a long while, until they disappeared over the horizon. Only then did he turn back his cold eyes.

He had a nagging feeling that there was something wrong with House Wei’s group, but he couldn’t quite put his finger on what. There wasn’t a problem with either Wei Jie or Wei Qixia. There wasn’t any issue even with thee warriors. It was simply this pill king who’d disguised his appearance who made the holy king feel as though he’d swallowed a fly, giving him a lingering nauseous feeling. However, thinking back carefully, Holy King Mu still felt that the pill king shouldn’t be related to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen was a genius from the Myriad Domain. It was fundamentally impossible for the Myriad Domain to produce a pill king. And even if that Jiang Chen had previously completed the pill king evaluation, it was simply impossible for him to foresee this situation where he would have to change the name on his identity medallion to “Zhen Shi.” One would use their own name or their title in an pill king evaluation. Who would use someone else’s name for no rhyme or reason? Holy King Mu’s mind was thrown into chaos for a time.

His instincts as an expert told him there was a problem with this pill king. But the more he reasoned it out, the more he felt that this

man shouldn't be Jiang Chen. He turned it over and over in his mind, yet he still couldn't identify an obvious clue. He immediately waved his hand. "Observe the rest carefully, don't overlook a single one."

The House Wei affair was but a passing episode. Countless wandering cultivators whispered among themselves, but none of them dared object to the questioning. House Wei could afford to be arrogant. They weren't entitled to such arrogance. It wasn't that the Eternal Celestial Capital didn't dare offend House Wei. Rather, they didn't dare offend the Veluriyam Capital standing behind House Wei. The wandering cultivators, on the other hand, were nothing to the Eternal Celestial Capital. The sect could kill them without batting an eye.

A great stir took place at the northern gates after about two hours. A stunning young lady had appeared alone on her mount. Her clothes were whiter than snow as she led her white horse gracefully through the northern gate. This young woman's beauty and grace was like an immortal descending from the heavens. Everyone at the scene stared dumbstruck, their eyes open wide and their jaws hanging loose.

Some people compared beautiful women to flowers, some compared them to rivers. Yet, any such metaphor of this world seemed to pale in comparison when held up to this young woman. Such stunning beauty didn't belong to the mundane world. Dazed, dazzled, to a one, they wondered whether she was a fairy banished from the heavens, fallen among mortals.

Even the Eternal Celestial Capital disciples in charge of the

inspection were sweating. As though they were one and all virgins longing for their first women, they walked on eggshells around her, afraid of offending the beautiful woman. Fortunately, this beauty was very cooperative, and didn’t make any trouble for them. After answering their questions, she vanished without a trace, leaving only behind yearning and regret at her absence amongst the disciples.

Chapter 724: A Candid Interaction

“Were we seeing things just now? Where did such a fairy come from?”

“Right? Judging from her temperament, she appears superior even to the ladies of the Upper Eight Regions.”

“Absolutely, even a first rank sect wouldn’t be able to raise a lady of such demeanor.”

The discussion wasn’t taking place among the wandering cultivators, but between the disciples of the Eternal Celestial Capital. Being part of a first rank sect themselves, they felt they had the right to compare. There were in fact, no shortage of beautiful geniuses within the Eternal Celestial Capital. There were even goddess-like existences amongst their ranks. However, even those existences seemed a far cry from the lady who had passed through just now in terms of elegance and temperament.

Demeanor was a mysterious thing. There was no definitive method by which one could measure and compare, but even simple commoners would be able to identify who was superior with a single glance.

……

The Wei convoy entered a large city within Veluriyam Capital borders after a day of travel. True to his word, Jiang Chen put together the relevant antidote for Wei Jie during this recess.

“Young master Wei, once you take this antidote thrice daily for three days, I have no trouble guaranteeing your recovery.”

Wei Jie accepted the medication with solemn gravity. “I’m deeply grateful to the venerable pill king for saving my life.”

Jiang Chen gestured, “There’s really no need to be. It was only by virtue of young master Wei’s efforts that I was spared a great deal of complications at the northern gate.”

The laughing Wei Jie wasn’t quite convinced of the service he had rendered. “That was a matter involving no great effort on my part. Even without the venerated pill king amidst us, I wouldn’t have allowed them to inspect House Wei’s convoy.”

That was indeed the truth—Veluriyam Capital had their own way of doing things—how could they allow a mere Eternal Celestial Capital to inspect their people? Jiang Chen developed a somewhat favorable impression of him after seeing Wei Jie refrain from taking credit. After a while, Jiang Chen raised his hand, “In that case, I bid you farewell then.”

Wei Jie started, “Is the venerated pill king already leaving?”

Jiang Chen merely nodded with a smile.

“Venerated pill king, please wait,” Wei Jie appeared somewhat alarmed.

“Eh?”

Wei Jie strode forth and spoke sincerely. “Venerated pill king, we aren’t too far from the heart of Veluriyam Capital now. Although I’m not privy to your purpose for visiting the capital, I hoped to entertain you at House Wei. Do allow me the opportunity to express proper gratitude for saving my life. If you require some assistance, it can be said that House Wei possesses some level of prestige within Veluriyam Capital. I would be happy to provide any assistance within my means.”

Jiang Chen was momentarily silent. Originally, he had planned to leave House Wei as soon as their deal had been concluded. He was slightly moved after hearing Wei Jie’s words and seeing the sincerity in his eyes. I came to Veluriyam Capital to search for leads and ultimately save my people. Since I’m not familiar with the area, local assistance could prove to be quite helpful. Although Wei Jie is quite young, he is anything but mediocre and might prove useful. Besides, these people don’t look like the type that’ll turn hostile… The more he deliberated, the more he was swayed.

“Venerated pill king, to be completely honest, House Wei is sorely lacking in the field of alchemy, despite our influence in the Veluriyam Capital. We’ve been desperately seeking to engage a talented guest pill king but to no avail…”

Jiang Chen was slightly distracted as he recalled what Elder Yun Nie had once told him about pill kings and pill emperors back at the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles. He’d learned that certain third rank sects had the qualification to hold certification tests for pill kings. Second rank sects had the right to certify fourth to sixth

rank pill kings, while first rank sects were authorized to certify those from the seventh to ninth rank. Since House Wei family was a ninth rank aristocratic family, they should at least be comparable to first or second rank sects. How could they not have a guest pill king?

Wei Jie hurriedly added after seeing Jiang Chen's hesitation, "House Wei once had a fourth rank pill king. However... ah... certain matters took place in the past and unfortunately, House Wei's pill king perished. From then on, we were left in an awkward state without a pill king."

Jiang Chen appeared pensive after listening to Wei Jie's explanation.

"If even a fourth rank pill king met his end at your Wei household, how much help can a mere second rank pill king as myself offer?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

Wei Jie sighed lightly. He didn't attempt to explain further and only forced a smile. "That... Venerated pill king, it seems I've overstepped my bounds. Out of eagerness, I rashly invited you to join our family struggles. Come to think of it, I am being somewhat selfish. I already owe you my life—it was absolutely improper of me to ask you to shoulder such a risk."

"Risk?" Jiang Chen stared blankly.

Wei Jie smiled awkwardly. "Yes, being a guest pill king of House Wei indeed involves some risk. But it was truly not my intention to

harm you. I only invited you to stay so that I can entertain you as an honored guest and express my gratitude. I seem to have lost control of my thoughts and strayed from our original discussion."

Wei Jie had expected the pill king to leave in anger after hearing what he'd said. Contrary to expectations, Jiang Chen just laughed nonchalantly. "Risk? It wouldn't necessarily be greater than the risk you take in travelling with me."

Wei Jie was stunned momentarily and failed to comprehend Jiang Chen's words. However, he was an intelligent man. It took a moment, but his suspicions from before came back in full force and a flash of insight let him connect the dots. His expression changed, and finally, let out a rueful laugh. "Which means, you... you truly are the person that the Eternal Celestial Capital was after?"

Jiang Chen was as free as the fish in the vast ocean or the birds in the boundless skies once he'd entered Veluriyam Capital territory. If they were to work together in saving those of the Regal Pill Palace, Jiang Chen would have to come clean about his identity sooner or later. This kind of thing couldn't be hidden for long.

"Is young master Wei feeling regretful?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly and glanced at the group from House Wei with a meaningful expression, as if he could see through to the depths of the latter's heart.

Wei Jie suddenly slapped his forehead with a laugh. "Who would've thought? How truly unexpected! I'd indeed entertained this suspicion before. But after careful scrutiny, my doubts were gradually erased. And yet, my hunch unexpectedly proved true in

the end. But then… who's pill king Zhen Shi?"

Wei Jie was indeed easy going. Despite his astonishment after learning Jiang Chen's identity, he was soon able to recover his disposition and continued to chat and laugh naturally.

"Pill king Zhen Shi?" Jiang Chen barked with laughter, "Just flip the words over."

"Shi Zhen? Who is that?" Wei Jie was obviously not familiar with the name.

"Someone from the Eternal Celestial Capital might perhaps be familiar with the name. Zhen Shi was a second rank pill king from the Ninesuns Sky Sect."

Wei Jie's expression was one of great incredulity. How was this even possible? However, he immediately realized that while the name on the medallion was Shi Zhen when read from left to right, it was Zhen Shi when read in the opposite direction. These tokens were designed differently depending on the location of issuance—some were carved left to right while others were engraved from right to left. There were even those written from top to bottom. It was just that when Jiang Chen had flashed the medallion at that critical juncture, he'd claimed himself to be Zhen Shi. Therefore, everyone had assumed that the token was carved from right to left, playing right into that assumption.

Moreover, Shi Zhen himself was by no means a grand character in the Ninesuns Sky Sect. His name was far from being well

known. With that, when Jiang Chen announced himself as Zhen Shi, no one immediately thought of Shi Zhen. Although Holy King Mu had heard of Jiang Chen killing Cao Jin of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, he had no desire to further enquire about relatively minor characters like Shi Zhen and Fatty Wu. After all, there was possible way an aloof existence like Holy King Mu would know of a mere second rank pill king. Jiang Chen thus took advantage of this to fool Holy King Mu.

Wei Jie was momentarily stunned silent, and spoke only after a while. “Sir, you’re truly bold and attentive to details. At that pivotal moment, even I didn’t doubt a thing, to say nothing of the Eternal Celestial Capital... hahaha!”

Wei Jie also burst out in laughter at that point. He obviously didn’t mind. As for being taken advantage of, it was a fact that Jiang Chen had saved his life. A life in exchange for passing a gate —no matter how one looked at it, Wei Jie was the one who had profited from this trade. Jiang Chen was still calm and collected even while facing an eighth rank emperor realm cultivator. As a youth of more or less of the same age, Wei Jie couldn’t help but admire his superior mentality and courage.

He didn’t know much about matters regarding the Myriad Domain and the Eternal Celestial Capital, but he had heard of the general situation. He naturally knew that the Eternal Celestial Capital had invaded the Myriad Domain to wipe out all its sects. Although he wouldn’t rashly stand out to condemn them, Wei Jie was inwardly contemptuous of the Eternal Celestial Capital’s actions. What’s more, the Eternal Celestial Capital’s brazen attitude in wanting to inspect his family entourage right at Veluriyam Capital’s doorsteps was enough to cause Wei Jie to

involuntarily side with the Myriad Domain. Now that he'd discovered that the person who saved his life was the very Jiang Chen whom the Eternal Celestial Capital had been chasing so desperately, he was rather astonished and, at the same time, filled with admiration.

Jiang Chen didn't let Wei Jie's praises go to his head, smiling faintly. "Young master Wei should realize by now whose risk is greater."

Wei Jie appeared unconcerned. "Brother, you jest. It's not their place to act so unbridled in Veluriyam Capital. House Wei has absolutely no need to consider their stance. My offer stands unchanged—as my savior, if you're willing to come to our house as a guest, I will do my best as a host. If you require anything done within Veluriyam Capital, I will assuredly do my best to help you."

Wei Jie was was apparently not an ingrate who would burn bridges after crossing the river. He was cognizant of gratitude and returning favors. Apart from that, he also admired Jiang Chen greatly. A Myriad Domain youth who was able to stand strong against the persecution of the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect—this alone was enough for Wei Jie to form a friendship with him. Others may fear the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect, but Veluriyam Capital certainly did not. There was absolutely no place for those two sects to act atrociously within Veluriyam Capital borders.

"Young master Wei, you must know that my second rank pill king status is fake." Jiang Chen reminded with a smile.

“Brother, wouldn’t I be too condescending and short-sighted if I were to invite you solely for being a second rank pill king?”

After Jiang Chen saw how frank Wei Jie was, he laughed. “Very well then. It appears I was being too pragmatic. On that note, I’m still well capable of concocting anything a second rank pill king can. However, the reverse might not necessarily be true.”

Wei Jie was momentarily dazed after hearing Jiang Chen’s words. But recalling his poison, he realized that a normal second rank pill king might not have been able to dispel it so easily. Surprise and delight in equal measure bloomed within Wei Jie.

Chapter 725: Veluriyam Capital

The atmosphere became very harmonious once the two were open and honest to each other. One had to say that Wei Jie was quite an amazing young man. He reminded Jiang Chen of the fourth prince Ye Rong of Skylaurel Kingdom. However, fourth prince Ye Rong was ultimately just the prince of a secular kingdom. His knowledge and bearing were leagues away from Wei Jie's. Moreover, Wei Jie was a little more aggressive than Ye Rong. This aggressiveness wasn't of the arrogant and despotic kind, but the kind that was unafraid to shoulder responsibility when something came up. Now that he recalled Ye Rong, Jiang Chen found that he missed the Skylaurel Kingdom quite a bit. There was also the Precious Tree Sect. I wonder how they're doing?

He had sent Ye Chonglou back to the Precious Tree Sect ahead of time, so the sect should have been prepared to deal with that calamity. If Ye Chonglou had gone back and prepared everything ahead of time, there was a high likelihood that they had avoided disaster. Jiang Chen guessed that the Precious Tree Sect must have dealt with the situation already. Otherwise, the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect would have used the Precious Tree Sect to threaten him with already. The fact that he hadn't encountered such a dilemma meant that the Precious Tree Sect was at least safe for now.

"Brother Jiang, I have heard of what happened in the Myriad Domain. Everyone knows that the Eternal Celestial Capital is hunting for you. However, I heard that they are sure that you will come to Veluriyam Capital, which is why they had laid many ambushes along the path to the Capital. May I know why?" Wei Jie asked curiously.

Since Jiang Chen had decided to be open and honest with Wei Jie, there was naturally no need to hide this from him, not to mention Jiang Chen still needed to borrow House Wei's strength to inquire about Gouyu and everyone else's whereabouts.

"I'll be frank, young master Wei. Controlled by the Eternal Celestial Capital, the Great Scarlet Mid Region invaded the Regal Pill Palace and kidnapped many of my sect's disciples. Later on, they sold those captives to the Veluriyam Capital. They knew that I would come to save them, which is why they attempted to ambush me along the way."

Wei Jie looked a little moved when he heard this, "Were they really sold to Veluriyam Capital? Is this news accurate?"

Jiang Chen nodded, "This news is absolutely accurate." Not only had he heard this from Gong Wuji, Jiang Chen had also gone to the Great Scarlet Empire to inquire about this personally. He happened to hear the same thing right from a prince of the Great Scarlet Empire himself.

Seeing how certain Jiang Chen was, Wei Jie replied with a very serious expression, "If they really were sold to Veluriyam Capital, then it will be quite difficult to save your people."

"What do you mean, young master Wei?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Veluriyam Capital is a free land, and slave trade is absolutely forbidden. In reality, there really aren't many factions who have

the ability to conduct slave trade in Veluriyam Capital. The problem is that those who do are very tough nuts to crack." Wei Jie's tone was also gravely serious when he spoke of this.

Jiang Chen said, "Young master Wei, if this troubles you and House Wei, then there's no need to get involved in this. If you can help me check which faction it was who bought my people, I will think of a way to do the rest myself."

Wei Jie hastily said, "It's not that I'm afraid of trouble, but that these forces just aren't easy to deal with. Let's talk about this once we get back to the capital of Veluriyam Capital."

Although Jiang Chen was feeling afire with anxiety, he knew that this wasn't something that could be dealt with in a short time.

"Brother Jiang, you mustn't act recklessly and use brute force to resolve this matter. If you use brute force in Veluriyam Capital, then the matter will take a turn for the worse and get completely out of hand. The Eternal Celestial Capital may not be able to harm you despite your offenses, but the troubles you will face in Veluriyam Capital will be ten times as worse if you offend a powerful force." Wei Jie's tone was serious, and he absolutely didn't look like he was being an alarmist.

"Don't worry, young master Wei. We can only make the rescue by ruse. It will be best if I can just trade for them. I don't mind spending twice, thrice or even five times the price if I can just buy them."

Wei Jie nodded, “We will plan accordingly once we get back home, but before we do that, it’ll be best if you don’t reveal your identity so as to avoid alerting the enemy. For now, you are still Pill King Zhen Shi. Also, if the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect learn that you’ve successfully made your way into Veluriyam Capital, they might send assassins to come after you. Although Veluriyam Capital forbids other forces from behaving atrociously on their lands, there will always be blind corners where light can’t reach.”

“Mm, my first priority is to rescue my people.” Jiang Chen naturally knew what was first order. It was still a problem of strength in the end. Why would he have needed to hide like this if he had sufficient strength? If he possessed sufficient strength, the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect wouldn’t have dared to do anything to him.

A few days later, Jiang Chen and House Wei’s group smoothly returned to the central city of Veluriyam Capital. Jiang Chen was astounded by the prosperity and style of Veluriyam Capital as he stood outside the gates of the central city and stared at the legendary Capital from afar. It wasn’t that Jiang Chen hadn’t seen the world before, but that Veluriyam Capital just stood out too much as compared to the other cities of Divine Abyss Continent. Compared to Veluriyam Capital, Tai-ah City, Great Scarlet Mid Region, Prospering Dragon City or Myriad Peoples City all looked like insignificant villages.

“Do you see that, venerable pill king? That building that stretches into the clouds is the Veluriyam Pagoda. Legend says that it enshrines and worships the ancient Veluriyam Emperor’s empyrean decree and his empyrean relic. The light of the

Veluriyam Emperor has blessed the Veluriyam Capital with a hundred thousand years of fortune…”

Jiang Chen followed Wei Jie’s finger and looked to the horizon, seeing a tall pagoda of glass that stretched into the clouds amidst the endless expanse of the city. Rainbow light glowed from the pagoda’s body, illuminating the entire Veluriyam Capital with its radiance. This made Veluriyam Capital looked like it was enveloped in a sheen of solemn, divine light.

“Come on, let’s go in,” Wei Jie waved his hands and walked towards the city gate.

“Halt!” They were stopped by a city guard.

Wei Jie frowned, “What’s going on? Have the rules of Veluriyam Capital change while I was away for just a few days? Since when did we start blocking a ninth rank aristocratic family from entry?”

The city guard obviously recognized Wei Jie, and he cupped his hands in greeting, “Apologies, young master Wei. Please come down from your horse before you enter the city. I’m doing this for you, and not because I want to make your life difficult.”

Wei Jie looked surprised, “What do you mean?”

That city guard captain sighed softly as his face became overshadowed by sadness for an instant, “Young Lord Fan had passed away, and the entire city is in mourning. All flights and

horse riding is temporarily forbidden. Everyone must walk in and out of Veluriyam Capital."

"What? Young Lord Fan..." Wei Jie turned incredibly pale as he blurted out, "When did this happen?"

"Just yesterday," The city guard captain shook his head and waved him off, "Go on in, young master Wei. Keep a low profile when you head home and don't act brashly." The city guard was actually giving him pointers out of goodwill.

The shock on Wei Jie's face lasted for a long time before he finally nodded and cupped his hands, "Thank you for the reminder. I'll treat you to alcohol when I come by again."

The city guard captain forced a smile on his face, but said nothing in return. It was obvious that the death of Young Lord Fan had cast a pall across the entire Veluriyam Capital. Wei Jie's feelings immediately turned downcast as he led his horse, lowered his head and entered the city. Even the normally high profile Lord Seven followed behind the group docilely and walked towards House Wei's residence with low profile.

House Wei's status in Veluriyam Capital was quite high, and the place they lived in was a very prominent location as well. It took them two hours of walking before they finally arrived at House Wei's residence. House Wei's residence had an incredibly large garden and looked extremely luxurious. It looked uncommon at first glance. House Wei had actually put a banner of mourning over their entrance due to the passing of Young Lord Fan as well.

“Who is this Young Lord Fan, and what is his background? How prominent is he to have the entire city mourn over his death? To think that even a ninth rank aristocratic family like the Wei Family would be in mourning for him!” Although Jiang Chen had questions in his mind, he didn’t voiced them out loud.

He entered the garden along with the rest of the group. House Wei didn’t make noise even though they were happy to see the return of their young master. It was obvious that no one dared to disturb this atmosphere of mourning.

“Qixia, please help prepare a place for our venerable pill king. Remember, it must be of the highest standard!” Wei Jie instructed Lord Seven. At the same time, he turned to Jiang Chen and said, “Venerable pill king, I shall be visiting my seniors first. Please forgive me for any slights that I might cause you during this time.”

They had had a tacit understanding to call Jiang Chen the ‘venerable pill king’ since they didn’t wish to reveal his identity at the moment. Lord Seven thought that the young master was hoping to retain this venerable pill king in their family, so he did his best to serve Jiang Chen without any hesitation. When he was done arranging a place for Jiang Chen, Lord Seven commented, “Please call me anytime you want if you need anything, venerable pill king.”

“Thank you for going to this trouble, Lord Seven,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

“That’s the way it should be. I shall not disturb your rest any longer, venerable pill king.”

After Lord Seven had left, Jiang Chen looked around and sighed in admiration. Even their guest room looked like an entirely different world. This guest room had several rooms and a relatively big garden. Everything looked very peaceful and calm. In a place like Veluriyam Capital where every inch of land was worth precious gold, the fact that House Wei could spend this lavishly showed that their status indeed very high.

When he was done familiarizing himself with the place, Jiang Chen returned to his room and finally let out a sigh of relief. After being hunted for such a long time, he could finally spend a night relaxing. He wasn’t worried that the Eternal Celestial Capital would chase him all the way to this place. Judging from House Wei’s lordly appearance alone, he knew that there was no way the Eternal Celestial Capital would dare cause trouble in this place even if they somehow tracked him to Veluriyam Capital.

“Miss Huang’er should’ve entered the city as well. Once she sees the markings I left along the way, she will meet up with me then.” Jiang Chen wasn’t worried about Huang’er. He sat cross legged and began meditating for four hours. Then, he sorted out his thoughts over the past few days. Everything had happened too quickly since the Myriad Grand Ceremony. He’d nearly had no time at all to put everything in order. Four hours later, Jiang Chen was just about to stand up when he suddenly heard a series of footsteps coming from outside.

“Brother Jiang,” It was Wei Jie’s voice.

“Young master Wei,” Jiang Chen opened the door.

“Forgive my negligence, brother Jiang. I visited my seniors and we chatted about some things. I’ll go out tomorrow and ask for the news for what you seek first thing in the morning.”

Jiang Chen nodded, but changed the subject, “Young master Wei, who is Young Lord Fan? What kind of person is he to have the entire city mourn for him? Is he the young master of Veluriyam Capital itself?”

Wei Jie’s face became overshadowed with sadness as he sighed softly and nodded, “Although he isn’t the only young lord of Veluriyam Capital, you aren’t wrong for calling him the young master of Veluriyam Capital.”

“Oh?” Jiang Chen looked curious.

“Young Lord Fan is Emperor Peafowl’s proudest true disciple, and Emperor Peafowl is the leading emperor out of the seven emperors of Veluriyam Capital. Young Lord Fan was exceptionally talented and powerful, and even rarer was the fact that he’s extremely noble minded even though he was still very young. You can say he is a genius favored by heaven. Veluriyam Capital has many young lords, but Young Lord Fan was commonly acknowledged to be the genius with the highest chance to inherit the position of city lord of Veluriyam Capital. What a pity…”

Chapter 726: Slave Market

The heavens envy those with great talent! Wei Jie spoke a lot, and his emotions ran a little high during the conversation, but Jiang Chen more or less understood what he meant. In the end, it all boiled down to that saying.

“Brother Jiang, there are only a few people whom I’m impressed by amongst my peers, and not even you, brother Jiang, have impressed me so much that I would submit to you fully. However, Young Lord Fan is one of the very few people whom I am fully willing to submit my allegiance to.” It would appear that Wei Jie was a die hard supporter of Young Lord Fan. Jiang Chen wasn’t surprised by this. It would be stranger if the most outstanding genius in Veluriyam Capital didn’t have a large group of followers and admirers. Still, just what exactly had taken the life of a genius like this?

Jiang Chen didn’t try to inquire about the matter, however. Right now, the only thing he was concerned about was the whereabouts of Gouyu, Mu Gaoqi and the others. Young Lord Fan’s death had obviously dealt a great blow to Wei Jie’s psych and he quite plainly didn’t wish to talk much on this topic either.

“Brother Jiang, since you’ve arrived at Veluriyam Capital, you are prepared to stay here for a long while, aren’t you? In that case there are certain things that I need to talk to you about Veluriyam Capital. We have seven Great Titled Emperors, and beneath them there are a total of twenty eight clans. The aristocratic families only came after these clans, and House Wei is one of the aristocratic families. However, House Wei is a ninth rank aristocratic family and thus classified as the highest ranking

existence among all other aristocratic families…" Wei Jie explained everything in great detail, and he paid particular emphasis to what Jiang Chen should pay attention to in Veluriyam Capital, and what forces he couldn't or shouldn't provoke.

The emperors and the great clans were a moot point. They were of course under the 'do not provoke' category. There were also many big and small forces that fell under the 'do not provoke' category. Of course, Jiang Chen hadn't came to Veluriyam Capital to cause trouble. His code of conduct was very simple: he would do no harm to those who did no harm to him.

Jiang Chen had to admit that Wei Jie was a kindred spirit. The two of them chatted deep into the night before Wei Jie finally bid him goodbye. The pair agreed to head out and ask around for information first thing in the morning.

The night passed peacefully and quietly. Jiang Chen woke up very early in the morning. Wei Jie had arrived at his residence as well. The duo headed out after they had breakfast. But just as they were about to leave the residence, they saw a group of people walking over from the road to the right of the residence. The leader of the group was a middle aged man and a youngster. They were followed by a pill master dressed in a pill master's robes. A group of soldiers followed behind the trio.

Wei Jie's footsteps halted when he saw the group.

"When did you come home, Jie'er?" The middle aged man looked surprised when he saw Wei Jie and walked over with a face full of smiles.

“Fifth uncle,” Wei Jie smiled. “I’ve just returned yesterday evening and haven’t been by yet to pay you a call, Uncle Tong.”

“Cousin, I was very worried when I heard that you were hurt, but it seems that you’re full of vigor and perfectly fine! I can be at ease now,” the young man beside Uncle Tong chuckled and walked over. He looked Wei Jie up and down for a very long time.

“I’m fine, brother Xiu. I’m sorry to have worried you,” Wei Jie’s tone was polite and amiable. They exchanged conventional greetings for a while before Wei Jie finally bid them goodbye, “Fifth uncle, brother Xiu, I need to head out for a bit. I’m sorry, but I must leave now.”

After saying this, Wei Jie nodded at Jiang Chen and walked towards the main entrance together. He hadn’t introduced Jiang Chen to them. The group remained where they were and stared blankly at Wei Jie’s back. They looked both shocked and astonished.

“Daddy, that kid looks like he’s perfectly fine, doesn’t he?” The young man called brother Xiu muttered.

“Keep your mouth shut inside the manor!” The middle aged man frowned and exclaimed. At the same time, he swept a slightly severe glance across the pill master in front of him. The pill master was expressionless, but his eyebrows became slightly wrinkled, “This doesn’t make sense. I controlled the dosage and calculated its effects very accurately. He shouldn’t have came back at all. The

Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder is no easy poison to cure, so how did he do it? How strange, how strange…”

“Hmph!” The middle aged man flourished his sleeves and looked very obviously displeased with this outcome, “Pill King Jiang, I haven’t treated you badly here, have I? But it seems that you’ve disappointed me this time.”

The pill master smiled indifferently, “Heaven’s plans supersede our own. He may be lucky this time, but he may not be as lucky the second time, will he? Don’t worry, I have a new plan already.”

……

After strolling about two kilometers away from the main entrance, Jiang Chen suddenly spoke up, “Young master Wei, are those people from earlier your kin?”

“Mm. My fifth uncle is cousins with my father, and he counts as an uncle of our family. He is only second to my father in terms of status. That young man is called Wei Xiu, and he is my fifth uncle’s son. He counts as a brother of the family to me.”

Jiang Chen smiled subtly and said, “You’re not too close to each other, aren’t you?”

Wei Jie looked startled. He had acted very cordially and considerately earlier, and he hadn’t revealed any displeasure or dissatisfaction at all just now. So why had Jiang Chen said this?

“Brother Jiang, did you notice something?” Wei Jie looked a little surprised.

“Hehe,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “If you found it inconvenient to divulge certain things, young master Wei, then it wouldn’t be right for me to speak either. I don’t wish to be suspected of sowing dissent after all.”

Wei Jie had been putting an act when he faced his relatives just now. The reason he hadn’t told Jiang Chen about it wasn’t because he was trying to hide anything on purpose, but simply because he thought that that family drama shouldn’t be spread about carelessly. When he heard Jiang Chen’s words, Wei Jie smiled wryly, “You truly are a genius who can stand toe to toe with the Eternal Celestial Capital, brother Jiang. It would appear that I cannot hide even something like this from you. My fifth uncle has fought very fiercely against my father since young, and when our generation was born, his son fights fiercely against me as well. That’s why what you saw earlier is just an amiable act.”

Jiang Chen nodded slightly, “It is a fierce fight that can only end in blood. You know that this father and son are the ones who had planned to kill you, don’t you?”

Wei Jie shook and looked at him with a face full of surprise, “What did you say?”

Jiang Chen was surprised himself to see such a strong reaction from Wei Jie. He’d thought that Wei Jie had known about this

from the beginning, but it would appear that was not the case. “You didn’t know?” Jiang Chen rubbed his nose a bit with embarrassment.

Wei Jie’s eyes were filled with disbelief. It wasn’t that he didn’t know about it. In fact, he had speculated this since a long time ago, or he wouldn’t have told Wei Qixia that this father and son were the poison inside the manor walls. But although he might have guessed this, only his father, Wei Qixia and a handful of people knew about this. He had never brought this up to Jiang Chen. So he was surprised, just how did Jiang Chen learn about this?

The atmosphere between the two became a little awkward for a time. Jiang Chen sighed softly and said, “Just assume that I’ve spoken out of turn if you don’t believe me, young master Wei. Do forgive me.”

Jiang Chen wasn’t trying to drive a wedge between the two parties on purpose. He simply thought that he should remind Wei Jie of his impending troubles since he was cooperating with young master. Conflict would be detrimental his rescue plans too.

Wei Jie let out a long sigh, “Family shame should not be spread carelessly. I wasn’t prepared to talk about this scandal, but I didn’t imagine that you would have guessed it already. I’m curious, though. How did you guess it?”

Jiang Chen shook his head, “It’s not a guess. I’ve realized it only just now.”

“Just now?” Wei Jie looked even more bewildered.

“There was a pill master standing next to your uncle, and he had probably just refined the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder within the month. There is a bit of leftover presence on him that is so weak that only a professional would notice. Moreover, I noticed a hint of killing intent from your cousin Wei Xiu while you were conversing with your fifth uncle. He hid it well though, and since you were in a conversation, you missed it. I saw things clearer because I was an onlooker at the time.”

Wei Jie was stupefied. He wasn’t quite sure what to say. The smell of the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha powder? Jiang Chen could sense it even though it was concocted almost a month ago? Just how powerful a consciousness and sense of smell did one have to have to notice it? Moreover, he had noticed Wei Xiu’s killing intent even though Wei Jie himself hadn’t noticed anything. This Jiang Chen… no wonder he was able to repeatedly pull one over the Eternal Celestial Capital. He really is an expert who hides his claws well.

“You’ve schooled me again, brother Jiang. There are always someone better out there, I see.” Wei Jie looked impressed, “Seeing is believing. I am truly impressed.”

Jiang Chen wasn’t trying to show off on purpose. Since his point had been made, it was now up to Wei Jie to deal with it. Internal conflict within a family was nothing novel. Even the small Eastern Kingdom had plenty of conflicts over power within the royal family.

“Where are we going, young master Wei?” Jiang Chen asked.

“We’re heading to the Fish and Dragon District.”

“Where’s that?” Jiang Chen asked curiously.

“As the name would suggest, that place is filled with all sorts of people. It is an extremely large trading zone where all kinds of trade happen. All slave trading basically happens in the Fish and Dragon District.”

All sorts of people? And they call it the Fish and Dragon District? Jiang Chen shook his head inwardly and thought that Veluriyam Capital really was very different from everywhere else. It was impossible that slave trading would happen between the sects of the Myriad Domain.

There were plenty of people in the Fish and Dragon District, and it was bigger than Jiang Chen imagined. People of all types were present. One only needed to take a casual glance to find sage realm cultivators everywhere on the streets. Even emperor realm experts could be glimpsed very often. As for origin realm cultivators, they were literally innumerable, as many as the hairs on an ox. Here, even an insignificant servant was at minimum spirit realm. A spirit realm cultivator made up the bottom of the status quo in this society. Even a random street sweeper was at least a spirit realm cultivator.

One could see that Wei Jie had an enormous social network. After entering the Fish and Dragon district, he would often be

greeted by people on the streets. It would appear that he was pretty well liked. Wei Jie was extremely easy going himself. He would always smile welcomingly at anyone who greeted him. It neither make him look arrogant, nor make him overly humble. “This is the place.”

The duo entered an alleyway after passing through several streets. The alleyway wasn’t wide, but there was another world inside it once they headed inside. There were actually all kinds of stalls within this enormous trading zone. There were actually countless slaves who were kneeling on each one of these stalls. These slaves all had price tags on them, so they were obviously for sale. However, it wasn’t like Jiang Chen had never seen slave trading during his previous life. He unleashed his consciousness and looked everywhere.

The first row, the second row…

After sweeping through the slaves again and again, he didn’t find any familiar faces from the Regal Pill Palace at all. “They’re not here. Let’s head inside,” Wei Jie pulled Jiang Chen into a shop in the market.

“Oh, isn’t this the young master of House Wei?” A slightly sharp voice rang the moment they stepped inside, “What a rare customer! So? Have you come here to buy a few slaves for your fancy?” A man with a face covered in makeup chuckled and beckoned them over.

The idiom used to describe the variety of people involves the characters for fish and dragon as well.

Chapter 727: Why Don't You Beg Me Instead?

This man was about thirty years old and dressed in very luxurious clothing. It made him look a little frivolous, not to mention that he had powder on his face too, adding a hint of femininity to his appearance. Judging from his tone, he and Wei Jie were obviously not so close that they could trust each other completely, even if they knew each other. Although his tone was rather cordial, it wasn't completely deferential.

Wei Jie smiled faintly, "Brother Lin, I see that business is booming." As he said this, he introduced the man to Jiang Chen, "This is brother Lin Ming. He is a respectable person in Fish and Dragon District."

"Brother Lin Ming, this is my friend Zhen Shi." It was still the same pronunciation, just that Wei Jie had used two different characters.

"Hello, friend Zhen," Lin Ming nodded. His expression was neither too cool nor too cordial, but just right for the occasion. "What brings you here today, young master Wei? If I recall, you aren't too interested in the slave market." Lin Ming was a businessman. He immediately felt a prickle of wariness when he saw that Wei Jie hadn't revealed his intentions despite the conversation going on this far. Thus, he decided to take the initiative instead.

Wei Jie smiled, "Brother Lin, can we talk somewhere else?"

It was a bit of face that Lin Ming had to give, so he immediately nodded slightly, “Please, come in.” He smiled after as he served them high quality tea, “Young master Wei, this mystery is starting to make me itch. Why don’t you tell me directly what good spot of business you’re here to offer?”

Lin Ming was extremely smart to use ‘good business’ as his pretext. The underlying meaning was very obvious: If Wei Jie had nothing good to offer, then he might as well not say anything. Jiang Chen could hear the undertones, and so could Wei Jie. However, Wei Jie smiled and replied, “Brother Lin, I’ll be honest with you. I am here to inquire about some news.”

Lin Ming’s expression froze as the smile on his face abruptly disappeared, “Young master Wei, my business doesn’t involve selling information. Do you have the wrong man?” It was an understandable position for a businessmen to care primarily about profit.

“Brother Lin, I will reward you if you have the news I seek,” Wei Jie pushed ten thousand saint spirit stones before Lin Ming without batting an eye.

Ten thousand saint spirit stones was not a small sum. Lin Ming’s eyes flickered as he glanced down at the spirit stones. However, he pushed them back to Wei Jie without any hesitation, “I’m sorry, young master Wei. We observe certain rules in our trade and will do only what is required by our business. We are absolutely forbidden from carelessly talking about anything else.” Lin Ming was obviously extremely cautious when it came to this matter.

Although he had no idea what kind of news Wei Jie was looking for, he still turned down the young master immediately without showing even an ounce of interest, despite the promise of great rewards.

His cautiousness quite caught Wei Jie off guard. He had thought that information wasn't all that secretive here, and that ten thousand saint spirit stones would more than suffice. He never thought that Lin Ming would turn him down without a second's consideration. "Brother Lin, we can still discuss this if it's about the money. You simply need to speak your price."

Lin Ming set down his teacup, "Young master Wei, I won't hide this from you. There is no way you'll get anything out of me today no matter how much money you offer me. I don't know about the others, but I will never break our rules. To put it bluntly, our businesses tread the very edge of legality, meaning while we're not illegal, we shoulder an incredible risk all the same. We could be crushed with one careless misstep. Please understand this, young master Wei."

It was true that the slave trading industry was extremely profitable, but it was also equally risky. Bosses normally weren't willing to talk about their industry or even dig into their slaves' backgrounds. If the goods were slaves, then all they did was slap on a price tag and sell the goods immediately. The obvious benefit from this informal protocol was that if the slave's information wasn't disclosed, the bosses were protecting themselves from information leakage and making new enemies. As slave traders, they neither cared not inquired into their slaves' identity. This was also to avoid the disaster that might befall them if they accidentally sold a person with a powerful background.

Although Veluriyam Capital feared no force, that didn't mean every businessman in the Capital was just as strong. There certainly was no end of examples in this trade of someone selling the wrong person and meeting with calamity. That was why slave traders kept a low profile and a tighter mouth even though their profits were massive.

Wei Jie actually wasn't sure what to say when he heard Lin Ming's very decisive rejection. They were both worldly people, so of course he understood that Lin Ming was basically throwing them out of his shop. Wei Jie immediately cast a somewhat helpless glance at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen hadn't said anything since entering the shop, drinking his tea calmly amidst the exchange of words. He finally put down his teacup when he saw Wei Jie looking his way. He cast an indifferent glance at Lin Ming and said, "Boss Lin, you haven't been sleeping well lately, have you? Does your left shoulder hurt like a thousand ants are biting you every 11pm to 1am? Moreover, white dots are starting to show up on your left cheek, right? That is why you have no choice but to conceal things with makeup, isn't it?"

Wei Jie looked startled. He didn't know why Jiang Chen had suddenly started speaking gibberish. On the other hand, Lin Ming trembled all over when he heard Jiang Chen's statements. The light of disbelief shone out of his eyes.

"Sigh, how unfortunate. How unfortunate it is that you won't have the time to enjoy all the money you've earned from this

trade, Boss Lin." Jiang Chen sighed and stood up, "Boss Lin, please excuse us. Thank you for your service."

He flung a glance at Wei Jie after saying this and made to head outside. The look in Lin Ming's eyes grew complicated as he bit his lips softly. It was obvious that Jiang Chen's words had struck a nerve, and he was feeling extremely conflicted on the inside. Seeing that Jiang Chen was about to leave, he leaped to his feet and swiftly caught up to him, "Brother Zhen, please wait."

"What is it, Boss Lin?" Jiang Chen purposely answered as if he didn't understand his actions.

Lin Min sighed wryly with resignation, "Please stay for a while longer, brother Zhen."

"Oh, it's alright. There are still some things that we need to attend to. Thankfully we came out early today, so maybe we'll get the news we need if we use the time to visit a few more shops, don't you think?"

Jiang Chen was finding the entire situation quite amusing. After he had struck Lin Ming's weak point, the trader would probably do his utmost to keep him there even if he really were to leave now. As he had expected, Lin Ming said morosely, "Brother Zhen, you shouldn't trouble two people with the same trouble. There's no need for you to go to other shops. It is very likely you won't get anything out of them either."

Jiang Chen purposely responded, "But Boss Lin has to

scrupulously abide by the rules of trade. We can't possibly trouble you with this dilemma any further!"

Lin Ming seriously felt like crying. He waved his hands repeatedly, "It's no trouble, no trouble at all."

When Jiang Chen so accurately spoke of the symptoms that had been plaguing him, Lin Ming really felt as if a bolt of thunder had struck his head. This illness had been plaguing him for several years now. Moreover, he had gone to many reputable pill kings in Veluriyam Capital and paid countless fees, but his illness had never shown any signs of recovery. Even those pill kings could do nothing.

Lin Ming might earn a lot of money, but his status really wasn't all that high. He neither had the qualification nor the right to visit a high ranking pill king and request a diagnosis. Therefore, not only was he not recovering, he was even getting worse and worse. When Jiang Chen had suddenly identified his sickness, he felt as if a ray of light had suddenly entered the infinite realm of darkness he was trapped in. He was as if a drowning man who suddenly found a log to cling to.

So how could he possibly let it go?

Wei Jie was caught off guard by this sudden turn of events, but he reacted very quickly to this new charade, "Brother Zhen, let's stay for a while longer. Look at how cordial Boss Lin is. There aren't many people who are as good a friend as him in the Fish and Dragon District, you know."

Lin Ming's face was burning. He wasn't sure if Wei Jie was provoking or taunting him by saying that, but none of that mattered right now. When everyone was seated once more, he personally poured tea for Jiang Chen and Wei Jie again. "Young master Wei, I wasn't lying about what I said earlier. Those are the rules of my trade. I am but a small fry in this river, and one misstep may very well result in my demise. Please understand that I am not making your life difficult on purpose, and my caution is all a helpless action to protect myself."

Wei Jie smiled noncommittally. Now that Jiang Chen had taken the reins, it wouldn't be right for him to speak up. Jiang Chen also smiled and said nothing. Although he knew that Lin Ming's words had some grains of truth in it, in reality, it was all up to the individual himself. There was no way a bit of insider information could bring forth disaster, could it? Regardless, he held his opponent's life in his hands right now. It was now up to Lin Ming and how far he would cooperate.

Lin Ming also knew that he might not even have the chance to speak if he didn't express something right now. He immediately looked at Wei Jie. "Young master Wei, my business is small in this trade. If I know anything about the news that you seek, that I will definitely tell you about it. I only ask that..."

Lin Ming looked at Jiang Chen while he said this. He obviously was hoping that this mysterious Sir Zhen Shi could diagnose his illness for him. Jiang Chen smiled faintly and responded, "It's nothing big, really. Have you heard of the Myriad Domain, brother Lin?"

“Myriad Domain?” Lin Ming was slightly startled as he nodded subconsciously, “Sure. They’re the force that’s currently in conflict with the Eternal Celestial Capital, right?”

“Yes, they are. I heard that Veluriyam Capital has taken in a group of slaves from the Myriad Domain. So what I want to know is, which faction has these slaves?”

Lin Ming stared a little suspiciously at Wei Jie after his initial surprise, and then looked at that Sir Zhen Shi. He couldn’t help but feel a little strange. Why was House Wei interested in a mere Myriad Domain?

Wei Jie smiled faintly, “Reign in your imagination, Boss Lin. I heard that Myriad Domain’s Regal Pill Palace is a sect of pill dao, and that there is an extremely rare pill dao genius among them. Plus, they have some items that I want... as you know, I’ve been worrying about getting a pill king for many years...”

Everyone in Veluriyam Capital knew that House Wei didn’t have a guest pill king. Everyone also knew that House Wei’s previous pill king had died a horrible death. That was why Lin Ming believed almost all of Wei Jie’s words when he heard them. “Is that all?” Lin Ming blinked once and looked at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “If your information is useful, then I’ll be able to treat you. I won’t be just treating your symptoms either. You’ll be fully cured!”

“You can cure me fully?” Lin Ming’s eyes lit up, “That all depends on whether your information is worth the price, Boss Lin,” Jiang Chen didn’t deny it.

Chapter 728: Preliminary News

Lin Ming could hardly not cooperate, being the businessman he was, and with his life in Jiang's grasp. A wry smile later, he responded to Wei Jie, "Young master Wei, someone did buy a batch of slaves from the Myriad Domain, and those slaves are indeed from the Regal Pill Palace. However..."

"Just tell me directly what you wish to say, Brother Lin," Wei Jie said.

"It was a boss of the Fish and Dragon District who did this business, but that boss is among the top ten slave traders in Veluriyam Capital. I am far inferior to him."

"Who is it?" Wei Jie probed deeper.

"It's the Myriad Puppet Pavilion."

"The Myriad Puppet Pavilion?" Wei Jie stared at him blankly.

"Yes, the Myriad Puppet Pavilion. Their backer is House Sikou," Lin Ming spoke plainly, not holding anything back.

"House Sikou?" Wei Jie's expression immediately turned ugly. House Sikou was one of the few sworn enemies House Wei had in Veluriyam Capital.

Lin Ming smiled wryly, “Young master, let us stop here. I would ask that you please don’t sell me out in the future. I do not nearly have enough wealth to endure the Myriad Puppet Pavilion’s full strength.”

Wei Jie said seriously, “Don’t worry, Brother Lin. I am not a person who sells out my friends.”

Lin Ming waved his hands. This news wasn’t all that big of a secret. Almost all the bosses in their circle knew about this. He then looked at Jiang Chen with an imploring look in his eyes.

Jiang Chen smiled, “Boss Lin, your symptoms are not caused by an illness, poison, or evil aura.”

“What might be the cause then?” Lin Ming could not look any more gloomy.

“Where do you normally live?” Jiang Chen asked with a smile, “If I’m not mistaken, you rest with a pet beside you at night, right?”

“How… How do you know about this?” Boss Lin was shocked.

“I even know that your pet is probably something that looks like a cat. However, it isn’t actually a cat, but a variant species.”

“Ah? I’ve always thought that it was a cat. Is there something wrong with it? But I’ve invited those pill kings into my home, and

they've inspected my cat too. They didn't mention anything like this."

"That's because they're ignorant," Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "The cat isn't carrying anything, so none of the pill kings you brought to your house would be able to notice anything wrong with it. The cat itself is perfectly fine too."

"Then... what is the problem then?" Lin Ming lips were trembling with agitation. He could feel it, a thin, fragile strand of hope that the symptoms that had been plaguing him for all these years were finally going to be resolved today.

"It's not even worth a mention once the truth is out, really. Go back and kill this cat. After that, I'll write you a prescription that you should consume for a full month. Once you've taken the prescription for a month, you'll be fully recovered."

"Are you sure?" Lin Ming's voice was a little shaky.

"What need do I have to lie to you?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "Bring me brush and paper."

Lin Ming prepared the brush and paper himself before placing them respectfully in front of Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen didn't dally, immediately writing out a prescription. "This is the prescription. Once you've obtained the necessary spirit herbs, you just need to boil them all together however you like. No technique is necessary. After that, simply drink your concoction."

Lin Ming unconsciously accepted the prescription even as a feeling of disbelief jolted through his brain. He felt like he was in a dream. If Jiang Chen hadn't so clearly described his everyday life, Lin Ming would've definitely thought him a liar trying to fob him off with excuses. However, his instincts told him that this was the right bet this time. Jiang Chen's tone and expression didn't belong to a liar at all. In fact, he could even see a certain something from his eyes that told him that Jiang Chen thought it beneath him to lie! For a moment, Lin Ming was overwhelmed by his emotions. He felt as if he had finally awakened from an everlasting nightmare.

"Go get your herbs. Later," Jiang Chen could see how agitated Lin Ming was, but as a pill master, he had seen similar sights countless times during his past life. Wasn't Lin Ming's expression the same as Wei Jie's subordinates when Jiang Chen had saved Wei Jie?

Lin Ming grabbed Wei Jie's hands, "Young master Wei, I owe you a favor this time. Come to me if you have anything else that you need in the future. As long as it is within my power, I will do everything I can to fulfill it!"

He didn't dare to grab Jiang Chen's hands because he thought that this mysterious Zhen Shi was a little unfathomable. He didn't dare to grab the pill king's hands carelessly.

Wei Jie beamed at him, "You speak too heavily, Brother Lin. I've always liked making friends, so if you truly believe that I'm worthy of your friendship, then let us associate with each other much more in the future."

“Of course, of course,” Lin Ming looked extremely excited.

Wei Jie patted his shoulders and said, “You are a lucky man, Brother Lin. Brother Zhen possesses an unfathomable depth in pill dao talent. He does not normally treat someone, but when he does, he never makes a mistake.”

“Definitely, definitely,” Lin Ming agreed with him strongly. There had been countless pill kings who’d investigated his symptoms, but none of them had been able to do anything about it. However, this Lord Zhen Shi had only taken a few casual glances to figure out everything about his symptoms. This absolutely wasn’t something any ordinary person could do.

Inferior men and goods were always discarded in front of true value. Compared to Lord Zhen Shi, those pill kings he’d seen before were utter trash who didn’t deserve their reputation! Lin Ming felt like crying aloud as he walked Wei Jie and Jiang Chen out of the door. These symptoms had tormented him for far too long now. The prescription he was holding in his hands felt heavier than a million saint spirit stones.

“So what’s with his symptoms, Brother Jiang?” Wei Jie couldn’t help but ask after they left Lin Ming’s shop. He was just as curious as Lin Ming was.

“It’s what it seems. The cat he raised isn’t a normal cat but a nether felidae. This animal cries softly during the four hours between 11pm and 3am and attracts much fiendish yin energy to itself. This energy is exactly what’s hurting Boss Lin. This fiendish yin energy isn’t visible in daylight, and it always reappears at

night. As a result, he is tortured by that energy everyday. His symptoms are actually so serious that livor mortis has already appeared on his face."

"Livor mortis?" Wei Jie felt his body grow cold when he heard this. "How could a living person possibly have livor mortis?"

"This fiendish yin energy comes from the underworld, so it contains the gas of the dead. This Boss Lin may be alive, but he may as well be one of the living dead the way he is right now. If I hadn't appeared, he would be dead for sure in less than three years."

"It's that bad?" Wei Jie looked shocked.

"This is nothing compared to the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder," Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "He could live for ten years or less despite this fiendish yin energy from the underworld, but the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder will kill you the moment you laughed nine times. I rather think that the person who's trying to kill you is far crueler."

Wei Jie's expression turned serious as he sighed softly, "Brother Jiang, there are certain things that I have found hard to speak of with you, but I dare not conceal them any longer considering how honest you are with me..."

Jiang Chen waved his hand, "We will have the chance to talk about that once we return. Let us head to Myriad Puppet Pavilion first."

Wei Jie smiled wryly, “Brother Jiang, we need to consider this at length. The Myriad Puppet Pavilion is not difficult to deal with, but if their backer is House Sikou, then this matter has just become quite the predicament.”

“Mm? Is House Sikou very powerful?”

“Not really. They’re a ninth rank aristocratic family just like us, and their standing in Veluriyam Capital is not bad either. What I mean by predicament isn’t their strength, but because they are one of our sworn enemies. To say our relationship is bad is just the tip of the iceberg!” Wei Jie knew that there was no concealing these details. There couldn’t be a bigger coincidence. It just had to be House Sikou! He looked a little embarrassed as he stared at Jiang Chen. It was obviously that he was feeling very apologetic for this outcome.

Jiang Chen considered this for a moment and nodded, “Alright, in that case why don’t you head back first while I go over and have a look myself?”

Wei Jie shook his head, “You came together with me, so the entire Fish and Dragon District probably knows about it by now. Even if you were to head in alone, the Myriad Puppet Pavilion wouldn’t show you the slightest cordiality.”

Jiang Chen thought through this and felt that Wei Jie’s words made a lot of sense. “In that case, let us leave first and find a place where I may switch my disguise before coming out again.”

The pair left the Fish and Dragon District. Very soon, a couple of spies sent news to the Myriad Puppet Pavilion and through them, House Sikou. “Young master Nan, House Wei’s Wei Jie showed up just now. He just left.”

“Oh? What was he here for?” The man known as young master Nan was a young man dressed in silver robes.

“I’m not sure, my lord. He took a spin around the slave market and stayed at Lin Ming’s shop for a moment, but left soon afterwards.”

“Summon Lin Ming,” Young master Nan gestured.

Lin Ming was soon in front of him. “Young master Nan,” Lin Ming neither acted too arrogant nor too humble. His attitude towards young master Nan was more or less the same as how he’d treated Wei Jie at the beginning.

“Boss Lin, did House Wei’s Wei Jie go to your shop just now?” Young master Nan asked indifferently. This young master Nan was a member of House Sikou. His full name was Sikou Nan.

Lin Ming knew that his meeting would not be concealed from the eyes of Fish and Dragon District, so he didn’t refute it, “Yes, young master Wei and another person came into my shop and stayed for a little while.”

“What was he doing?” Sikou Nan’s voice was indifferent and somewhat interrogative. He spoke as if he was naturally in a position of authority.

Lin Ming wasn’t naturally a bit unhappy to hear such a tone. The fact that he was able to establish himself in the Fish and Dragon District was proof that he wasn’t completely powerless. He wasn’t afraid of Wei Jie, so naturally he wasn’t afraid of this Sikou Nan either. He was irritated to hear Sikou Nan questioning him with such an impolite and arrogant tone. However, as a businessman he was well versed in hiding his emotions. “He came to my place seemingly wanting to buy a few slaves for himself. However, he left afterwards because we failed to come to an agreeable price,” Lin Ming told a random lie.

It wasn’t easy for Sikou Nan to differentiate if a lie like this was true or false. “Is that all? was there anything else?”

Lin Ming shook his head, “It’s not like I have a relationship with House Wei. What else do you think there might be, young master Nan?” Lin Ming’s tone wasn’t arrogant, but it wasn’t completely subservient either.

Sikou Nan asked a couple more questions, but failed to get anything out of Lin Ming. He waved him away and said, “Boss Lin, there are some people that you can’t do business with, such as House Wei. You understand what I mean, don’t you?”

Lin Ming smiled but said nothing. He turned around and left.

After Lin Ming had left, Sikou Nan sent for his subordinates, “Send out more eyes and keep a closer watch on House Wei. I want to be informed immediately if House Wei even steps foot in the Fish and Dragon District!”

Once they exited the Fish and Dragon District, Jiang Chen told Wei Jie to head back home first. Once Jiang Chen was alone, he slipped into a secluded corner and changed into a new outfit in a few breaths. He was just about to exit when a sudden voice rang out from behind, “Please wait a moment, my friend.”

Jiang Chen’s figure blurred as he turned around. He was just about to enter a defensive stance when the person giggled, “Relax, young master Jiang. It’s me.” Like a pure lotus in the breeze, Miss Huang’er appeared before him.

Chapter 729: A Revolting Business Custom

“Miss Huang’er, you’re here!” Jiang Chen was ecstatic to suddenly see her. The two of them had slowly become accustomed to each other’s presence after the long journey they’d spent together. The few days of separation had left Jiang Chen with a foreign feeling, one of emptiness and loss. Seeing her again immediately brightened his mood, filling his heart with contentment. Even though it was evident that Huang’er hadn’t deliberately dressed up, her casual clothes imparted a certain unexpected charm.

“Sir Jiang, I followed your marks here. Have you found any news of big sister Gouyu?”

Jiang Chen nodded as he composed himself once again, “There are a few leads, but nothing certain yet. I was just getting ready to take a closer look.” Without leaving out any details, he explained what he had learned so far.

Huang’er frowned, her slender brows knitting together a little when he finished. “If that’s the way things are, then we should go check things out without delay.”

“Mm.”

Huang’er stopped herself after raising a foot, having thought of something. She giggled. “I should probably disguise myself again.” Saying this, she nonchalantly passed a hand across her face. A mask glimmered into existence, hiding the beauty beneath.

Jiang Chen smiled, knowing that she hadn't done so to be pretentious, but rather to avoid unnecessary trouble. If Huang'er were to appear with her actual appearance in a place as seedy and disreputable as the Fish and Dragon District, there was no telling how much annoyance it would cause. Huang'er's actions were intended to avoid trouble for him as much as it was to avoid trouble for her.

The two of them quickly returned to the Fish and Dragon District. To avoid suspicion, they took their time to circle around the slave markets several times before heading towards Myriad Puppets Pavilion. As a major establishment within the slave markets, Myriad Puppets Pavilion was noticeably different from the normal stores. The two of them were greeted with a sense of extreme luxury as soon as they stepped foot inside. Compared to the scattered stalls outside, both of them wondered for a moment if they'd entered the wrong door.

No slaves were on display inside. That alone was a marked difference from the stalls outside. Instead, an attendant appeared near instantly beside them, ostensibly to greet these new customers. "Honored customers, what kind of goods are you looking for?"

Jiang Chen had already mentally prepared himself before walking in. The more cautious one appeared to be in this kind of store, the less respect one received. Better to look calm and impenetrable, so that others couldn't gauge one's depth. Only then would they pay attention.

“What goods are there?” Jiang Chen wandered in a circle before haughtily seating himself on a chair.

“What grade of goods is the honored customer interested in?” Employees of large stores rarely had the bad habit of being overly arrogant. The attendant didn’t dare slight the customer upon seeing how importantly he seemed to carry himself.

“The higher the grade the better, of course,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “If I could examine the goods in person, that would be best.”

“Of course, that’s not a problem. However, we do have a custom in this business. If you’d like to examine the goods, you’ll have to make a down payment,” The attendant chuckled.

“Money is no object,” Jiang Chen casually waved a hand.

“Haha, honored customer, you misunderstand. Our humble store never questions our customers’ financial abilities. Many of our largest transactions do not take spirit stones.”

“You don’t take spirit stones?” Jiang Chen furrowed his brow. Currently, it was the one thing he didn’t lack in. The spoils from the battle at Infant Shriek hadn’t been anything of note, since those cultivators had been careful enough to stash their important belongings somewhere else. On the other hand, they had carried plenty of everyday items such as spirit stones. When it came to spirit stones, he was definitely a millionaire now.

“Certainly. The biggest sales we make can in fact cause a stir within the upper echelons of Veluriyam Capital. Special goods demand special means of transaction. If there are no assets of interest on the other side of the bargain, we will definitely not easily part with our top quality goods.”

Hearing this, Jiang Chen scowled imperceptibly. Why does a business have so many rules?

“Let’s see the goods first,” Huang’er abruptly opened her mouth off on the side, plonking something down with calculated indifference.

The attendant took a closer look, and almost had his jaw drop with surprise. Was ... was that a piece of spirit marrow? Spirit marrow was also a kind of spirit stone, but it was the very purest essence of its kind. The distilled spiritual strength inherent within a piece of spirit marrow could rival that of ten thousand, even a hundred thousand spirit stones. However, a hundred thousand spirit stones were easy to obtain, but obtaining a piece of spirit marrow was particularly difficult. Spirit marrow had many more uses than spirit stones, for example, etching formations, crafting pills, creating talismans...

The eyebrows of experts may not even twitch if spirit stones were placed before them. Most of the time, wealth held no meaning for the strongest of the strong. But when something like spirit marrow appeared, it held an allure that even the most elite cultivators could not resist. This was the good thing about spirit marrow. Even one piece was more alluring than a hundred thousand spirit stones. If one had a hundred thousand spirit stones, one might still

be considered poor in the world of martial dao. But if one had a single piece of spirit marrow, then one was definitely rich.

Spirit marrow was not something the ordinary poor would possess. As expected, the attendant's eyes brightened when he recognized the spirit marrow. The two had been served by this particular attendant up until now, but the latter immediately offered an apologetic smile, "Honored customer, please wait a moment."

It didn't take but a moment for a well-dressed middle-aged man to approach them. His moustache danced on his face as he spoke with a wide smile. "Honored customers have paid us a visit! Please excuse our rudeness."

"How should we address you, shopkeeper?" Jiang Chen asked, smiling faintly.

"My surname is Li, so please feel free to call me Shopkeeper Li." The middle-aged man's beaming expression was the height of enthusiasm.

"Shopkeeper Li, I came here today because I heard that your Myriad Puppets Pavilion is one of the giants in this business. I hope we're not disappointed."

Shopkeeper Li maintained an easy smile, "Ah, not at all, not at all. If the two of you have any special needs, please don't hesitate to mention it to this humble shopkeeper."

Not in a rush, Jiang Chen lightly drummed his fingers rhythmically upon the table. A similarly easy smile hung on his face. “Shopkeeper Li, we are in recent need of new manpower, ideally a group with reasonably good talent with pills. If I may ask, how many units of this type can the Myriad Puppets Pavilion supply?”

“However many you would like, honored customer.”

“Oh? How impressive.” Jiang Chen laughed. “If that’s the case, shall we take a look at the goods first?”

Shopkeeper Li nodded, “That shall be arranged immediately. Honored customers, please follow me.”

The shopkeeper led Jiang Chen directly towards the back, past the anterior hall. The space suddenly broadened—its immenseness far surpassed anything Jiang Chen could’ve imagined. They swiftly arrived at a patch of unoccupied ground in the back. Shopkeeper Li spoke, “Honored customer, please wait shortly. We are already organizing the goods for display.”

Barely a brief moment passed before thousands of slaves were trotted out. However, Jiang Chen was stunned upon seeing them emerge. The slaves were each wearing a mask and plastered with sealing talismans, erasing their personal auras. Their faces couldn’t be seen, and the ripples of their consciousness completely indiscernible. From far away, they all looked almost exactly the same. Jiang Chen and Huang’er exchanged a look, the two of them equally speechless.

“Shopkeeper Li, how am I supposed to examine the goods like this?” Jiang Chen was greatly put out. “I can’t see their faces or sense the level of their cultivation.”

Shopkeeper Li laughed, “Honored customer, this is customary in our line of business. Their senses are all sealed away before being sold and their true appearances hidden. You can only view their associated explanatory papers to examine the goods. Each slave has the details of their cultivation written, as well as their features of note, specialties, et cetera. The overview is quite accurate. If you find that the goods differ from their brochure after you receive them, we accept refunds without question. Don’t worry, the Myriad Puppets Pavilion makes all of its business deals in earnest.”

Jiang Chen cursed internally. Could reading an explanatory brochure really be called ‘examining the goods’? He almost wanted to give Shopkeeper Li a beating, but firmly tamped down on that impulse. But what kind of examination was this, exactly?

“Honored customer, what do you think? Shall we go over them one by one, or…?” Shopkeeper Li asked, his expression quite eager. How could he know that Jiang Chen was furiously angry in his heart?

“Shopkeeper Li, since their senses have been sealed away, does that mean they won’t be able to hear what we are saying?” Jiang Chen said, not altering his voice, purposely using the one he had used at Regal Pill Palace. Since I can’t see their faces and can’t detect them by the ripples of their consciousness, surely someone that knows me would give me a sign if I raise my voice? But no

such result came. The slaves were truly like wooden puppets, and had no reaction whatsoever. They stood straight at attention, almost like the walking dead.

"Hehe, they can't hear, see, or feel. They can't sense anything before the seals are removed, much like a puppet," Shopkeeper Li chuckled.

"Shopkeeper Li, I have a strange quirk. Even my slaves must be of fair appearance. How about you take off their masks and let me take a peek?"

Shopkeeper Li's face was the very picture of a salesman's happy smile, but he still shook his head. "Honored customer, we can't do that. This custom is ironclad for our business, and can't be broken."

"Customs are fixed. People should be flexible," Jiang Chen offered further encouragement.

Shopkeeper Li produced a placatory smile, "Honored customer, everything else can be discussed, but this absolutely can't be done. If I gave you this chance now, my boss would kill me immediately. We are doing business together, you and I. Does the honored customer honestly wish for me to lose my life?"

The lack of flexibility in Shopkeeper Li's words filled Jiang Chen with consternation. He thought a moment, then suddenly asked again, "Shopkeeper Li, I hear that you've recently gotten a new shipment of goods in stock, with very high quality. Could you take

that shipment out separately for a stroll?”

Shopkeeper Li was momentarily taken aback, “We have received many batches of goods recently, which shipment do you mean?”

Jiang Chen wanted to directly say ‘the shipment from the Myriad Domain’, but he knew that he couldn’t; that would expose him immediately. “How many batches are there? Why don’t you bring them all out, since I need a lot anyway.”

Jiang Chen had heard that there were quite a lot of Regal Pill Palace people sold. There were at least several dozens, perhaps even several hundred. Shopkeeper Li grinned briefly, “Actually, all of the new goods are here already. We have a high rate of inventory turnover, and new goods generally can be completely replaced in a fortnight. We received all of these within the past two months.”

“Oh? Are you sure that they are all here?” Jiang Chen asked, yet again.

“They are all here, except the most outstanding, which are individually listed as some of our finest goods. Those finest goods are only offered for sale in our auction, and won’t appear here.”

“There are more, higher quality goods? May I see them?”

Shopkeeper Li smiled wryly. “The finest goods can only be seen at auction. Even my authority isn’t enough.”

The more Jiang Chen heard, the angrier he grew. How were they supposed to do business? If he couldn't examine the goods, who knew if the group from Regal Pill Palace was here or not? Buy all of them? The group numbered almost two thousand! Though he was incredibly wealthy, even he might not be able to shoulder this burden. What if the people he wanted wasn't within this group, wouldn't he be out tons of money then? Loss of money aside, if he exhausted his wealth here, what else could he do in the short term to rescue his fellow sect members?

Chapter 730: You Forced Me to Rob You

However, Shopkeeper Li had also mentioned that they had a rapid turnover. These slaves might be considered a new batch right now, but in just half a month, they might be all gone. If one took into consideration how these slave traders conducted business, it would be incredibly difficult for him to track down his sect members if they were sold again. With rules like these in place, it would be near impossible to track down a buyer, no matter how far one dug. It was impossible to check who they'd sold to whom and to where. Without a first name, a last name or any physical characteristics to use as a reference, there were naturally no clues left behind.

He had to admit that although these rules were absolutely disgusting, it did protect these profiteers' interest and safety to an extreme degree. Even if a slave somehow regained their freedom and experienced a massive growth in strength, they wouldn't be able to find a target for revenge. After all, just how would one track down the ultimate mastermind or the middlemen after they'd been passed through so many hands with every sense sealed?

Jiang Chen wasn't sure what his next steps should be. If he didn't buy them, he would miss the chance to save his sect members that were part of this group, if they were even part of this group. If that happened, he would never have the chance to save them again. If he were to try and purchase them all, he might not be able to afford all two thousand slaves at once no matter how wealthy he was. Moreover, whether the trader was even willing to make such a sale was another question in and of itself. After giving the matter some thought, Jiang Chen ultimately decided to do what he could at the moment. He immediately asked, "Shopkeeper Li, what kind of price can you give me if I were to buy all of them?"

“What?” Shopkeeper Li was completely stunned by this, “Buy... buy all of them?”

Jiang Chen rubbed his nose, knowing that his words must be rather shocking considering how exaggerated the reaction was. However, he was not in a position to back down after venturing the question. “Yes. Don’t tell me that this too is against the rules?”

Shopkeeper Li smiled wryly, “Honored customer, I think you best look at the prices first... also, we have a rule that restricts us from selling more than fifty slaves at once. It would cause too big of a splash if we were to sell anymore than that, which is why we’re absolutely forbidden from doing so. Fifty slaves is our highest limit.”

Jiang Chen cast a few random glances at the prices and was instantly flabbergasted by the absolutely ghastly prices. An origin realm cultivator could cost between two hundred thousand to one million saint spirit stones. A sage realm cultivator was priced anywhere between two million to ten million saint spirit stones. This meant that on average Jiang Chen would have to spend at least two to three million saint spirit stones on every slave, and there were roughly two thousand slaves in this place. It would cost him more than six billion saint spirit stones to buy all of them. No matter how wealthy Jiang Chen was right now, the total sum of his wealth was far and away from this number.

Yes, it was true that he gained a lot of profit after sweeping through the three thousand strong group of cultivators at Infant Shriek, but those people had only brought enough spirit stones to

spend on daily expenses, not their entire wealth. Even if he were to convert all the spirit stones he collected into saint spirit stones, it would only still be worth a couple billion or so. The sum needed to purchase all of the slaves in front of him was completely astronomical!

Even House Wei might not necessarily be able to mobilize this many saint spirit stones at once, despite being one of the top few aristocratic families of Veluriyam Capital, to say nothing of Jiang Chen. Or rather, while they could afford this amount, but even they would find it difficult to gather this sum in a hurry. He suspected that only one of the great clans could easily produce this number without suffering too great a loss.

“Didn’t Wei Jie said that this Myriad Puppets Pavilion is a property of House Sikou? Is House Sikou this rich?” Jiang Chen was secretly shocked. However, he did understand that this trade had a rather high profit margin. These goods might have a price tag of two to three billion, but the actual cost would be at most one tenth of the price. At the same time, roughly only forty percent of these profits would enter House Sikou’s pockets. The rest would be spread out to many, many other channels. Otherwise, it was impossible for such profits to exist in a high risk business like slave trading.

Right now, the problem he faced was that the boss refused to sell to him, even if he somehow possessed the capital. Shopkeeper Li made it very clear that he could only buy a maximum of fifty slaves at once. Anything more than that was unacceptable. Jiang Chen finally understood why the other party had worn such a astonished expression on his face when he heard that he was going to buy all of them. He had inadvertently spoken something stupid that

revealed his lack of knowledge of this industry. “Shopkeeper Li, the rules of your trade sure are inflexible! How would you justify this fifty slave limit? Why won’t you allow your customer to make a purchase if they have the money?”

Shopkeeper Li smiled wryly, “You must be new, honored customer. In the first place, slave trading isn’t the kind of business that can operate openly. If I were to be blunt, it steps across a few lines in the sand. Thus, if we were to make too big of a sale, then it would influence the general state of affairs. If we allow you to buy a hundred or a thousand slaves at once, and if these people were all granted their freedom, how big of an impact do you think they would have on Veluriyam Capital? And how big of a hidden threat would it create in the Capital? Hypothetically speaking, if someone were planning to cause trouble and purchased several thousand slaves at once, how much damage would that cause in the Capital?”

“So you’re saying that I won’t have a place to spend my money today?” Jiang Chen was absolutely depressed by these confounded rules.

“I’m sorry, honored customer. You can follow our rules and make a total purchase of fifty slaves every seven days. This is our absolute limit,” Shopkeeper Li had worked here for dozens of years, but he had never met a situation like this before.

Buy all of them? You want to buy two thousand people at once? Are you sure you have the money to do so? Shopkeeper Li was ultimately a worldly person. He might find it funny and think that this customer was much too green for this trade, but nary a trace

of his true feelings made it to his face.

Jiang Chen exchanged a helpless glance with Huang'er. They could both see the resignation in each other's eyes. "Miss Huang'er, they might actually be forcing me to rob them," Jiang Chen mentally communicated with Huang'er.

Huang'er smiled faintly, "Then let's commit a robbery."

For some reason, what Huang'er used to view as an extremely despicable act of banditry somehow became an unbelievably wondrous experience when it was done with Jiang Chen. She was experiencing the joy that one experienced breaking the rules, that she was so used to following, with someone she admired.

Jiang Chen suddenly smiled and said to Shopkeeper Li, "I say, Shopkeeper Li, security isn't very tight here, don't you think?"

Shopkeeper Li abruptly paled, "You..."

He couldn't even finish his sentence before the scene before him blurred. He suddenly found himself standing at the center of a sea of yellow sand. It was as if he was suddenly exiled to an abandoned desert. "Not good! Someone's attempting a robbery!" Shopkeeper Li shouted at the top of his lungs. His shouts were pointless, however. With a formation between him and the real world, he could shout himself hoarse and not be heard by anyone outside.

Jiang Chen summoned his palace abode and threw every slave

inside it. “Miss Huang’er, let’s go!”

They both felt a sense of helplessness, but also a streak of excitement in committing this robbery. They felt like naughty kids breaking the rules and got an extremely great kick from it. The two shot straight into the sky, tearing up escape glyphs as they did so. At the peak of their flight, they abruptly vanished.

Shopkeeper Li kept yelling without pause, but his view blurred once again. Once he could stop his eyes from rolling, he discovered that he was still at the shop. All the slaves before his eyes had vanished. “Not good! Help! Help!” Shopkeeper Li started screaming like he was a pig being slaughtered.

It wasn’t like this backyard had lacked formations or defenses that would activate to protect their property. However, this pair had been able to calmly avoid triggering these defenses and any formations before vanishing! Shopkeeper Li could scarcely believe that such a bizarre thing had happened. The experts of the Myriad Puppets Pavilion surged in from all directions.

Before long, dozens of sage realm experts had surrounded the backyard and an initial emperor realm expert strolled in. “What’s wrong, Old Li?”

Shopkeeper Li gasped wretchedly, “Manager Qiu, a disaster has happened! Our goods from the last three months has all been robbed by someone!”

The initial emperor realm Manager Qiu thought that his ears

were mistaken, scolding, “What kind of nonsense are you spouting? There was a total of two thousand slaves here! Are you dreaming or what?”

“I’m telling you the truth!” Shopkeeper Li looked like he was about to cry.

Manager Qiu gestured to behind him, “Check the warehouses.”

The warriors behind him had long since gone to inspect the warehouses, even before the order had been issued. It didn’t take long for them to rush back, panting, “This is bad, my lord! They really are all gone!”

“None of the formations at the scene were triggered. Manager Qiu, these people came bearing ill intentions!”

Manager Qiu’s expression immediately darkened. He finally realized that Shopkeeper Li wasn’t lying. “What happened? Tell me everything in detail.” He was an emperor realm cultivator after all, and quickly calmed his rage.

Shopkeeper Li began conveying everything from beginning to the end with a wretched expression on his face. He also emphasized strongly that the other party had a piece of spirit marrow, and that they’d attempted to buy all of the slaves at once.

“So they’re foreigners,” Manager Qiu wore an extremely ugly look on his face as he muttered to himself, “If they were locals,

they would have known about our purchasing rules."

But another warrior said, "Manager Qiu, that may not necessarily be the case. What if this bastard has been planning this robbery for a long time and merely said those words to confuse us and lead us down the wrong line of thought? We might be falling into their trap if we go down this way of thinking."

His words called Manager Qiu's attention to this possibility, and the manager nodded slightly, "We should follow both paths of investigation thoroughly! How dare they rob the Myriad Puppets Pavilion! How dare they commit such atrocities in Fish and Dragon District! This is... this is..." Manager Qiu was so angry he couldn't even find the right words to describe his feelings. He really was feeling a little muddleheaded from anger. Regardless of who their enemy might be, they certainly had unmitigated gall. After all, robbing the Myriad Puppets Pavilion was the equivalent of robbing House Sikou. Moreover, committing a robbery at the Fish and Dragon District was the equivalent of taunting the entire District! House Sikou wouldn't be the only one offended in this case.

This entire matter seemed all so ludicrous. It wasn't like the Fish and Dragon District had never experienced a robbery, but they had mostly happened to those luxury stores that sold trinkets. In the slave market, 'robbery' simply didn't exist as a concept because the amount of people one could loot in one go was plainly limited. Plus, it wasn't easy to hide a person at all. Unlike precious herbs and treasures, the uses of a slave were too singular. Moreover, these slaves might not even be useful if one obtained them outside of purchasing them!

It was exactly because robbery didn’t exist as a concept in the slave market that the Myriad Puppets Pavilion had not put up an utterly impregnable defense. Unfortunately, this had also given their enemy the opportunity to rob them. Most importantly, the enemy was actually capable of making off with two thousand people at once. This was the most shocking news of them all. Everyone knew that humans couldn’t live long inside a space ring. Moreover, how did they manage to transfer two thousand people into a ring in such a short time?

Chapter 731: Regal Pill Palace Disciples

News in the Fish and Dragon District spread faster than any other place. Hushed whispers and back alley conversations soon made the robbery at Myriad Puppets Pavilion the talk of the entire district. Yet, chief among all the emotions that rippled across everyone's heart was incredulity.

The mere fact of a robbery wasn't the thing that had rendered them incredulous. Desperation had driven many a fool to tempt fate before. There were far too many of those occurrences every year to keep track of. But robbing the Myriad Puppets Pavilion, that was certainly novel! Moreover, they'd even taken two thousand slaves in one go. What exactly were the culprits trying to do? What did they need so many people for? What everyone was even more curious about was just how on earth they had pulled it off? What kind of technique was powerful enough to snatch a couple thousand people in a couple of breaths?

The most crucial thing was that both the Myriad Puppets Pavilion nor local law enforcement seemed to have caught the culprit. Let alone catch them, they didn't even seem to have the faintest whiff of a clue. This robbery had boasted of a domineering style and a mind boggling brilliance. From the top echelons to the bottom feeders, the whole of the Fish and Dragon District was in shock.

News of the robbery quickly reached House Sikou as well. Sikou Nan was first to arrive at the scene of the crime and flew into a terrible rage. Meanwhile, Lin Ming was in the middle of boiling medicine in his store not far away from Myriad Puppets Pavilion when he heard the news. The shock almost struck him dumb. The

Myriad Puppets Pavilion had been robbed! He knew who had done it even if he thought with his knees. After all, there were only those two people who had asked him about the Pavilion an hour ago. This was far too much of a coincidence! They talked about the Myriad Puppets Pavilion, and then the Pavilion was then robbed in short order?

A shiver coursed through Lin Ming, traveling from head to toe. Just when did Wei Jie become so crazy? Hadn't Wei Jie always been known for being cool-headed?

"Wei Jie, Wei Jie, you're really making big waves this time. I dearly hope you won't be caught," Lin Ming felt the urge to cry. He knew full well that if they got caught, the first to be implicated would be himself. As a result, Lin Ming was painfully aware that he had to lock up whatever he knew inside his head, and leave it there to rot. No matter what, he couldn't speak of it. To speak of it would be to buy a one-way ticket to hell. Even if he was perfectly innocent, he still wouldn't escape the charge of being an accessory to the crime. Therefore, this had to be kept secret.

Jiang Chen and Huang'er strolled around for the entire day after leaving Fish and Dragon District. Only after nightfall did they make their way back to House Wei's mansion, free and easy. Both of them had changed their external appearances from the one they'd used to enter the Fish and Dragon District. With their current appearance, no one would think of suspecting them.

Seeing Jiang Chen return with a companion in tow, Wei Jie was more or less certain that the one who had robbed Myriad Puppets Pavilion was none other than Jiang Chen. He hadn't been entirely

certain previously because Jiang Chen had been by himself when they'd separated.

"Brother Jiang, who might this be?" A curious Wei Jie inquired.

"Young master Wei, this is a friend of mine. I presume you already heard about the affair in the Fish and Dragon District," Jiang Chen took the initiative. He wasn't planning on hiding anything.

Wei Jie responded with a wry smile, "Of course I heard about something that big. I thought at first it was someone else who did it, but I have a pretty good guess now that two of you have arrived."

Jiang Chen nodded. "The implications of this affair will likely be enormous. The two of us will depart immediately and won't trouble you."

Wei Jie quickly replied with a smile, "What are you saying? I feel quite thrilled that you robbed House Sikou. Don't worry. You, me, and Lin Ming are the only ones who even know a shred of what's going on. Lin Ming is involved himself, so he wouldn't dare betray us. House Sikou is my House's sworn enemy, so it's even more impossible for me to betray you. So, just let them investigate. Things will sort themselves out after the commotion dies down."

"We really won't drag you down?" Jiang Chen asked once again. He wasn't one to act recklessly without a care for consequences. If Wei Jie would be implicated as a result of Jiang Chen's actions,

he'd turn on his heels and walk out right this instant.

Wei Jie waved him off, "Brother Jiang, we're friends who've been through life and death already. Don't mention being implicated. It's of no consequence even if I have to shoulder a little risk. A mere House Sikou? House Wei isn't afraid of them."

If nothing else, a ninth rank aristocratic house's heir had the heroic spirit to willingly shoulder responsibility. Jiang Chen thought a moment. He still countered, "Young master Wei, we're friends who've gone through tribulations together, so I won't treat you as an outsider. However, people will definitely be on the lookout now that I've stirred up a fuss. You can't find a place here for a couple thousand people either, I need to find another place."

No matter how large the House Wei manor might be, it would still be hard to hide releasing two thousand people all at once. This was a situation they had to handle discreetly. Wei Jei thought a moment and responded with a nod, "House Wei has an underground estate in the capital. It's extremely well hidden; only my father and me know about it. Brother Jiang, if you can overlook the crudeness, I'll take you there right now."

Jiang Chen waved him off. "Just tell me the exact place and how to get there. There will certainly be countless pairs of eyes watching you if you take a step in any direction. It wouldn't be a good thing for you. I wouldn't want to involve House Wei in this quarrel because of a careless mistake."

Since House Wei and House Sikou were mortal enemies, House Sikou would definitely send people to keep watch over House Wei

after something this big happened. As House Wei's young master, Wei Jie's every move would certainly be carefully observed. It would be a shame indeed if their charade was seen through because of a predictable action.

Wei Jie pondered a moment and nodded without arguing. He drew a map on the spot and handed it to Jiang Chen. "The exact position, concrete directions, and how to enter are all clearly indicated on this map. The place is extremely well hidden; absolutely no one from House Sikou will find it. This place is the final trump card for my father and I."

Wei Jie disclosed all this private information to Jiang Chen with a wry smile. "Brother Jiang, I won't hide anything from you. House Wei looks full of splendor on the surface, but it's in fact riddled with troubles internal and external. That place is the final safe shelter for my father and I, the absolute last lifeline in case of an emergency."

Jiang Chen's heart faintly shook. A profoundly grateful look emerged on his face. He patted Wei Jie, "Young master Wei, you and I are friends for life."

Though he'd once saved Wei Jie's life, the sincerity Wei Jie had demonstrated again and again had clearly gone above and beyond a mere repayment of debt. One could say that they'd both made use of each other at first, but they'd now come to truly treat each other as friends from the bottom of their hearts after undergoing repeated woes and trials together. Especially now that Wei Jie had entrusted him with his final trump card, whether or not it truly was his final trump card or not, Jiang Chen still owed him a debt

of gratitude. “Young master Wei, I’ll come find you again after I settle them in. Here are some detoxifying pills. Take them for now, and stay vigilant against the pill master at your fifth uncle’s side. He’s likely hiding his real strength.”

Wei Jie looked pensive. He took the pills from Jiang Chen and put them away. After a small pause, he still couldn’t stop himself from asking, “Brother Jiang, I see that your talent for pill dao is marvelous. I wonder if…”

Jiang Chen smiled, “I haven’t had my pill dao potential tested, so I can’t tell you at what level it is specifically. That said, when it comes to pill dao, I truly haven’t met anyone yet I would bow down to. So I might not be able to provide a concrete answer if young master Wei wishes to know. That said, ordinary pill kings are indeed below my notice.” He patted Wei Jie’s shoulder, “Take care.”

After bidding their farewells, Huang’er and Jiang Chen departed under the cover of the night without any hesitation. Trackers were everywhere outside. Even so, House Sikou wasn’t a first class faction in the capital, so they couldn’t hunt and arrest people as they pleased without scruples. For that reason, though they put great effort into the search, it was very difficult to guarantee that they could cover every possible area. Meanwhile, Jiang Chen and Huang’er precisely happened to be experts in slipping through blockades. From the Myriad Domain all the way to the Veluriyam Capital, they’d gone through too many roadblocks to count. They simply had too much knowledge and experience dealing with such a search.

Following the map, the two of them spent quite some effort before finally locating the concealed location. It was indeed superbly hidden, even looking like an underground maze the deeper they went. Most importantly, there were even formations deployed inside, as well as early warning systems. The arrangements were close to perfection in every area. What was even more surprising was how spacious this place was. It could even accommodate several times more people than they needed to situate.

“A ninth rank noble house in Veluriyam Capital is indeed something else. This place would have been rather difficult to build without tremendous power,” Jiang Chen said, sighing with feeling after he settled down.

Huang’er nodded with a faint smile. “Sir Jiang, hurry up and let these people out. I can’t wait!”

He summoned his palace and was about to release the captives, but then thought better of it. The eternal imprint last time from the Eternal Celestial Capital was a mistake he’d learned from. It wasn’t impossible for the Myrial Puppets Pavilion’s unique imprint to be on these slaves. The palace was separated from the outside world, so this imprint naturally wouldn’t be able to send out a signal. However, if they were indeed marked, releasing them would only invite his pursuers to track him all the way to this place.

“Miss Huang’er, let’s go inside.”

The two of them entered the palace. Two thousand slaves stood

there like living corpses, not showing the slightest sign of resistance, not putting up any struggle. Jiang Chen walked forward, pulling off their masks one by one. His mood became heavier with every mask he pulled off. The thing he was most worried of was that those from the Regal Pill Palace wouldn't be among this batch of slaves. Even Huang'er was extremely grave. She also knew full well that if they couldn't find their people from Regal Pill Palace here, further rescue attempts would be at least ten times harder.

As masks were tugged off one by one, Jiang Chen's state of mind grew increasingly heavier. After taking down more than thirty masks, his hands spasmed as wild joy exploded on his face! A familiar face had appeared in front of Jiang Chen's eyes.

Indeed, he was very familiar with this person! "Shen Trifire!" he blurted, wild with joy. Shen Trifire was a genius from the Sovereign Area of Rosy Valley. He had been Shen Qinghong's right hand man back then. Jiang Chen had once thoroughly defeated him in a pill dao contest. Shen Trifire had repented then, and withdrawn himself from sect conflict, going into closed door cultivation. Jiang Chen never thought this peer would be the first one he'd find!

Jiang Chen and Huang'er shared a look, seeing the joy in each other's eyes. Since they saw a familiar face, this meant that those from Regal Pill Palace were at least in this batch. Thank the heavens! Jiang Chen immediately used his consciousness to scan Shen Trifire. However, the joy quickly disappeared from his face, and his brows bunched together in a frown.

Chapter 732: Running Into Yet Another Problem

“What is it?” Seeing Jiang Chen’s expression darken so suddenly, Huang’er realized that the situation wasn’t as optimistic as she’d first thought.

“As I thought, those that work in this business are all animals. Aside from everyone’s senses being sealed, their vitals have been sealed as well. If they make the wrong move, their qi ocean will self-detonate. Vicious indeed!” Jiang Chen swore in a low tone.

Hearing this, Huang’er’s expression sank as well.

“Let’s see if the others are here.” She was the first to calm down and came forward to help. The masks were torn away one by one, and the faces of fellow sect members steadily appeared. Suddenly, there was a cry of pleasant surprise. “Big sister Gouyu!”

A mask was removed over on Huang’er’s side, revealing Gouyu’s face beneath. Her senses had been sealed away, but Gouyu’s expression was still defiant and unyielding. Her cheeks were thin and pale. She had evidently suffered a lot during her capture. Yet to Huang’er and Jiang Chen, the sight of her was invigorating. They removed all the remaining masks in a concerted effort.

Xue Tong, Guo Jin, the Qiao brothers, Wen Ziqi, Shen Trifire, Rong Zifeng, Ouyang Chao... There were almost sixty disciples from Rosy Valley among those rescued, but not one of the elders were present. More importantly, Jiang Chen didn’t find Mu Gaoqi

and Elder Yun Nie in the group either.

According to the information he'd received, it was likely that Elder Yun Nie hadn't died in battle. Those from the Great Scarlet Mid Region had been ordered to capture the elder alive so that they could pry the recipe for the Longevity Pill from his lips. The recipe for the pill had indeed changed hands at some point afterwards, which was proof that Elder Yun Nie had lived past the fall of Regal Pill Palace. The elder had also definitely been the one to disclose the recipe for the pill. Since they hadn't killed the elder then, he would have made a most valuable slave considering his identity and prior position. There was no reason for the imperial family of the Great Scarlet Mid Region to kill the elder. But even if they had killed the elder, why had the unassuming Mu Gaoqi disappeared as well?

Not seeing Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi dampened Jiang Chen's mood. To tell the truth, he had barely any emotional attachment to the others that he'd rescued aside from his personal guards. He only knew them because they were from the same sect. His main motivation to defy all the odds had been to come to the rescue of those closest to him, Palace Head Dan Chi, Elder Yun Nie, Mu Gaoqi, and the Lin sisters. They were the only ones dear to him at Regal Pill Palace. Lin Bi'er had gotten separated from them at the Palace, and her whereabouts were still unknown. Lin Hui'er was with her father, so she should be safe.

Aware that Mu Gaoqi and Jiang Chen were the best of friends, Huang'er understood the latter's anguish upon discovering Mu Gaoqi to be still missing. "Sir Jiang, it is said that man can only propose, but it is heaven who disposes. You gave it your all. Don't blame yourself too much," Huang'er gently encouraged him. With

her recent deeper understanding of Jiang Chen, she knew that he was the kind of person to carry a large burden in his heart. In particular, she was concerned with the self-guilt that he would inevitably feel.

Huang'er's words of encouragement cheered Jiang Chen up quite a bit. However, the masses of unseeing zombie-like figures in front of him, deprived of senses and life, was still a major headache. Though it wasn't particularly sophisticated work, the seals on their bodies ensured that their lives lay in the hands of their sealer. Like a puppetmaster, he decided their life and death with a single thought. If Jiang Chen couldn't disable all the seals all at once, he would alert the controller and every slave would die instantly.This was Jiang Chen's most pressing concern.

Seeing Jiang Chen deep in thought over a fresh predicament, Huang'er wanted to share his burden. "Sir Jiang, I once heard Elder Shun mention something about sealing qi oceans."

"Oh? What did Elder Shun say?" Since he'd been dwelling on the same subject, Jiang Chen was curious what the elder's thoughts had been.

"He said that when he was young, he saw something similar happen during a conflict he'd witnessed. Members of one sect had been captured by their rival, and their qi oceans sealed away. They were rescued by their peers soon afterwards, but the seals on their bodies couldn't be removed. If the seals were touched, the enemy could activate the seals to kill them..."

"What happened after?" Her words moved Jiang Chen.

“Elder Shun said that they were eventually all saved. Their peers asked a formations master to set up a formation that was filled with attacks, each tailored for each seal. Activation the formation caused all the forces within the formation to assail the seals all at once, breaking them all in a single instant. From Elder Shun’s description, the formation has two particularly difficult requirements. First, each sealed individual needs to have their own force, tailored to the seal on the body. As such, you need as many attacking forces as you do people. Second, the strike on the seal must be extremely quick. If every seal isn’t broken in the span of a breath or two, iti would give the sealer the opportunity to kill every sealed individual.”

“So you’re saying the formation was successful?” Jiang Chen’s heart was shaken. This was a new line of thinking that hadn’t occurred to him. Thus far, Jiang Chen’s head had been filled with mush, and he really hadn’t thought of the idea. Huang’er’s reminder gave him a burst of inspiration.

“Yes, Elder Shun said that was the case. The matter left a deep impression upon him. The method of sealing he saw was a lot more complex than this, and the difficulty of removal understandably higher,” Huang’er looked at Jiang Chen reassuringly.

“Alright, since they managed to pull it off, there must be a way for us to do the same,” Jiang Chen slapped his thigh. There were many ways to remove seals in Jiang Chen’s memories. He had no shortage of formations either. He was no stranger to working with either ingredient.

“Sir Jiang, let Huang’er help you.”

……

In a secret room in the central area within House Wei, a particularly detailed discussion was taking place between the Wei father and son.

“Jie’er, is that Jiang Chen really as miraculous as you say?” The current master of House Wei was Wei Tianxiao, Wei Jie’s father.

“Father, you know that I have a good eye for judging people. There is no way that I’ve made a mistake this time. He is a young man from the Myriad Domain, but he’s able to run circles around both Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect. The meteoric rise of such a genius cannot be stopped.” Wei Jie’s tone was filled with confidence.

Wei Tianxiao gave his son a look of commendation. Truthfully, his son often exceeded his expectations. “Mm. As always, I do not doubt your foresight and discernment. From your description of him, this Jiang Chen has pill dao talent that rivals a typical mid-level pill king. That alone makes it worthwhile for House Wei to maintain a good relationship with him. Additionally, it is also good news for us that he has fallen out with House Sikou. After all, the enemy of our enemy is our friend.”

“There is wisdom in your words, father. However, what are your plans for the trouble within our house’s walls? If there is no quick resolution, I fear endless trouble will follow.”

A bright glint flashed across Wei Tianxiao's eyes. He responded in a solemn voice, "Hmph, that traitor Wei Tianshu, how would I not know about his wolfish nature? Since he dared to raise a hand against you, Jie'er, there is no reason for me to tolerate him any longer! When the right time comes, I shall eradicate that pest with one fell swoop." Turning to look at his son again, Wei Tianxiao exhorted, "Jie'er, if this is the choice you've made, you should nurture your relationship with Jiang Chen carefully now. If he happens to prosper one day, you will have gained an important contact."

"I understand," Wei Jie nodded.

"Keep yourself safe, and do not let anyone from House Sikou have the chance to implicate or attack us," Wei Tianxiao advised.

"Yes, I will treat the matter with care."

……

In stark contrast from the Wei family's intimate conversation between father and son, House Sikou was filled with great dejection. The family had lost great face due to recent events. That a robbery would happen to a name as eminent as House Sikou and a store as time-honored as the Myriad Puppets Pavilion was inconceivable. The simplicity of the crime was almost shameful. What had been lost was not only two thousand slaves, but also House Sikou's golden reputation.

“Nan’er, do you have any news?” Sikou Yuan, the master of House Sikou, asked his son.

Sikou Nan shook his head sadly even as he gritted his teeth. “Father, there is no news for the moment. But, even if I need to turn the city upside down, I will find the bastard responsible for this. Stealing from House Sikou is nothing short of intentionally walking into a lion’s den. They must pay the price for such folly!” He thumped his chest.

“Perhaps someone from House Wei is causing us trouble?” For Sikou Yuan, the family’s old rival was the first thing that came to mind.

“I suspected the same. I have already dispatched men to monitor the activities of House Wei closely. If that really is the case, it won’t take long to find evidence.” Sikou Nan scowled darkly. “Only a few hours before our store was robbed, their young master Wei Jie arrived at Fish and Dragon District to visit Lin Ming’s store.”

“Did you question Lin Ming about it?” Sikou Yuan inquired in a low voice.

“I did. There was nothing out of the ordinary during his time at Lin Ming’s. Even Lin Ming himself could not make heads or tails of it. I think it is likely that he was only a decoy, meant to mislead us into suspecting Lin Ming.” Clearly, Sikou Nan didn’t believe that the likes of Lin Ming would have the audacity to oppose his house.

Sikou Yuan frowned. “Each slave bears our unique mark. They would be totally useless without your unsealing commands. Have you tried tracking the signatures on your seals?”

Sikou Nan answered with a wry smile. “How would I have not? Our adversary seems be very wily, and the seals are cloaked from detection. There is no way for me to detect the seals unless they are directly tampered with. Otherwise, I have no way of even knowing if the slaves are still alive.”

“Cloaked? That’s not something an ordinary person could manage. This unknown person is extraordinarily capable. But, seizing two thousand slaves in a single sweep is in and of itself testament to that. Nan’er, you cannot take this matter lightly.”

“Father, please be at ease,” Sikou Nan let out a harrumph. “Without my release commands, the goods are totally rubbish. If they truly cannot be found, I can crush the unsealing talismans to activate the self-detonating mechanisms. Then, that would put an end to this.” Sikou Nan was unnerved and in a rush.

Sikou Yuan shook his head, “Search thoroughly first. That choice must only come as a last resort. The slave business is our house’s primary source of income. It would be a crippling blow to our finances to abandon that batch of goods. It may even affect our day-to-day operations.”

The batch in question was valued at two to three billion. The actual cost of the goods had been far lower than that, but given the breadth of the family’s business activities, losing a shipment of goods was not as simple as deducting their inventory price. The

loss of potential profits also had to be taken into account.

Chapter 733: Gouyu Awakens

House Sikou wouldn't choose the path of mutual destruction unless it was the only choice they had left, and on a certain level, it gave Jiang Chen some freedom to prepare. With the memories of his past life, Jiang Chen had an extremely stable foundation in formations. As such, laying down a formation wasn't a problem for him. The crux of his problem lay in making each strike true. Given that he could only spare one attack for a seal, it was imperative to make the strike count. If he were to fail and alert the sealer to what he was doing, he would be in grave trouble. If in the worst case scenario, the sealer was alerted and flew into a rage, he could very well fly into a rage and kill all the slaves. Then, Jiang Chen's failure would become an unredeemable failure in his heart. As such, Jiang Chen would not attempt anything until he was sufficiently assured of success. Time passed by day by day. Seven days later, Jiang Chen finally performed his last modification of the formation, according to the results of his experiments and deductions. This newly modified formation seemed even more precise and thorough than before, thanks to the Crimson Heaven formation flag.

"Everyone, this is the best I can do. Failure or success, I hope you don't blame me," Jiang Chen closed his eyes to offer a silent plea to his sect members. He had truly done everything he could up to this point. He had devised a method to create sixty four clumps of energy that would be held by the formation. Once the formation was activated, all the knots of energy would come alive at the same time. Fifty four of those clumps were meant for his sect members from the Regal Pill Palace, whereas the remaining ten was assigned to ten relatively strong cultivators. They were all at least earth sage realm cultivators, and some even sky sage realm cultivators. "Miss Huang, I will be starting now."

At the center of the formation, Jiang Chen nodded at Huang'er standing outside and began activating the formation. The formation slowly rumbled to life as sixty four rays of light flew towards the people inside the formation like meteors. After the flashes of light started to dissipate, countless formation glyphs crawled through the surrounding space like newly born tadpoles.

Wham! The light entered the people's qi oceans.

"Everything depends on this!" Jiang Chen gritted his teeth and started to make rapid hand seals. The light kept growing thicker and stronger with each seal. Every slave was gradually enveloped by the light; Jiang Chen could make out everyone's qi oceans as clouds of nebula. Each qi ocean seemed to entrapped by spiderwebs of restrictions. Those were the seals outside their qi oceans!

"Break, break I say!" Jiang Chen growled as he urged the formation to its full power. The light slammed into the seals surrounding everyone's qi oceans, causing illusory sparks to scatter into the air. Bzzt!

The ear-piercing noise continued for a moment.

One breath, two breaths... It had only been three breaths of time, but it felt as long as an eternity.

Crackcrackcrack...

No sound would've sounded sweeter to Jiang Chen's ears as cracking sounds marked the moment the restrictions around the slaves started to crumble. With a sound like torn sheet metal, all the seals completely disintegrated! Jiang Chen let the formation dim, and shut down. His forehead was covered in sweat, but his eyes were shining with delighted pleasure. "It worked!"

Outside the formation, Huang'er was also wearing a look of joy as she stepped quickly into the formation and asked, a tad concerned, "How are you feeling, Sir Jiang?"

"It's nothing. I'm just a little tired because this formation used up too much energy. It won't affect my core," Jiang Chen scanned himself briefly and found nothing wrong other than a little over-expenditure of consciousness. This formation was extremely sophisticated and exhausting. It really wasn't something that a mortal sage realm cultivator should be able to control. In fact, a sage realm cultivator simply didn't possess the qualifications to control this formation. If Jiang Chen hadn't possessed exceptional advantages in every aspect of his cultivations, he wouldn't have been able to utilize this formation.

……

The moment the formation broke through the seal, Sikou Nan was abruptly jolted out of his meditation far, far away at House Sikou. His command seals had all disintegrated on their own! It was the middle of the night, and he'd just been about to enter a meditative state. Unfortunately, it'd also given Jiang Chen the opportunity to break the seals without Sikou Nan noticing. By the time Sikou Nan realized what was happening, his command seals

had already been shattered to bits. He took out their corresponding tokens, but noted that they too had all been reduced to fragments. When his consciousness swept through his tokens, he noticed that a total of sixty-four tokens had been broken. Sikou Nan's expression changed greatly as he swore non-stop, "Damn it! Damn it!"

He knew that the destruction of these tokens meant that all sixty-four seals had been destroyed. Moreover, the method his enemy had used to crack these seals was extraordinary! His enemy's timing and cracking method were absolutely top notch. He hadn't the slightest chance to react.

"Who is it? Who is it?!" Right now, Sikou Nan's feelings were utterly messy. Despite the fact that it was midnight right now, he ran straight to his father's doorsteps.

Sikou Yuan was also shocked when he heard the news. Father and son exchanged looks with each other as they stared at the shattered remains of the tokens. Their fear and anger battled each other relentlessly inside, but they had no place to vent. They weren't afraid of enemies who would come after, but an enemy who they didn't even know felt far more threatening. At least, looking at the results in front of their eyes, it was obvious that this person wasn't the type they could get away with underestimating. Even Sikou Yuan himself couldn't break through sixty-four seals all at once in just a few breaths of time.

"Nan'er, has the Million Puppets Pavilion offended anyone as of late?" Sikou Yuan sounded a bit conflicted.

Sikou Nan answered almost absentmindedly as he kept staring down, “We’re businessmen who seek profit. Why would we offend someone for no particular reason? Plus, there aren’t any amazing customers who have showed up as of late.”

“Was there anyone of great influence amongst our goods this time?” Sikou Yuan asked again.

Sikou Nan thought for a moment and shook his head, “There really isn’t anyone on the Divine Abyss Continent that could be considered as a person of great power to Veluriyam Capital. Our sources as of late have been pretty clean too. They all came from those middle and lower regions. Not a single one came from the Upper Eight Regions.”

“Are there any foreign races involved in our trade?” Sikou Yuan asked again.

“Father, I am not an idiot. The Million Puppets Pavilion only works with the human trafficking trade, never other races.”

Sikou Yuan nodded, “This is strange then. The fact that this robber could instantly crack sixty four seals in an instant means that his strength is terrifying. This person... could it be that they cultivate some sort of evil art that uses cultivators as cultivation furnaces?”

“Father, why do I get the feeling that House Wei probably has something to do with this?” Sikou Nan said sullenly.

“House Wei?” Sikou Yuan shook his head, “House Wei themselves are in a complete mess right now, not to mention that I know very well what level they’re at. There’s no way they could unlock sixty four seals at once in just a couple of breaths of time. Even in the Veluriyam Capital, only those who belong to those top forces are capable of something like this.”

Sikou Nan was feeling very dejected. He dearly wished that this was done by House Wei so he could at least have the pleasure of wiping the ground with them. It was at least better than knowing nothing right now.

“Father, I’m afraid that this person will unseal the slaves one after another now that they’ve had their first success. If that happens, then all our slaves would become his in just half a month’s time.” The fact that their seals were broken meant that these slaves were no longer under House Sikou’s control.

“Can we check where these unsealed slaves came from?” Sikou Yuan asked again.

Sikou Nan shook his head with dejection, “Our sources have plentiful as of late, and since they’re numbered based on cultivation and potential, they cannot be differentiated at all once they’ve been grouped together. Moreover, we never pay attention to where our goods come from unless their identities are unusually sensitive.”

If they couldn’t figure out the source, then they wouldn’t be able to investigate the identity of the culprit using that lead. Therefore, that line of investigation was a dead end. Sikou Yuan let out a long

sigh, “Just who has a bone to pick with House Sikou?”

Ferocity flashed through Sikou Nan’s eyes, “Father, in my opinion, it is best if we just bear the losses and kill off the remaining slaves. If we can’t get them back, then we will at least make sure that that robber gets nothing in return.” It was the second time Sikou Nan had brought up this suggestion.

Sikou Yuan was still hesitant to accept that choice. It was a final choice that he didn’t want to make unless he had no other choice, because it gained them nothing except embarrassing their opponent. Moreover, Sikou Yuan was still hoping that they could somehow regain these slaves. It was just too wasteful to kill all of them just like that. In addition, this method of mutual annihilation might provoke this hidden enemy into anger. They might end up taking revenge because of this.

Sikou Yuan was old and wise, and he didn’t wish to unknowingly make such a big enemy for House Sikou. “Nan’er, if this really is the act of those deviant cultivators wanting to use our slaves’ physical bodies to practice their cultivation, then he will only do worse if we destroy these slaves. If this person turns vicious and causes trouble to the family from the shadows, it will become a rather troublesome issue. We may not fear them, but there’s no denying the fact that it’d be an annoyance.”

“Hmph, are you saying that we should endure such a huge loss and do nothing about it? Not only that, we even have to consider the robber’s feelings?” Sikou Nan was ultimately in the prime of youth. He couldn’t accept this conclusion at all.

“Nan’er, we must look at the bigger picture. We must not do this unless we are pushed to the cliff’s edge.”

……

Inside the secret room, Jiang Chen had to meditate for a full day as he slowly healed his consciousness. Although the seals on those now freed slaves had been destroyed, their senses were still sealed away. They wouldn’t be able to return to the person they’d been before unless these particular seals were eliminated too. However, these particular seals were not explicitly controlled by House Sikou. Therefore, their safety was no longer a concern. Moreover, unlocking the seals on their senses was a lot easier compared to unlocking the seals on their qi oceans.

When Jiang Chen had recovered, the first thing he did was to unlock the seals on Gouyu, Xue Tong and a few others. These five bodyguards had followed him all the way since the Eastern Kingdom, and their loyalty had never wavered during the whole ride. The five of them slowly regained their consciousness after their senses were unlocked. Gouyu was the strongest out of all of them, and she was also the first to open her eyes slowly.

When she saw what was before her, she thought that her eyes were blurry or she was experiencing an hallucination. She even blinked a couple of times as she alternated glances between Jiang Chen and Huang’er. “Young master, am I… dreaming?” Gouyu felt like crying. Even with her unyielding temperament, she couldn’t help but feel the agitation that came after being granted a new lease on life.

“Gouyu, I’m sorry I didn’t manage to save you all earlier,” Jiang Chen sighed.

Huang’er’s eyes had also reddened a little, “Big sister Gouyu, Sir Jiang has walked over countless miles and gone through innumerable obstacles to come to Veluriyam Capital. Thankfully his efforts were ultimately not wasted, and all of you are fine. You are safe now.”

Gouyu stared at Huang’er, but wore an expression of blank puzzlement on her face, “You… are you little sister Huang’er?” Other than her clear and bright eyes, Gouyu wasn’t able to connect this exquisitely beautiful girl to the Huang’er she knew back then at all.

Chapter 734: Intra-Sect Friendship

After Gouyu came to, Xue Tong and the others also woke up one after another. Jiang Chen wasn't in a rush to unseal the senses of the others from the Regal Pill Palace. These particular people were those of his inner circle. After parting ways for almost a whole year, they had too many things to say to each other. If he were to unseal everyone else's senses now, it would sour the atmosphere instead. Just like Gouyu, everyone was surprised to see Huang'er's true appearance. They'd never imagined that the ugly-looking Miss Huang'er was in reality an outstanding beauty. There was nothing wrong in calling her a goddess who had descended to earth. Even Gouyu, for all her competitiveness, was completely convinced by Huang'er's temperament and beauty and felt no resistance towards her whatsoever. She naturally came to the firm opinion that Miss Huang'er was the most perfect match for the young master.

Of course, there were psychological reasons behind her acceptance. Back in the Regal Pill Palace, Gouyu had been close enough with Huang'er to be called sisters. Even before this revelation, Huang'er's behavior, temperament and grace had already won over those in Jiang Chen's circle. Now that Huang'er had revealed her true countenance, not only did they feel not repelled by it, they even thought of it as the way it was supposed to be. It was only right that Huang'er's natural and unrestrained manners, amiable and approachable temper, and extraordinary qualities were complemented with an equally unrivalled beauty. Everyone's voices grew thick with emotion as they described their experience.

"Young master, countless experts descended on the Regal Pill Palace back then, and the great formation didn't even last an hour

under their attacks. All of the sect experts who'd sustained the formation were slaughtered to the last in just an hour's time. At that time, Elder Yun Nie had come to Rosy Valley to gather up the geniuses and retreat, but we recalled the young master's instructions and chose not to escape. Instead, we convinced Elder Yun Nie to hide with several dozen others inside the formation. To its credit, at first, they weren't able to break through the formation at all. But later, an even more powerful emperor realm cultivator appeared and joined hands with several other emperor realm cultivators to attack the formation in unison. Only then did they finally managed to break through the formation. As a result, all of us became captives..." Gouyu talked about that day in great detail. The sheer desperation of that battle was so vivid in her story that they felt as if they truly were present then. "Young master, those people had originally wanted to kill us all. However, it sounded like they spared us because they wanted to interrogate us about a certain pill recipe. At first, Elder Yun Nie refused to submit even in the face of death and said not a word. However, the enemy began to kill a Regal Pill Palace disciple for every question that went unanswered. After killing a dozen or so people, they hauled Mu Gaoqi in front of Elder Yun Nie... and..." Gouyu cast a glance at Jiang Chen, looking a bit hesitant as to whether she should continue.

Jiang Chen waved his hands and said, "Continue."

"If Elder Yun Nie still refused to speak, then Mu Gaoqi would be slaughtered too. Therefore, Elder Yun Nie finally revealed the pill recipe. Young master, if it wasn't for the pill recipe, we might have been killed outright by the enemy already. Those people were extremely savage, and they'd never planned to leave anyone alive at all. In fact, they were going to execute us on the spot after obtaining the pill recipe. However, someone brought up the fact

that they had a group of slavers at their place, and they could sell us to them and earn quite a lot of spirit stones…”

Gouyu didn’t know from beginning to end who had destroyed the Regal Pill Palace or taken them captive. They naturally didn’t know where they’d been sold to either.

Jiang Chen more or less understood the entire situation after Gouyu had finished her tale. He actually felt relieved after hearing her story. He had to admit to feeling a bit of hesitation when he discovered that the Longevity Pill recipe had fallen into the hands of the Eternal Celestial Capital. Although he didn’t believe that Elder Yun Nie was a coward, it was a fact that he’d leaked the Longevity Pill recipe. Now that he learned that Elder Yun Nie had done it to save Mu Gaoqi, the last bit of suppressed emotion clogging up Jiang Chen’s heart had vanished completely.

Xue Tong asked, “Young master, who on earth did the Regal Pill Palace provoke? Was it the Ninesuns Sky Sect?”

“The Ninsuns Sky Sect was indeed involved in this matter, but the main culprits are the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Great Scarlet Mid Region. The Eternal Celestial Capital was the mastermind, and the Great Scarlet Mid Region acted as the butcher’s knife. Moreover, the Regal Pill Palace was not the only victim of this incident. The entire Myriad Domain and in fact almost every sect, regardless of their size, have been eliminated.”

“What?” Gouyu and everyone else was greatly shocked by this news, especially Gouyu, “What… what about the sixteen kingdoms alliance?” The sixteen kingdoms alliance might be a small place,

but it was still their home.

"There is no news from the sixteen kingdoms alliance, but I notified the Precious Tree Sect about something like this a long time ago. They should have put some countermeasures in place. As for the secular kingdoms, they never even entered these forces' eyes. No matter how idle those bastards are, they wouldn't eliminate the lowest of kingdoms," Jiang Chen explained. He knew that Gouyu was worried for the Eastern Kingdom. It was her home after all, and the place where her relatives lived. To a sect, a secular kingdom was like an ant beneath an elephant's foot. It was doubtful that they would even see it, much less bother to eliminate it.

If a sect had rooted out and razed even a place like that, then they would literally draw ire from all sides. The cultivation world had its own unspoken rules. If they had really gone to bully a tiny ant, then even the heavenly laws wouldn't be able to tolerate such a despicable action, much less societal customs.

"Young master, how did you find us?" Wen Ziqi was naturally shy, and hadn't spoken a word till now.

The answer to this question however, would be quite lengthy. Jiang Chen smiled easily, "It's a long story. I'll tell you guys about it in the future."

Contrary to expectations, Huang'er actually smiled and spoke up, "Your young master is acting humble. Please allow me to tell you this story."

Huang'er wasn't a talkative person, but she'd experienced firsthand Jiang Chen's innumerable efforts during this trip and the terrible hardships he'd undergone to save his people. It was not a story she wanted to go untold.

She started from the Myriad Grand Ceremony and described everything that had happened up until their rescue. The story greatly stunned and moved everyone. The young master had traveled over several million kilometers into the Upper Eight Regions, braving innumerable obstacles and dangers, all to save them from disaster. How could they not be moved by this act? If the young master hadn't been strong enough, or if the young master had been any later, they would've been sold off as slaves already. If that happened, then not even the young master with all his power would have been able to find them again. Everyone was touched and grateful for their good fortune when their thoughts reached that point. They knew very well what kind of life a slave faced.

When they thought of the amount of opponents Jiang Chen had obliterated along the way, they couldn't help but feel the pleasure of vengeance suffuse them. Although they hadn't taken revenge personally, they all felt their blood boiling as they listened to Huang'er's narration. No matter how fierce or terrifying their opponents were, they were never able to escape their young master's grasp. In fact, their young master had even killed dozens of emperor realm cultivators! It was only now that they realized just how incredible and wonderful their young master was!

"You may keep this in your heart, but please don't tell the other Regal Pill Palace disciples about this. Although we are at Veluriyam

Capital now, the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Great Scarlet Mid Region won't give up just like that. The Ninesuns Sky Sect is also waiting for an opportunity to jump into the fray. That's why we absolutely cannot let our guard down!" Jiang Chen reminded them.

They all nodded, "You're right, young master. We've become your burden once, and we mustn't drag you down a second time."

"Mm. We won't be able to leave Veluriyam Capital for now. Here at least, those forces wouldn't dare to act wantonly. We may very well be hunted down again the moment we leave."

"We obey your orders, young master."

"Yeah, we'll do as you say, young master."

Jiang Chen nodded as the crowd stared at him. He had in fact formed this plan long before today.

"We'll be living in Veluriyam Capital for the foreseeable future. However, we'll have to change some of our identities. The Regal Pill Palace will become a thing of the past until we can fully guarantee our own safety. No matter what, our identities are our greatest secret. I'll think of a way to help you all settle in," Jiang Chen cast another glance at the unconscious fellow sect disciples. "I'll have to arrange these people properly as well. If any one of them is exposed, we will all fall prey to disaster."

Huang'er also remarked, "Considering the number of people involved, this will need proper planning. Sir Jiang, in my opinion, it'll be best if we build a force of our own in Veluriyam Capital. If people are relocated into someone else's domain, it's only a matter of time before they're exposed." It was a certainty that they would be interrogated and investigated if they were to live under someone else's roof. As a result, it was very likely that their real identities would be exposed. If they had their own force, then they would have their own territory and no fear of investigation.

Jiang Chen pondered for a moment and said, "I've given it some thought. We will definitely draw a lot of attention if we were to establish a sect in Veluriyam Capital. I personally think that there's no need for us to do that. If we must build a force, then we should establish a business group or operate a store. That'd be the safest method."

It was quite normal for a sizable store to accommodate several dozens of people. It'd also be much easier to make arrangements for these people and hide their identities.

"Mm, that's a good idea," Huang'er nodded in full agreement. Gouyu and the others naturally had no opinions regarding this matter. Right now, they only wanted to avoid becoming Jiang Chen's burden and dragging him down. They wouldn't mind whatever Jiang Chen planned to arrange them. Seeing that no one else had an opinion to offer, Jiang Chen cast a glance at his other sect mates, "Let's wake these people up. They are our sect mates, and I hope that they wouldn't act stupidly."

If he were to be frank, he hadn't stayed at the Regal Pill Palace for

long enough to form connections with these people. He had no real feelings for the others, and the only reason he even bothered to care, arrange and rescue these people was his principles and morality. Their rescue was for Palace Head Dan Chi's sake and as a member of the Regal Pill Palace. If these people chose to act stupidly and disobey his arrangements, then he would have no qualms in employing a more forceful method.

As their senses were unsealed, the Regal Pill Palace disciples slowly awakened from their slumber. Everyone's first reaction when they fully woke was that they were dreaming. Some of them even thought they were dead already. More or less, their reactions were similar across the board.

Jiang Chen didn't speak up immediately. He waited until they had calmed down a little before speaking to Shen Trifire, "Shen Trifire, do you still remember me?"

Shen Trifire was one of the top geniuses in Regal Pill Palace. He was steady and had a clearer mind than most. "Senior brother Jiang, were you the one who saved us?"

Shen Trifire was very smart, and had placed himself in a very good position. Although he was quite a bit older than Jiang Chen, and had entered the Regal Pill Palace much earlier, he still addressed Jiang Chen as his senior brother. This way of addressing was rather quick thinking on his part. If he were to call Jiang Chen junior brother Jiang, he would sound too arrogant and full of it. But if he were to call Jiang Chen brother Jiang, he would sound a little too distant and fail in displaying the relationship between sect members. Right now, Shen Trifire knew better than anyone

just how important this relationship was.

Chapter 735: Group Acceptance

“Senior brother Shen, we would have all been condemned to eternal servitude if not for our young master. We would have no opportunity to resist or rebel, only endless suffering and shame,” Xue Tong spoke up. Unlike the other sect members who had been executed or slain in the conflict, these people had been able to hide away in Jiang Chen’s residence. Thus, they dared not show disregard for these members of his personal guard.

“Brother Xue, what’s going on? Can you talk about it in detail? Who is this enemy of the Regal Pill Palace? Is the sect alright?” Shen Trifire asked.

Xue Tong didn’t hide the specifics from them. He gave a comprehensive account of events, omitting only the things Jiang Chen had instructed him to. All of the disciples were shocked, their faces gone bloodless. The sect had been shattered! Almost no living members of the sect remained aside from themselves. Palace Head Dan Chi was nowhere to be found!

The Regal Pill Palace wasn’t alone in this predicament. The entire Myriad Domain was in shambles. All of its sects had been attacked, regardless of size, and it had been almost a total rout. In other words, they were all now as homeless as unburied ghouls, with no news of whether their sect head was even still alive. A collective feeling of bleakness entered their hearts. Many of them couldn’t help but show their despair on their faces. That they were still alive was the only thing they could be thankful for. They were certainly a hundred times luckier than the others who had died.

After hearing this weighty news, Shen Trifire also sank into a long silence. This news was unbearable regardless of one's mental fortitude, and he was no exception. The sect ruined, their elders cut down, their comrades vanquished, and the sect head's fate still unknown. Though they weren't technically wandering cultivators, was there even a difference anymore? They didn't even enjoy the latter's freedom. If their enemies knew that they lived and still walked free, that would be the day of their doom.

Shen Trifire was the first to shake off his miserable mood, and moved his gaze to Jiang Chen. A moment of clarity flashed within Shen Trifire's mind. That's right! The Palace wasn't completely destitute; it still had Jiang Chen! When the Myriad Domain was surrounded and overwhelmed, Jiang Chen had been able to escape. Returning after the sect had fallen, Jiang Chen had then escaped encirclement a second time! It was Jiang Chen who had crossed several million kilometers to rescue them from their sad fate of enslavement, navigating the Eternal Celestial Capital's innumerable obstacles in the process. Was a comrade like this unfit to be relied on?

An idea came to Shen Trifire, and he stood up, raising a cupped fist salute to Jiang Chen. "Senior brother Jiang, our sect is fragmented. Only you are able to lead us now. Shen Trifire is at your absolute command. My only desire is that one day, we may be able to revive our sect, and take vengeance upon our foes!"

The other sect members were startled by Shen Trifire's words. However, they soon realized that without Jiang Chen's protection, they would have nowhere to go. Stay in Veluriyam Capital? On whose authority? Even Shen Trifire hadn't entered the sage realm, having only attained the eighth level origin realm. Someone with

that level of strength would only be considered third or fourth-rate here. Even if they joined another faction, they would still receive no respect. After all, they hadn't been counted among the top tier even in the Regal Pill Palace. Aside from Shen Trifire, the rest were only second-rate existences in the sect. As for those considered first-rate, some had died, and still others had fled. Almost none remained except Ling Bi'er.

"What do you think, Rong Zifeng?" Shen Trifire glanced at the man. Rong Zifeng was the furthest ahead in cultivation among the rest, and certainly wanted to side with Jiang Chen. But, he had quarrelled with Jiang Chen when he was still under Shen Qinghong's authority, and had even fought each other. His perspective was different from Shen Trifire's.

Rong Zifeng was embarrassed by Shen Trifire's question, and he looked at Jiang Chen with some difficulty. In his heart, he had already submitted to Jiang Chen. Like everyone else, he was no fool. Jiang Chen had saved his life, and Shen Qinghong had reconciled with Jiang Chen much earlier as well. There was no need for Rong Zifeng to play the role of an apostate. In a time like this, did he really have a choice?

"Senior brother Jiang, I have much offended you in the past. Only after this catastrophe did I come to see your magnanimity. You have my utmost respect. As long as you don't consider me too weak, I am willing to follow you in your efforts to re-establish our sect!"

"I, too, am willing to follow senior brother Jiang Chen," Ouyang Chao stood as well. He had competed against Jiang Chen for the

quota of Rosy Valley's sovereign area, and his grandfather Ouyang De had been an elder of the Herbal Hall. They'd all had some bad blood with Jiang Chen as well. But, these past disagreements were no longer important.

"We will all follow senior brother Jiang Chen, and contribute to re-establishing the sect!" Following Shen Trifire and Rong Zifeng's lead, the others declared their allegiances as well.

Jiang Chen didn't doubt their loyalty to the sect. Though there may have been disagreements between individual disciples of the Regal Pill Palace, they all felt a strong sense of belonging when it came to the sect. Otherwise, the invasion wouldn't have claimed so many in casualties.

Jiang Chen had expected a few to be contrarian, so things had gone smoother than he'd anticipated—though that was no surprise either after he took a moment to consider. A great calamity had just befallen the sect; only someone with brain damage could remain oblivious to that. Furthermore, it was abundantly clear that only in unity was there even a chance of a ray of hope. After all I've done for them, there's no reason for them to spurn my protection.

Having thought things through, Jiang Chen nodded with a serious expression. "I don't doubt the loyalty of anyone to the sect here. But I'll be upfront and frank. Sink or swim, we must stand together. If something bad happens to one of us, the rest will surely suffer as well. The tiny prospect we have for rebuilding the sect can be snuffed out like a candle in a hurricane. So, I hope that certain habits from back home will not be carried over here. You

are all comrades, with only each other to rely on. There should be no disputes over feelings, or any petty tricks. Our most important goal is to keep on living!”

“Senior brother Jiang is right. Politics and intrigue can no longer be tolerated. Selfishness will only hurt us all!” Shen Trifire agreed loudly. “Think about it carefully, everyone. Don’t be that rotten apple in our barrel.”

“That’s right, with the way things are now, anyone that acts up is no better than a criminal to the sect!” Everyone present murmured various affirmations. Finally, it was unanimously agreed that they would defer to senior brother Jiang Chen in all things. He didn’t particularly shy away from the responsibility either. He might have been able to ignore these people when they weren’t in front of his eyes, but he’d rescued them already. There was no way he could leave them alone. Though it was more convenience rather than intent that had precipitated his rescue of these people, he couldn’t just leave them in the lurch, nor could he just let fate take its course with them after rescuing them. For good or for ill, they were once his fellow disciples.

“Since you hold me in such high regard, it is natural that I arrange a future for you here in Veluriyam Capital. My only wish is that our past shame will forge future bravery. Though it may take a hundred, or even a thousand years, I hope that one among you may rise up with unrivalled strength to avenge our sect and rebuild the sect.” After experiencing such adversity, Jiang Chen doubted that they lacked the motivation.

There was a flurry of head bobbing. “That’s right, there is

something else. Were Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi with you on that day?" Jiang Chen asked again, quite suddenly. He was deeply concerned with the duo's disappearance.

"Yes, we were together, and we were sold here together too. Our senses were sealed away upon arrival, so we don't know anything after that."

"That's right, everyone was together before we were sealed."

"I was near senior brother Mu Gaoqi at the time, and I think I heard them mutter something about an innate wood constitution, and whether they should put a price on him for separate sale, or something ..." one of the fellow disciples said.

"Are you sure?" Hearing that made Jiang Chen very excited.

"Yes, I definitely heard those mumblings back then, but I don't know anything after that because my senses were then immediately sealed."

There can be no mistake if he heard that! So, it was quite likely that Mu Gaoqi and Elder Yun Nie had been labeled for separate sale, or had even gone unpriced. No matter what, if those assumptions were true, they should still be safe. Jiang Chen knew in his heart that it was unlikely that the Regal Pill Palace could be rebuilt just by rescuing these people alone. In fact, the possibility was still quite slim. But, if they could rescue Mu Gaoqi, the future hope of rebuilding the Regal Pill Palace would rise by more than ninety percent. The high-order innate wood constitution that Mu

Gaoqi possessed was definitely something capable of altering the prospects of their sect in the next thousand years.

Once Mu Gaoqi was rescued and given a few decades or a century to develop, he would definitely have the ability to rebuild the Regal Pill Palace! It was too bad that he hadn't been able to rescue the person he wanted to the most. Among the youth of the sect, with the exception of the Ling sisters, Mu Gaoqi was definitely the closest to Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen saw him as something of a younger brother. At the same time, he was the one Jiang Chen was most optimistic about. If Jiang Chen was asked who would be the most likely to rebuild Regal Pill Palace in the future, he would answer Mu Gaoqi first, then Ling Bi'er. As for Shen Trifire and Rong Zifeng, neither of them were cut from that cloth. At most, they would make good advisors, but they lacked that intrinsic ability to turn back a tide.

"Alright, you will all be very safe here. For the next few days, I will ask Miss Huang'er to teach you a few ways to change your appearance. From this day forward, you must adopt different identities. When the time comes, I will open a pill store here in Veluriyam Capital, and openly recruit staff from the public. Then, you can come join me as wandering cultivators. That way, your new identities will be legalized and transparent."

Everyone was reassured by Jiang Chen's preparations. Now that everything was taken care of on that front, Jiang Chen turned his attention to the remaining ten slaves. They had been unsealed with the group shortly prior, and even the weakest among them was earth sage realm. Jiang Chen had plans to put them to good use. As their savior, he had an obligation to extract at least some value from them.

Chapter 736: Ten Sage Realm Cultivators Submit

His mind made up, Jiang Chen messed around a little in each consciousness before unsealing their senses.

“Who … who are you?”

“Where am I?”

“Am I dead?” Awakening one by one, the dazed people blurted out questions in rapid succession. Jiang Chen had already sent his fellow sect members to another floor of the hideout. Besides the yet sealed slaves beneath them, only he and these ten remained. A faint smile on his face, he waited for them to sort out their thoughts rather than answering straightaway. Though he didn’t know their pasts, it was unrealistic to expect instant submission from sage realm cultivators.

However, he did not plan to actively persuade them either. It was better for them to come to their own conclusions about the situation rather than expending needless effort. A few more moments passed before the ten sorted out their thoughts. When they looked at Jiang Chen again, their gazes were filled with animosity, some almost bordering on malice.

“Excuse me, where are we?”

“Hmph, it’s just a kid. Don’t try to scare us!”

“Where are we, cough it up! Who sent you, kid?!” Upon discovering that the brat before them was below them in cultivation, they shed any pretense of self-restraint and let their emotions run free.

“It looks like your heads have cleared, but you still don’t know what kind of state you’re in, huh? I’ve only heard of the fable of the farmer and the viper where kindness is met by betrayal. I guess you’re the kind of people it describes?” Jiang Chen sneered.

“Kid, what are you talking about?”

“Speak clearly!”

“Speak clearly?” Jiang Chen’s expression darkened. “Need I remind you of your capture and enslavement? Or maybe you already remember, and you’re feigning forgetfulness?”

Of course these people were aware of their situation. But when they only saw a youth before them, they merely saw him as an opportunity to exploit. Faced with Jiang Chen’s plain speech, their affectations of arrogance were instantly cut short.

“Little brother, please give us a clear explanation. I am an old man of several hundred years, and it has been a shameful experience to be ambushed and sold into slavery. If you’re looking to subjugate this old pile of bones, I would rather die.”

“Yes, that’s right. You will enslave us only in death!” Shouts of agreement echoed around the room.

“You have hands and feet, and you’re free to move about. I won’t stop you if you want to die. Would someone take the lead? After all, leading by example is a fine trait” Die? Who didn’t know how to speak in hyperbole? These people would actually be quite reluctant to really die. As expected, the expressions of those present grew a little unnatural, even awkward. They had no resolution to instantaneously commit to death.

“I don’t know who sold you, neither do I know who you were going to be sold to. I can only tell you this: we are in Veluriyam Capital, and you were held captive at the Myriad Puppets Pavilion, priced and ready for sale. If I hadn’t rescued you, perhaps you would already have been sold to some family to be their servant, doomed to eternal servitude as a slave of the lowest class.” Jiang Chen’s explanation was lengthy but measured, with no hint of disdain. He smiled as he finished. “If anyone here thinks that I’ve made a mistake, I can take you back to Myriad Puppets Pavilion right now. As for where you’ll be headed after that, or whose slave you’ll become… that will no longer be my concern.”

He really had nothing to ask of these people. He only wanted them to understand the situation they’d found themselves in. “Look, down there… that mass of unsold slaves was also part of the group that I rescued. It was but mere convenience to rescue. But take a good hard look. Compare their state to yours, and you’ll see how lucky you are.” Jiang Chen pointed downwards, guiding their gazes. “Why don’t we go down and take a closer look,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

Though their bodies were not fully recovered still, they'd just regained consciousness after all, the ten had no problems taking a few steps. They were all completely shocked after probing the larger group below them. It wasn't only the slaves' senses that had been sealed, but also their qi oceans as well. Moreover, the seal on the latter had clear indications of its destructive nature. The sealer only needed to destroy the corresponding tokens to destroy the slaves utterly. Adopting complicated expressions, the ten ascended slowly. Their prior arrogance had all but disappeared.

"Well?" Jiang Chen smiled. "You were actually in the same state as they are a little while ago. If I hadn't spent some of my consciousness in order to remove the seals on your qi oceans, your lives would still be subject to the whims of House Sikou."

"Who are you?"

"Why did you rescue us?" Having no basis for further arrogance, the ten adjusted their attitudes. They knew as well as Jiang Chen did that if they didn't cooperate, they could simply be sent back to the Pavilion.

"As I said, your rescue was merely a matter of convenience. The only reason I removed your seals because I thought you had some use," Jiang Chen spoke slowly.

"So you mean, you're going to enslave us as well?" Their expressions changed in unison.

"What difference is there between this and being sold at the

Pavilion?!”

“Hmph, aren’t we still slaves in the end? Huh, I suspect that you’re from House Sikou yourself. This is just a type of brainwashing, isn’t it?”

Well, their imaginations were certainly vivid. Jiang Chen was expressionless, but his gaze gradually cooled. “My plans for you aside, what kind of attitude is this? DId you somehow pick up the mistaken notion that you’re irreplaceable? There are still a thousand-odd people over there, do you think I won’t be able to find substitutes from them?” His tone was ice, and his demeanor no longer as polite. These people had no previous relationship with him, nor were they members of his sect, so it was difficult for them to conjure up feelings of unity.

A red-haired man spoke up, “Sir, to me at least, you do not appear to me to be a malicious man. I am personally quite thankful that you came to our rescue. If I may ask, what are your exact plans for us?”

“Yes, tell us the truth. If it’s not too difficult, then of course we will do our best to repay this debt.” One person’s surrender led to the softening of others. After all, this was the way of human nature. Besides the debt they owed to the young man for his rescue, they could also sense the subterfuge within their consciousnesses, though neither party alluded to this fact a single time. They understood better than anyone that the young man could destroy them with a single thought.

Jiang Chen’s face softened slightly, declining further pursuit of

their concessions. “Like I said, I rescued you because I thought you of some use to me. If you’re not willing to accept that, say so now. I can take you back to the Myriad Puppets Pavilion at the next opportunity.”

Back to the Pavilion? Back to being a slave with a price tag? Their faces all changed. A fate like that would really be worse than death. Though the young man before them wasn’t easy to deal with, at least he didn’t look like the vicious sort.

“Let’s cut to the chase. I need some subordinates who can help me with various things. Though I can’t say that you’re amazingly superb, you’re at least sufficient for my purposes. Here, you can count yourselves as employees or subordinates. If you treat yourselves with respect, I will do the same. Furthermore, I have no desire to take away your permanent freedom. The longest I’ll need you for is a decade or two, though you yourself might not be willing to leave when the time comes.”

Truthfully, Jiang Chen hadn’t actually come up with the proper arrangements for these people just yet. But if he wanted to make a name for himself at the Veluriyam Capital, he needed a group of his own men. His fellow sect members from Regal Pill Palace lacked both the strength and the ability to share his burdens. He didn’t know the origins of these people, but at least they were all sage realm cultivators, with even the least amongst them in the earth sage realm. Although this kind of strength was insufficient to vie for hegemony in the Capital—truthfully they weren’t even third-rate, really—it was still better than the origin realm guys from the Regal Pill Palace.

The most important factor was Jiang Chen's inability to heavily use and yell at his comrades, but these people were free from that worry. Having saved their lives, Jiang Chen felt he had every right to command them for a mere decade or two. By the time he was set up at the Capital, they probably wouldn't want to leave any more.

"You have fifteen minutes to consider it. Remember, I don't need an insincere answer, only a choice made from the heart. If you think my conditions are unacceptable, there is no problem in bringing it up with me. On the other hand, feigning compliance while secretly acting in opposition will bear grave consequences," Jiang Chen said quite seriously.

The fifteen minutes passed by very quickly; the ten of them embroiled in their own thoughts. Evidently, the choice wasn't easy to make.

"I've thought it through. Ten or twenty years is nothing. I, Meng Redhair, am willing to follow you for even thirty or fifty years. The time spent is worth it in repaying your kindness." The red-haired man was first to reply.

"I, too, am willing," an old man of the sky sage realm also responded. In the world of martial dao, ten or twenty years would pass by with the flick of a finger. The lifespan of sage realm cultivators numbered in the thousands, often longer than two thousand years. Twenty years was really nothing. Furthermore, their rescue was now an established fact. If they took a step back and contemplated their return for eventual sale as a slave, that sort of horrible fate was easily visualized.

“Ah, well, let’s be done with it. I suppose it is a kind of silver lining to have this as the conclusion to a calamity in life.”

“Twenty years it is? I too wholeheartedly entrust myself to you.” With the first capitulation, a second soon followed. No one here was a fool. It was better to take the lighter consequence than the heavier. Twenty years of subordination versus a lifetime of servitude—it was a simple choice between the two.

Chapter 737: Lord of the Majestic Clan

However, Jiang Chen wasn't easily fooled. It was easy to claim loyalty, but it wasn't that easy to actually feel loyalty. "Everyone, I have no way of knowing how sincere you are, so I'm just going to ask one question: do you want me to use restrictions in your consciousness to restrict you until the day you are freed, or do you want to take the initiative and swear to the heavens that you'll serve me loyally? I'm not a greedy person. A mere twenty years is all I ask."

Everyone was overjoyed when they heard Jiang Chen's choice. Meng Redhair hastily asked, "Young master, will you truly unlock the restriction in our consciousness if we swear to the heavens?"

Everyone else were staring at Jiang Chen in surprise too. They obviously hadn't expected to be given such a pleasant choice. Both choices were restrictions of a sort, but the heaven's oath was far less strict than a restriction in one's consciousness. But the difference between the two restrictions were obvious.

It was true that a heaven's oath was extremely strong, but there wouldn't be any consequences as long as they didn't willingly go against their oath. However, a restriction in one's consciousness was different. Such a restriction meant that their lives were completely in the other party's hands. Even if they were to obey Jiang Chen's every whim, he could still kill them with a single thought if he felt like it. It was the same as a lit candle in the wilderness. The tiniest wind could threaten the flame. But if the candle was put inside a house, it wouldn't be extinguished as long as they didn't act stupid and blow it out themselves.

“That depends on your performance,” Jiang Chen smiled calmly. He wasn’t an easy person to bargain with. He was simply giving them a bite of the carrot so they would remain hopeful for the future. With this rule in place, it would be odd if they didn’t work hard for him.

“The time limit on your restriction depends on your behavior and your performance, but you still have to swear a heaven’s oath before I unlock your restrictions. After all, there are plenty of ungrateful people in this world, and I cannot say for sure if no such person exists among you. I may have saved your lives, but that won’t stop some of you from consciously ignoring that debt and focusing on the fact that I’m going to order you around for twenty years.”

“That’s unacceptable, that’s absolutely unacceptable!” Meng Redhair shook his head repeatedly. “It is only natural to repay one’s debt. Anyone who doesn’t do that is the worst of ingrates!”

“Yes, yes, we are all willing serve you from the bottom of our hearts. Being your subordinate for twenty years is 100 times better than serving as someone else’s slave forever. We all know that very well.”

Their words were pretty, but it didn’t deter Jiang Chen’s decision in the least. He smiled and waved his hands, “Actions speak louder than words. Oh right, please tell me who you guys are. As I’ve said earlier, I like honesty and detest half-heartedness.”

The ten began to introduce themselves to him. As he thought, a large majority of these former slaves were wandering cultivators. Seven out of ten of them were generic cultivators coming from all sorts of regions, some middle and some lower. Strictly speaking, the remaining three didn't count as wandering cultivators, but rather as sect disciples. One of them had suffered the same fate as the Regal Pill Palace and had been sold as a slave after being captured when his sect was destroyed. As for the remaining two, one of them had been baited into a trap while he was journeying, whereas the other guy was an even unluckier person who'd been traded as a bargaining chip after his sect had participated in a gamble and lost.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but sigh at the size of the world and its innumerable strangeness as he listened to their odd experiences. However, their background and identity gave Jiang Chen a little peace of mind. At the very least, none of these ten people seemed to have extraordinarily powerful backgrounds. The size of a person's background often determined the amount of their arrogance. It would be much easier to order them around if he didn't need to account for backlash. Of course, intimidation was also an important part of control. Jiang Chen understood that the stick alone wouldn't be enough to control these people. He must also offer them the carrot and make them genuinely acknowledge him. If they felt like they had found a home with him, they might not even be willing to leave even if he told them to get lost.

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The Majestic Clan was one of the twenty eight great clans in Veluriyam Capital. They were the highest ranking existence in Veluriyam Capital, second only to the seven emperors. Since the

seven emperors often secluded themselves from the world and abstained from personally participating in the management of Veluriyam Capital, the twenty eight clans were actually the true holders of power in Veluriyam Capital. Any one of these clans could summon the wind and the rain in the Capital.

Currently, the Majestic clan lord was secretly meeting a mysterious guest in his residence. There were only four men inside the secret room. The clan lord was seated at the master's seat. A casually dressed pill master was standing beside him.

Ini the guest's seat was an eighth level emperor realm cultivator. He wore flowing white robes and appeared unusually humble before the clan lord. He too had a pill master standing just beside him.

"Clan Lord, I can confirm that this pill is of good quality. I do believe that it's the Longevity Pill." The pill master next to the clan lord inspected the pill for a moment and put it back on the table before making his report.

The clan lord nodded slightly without batting an eyelid. Then, he looked at the guest sitting at the opposite side. "Brother Ke, this is indeed a very good pill. I can see that the Eternal Celestial Capital had reaped quite the profits from your invasion of the Myriad Domain," the clan lord smiled faintly.

The man dressed in flowing white robes sitting on the opposite side of the table was none other than a saint holy king of the Eternal Celestial Capital. He had arrived at Veluriyam Capital just that day to personally promote the Longevity Pill and open up

retail channels in Veluriyam Capital. The saint holy king looked very at ease even though the other party had brought up the subject of the Myriad Domain.

"Clan Lord, I can guarantee that this Longevity Pill will accomplish impressive sales figures once released into the open market. However, Veluriyam Capital has always stood alone, and we of Eternal Celestial Capital dare not push our own businesses in. That is why I have come to Veluriyam Capital to inquire about the possibility of opening up a trade route. Of course, the first group to pop into my mindwas none other than the Majestic Clan."

"Hehe. And are you planning to ask my clan to open the way for you?" The clan lord asked indifferently.

"Merely opening up the channels of trade isn't sustainable for a long period of time. I am here today with the Eternal Celestial Capital's utmost sincerity with me. Even sharing our profits is possible. If you support us, clan lord, then we are willing to let you manage the market in Veluriyam Capital on our behalf."

The clan lord's mask slipped just a little when he heard this. A gleam appeared in his eyes as he stared intently at Holy King Ke, obviously trying to peer into the latter's heart and figure out his true intentions. It was obvious that the clan lord couldn't quite believe that a free meal would drop from the sky and hit him on the head like this. The Longevity Pill was such an extraordinary pill. If his clan were to become the sole retailer in Veluriyam Capital, then they would basically monopolize the entire market. He could hardly imagine the sheer amount of profit they would rake in!

The Majestic Clan might be wealthy and rich, but who ever would begrudge having more money? Plus, this Longevity Pill was a breakthrough in the history of pill making. If this pill could be mass produced, then the profits it would bring were unimaginable. Even as a retailer, the profits they could earn would still be massive.

“Brother Ke, forgive me for being direct, but why would such a good offer land in my lap?” The clan lord was ultimately a man of great importance. He found it entirely beneath him to beat around the bush.

“Honored Clan Lord, I understand that this offer may come as a bit of a surprise. However, there is a reason behind our offer.” Holy King wasn’t in a hurry to seal the deal. The bait had been dangled, and it was now time to haggle. “Firstly, I don’t know many important figures in Veluriyam Capital. In fact, I am most familiar with you, my lord. Secondly, we are planning to open a trading channel in Veluriyam Capital, and you are without one of the best choices we have in terms of network and connections.”

The clan lord chuckled, “I won’t deny this, but being the best choice and the only choice are two different things, no? There must be another reason right, ole brother Ke?”

“My lord is wise. Our final reason is because we wish to borrow your network and status in Veluriyam Capital for a bit.”

“What do you mean?” The clan lord asked indifferently. Free

gifts could always be turned down, and he would see what his gifter requested from him before he made a decision.

"You and everyone else may be aware of this, but while we have eliminated the Regal Pill Palace, some of them have managed to escape our grasp. These people are an enormous hidden threat if they are not eliminated completely. Among these people, there is even one who holds an irreconcilable grudge with us. This man even went so far as to kill one of our holy kings..."

"You're speaking of the young man you are pursuing. What is his name again?" The clan lord had vaguely heard of this. It was just that he didn't pay too much attention to it. After all, this was all minor news for someone at his level.

"His name is Jiang Chen, and he's an extraordinarily cunning person. In fact, we suspect he has already infiltrated Veluriyam Capital. If that is the case, then our investigation attempts will be greatly obstructed since Veluriyam Capital is not a place where we can chase him down at will. If we give him time to grow powerful, he will inevitably become a huge threat to the Eternal Celestial Capital. That is why... I have come today for two reasons: one, to promote the Longevity Pill and two, to obtain a minimal right to arrest in Veluriyam Capital. Naturally, it would be best if our arrest is supported by the heads of Veluriyam Capital, and you are the best choice I can think of, my lord." Holy King Ke was quite gifted in eloquence. He wove half truths through his words and spoke as if with great sincerity. He didn't speak in a secretive manner and even snuck in some flattery while explaining his reasons.

As expected, Clan Lord Wang Ting pondered for a moment before raising an eyebrow, “Is that all?”

“Yes. Hunting down the remnants of the Regal Pill Palace is our only wish,” Saint Holy King nodded without hesitation. Of course, there was no way he was going to explain his reasons any further.

The clan lord nodded slightly, but gave a noncommittal response. Holy King Ke was rather experienced in the art of the deal. Now that all the demands had been aired, it was time to talk about splitting the profits. After all, how could he convince the other party to accept his wishes delightedly if he wasn’t willing to offer them a nice, juicy carrot? “Our master has personally given his word that anyone who can help the Eternal Celestial Capital in solving this problem would be given the retail rights of the Longevity Pill in Veluriyam Capital. We are willing to bear all the costs and give the retailer twenty percent of our profits.”

Twenty percent! It might not sound a lot, but it was almost sheer profit for the retailer. They didn’t need to bear any costs at all, other than the establishment of shops and the costs associated with the employees. This meant that they would be gaining this twenty percent for almost nothing. After all, the cost and fees necessary to sustain the shops were nearly negligible compared to the Longevity Pill’s priceless value.

Moreover, this pill was one of a kind product, and thus was ripe for a monopoly. In fact, the retailer didn’t even need to open a shop for this type of business to flourish! They only needed to sit at their homes and wait for the orders to come in. Their buyers would come present themselves and beg for a sale! This was the

benefit of a monopoly! To be honest, even ten percent profits to a retailer was a shocking sum already in this kind of business, much less twenty!

Chapter 738: Wave After Wave

Even the Majestic clan lord could feel his heart palpitate in eagerness in that moment. However, as the leader of a great clan, his appetite was one that would never be fully sated. He smiled faintly, “Thirty percent. For thirty percent, I’ll sign the contract here and now, without another word!”

The seller asks for the moon, the buyer counter-offers in the same vein. Since this was a transaction, one had to fight for the greatest benefits. Would it not be a waste if they didn’t latch on firmly to an opportunity presenting itself on a silver platter? The Majestic clan lord knew full well that they would have considered things from every angle before coming to him. They certainly wouldn’t settle on someone else without rhyme or reason.

Indeed, after muttering to himself for a moment, Holy King Ke said, “Thirty percent is far too high, my lord. Especially since we have to shoulder the manufacturing costs as well as the costs of transportation. Pills like these obviously cannot be transported by your everyday person, we would need masters, so costs will be very high. My lord, twenty percent is already a great show of sincerity.”

Indeed, as Holy King Ke said, twenty percent was already a great show of sincerity. The Majestic clan lord didn’t deny this point. With a smile at Holy King Mu, he said, “Ole brother, let me simply say this. I would sign the agreement for twenty percent as well, but I might not provide my full assistance. My sincerity depends on your own sincerity.”

Holy King Ke forced a smile on his face, “Twenty five, that’s my

upper limit. I beg the clan lord not to force me into a difficult spot. This is the highest I have been authorized to go. Thirty percent is beyond the scope of my authority."

There were only a few percentage point difference between twenty five and thirty. The Majestic clan lord was rather ambitious and very much wanted thirty percent. But then he thought better of it. If this is really as high as Holy King Ke can go, then the Eternal Celestial Capital would send someone else if I stand my ground too firmly. If that happens, the ones they'll negotiate with might not be our Majestic Clan...

After all, the Veluriyam Capital was big, with many great clans in it. The Majestic Clan was a well-known faction, but they weren't the only ones who had clout. With these thoughts, the Majestic clan lord smiled cheerfully. "Twenty five then, it's so decided."

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"Brother Jiang, did you say you want to open a pill store?" Wei Jie asked, a little startled.

"Indeed. I wonder if there is a decent storefront that House Wei can provide?"

Wei Jie said with a smile, "A storefront isn't actually a problem. House Wei has an abundance of properties in the capital, so that won't be an issue. Only, there's great competition in the pill market in the capital. The great pill stores are more or less entirely monopolized by the great clans. Even the next tier of pill stores are

supported by noble houses. As a result, in the capital, the profits to be had from pills are almost next to nothing."

It wasn't that Wei Jie didn't want to help. The competition in the pill market inside the capital was indeed very fierce. It was hard to tell how many pillmakers there were in the capital, even if one just counted the pill kings. Every pill king was supported by a powerful faction. Some formidable factions even had a number of pill kings in their ranks. These pillmaking factions were the big players in the capital's pill market. The lion's share of the profits went into their pockets, leaving only scraps for the others to fight over. It would be extraordinarily difficult for an outsider like Jiang Chen to even get a toehold in the pill market.

He was still new to the Capital, but he didn't doubt Wei Jie's words. Some things never change. No matter whose territory, no matter the market, the majority of the profits were always monopolized by a few. Back then in the tiny Eastern Kingdom, the Hall of Healing and two other factions had managed to corner off the pill market. He had seen the same when he travelled to the Skylaurel Kingdom.

As a power even stronger than first rank sects, Veluriyam Capital controlled countless territories and consumed an astronomical amount of pills. The profits to be had were certainly astounding. However, astounding profits didn't mean that just anyone could corner a share. Many pitfalls awaited an ordinary outsider trying to squeeze their way in, even if the big players didn't actively try to crush them. With so many pill stores around, why would someone come and buy pills in a tiny little shop?

“Young master Wei, I already have a preliminary plan on the matters of survival and development. I’m not asking for anything huge, a simple foothold will suffice. I will also pay a fixed amount for the required rent. How about it?” Jiang Chen had no desire to explain too much.

Wei Jie smiled wryly when he saw Jiang Chen’s attitude. “I can make the decision myself for an ordinary store, but I feel that it wouldn’t be showing you enough face. Let me ask my father first.”

……

“Open a pill store?” Wei Tianxiao, Wei Jie’s father, was greatly taken aback.

“Yeah,” Wei Jie repeated what Jiang Chen had told him.

“Open a pill store in the capital? Will that even work?” Wei Tianxiao’s smile also wry. “Even dragons bow down to snakes when far from home. Not to mention, he’s no mighty dragon when it comes to pillmaking, while the local magnates aren’t simple ground snakes either. It’d be too difficult for him to survive.”

“But he won’t change his mind no matter what. I think he might have a hidden ace no one expects! The Longevity Pill, for example?”

“The Longevity Pill? That’s impossible! If he refines the Longevity Pill, he’d definitely be exposing himself?” Wei Tianxiao

shook his head. “That’s absolutely impossible.”

“Indeed. The Regal Pill Palace might be a pill dao sect, but what kind of extraordinary pill could a puny fourth rank sect have?” Wei Jie was also skeptical. “Father, don’t we have a storefront in Farmer God Market?” Wei Jie probed.

“You want to give him that storefront?” Wei Tianxiao was stunned. Farmer God Market was a famous street market in the capital, even more famous than the Fish and Dragon District. That was because almost all the pill retail storefronts for the Capital and even many surrounding cities were gathered inside Farmer God Market. It was a paradise for pill merchants. Almost all the big pill players in the Capital had pill stores there, and all of them core shops. House Wei also had a storefront in Farmer God Market. However, House Wei had always been tepid when it came to pills. They owned the property rights to the storefront, but they often sold other items there instead of pills. But still, profits had always been mediocre.

“Father, that shop isn’t very useful in our hands anyway. Why not let him give it a try?” Since they wanted to rope in Jiang Chen, that was actually a most excellent opportunity.

He would be labelled as man of House Wei if he was to use a store belonging to House Wei, whether House Wei participated in the venture or not. Their mutual relationship would then very naturally become a firm collaboration. Wei Tianxia became contemplative. He would never have considered it for an ordinary person. However, he just couldn’t see through this Jiang Chen. He could only feel a boundless potential from this young man, as

though nothing was impossible.

Breaking through the Eternal Celestial Capital's encirclement again and again, exterminating several thousand people from the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Celestial Sect... Now he had come to Veluriyam Capital and caused House Wei's mortal enemy, House Sikou, to suffer a great loss almost immediately. These glorious achievements were far from what one would expect from a young man coming from a fourth rank sect. And yet, he'd accomplished them.

And now this person wanted to open a pill store in the Capital, who said he would necessarily fail? It was worth giving a young man like this a chance to try! Wei Tianxiao smiled. He remarked, "Jie'er, invite him to my residence. I want a face-to-face conversation with him. You and he are friends, so you can only play the part of the good guy. Only your father can play the part of the bad guy. Let me be the villain."

"Father, you..." Wei Jie stared.

"Don't worry. I won't hinder him. However, since he's going to use our store, we're bound to talk about how to split the profits! Our business has been declining for these years, so this might actually be an opportunity."

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Jiang Chen also knew that Wei Tianxiao, the lord of House Wei, would certainly request to see him. This was an eighth level

emperor realm man in charge of a noble house, and furthermore, someone he had to meet sooner or later.

The meeting proceeded in an extremely relaxed atmosphere. Wei Tianxiao was someone who knew how to conduct himself well. He never broached matters outside the subject at hand. He merely told Jiang Chen many secrets about the pill market in the capital, his undertones hinting that doing pill business inside the Capital wouldn't be so easy an affair. In the end, both of them reached a very happy agreement. House Wei would provide the storefront and the raw material for the pills, while Jiang Chen provided the manpower and the refining techniques. The profits would be split evenly between them.

The negotiations went without a hitch. Jiang Chen didn't care unduly about the division of profits. When Wei Tianxiao mentioned splitting half and half, he agreed with barely any hesitation. This took Wei Tianxiao slightly aback. He couldn't but admire this young man's daring and vision. He had been prepared for a long bout of haggling. He would have even accepted forty percent for House Wei. He didn't think Jiang Chen would actually agree without a second thought.

Both of them happily reached a verbal agreement, and agreed they would sign a formal contract after Jiang Chen proceeded with his initial preparations. Jiang Chen was about to take his leave at the end of the negotiations when the guards reported a visitor at the door.

"Lord Wei, I came charging over, so don't you go blaming me!." A voice rolled in like rumbling thunder, very much at odds with

House Wei's tranquil style. One could know just from the sound of his voice that he was used to forcing his will upon others. He didn't curb his manners even when visiting someone else's house.

"Is it the lord of House Tong?" Wei Tianxiao walked outside after a momentary pause. Jiang Chen and the rest of House Wei also followed behind him. Wei Jie secretly transmitted his voice to Jiang Chen, introducing this visitor, "House Tong is also a ninth rank aristocratic house with a very high status in the Capital. It's one of the noble houses beneath the Majestic Clan. As for the Majestic Clan, they fly under Great Emperor Asura's flag. Great Emperor Asura is nominally third among the seven great emperors, but his real influence actually ranks second."

Wei Jie's introduction was very detailed. Jiang Chen understood the situation as soon as he heard. "Is House Wei in the same camp as them?" Jiang Chen inquired.

Wei Jie shook his head with a wry smile, "House Wei is closest to the Coiling Dragon Clan. The Coiling Dragon Clan is a faction under Great Emperor Peafowl's banner. When it comes down to it, our House Wei should be in Great Emperor Peafowl's camp."

Jiang Chen could read between the lines. No wonder Wei Jie had been so heartbroken when Great Emperor Peafowl's true disciple, young master Fan, had passed away. It turned out they had ties to each other. And judging from Wei Jie's tone, the relationship between the second-ranked Emperor Asura and the first-ranked Emperor Peafowl weren't entirely harmonious. As a result, relations between the factions under their flags were likely to be very strained. For that reason, it was startling for the lord of House

Tong to visit a house that belonged in the Emperor Asura's camp.

Wei Tianxiao had already begun to engage Lord Tong in small talk as Wei Jie transmitted information to Jiang Chen. "Which wind has blown Brother Tong this way today?"

"House Lord Wei, I wouldn't be here for no good reason. I came here this time to rent the store your house owns in Farmer God Market."

Both Wei Jie and Jiang Chen were startled at that. They looked at each other, both of them baffled. What an admirable coincidence! Someone came to rent the store just moments after they concluded their negotiations? Judging from Wei Jie's flabbergasted expression, it was clearly not something House Wei had planned for in advance.

Chapter 739: The Goal of Establishing Himself in Veluriyam Capital

“Heh heh, Brother Tong, what an unfortunate timing. We’d just decided to implement some new plans for that store. I fear Brother Tong has made a trip for nothing.” Rather than beating around the bush, Tong Tianxiao made his position clear by refusing directly.

“House Lord Wei, you’re not deceiving me on purpose, are you? That shop’s business has always been, well to say the least, lackluster. If you rent it to me, I can guarantee at least the double your current profit. Are you sure you can find that much success with anything else? In Farmer God Market, it’s a dead end if you don’t deal in pills.” The leader of House Tong nattered on as though he were releasing firecrackers. His words came out in rapid fire, persuasive, yet still sounding very arrogant.

In contrast, Wei Tianxiao was slow and leisurely, “This is my house’s business; there’s no need for Brother Tong to be unduly worried.”

The leader of House Tong chuckled. “Tell me the secret, what are you planning? You’re not thinking about selling pills, are you? Your House Wei, hehe, better forget about pills…”

Those words completely crossed the boundary of rudeness. Even Wei Jie’s face became frosty. However, Wei Tianxiao was still as tranquil as a drifting cloud. “Won’t Brother Tong know the answer as soon as we open for business?”

The lord of House Tong rolled his eyes, then flashed a confident smile. “No matter what you’re planning, you’re still going to end up leasing it to me! Hahaha, farewell.” Who knew where his confidence came from? He threw a casual salute at Wei Tianxiao, then shook his sleeves and left unceremoniously. Such rude actions didn’t seem at all like a conversation between the leaders of two equally ranked aristocratic houses. This House Lord Tong had almost seemed like he was addressing an inferior. Even one as shrewd as Wei Tianxiao frowned slightly. He was also obviously dissatisfied with House Lord Tong’s discourtesy.

Wei Jie was a fiery young man. He was furious seeing such rudeness, and shouted loudly, “House Lord Tong, I have no idea where your confidence comes from, but our house will never rent that storefront to you, even if we have to let it rot there!”

The lord of House Tong had already stepped outside the door when his figure suddenly froze. He turned his head back abruptly, a cold glint flashing in his eyes. “Isn’t a mere junior like you afraid of the consequences of running your mouth?”

Wei Jie didn’t back down, “Coming to our house and showing off, shouldn’t you Tongs be mindful of running your mouth? Why should I be afraid in my own house?!”

House Lord Wei actually smiled in his fury. He was about to speak when Wei Tianxiao’s face suddenly darkened. “Lord Tong, forgive me for not escorting you any further. Farewell!”

Wei Tianxiao was obviously angry as well. He’d courteously called his guest “Brother Tong” till now, but now his title had

changed. Moreover, the two weren't even in the same camp. Now that this Lord Tong had forsaken any semblance of courtesy, Wei Tianxiao would naturally not keep tolerating his mannerless behavior. House Lord Tong smiled with unbridled arrogance. He nodded and looked at House Wei's father and son with a gaze charged with meaning. He smiled in contempt, and left without a word.

"Wise nephew Jiang, don't worry, we of House Wei are men of our words. We'd never rent the store to someone else now that we've reached an agreement, to say nothing about a house from a different camp like House Tong." Wei Tianxiao looked in Jiang Chen's direction. His words were meant to allay the latter's fears.

Jiang Chen smiled, he didn't doubt House Wei's sincerity. He said with a nod, "Uncle Wei, I'll take a stroll around Farmer God Market first."

Wei Tianxiao thought a moment, then nodded. "That works too." He looked at Wei Jie, "Jie'er, you should accompany wise nephew Jiang."

After taking their leave of Wei Tianxia, Jiang Chen and Wei Jie left the Wei manor and headed towards Farmer God Market. Farmer God Market was one of the three famous street markets in the capital, and was even more famous than Fish and Dragon District. It could almost be said to be the most famous market in the Capital, and was by far the most bustling, thriving one. This wasn't just the heart of pill provisioning for the Capital. Its influence even spread to seven or eight cities in the surrounding area. Rare were the places that flourished as much as this one in all

those cities. On top of that, in the wake of the pill business, every business and profession prospered here. Pills, talismans, spirit beasts, formations, spirit stones, weapons and armor...

Every business related to cultivation was included in Farmer God Market. All sorts of stores were laid out in endless rows. It was a sight that bedazzled the eye. House Wei was clearly no stranger to the market. Although they didn't play a preeminent role there, and were somewhat marginalized when it came to the pill business, House Wei still had other properties and businesses after all. Otherwise, how would they be able to afford the upkeep for a ninth rank aristocratic house? That being said, Jiang Chen was clearly focusing on the pill market.

Wei Jie explained things carefully to him along the way, giving him many details about all the heavyweights of pill dao inside the Market. In Veluriyam Capital, since the seven great emperors stayed away from mundane vying, the core of the Farmer God Market was controlled by the twenty eight great clans, as well the mighty aristocratic houses under these great clans.

In this Market, there were more than a dozen first-tier pill sellers, all of them controlled by the great clans. There were even more second-tier ones, numbering in the several dozens, perhaps even more than a hundred. Almost all of them were dominated by the aristocratic houses. The third-tier ones were too many to count, numbering in the hundreds, large and small. The number of these stores seemed very high. But compared to the enormous number of cultivators in the capital, as well as the cultivators from the surrounding cities who came to visit, the supply from these pill stores was still far from enough to meet the demand. After all, there were simply too many cultivators in the various cities in the

area. In all seriousness, they were even more numerous than the stars in the sky. Of that, Jiang Chen had no doubt whatsoever.

He could remember how prosperous the pill market was even back in the tiny Eastern Kingdom, and how many pill sellers it could host. Veluriyam Capital's area of influence was more than ten thousand times bigger, while the realms and levels of the cultivators here were many times more sophisticated. There was definitely an astronomical demand for pills.

"Brother Jiang, if we were to include all the small operations, the Farmer God Market has at least ten thousand shops. Any single shop is supported in some form from a faction. Our House previously had a pill store that could barely make the cut as a second tier. Afterwards, because of our pill king's sudden death, House Wei's pill business instantly suffered a devastating decline. Now, several years later, we're in an awkward position. The profits are too small, so our House has gradually stopped our participation in the pill market."

It wasn't because of a lack of desire to participate. Rather, it was simply impossible to do pill business on a large scale without a pill king in charge. There might be a little profit, but it would be like a drop in the ocean for House Wei. House Wei had always devoted their efforts to inviting another guest pill king, but for various reasons, their wish never came true. This put House Wei in an extremely awkward situation when it came to the pill business. They clearly had a top-notch store in Farmer God Market, but they could only use it to conduct other business.

Jiang Chen merely listened and looked around without saying

much. He nodded after Wei Jie's presentation. "Let's go, we'll have a look at every store."

When playing the pill market, a lone dragon like him would never prevail over the local snakes if he were to try the conventional way. Know thine self, know thine enemy and you will be victorious in a thousand battles. Jiang Chen decided to first observe the business models the others were using, then strive to find a model different from theirs in order to survive.

Gain a footing, earn money, expand, build strength. These were Jiang Chen's successive goals. After experiencing the Regal Pill Palace's disaster, Jiang Chen realized very clearly everything would be nothing but a fleeting dream without powerful backing. Enough power and strength to evoke respect, these were the only resources one could build a footing on. A clear example of this was the Eternal Celestial Capital and then the Ninesuns Sky Sect. They clearly knew he might very well have escaped to the Veluriyam Capital already, yet they still didn't dare barge in. What did that mean? This was precisely the best proof of power. When the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Great Scarlet Mid Region massacred their way into the Myriad Domains, they didn't show the slightest scruple; they did whatever they wanted to do. However, they didn't have the guts to run rampant in Veluriyam Capital. Even a noble house therein wasn't something they dared strongarm.

These things had left a deep impression on Jiang Chen. He secretly vowed to put down roots in the Capital and develop a faction of his own. Only then could he could he cultivate in ease. Only then could he stop going on the run time and time again, uprooting and moving repeatedly. From the Eastern Kingdom to

the Skylaurel Kingdom, to the Precious Tree Sect, then again to the Regal Pill Palace... He'd been forced to move almost every time because he had been passive. The primary reason was that his power was lacking, that he was too insignificant in front of the then absolute powers. In direct contrast, Veluriyam Capital was an apex level colossus even in the Upper Eight Regions. This was undoubtedly the most optimal choice for Jiang Chen, whether to rescue his father Jiang Feng, rescue Mu Gaoqi and Elder Yun Nie, or rebuild the Regal Pill Palace in the future. All of these required the backing of a formidable power.

Without the support from a mighty faction, every plan was but a fleeting dream. A life of always running away like a stray dog might help sharpen himself, but ultimately, it was too depressing when all was said and done. And so, engaging in the pill business was the first step of his goal in establishing himself in the Capital!

Wei Jie was indeed offering his full support. He took Jiang Chen to store after store. The two of them visited every first-tier and second-tier store that day. Even some more distinctive third-tier stores weren't spared his presence. Jiang Chen certainly gained a lot that day.

"Brother Jiang, there are still four stores I haven't taken you to. These four stores are the biggest top-tier players, they control the pill market's lifeline in the Capital. They won't look any different from first rate stores on the surface, but some top-level pills will only appear in these four stores."

Jiang Chen hadn't gone to those stores, but it was hard to count just how times he'd heard people mention them in the market

throughout the day. Big players monopolizing the market wasn't something Jiang Chen was unfamiliar with. "There's no need to go to these four stores. Our present goal is still far from that level. Let's first set our sights on the second or third tier, then strive for the first tier when we get the opportunity."

Jiang Chen didn't want to promise Wei Jie miracles. As a matter of fact, with Jiang Chen's talent in the dao of pill-making, he could force these four big players to close up shop with only half his talent, to say nothing about first tier stores. However, he would obviously not do so immediately. With his current strength and manpower, the backlash of such a grand move wasn't something he could withstand. The nail that sticks out is certain to get hammered down. If he recklessly attracted attention to himself, then they could casually crush him with the wag of a finger. When all was said and done, mighty players in the pill market would never be lacking in support from mighty martial powers. Jiang Chen was cooperating with House Wei at present, but even if House Wei threw its whole weight behind him, it was merely a noble house in the end. It was not a great clan, to say nothing of the great emperors.

Chapter 740: Inner Turmoil at House Wei

Slow and steady wins the race; no great city was built in a day. No matter how much expertise I have, I can't apply it without sufficient strength to back me up. That fact had been proven numerous times in the past. He'd thought the Longevity Pill to be something insignificant, but the consequences it had given rise to were astonishing. Though it wasn't the main reason for the joint invasion of the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Great Scarlet Mid Region, its existence had caused the invaders to focus on Regal Pill Palace.

However, the lives of Elder Yun Nie and his peers had been spared due to it as well. Regal Pill Palace still had a remnant of life left, unlike the other sects which had been completely exterminated. The world was transient. Good and evil accompanied each other in unpredictable ways. Learning from his past mistakes, Jiang Chen decided to be more cautious. "Young master Wei, let's go take a look at your family's storefront," Jiang Chen suggested with interest.

Wei Jie had no objections. Through the trouble with the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder, he'd come to realize the extent of his difficulties, both internal and external. He urgently desired to find a breakthrough point, and Jiang Chen's appearance seemed a stroke of providence. If he could really start a pill business with Jiang Chen, both he and his father would gain a more dominant voice in the affairs of the house.

The reason for the various voices of dissent within the house was because all of its businesses were bottlenecked, or even regressing. It was enough for some members to hatch plots against Wei Jie. As

a ninth ranked aristocratic house, House Wei's members were extraordinarily sharp at predicting crises. It was normal for their hearts to waver if the house showed signs of going downhill. If House Wei were to be demoted to an eighth ranked, or even seventh ranked house, its position in the Veluriyam Capital would be greatly affected, and it would even risk being sidelined. Thanks to these considerations, Wei Jie had no shortage of motivation.

Jiang Chen needed House Wei to cover for him, and House Wei needed Jiang Chen to be a game-changer. This mutual necessity was one of the main reasons that Jiang Chen's and Wei Jie's relationship had developed so quickly.

"Brother Jiang, the store is up ahead," Wei Jie pointed forward.

Jiang Chen scanned his surroundings and was a little surprised to see that they were in one of the most prosperous parts of the Farmer God District. House Wei has stores located in such a prime location? How unexpected. To think that even with such an advantage, their pill business hadn't flourished... what a waste. As they walked nearer, Wei Jie's face colored imperceptibly. He pulled lightly on Jiang Chen's arm, and the two of them ducked behind the guardian lion statue of a nearby store.

A group of people walked out from House Wei's store. One of them was Wei Jie's fifth uncle, Wei Tiantong, as well as his son Wei Xiu. They were accompanied by several elders from House Wei. Though Jiang Chen didn't know the elders' identities, their unique dress gave away their origin. Most importantly, the House Wei members were gathered around one person in particular. It was a young man some twenty years of age, clad in luxurious

robes. There was a hint of regality in his expression, and the House Wei members appeared to give him their full respect. Wei Jie frowned a little at the scene.

The group walking out had clearly not noticed Wei Jie and Jiang Chen. Several of them were talking and laughing. Foremost among them was Wei Jie's cousin, Wei Xiu, whose tone oozed flattery. "Young master Wang, your word is as good as done. We will definitely rent this store to House Tong," Wei Xiu groveled.

The young man hummed in agreement, but ignored Wei Xiu. "I hear that the one who still has final say at House Wei is still Wei Tianxiao," he turned to Wei Tiantong.

"As the master of the house, of course he has the final say on many things. We don't bother arguing with him on smaller things, but a store in the Farmer God District is an important matter. Neither I nor the house elders will allow him to mess about." Offering a placatory smile, Wei Tiantong tossed a few looks at the house elders, who nodded successively in agreement.

"If that's so, then I thank your hard work in this matter. I will inform father of all these details once I return, including your attitudes of cooperation. If all goes according to plan, father will be sure to personally host a banquet of gratitude," the Wang surnamed youth smiled serenely.

"The lord of the Majestic Clan has much to attend to. It would be an honor for us to receive such an invitation," Wei Tiantong declared hurriedly.

The Wang surnamed youth nodded slightly at the words, but said nothing further as the group departed.

Wei Jie's face was very pale behind the statue. He had inadvertently stumbled on a great secret. Its contents shocked and terrified him. "Brother Jiang, there may be a change in the proceedings," his tone was grave.

"That youth... is from the Majestic Clan?" During Jiang Chen's time at House Wei, the lord of House Tong had come to visit. The Majestic Clan had been mentioned in conversation then.

House Tong was one of several houses under the Majestic Clan's command. Moreover, the Wang surnamed youth was the son of the clan lord. Putting the details together, Jiang Chen understood the chain of events. So it wasn't House Tong alone that was after the store. The Majestic Clan was involved as well!

No wonder Wei Jie was so pale. This new development was wholly unexpected. Wei Tianxiao easily had the authority to refuse House Tong's request, since both ninth ranked aristocratic houses were evenly matched. There was no fear of offending anyone. But as one of the strongest clans in the Veluriyam Capital, the Majestic Clan possessed strength which House Wei could not hope to resist.

From what they had just seen, some House Wei members obviously intended to change their allegiances, flocking to the Majestic Clan banner. More incredibly, both house lord Wei Tianxiao and heir Wei Jie had been unaware of it. And now, there

were plans to reduce father and son to figureheads. Decisions were being made before approval was granted. Judging from their tone, House Wei members would stop at nothing to appease the Majestic Clan. They were even willing to band together in opposition against the nominal master of the house. For Wei Jie, the situation had worsened beyond belief.

Used to various conflicts, Jiang Chen knew that House Wei's circumstances were about to come to a head. "Young master Wei, is your father completely oblivious about all of this?" Jiang Chen couldn't resist the question. Being in the dark, the Wei father and son were at a clear disadvantage. If things were allowed to continue, it was likely Jiang Chen himself would be dragged in as well. At that point, cooperation would be out of the question.

"Let us return first, brother Jiang," Wei Jie replied in a low voice. He too felt danger creep up on all sides.

Jiang Chen was no stranger to the grand stage, so he wasn't in the habit of retreating at the slightest sign of a problem. Aside from the connection to House Wei, he currently had no other options for higher society. There were many other houses, true, but it would be hard for one of them to accept him. Starting from scratch? That was even more absurd. Though the Veluriyam Capital appeared a free city, the hierarchy between social castes was quite defined. As an outsider with no background here, he would be devoured instantly regardless of how unassuming he was. The only way to grow was to build relations with a native faction.

Wei Jie's expression was heavy all throughout the return trip.

“Brother Jiang, I am very sorry. These developments are quite unexpected. As you’ve seen, the circumstances of our house are very complicated at the moment. Though my father has some grasp of the situation, a small change may have great effects. Sometimes, it is hard to deal with things even when you know what is happening. For example, I was poisoned a while back. Father’s investigation led to my fifth uncle, but he couldn’t do anything without evidence. Furthermore, house matters are actually decided on by six people currently. My father is the master of the house, but doesn’t hold absolute power.” Wei Jie had nothing further to hide given how things had progressed. He explained House Wei’s plight in detail. “Brother Jiang, if this blows up, both my father and I may lose our position in the house. So, I understand if you want to back out now.” Wei Jie added honestly after thinking for a moment.

‘Backing out now’ was not Jiang Chen’s style. He would have no compunctions about it if they had faked warmth with him, but Wei Jie had treated him with honesty and sincerity in their friendship. “Though I couldn’t take a look inside, your store’s location is quite amazing. I have my mind set on it.” Jiang Chen’s words were not a direct response, but they expressed his sentiment.

Wei Jie was overjoyed. “You are truly a chivalrous man, brother Jiang. It is no surprise that you came to the rescue of your fellow sect members, despite the distance, despite the difficulty,” he praised.

“Let us spare the niceties, young master Wei. First describe to me the decision making process within your house. Which six people are part of it? How are they related to each other…” Internal change was needed first to achieve a reversal. If the problems

within House Wei couldn’t be suppressed, taking over their store would be wishful thinking.

Wei Jie went over the details with Jiang Chen. At House Wei, there were six people with executive power, including house lord Wei Tianxiao and second-in-command Wei Tiantong. Being second-in-command meant that if something were to happen to Wei Tianxiao, Wei Tiantong would rightfully take over his role as house lord. In addition, there were four house elders.

Only one of the elders was indubitably loyal to Wei Tianxiao—his own uncle, Wei Jie’s grand-uncle. Out of the other three, one was Wei Tiantong’s confidante, and the other two generally held a neutral position. From today’s events, however, both of the neutral elders had seemed persuaded by Wei Tiantong. They would not have appeared at House Wei’s store otherwise, nor would they have cavorted with the young master of the Majestic Clan!

Chapter 741: The Deviant Pill Faction

The news that Wei Jie brought back depressed Wei Tianxiao greatly. It was as if someone had just gut-punched him.. hard. He'd always known Wei Tiantong was up to some petty tricks, but he hadn't imagined the situation to be this severe. Among the six decision-makers in the clan, four was on Wei Tiantong's side. Setting aside Wei Tiantong himself, two of the three other clan elders had always been neutral before. Prior to this, they had even showed inklings of leaning towards Wei Tianxiao. Their new leaning towards Wei Tiantong signified a problem.

"Father, there won't be problems with third great-uncle, right?" Wei Jie asked carefully.

"Your great-uncle is my very own uncle. There is no need to worry. He is absolutely reliable."

"If the six people are half-and-half, father should have the initiative again, no?" Wei Jie wondered.

"Hmm. Before now, it was always your third great-uncle and me against Wei Tiantong and his confidante. With the other two maintaining neutrality, the balance was maintained. As the house lord, I could keep things under control."

"So if we win one of the three other clan elders over, we can turn the tables on them?" Jiang Chen piped up as he listened in.

"That's right. I will personally visit Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng

tonight. They've always been dependable and loyal in the past. Why are they joining up with the Majestic Clan, with whom we've never gotten along with?" Wei Tianxiao nodded, smiling.

"Why else could it be? Because of the unexpected passing of Young Lord Fan, everyone thinks the lineage of Emperor Peafowl will fall by the wayside. Considering the rapid expansion of Emperor Asura's lineage in recent years, his death has tipped the balance quite a bit into the opposite direction. People like to ride on others' coattails. This is very normal," Wei Jie snorted softly, his words disdainful.

The Majestic Clan was one of the greatest clans under Emperor Asura's banner. Amongst the twenty-eight prominent clans in the Veluriyam Capital, it was one of the top three. Its underlings included not only House Tong, but House Sikou as well, with whom House Wei had a death feud. House Wei was itself under the jurisdiction of the Coiling Dragon Clan, similarly one of the top three. In the past, it had unquestionably been the foremost clan among them all. But as the leading clan aligned with Emperor Peafowl, the Coiling Dragon Clan had walked a troubled path in recent years. Its position as the foremost clan was now quite precarious.

As challengers, the Majestic Clan and the others exerted a large amount of threat and pressure on the Coiling Dragon Clan. As one of the core factions beneath the afflicted Coiling Dragon Clan, House Wei could not help but share in its thorny situation. For House Wei, this was most unacceptable, and the reason for many members' change of heart. Though it looked peaceful on the surface, Veluriyam Capital was terrifyingly treacherous as the shadows of intrigue and conflict lengthened. Inter-faction conflict

in the Capital held many dangerous shoals beneath the waves. Like sailing against the current, lack of progress meant regression. The competition was exceedingly brutal.

Jiang Chen was not in a position to comment on House Wei's problems. However, from what he could see, as the house lord, Wei Tianxiao bore a significant amount of the responsibility. The house was a Coiling Dragon core ally, but Wei Tianxiao hadn't received help and attention in his moment of need. It seemed even his relationship with the clan itself was questionable. Moreover, as the master of the house, he hadn't fully grasped all of the power in House Wei. This further heightened his problematic control. No matter what the reason was, Wei Tianxiao wasundeniable culpable for the current situation.

Of course, it was ultimately an internal matter for the house—Jiang Chen had no right to point fingers. Now that the key to the problem was clear, he had to start from the two neutral elders if he wanted to change the situation. "Uncle, you said the elders haven't always sided with Wei Tiantong. There must be a reason for their sudden change. If we tackle the source of the change directly, there should be room for us to salvage the situation."

"Father, between Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng, we only need to convert one to stabilize the situation," Wei Jie urged. "They still think everything is under wraps, so there should only be a few precautions in place. There would be far more trouble if they knew we knew…"

Jiang Chen didn't say anything more. It was not right for him to interfere overmuch in House Wei's affairs. If Wei Tianxiao

couldn’t even take care of his household’s issues, their business relationship was due for a reevaluation. Unruffled by the events besetting House Wei, Jiang Chen returned to the hideout. He had his own things to do. From researching the stores within Farmer God District, Jiang Chen had gotten a rough understanding of the Veluriyam Capital’s pill market as a whole.

Be it high-end pills or low, the pill market in Veluriyam Capital was mouthwateringly large. However, it would be insurmountably difficult for an outsider like him to carve out a slice of the pie as well. Even if he had the support of House Wei, it was difficult enough to achieve a large amount of growth in a short time, not to mention trying to become a first-rate store. No, what he needed was specialty and exclusivity. This was the strategy Jiang Chen had hatched after much consideration.

Expanding by-the-book wouldn’t cut it. If he wanted to grow quickly in the market, he would have to do the unexpected and walk his own path, teeter on a knife’s edge. The Longevity Pill would have been a very unique pill to sell, but its production would be a personal identifier. To refine the Longevity Pill now would be akin to turning himself in. It would be tantamount to suicide.

There were many recipes for legendary pills in Jiang Chen’s memory. However, it was hard for him to find a recipe that was suitable for the Veluriyam Capital which he could also openly produce.

It was vital that his identity not be revealed via his pills. He didn’t want to step on the toes of the larger factions in the city,

either, at least not enough for the major pill producers to crack down on him. He just wanted to survive and flourish between in the gaps. Recalling the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles inspired him. In the pill decomposition contest that he'd taken part in, there was a pill called the Skyheart Nirvana Pill. It was a representative example of a pill from the Deviant Pill Faction. As a school, the Deviant Pill Faction stood out among others as being extraordinary.

Pill masters from the Deviant Pill Faction favored using medicine in unusual ways, and commonly had rich imaginations. Their work was often unorthodox upon first glance, but made sense after some consideration. Masters from this faction were typically romantics at heart. They pursued eclecticism, and made it a point to differentiate themselves. The Deviant Pill Faction was sometimes described as a cultivation deviation. However, one couldn't help but accord it respect in the pill world. Though members of the school were rare, each master that rose from the school became a legend in their respective era.

The pill market at Veluriyam Capital had pills from every school but the Deviant Pill Faction. Here, the market for their uncommon pills was still untapped. Thus, they were the style of pills Jiang Chen decided to focus on.

There weren't many pills that belonged to the Deviant Pill Faction, but each pill that did was unique and irreplaceable. The Skyheart Nirvana Pill was the most widely circulated among them, but its level was still a little low. Perhaps it was appropriate in the Myriad Domain, but the Veluriyam Capital was a much bigger stage. Here, the Skyheart Nirvana Pill could only be described as a motley selection. But that was no problem. Jiang Chen picked out

several other definitive pill recipes belonging to the school from his memory.

The Hexarune Black Dragon Pill for example, was useful to cultivators in ascending realms. Jiang Chen had helped Elder Yun Nie solve the issues related to its creation shortly after arriving at the Regal Pill Palace. The pill was widely applicable to sage realm cultivators looking to break through the shackles of martial dao.

There was risk in advancing one's cultivation at any level. For those not as confident in their abilities, the Hexarune Black Dragon Pill was very useful. Using the pill during a cultivation breakthrough was akin to buying insurance. It would greatly reduce the risk to the cultivator. Naturally, Jiang Chen was not satisfied with merely the Hexarune Black Dragon Pill. He wanted to increase its level, and refine the Heptarune True Dragon Pill. Though it was only the addition of one rune, a major step had to be added to the creation process. It made all the difference to the level of the pill. The improved Heptarune Pill was useful for sage realm cultivators in their breakthrough into the emperor realm. Furthermore, the teachings of the Deviant Pill Faction demanded the use of unconventional materials, resulting in cheaper costs. The school did not solely seek to be contrary. Reductions in the cost of materials was a major part of its goals. All else held equal, the pill that was cheaper to make held the advantage.

For any orthodox member of the school, cost reduction was their greatest ambition. Though some nonconformists liked to apply the label to themselves, they did not truly follow the school's teachings of pursuing innovation for the sake of innovation. In addition to the breakthrough pill, Jiang Chen also planned to make some antitoxin pills with varying levels of strength. Pills that protected

against poisons were never unpopular. Since the pills of the Deviant Pill Faction had lower costs, he had a competitive advantage in their pricing, especially against pills of the same level.

Furthermore, Jiang Chen had also set his sights on berserk pills—by rousing one's potential, these pills could drastically increase combat ability for a short period of time. These pills were basically instant performance enhancements. Though their effect did not sound appealing to the mainstream, in actuality, the pills tended to be quite popular. Yet, the pills seemed to be scarce in Veluriyam Capital. There were few to no stores that offered them. This evidently presented an opportunity.

Finally, there was a fourth category of pills that was equally important and that the Capital happened to lack at the moment: cosmetic pills. Amongst the cultivators at the Capital, men outnumbered women. In fact, it could be said that the entire city was ruled by men. The modest number of female cultivators barely controlled any power. But, this didn't mean that there was no demand for cosmetic pills. The Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill only preserved a few decades of youthfulness, and yet the crazy chain reaction it had set off at the Skylaurel Kingdom was unforgettable to Jiang Chen. If he could present a similar pill that lasted for hundreds, even a thousand years, it would be sought after that much more!

Chapter 742: Jiang Chen Strikes

With all this decided, Jiang Chen threw himself into the anxious work of preliminary preparations.

But on this day, Wei Jie suddenly visited him and brought him an update. “I’m really sorry to bother you so urgently, Brother Jiang. My father’s talked with Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng and found no problems with their loyalty to the family, but it did seem like they’ve received some benefits from Wei Tiantong. Also, they all seem to have something to do with that pill master.”

However, Jiang Chen wasn’t too surprised by the news. He’d guessed that Wei Tiantong’s pill master was likely a pill king who had concealed his true strength. It would be easy for a pill king who could refine something like the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder, and have Wei Tiantong cover things up for him, to toy with two house elders. He flashed a smile, “Let me guess: one of the elders’ direct descendants or perhaps even the elders themselves have caught some sort of sickness or poison that this pill master can cure, right?”

Wei Jie looked startled, “How do you know?”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “Acts of goodwill and favor aren’t really all that novel. It’s obvious at first glance that that pill master isn’t a good person, and I’m guessing that all of this is but a ploy by Wei Tiantong. In fact, this pill master may very well be an enemy spy himself.”

Wei Jie remained silent for a long time after he heard this. The possibility sounded unbelievable at first, but it somehow seemed to have a grain of truth if he took the time to think it through. Wei Tiantong was only the second-in-command of House Wei. Under normal circumstances, he would never become the house lord of House Wei. In addition, this pill master was dead set on serving Wei Tiantong for some reason instead of Wei Tianxiao!

It was obvious to an outsider like Jiang Chen that this was an abnormal choice. Even if Wei Tiantong had the ambition or even the hope of taking the position of house lord from Wei Tianxiao, it still wasn't a reason for a pill master to serve him with such unswerving loyalty. Jiang Chen could deduce with even his toes that another force must be pulling the strings from behind the scenes. In fact, he suspected that the problems the elders were facing might very well have been orchestrated by this pill master himself.

"Young master Wei, do you know what is troubling your two family elders?" Jiang Chen needed to understand the situation before he could treat them.

Wei Jie hurriedly answered, "Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng weren't going to say anything at first, but they finally answered after my father questioned them repeatedly. Elder Zhuo has a grandson who's encountered a bottleneck at third level sage realm. His chances of breaking through to earth sage realm aren't high. It seems that the pill master can solve this problem and raise Elder Zhuo's grandson's chances by twenty to thirty percent. As for Elder Feng, it seems that one of his direct descendants has caught some kind of poison while he was training outside, and it's threatening his qi ocean..."

“It so happens that that pill master knows how to cure it too, correct?” Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “There’s no need to think further on it. This so-called poison must be the work of that pill master too. Ruining a patient first before saving their life… this tactic never gets old.”

Wei Jie’s eyebrows twitched, “Brother Jiang, you’re saying…”

“I’m not sure about Elder Zhuo, but I’m quite sure that Elder Feng’s descendant’s so-called poison is from this pill master, just like the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder you were poisoned with.”

Wei Jie looked quite frustrated as he swore, “Where on earth did Wei Tiantong find such an evil pill master? And why use him to attack House Wei?”

“He’s most likely from a force that opposes House Wei. It seems that Wei Tiantong’s bringing his enemies into his bedroom.” Jiang Chen didn’t want to interfere with House Wei’s internal conflicts, but considering how bad the situation was already, the Wei father and son were almost certainly going to crumble under this evil plot if he didn’t act. Three of the four family elders had chosen to stand on Wei Tiantong’s side. Wei Tianxiao would be hard pressed to stand alone. After some thought, Jiang Chen said, “Let’s head to Elder Zhuo’s place first, young master Wei.

“What about Elder Feng?” Wei Jie looked curious.

“We’ll deal with Elder Feng later. Let’s handle Elder Zhuo first. This way, we can at least help your father arrive at a three versus three situation and prevent defeat.” Jiang Chen sized up the situation for a bit and felt that his chances of winning over Elder Zhuo were greater than Elder Feng’s. Still, Wei Tianxiao should be able to snatch back the initiative as long as he lured one of the elders back to his side. If he could pull both elders back to Wei Tianxiao’s side, then everything would go swimmingly.

……

“What did you say? Young master Jie is paying a visit?” Inside the House Wei elders’ residence, Elder Zhuo sounded a little surprised when he received the report from the door. As one of the four family elders of House Wei, Elder Zhuo’s status was quite high in House Wei. Even house lord Wei Tianxiao had to show him some respect. Wei Jie was Wei Tianxiao’s son, and he was a few generations below Elder Zhuo. There wasn’t any interaction between the two of them at all. So why was Wei Jie visiting at such a time?

It couldn’t be that Wei Tianxiao had sent his son to persuade him because he’d failed, could he? It wasn’t that Elder Zhuo had made up his mind to stand firmly by Wei Tiantong’s side. He just didn’t have a choice. The grandson he loved the most and thought most highly of had encountered a bit of a problem in his cultivation, and Wei Tiantong’s pill master was the only person who could solve it. Elder Zhuo might not feel any goodwill towards Wei Tiantong, but he had no choice but to ask for his help. Still, the elder had no reason to turn down Wei Jie’s visit.

“Grandnephew Wei Jie is here to visit you, Elder Zhuo,” Wei Jie respectfully gave Elder Zhuo a junior’s greeting after he entered the room.

The look in Elder Zhuo’s eyes was a bit complicated. He was also a little wary of Wei Jie and was quite worried that Wei Jie was here to cajole him. It wasn’t that the elder disliked the Wei father and son, but that he had no idea how to turn them down. Elder Zhuo was incredibly loyal to House Wei. To have him stand by Wei Tiantong’s side and curry favor with the Majestic Clan was a violation of his own principles. But he had no choice but to do so; it was the only way to ensure his grandson’s future

Elder Zhuo couldn’t help but feel a little guilty inside considering that the Wei father and son had came to visit him one after the other. “Jie’er, you rarely come to visit me. Have you come today under your father’s orders?” Elder Zhuo’s underlying meaning was very subtle. Your father has already visited me once. If you’re here to say the same thing as your father did, then I’ll go ahead and spare you the effort to do so.

Wei Jie smiled but shook his head, saying, “I was very concerned to hear that house brother Mo in our house has encountered a bit of problem in his cultivation. I’ve come to pay him a visit. I happen to have a pill master friend who’s quite versed in pill dao. It took me quite a bit of effort to persuade him to diagnose house brother Mo’s condition.”

House brother Mo was in fact Elder Zhuo’s grandson Wei Mo. He was of the same generation as Wei Jie, and since he was only two years younger, Wei Jie addressed him as clan brother Mo.

Elder Zhuo looked a little surprised when he cast a glance at Jiang Chen. He noticed that Jiang Chen wasn't very old, and that he was a friend of Wei Jie's. Frankly, he didn't think highly of Jiang Chen's abilities at all. If he was a friend of Wei Jie's, then even if he was somewhat talented in pill dao, he wouldn't have reached a level of great attainment yet. Wei Mo's problem wasn't something that could be solved by any ordinary pill master. Even the regular initial level pill king might not necessarily be able to solve this.

Wei Jie smiled upon seeing Elder Zhuo's expression, "I can understand why you're on guard, Elder Zhuo, but Wei Mo is my house brother and I'm only trying to help him. Are you thinking too much, Elder Zhuo? Even if I fail, I can't possibly kidnap you and force you to obey my wishes, can I?"

Elder Zhuo looked a little embarrassed. He understood that his reasons for standing on Wei Tiantong's side was a little selfish. In fact, it completely went against his own principles. He grew even more ashamed when he heard Wei Jie's words and answered him with a wry smile, "In that case, please wait for a moment while I summon Wei Mo."

Wei Mo came straight away after receiving the news a moment later. "Brother Jie? Have you come to see me?"

Wei Mo had had some previous interactions with Wei Jie, and while it was inevitable for the youngsters within the family to compete with each other, Wei Mo and Wei Jie shared a friendly relationship.

“Brother Mo, I heard that you’ve encountered a small problem in your cultivation, so I invited a pill dao genius to diagnose your illness. This Brother Zhen of mine may not be famous, but his skills and knowledge are absolutely genuine.”

Wei Mo was both surprised and touched by the gesture, “I must thank you then, Brother Jie. My grandfather had been worrying himself sick for my problem, and I’m also feeling quite dejected to see him so cheerless everyday.”

Wei Mo’s words were innocent, but Wei Jie heard the underlying meaning behind his words. While Elder Zhuo had stood on Wei Tiantong’s side, it seems that it wasn’t where his heart truly was. Why else would he be cheerless? It was obvious that he was gloomy and discomforted because he had gone against his own heart.

Jiang Chen had only looked at Wei Mo once since the young man had showed up. He’d kept silent and remained smiling since.

“Brother Zhen, I am Wei Mo,” Wei Mo raised a cupped fist salute to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smiled and nodded in response, “House Wei’s wealth is definitely plentiful to produce a third level sage realm cultivator at your age, Sir Mo. But am I right to say that you’re at the age of marriage already, aren’t you? Why have you not taken a wife? Why have you remained single?” Jiang Chen’s questions had came out of nowhere. It completely confused everyone present.

Elder Zhuo was inwardly shaking his head. Who is this that Wei Jie's invited? What a strange thing to ask upon a first meeting. This makes no sense at all.

Wei Jie was also surprised by this question, but he knew that Jiang Chen wasn't someone to speak carelessly. Therefore, he immediately took over the conversation and asked curiously, "Brother Zhen, I don't remember telling you that Brother Mo hasn't married. How do you know?"

Jiang Chen kept silent, but was quietly amused. Isn't it obvious? Your brother Mo's desire as a man is written all over his body. How can he possibly be a married man? "Elder Zhuo, please forgive my candor, but why have you submitted to Wei Tiantong and aided a tyrant for such a small matter? Do you really think so little of House Wei?" He abruptly changed the subject and fired his question with piercing eyes at Elder Zhuo.

Elder Zhuo was an emperor realm cultivator, but the sharp, piercing question had came so suddenly that he was dumbstruck for a moment. It was obvious that this matter was a black mark on the elder's heart. Jiang Chen didn't wait for an answer before he responded with a smile, "If I can solve this problem for you, would you consider changing your standing, Elder Zhuo?"

Elder Zhuo was caught off guard. Then, great surprise overwhelmed his expression, "You… can you solve his illness?"

"It's not anything serious. It only looked that way because someone has intentionally blown it out of proportion with the goal of using you. It's truly just a small problem," Jiang Chen's smile

was faint, but his confidence was great. No one could doubt that his confidence was genuine.

Chapter 743: Elder Zhuo's Great Admiration

The self-confidence on Jiang Chen's face, his easy calm and temperament—even someone as experienced as Elder Zhuo couldn't find the barest hint of a flaw. Ease and confidence weren't the only things he saw from Jiang Chen's eyes. He felt a trace of sincerity in those depths. In comparison, Elder Zhuo disliked the pill master at Wei Tiantong's side. That fellow might be a man of few words, but there was also the trace of something deceitful and sinister just simmering beneath the surface. This feeling was something very unwelcome for someone with such upstanding righteousness like Elder Zhuo. If he didn't have something to request of the pill master, he'd want nothing to do with such a person.

Wei Jie was very quick witted. Seeing Elder Zhuo waver right then, he knew this was a weak point he could take advantage of. He hastily spoke up, "Elder Zhuo, perhaps your esteemed self isn't aware of certain things yet. Last time I left home, a traitor of the house plotted against me and poisoned me with Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder. No pill master I found could treat it. In the end, Brother Zhen was the one who rescued me from the very brink of death. I happen to suspect Wei Tiantong's pill master to be the one who poisoned me."

"What?!" Elder Zhao naturally didn't know such a secret. He was utterly flabbergasted when he heard, amazement etched on his face. "Jie'er, are those words true?"

Wei Jie didn't beat around the bush. "May the heavens judge me and strike me dead if there's a single false word."

How would Elder Zhuo still doubt Wei Jie after he swore on the heavens? The elder was dumbstruck for a moment. He knew Wei Tiantong had long wanted to usurp Wei Tianxiao's position, but he never would've imagined Wei Tiantong would act directly against kin! Internal competition was one thing. Everyone could compete based on their skills and abilities; there was nothing untoward about it. However, directly using poison against family was crossing the line, something Elder Zhuo couldn't accept no matter what the circumstance.

Elder Zhuo's mouth quivered with his reaction. He was clearly stupefied by the news. He couldn't help but think to himself. If Wei Tiantong was that vicious, could he really lead the house to glory if he were truly to seize power? Would there really be space left for others?

Jiang Chen suddenly spoke then, "It seems that Elder Zhuo has truly been kept in the dark. Perhaps you think you owe Wei Tiantong a favor because he can help solve a difficult issue for Sir Mo, therefore you have no choice but to stand with him? Perhaps you're not aware that this affair was Wei Tiantong's scheme from the beginning?"

Elder Zhuo was struck completely dumb when he heard this. "What do you mean by this?"

Jiang Wei smiled faintly. "Sir Mo has outstanding potential, while House Wei has solid foundations. He should have been almost certain to break through to fourth level sage realm. Why did a problem suddenly arise?"

“Why?” Elder Zhuo was dazed by Jiang Chen’s tone. Wei Mo was definitely among the top three in House Wei when it came to natural talent. There was no reason for a lethal bottleneck to appear at the earth sage realm.

“It’s very simple. It’s because that evil pill master interfered with Sir Mo,” Jiang Chen responded faintly.

Elder Zhuo shook his head vehemently. “Impossible! This old man doesn’t know about Jie’er’s poisoning, but our Mo’er definitely suffered no poison. I am certain of that.” Elder Zhuo didn’t doubt Wei Jie’s matter, but he was a little doubtful about Jiang Chen’s words. He felt that the other was trying to use scare tactics.

Jiang Chen smiled. “Elder Zhuo, when did I ever say Sir Mo was poisoned?”

“What then?” Elder Zhuo blinked.

“Sir Mo’s cultivation technique should be one that follows the path of extreme yang. Yang energy is already predominant in his body. That person merely used some medicine to stimulate it. Something like that is no poison, so how would it have been detected? Sir Mo already has an excess of yang, and isn’t married either. If you give him some things to stimulate his yang, what do you think will happen?” He turned his attention to Wei Mo, “Sir Mo, do you perchance feel dry and hot everyday, and have trouble keeping your internal demons at bay? Perhaps you always feel

hyperactive, wild thoughts galloping through your mind and have trouble focusing on anything?”

Wei Mo blushed beet red with shame, but nodded. Jiang Chen secretly snickered to himself, because Wei Mo’s symptoms were simply the most common issue for a young man: unsated sexual desire. Something like this wouldn’t have been much of an issue for someone else, but for one who cultivated a path of extreme yang, it was simply adding fuel to a flame. It was similar to the diagnosis Jiang Chen once gave Ye Chonglou’s mount. The Five-Winged Dragon-Phoenix had been in a similar situation. The only difference was that the Dragon-Phoenix’s problem was a normal physiological one, whereas Wei Mo had had his normal physiological issues magnified by someone with malicious intent.

In the world of martial dao, many cultivators had the misconception that relations between men and women would disturb their pure inner yang, that it lead to a waste of their internal energy. This saying wasn’t necessarily untrue, but that the so-called pure yang was something unique to those with innate pure yang constitutions, which could only be found in one out of untold millions. Ordinary cultivators, even those cultivating a path of extreme yang, wouldn’t necessarily have to avoid the matters between men and women. There was even less of a need for someone like Wei Mo.

When cultivators reached the ultimate realm, the most profound truths were the simplest ones. Let nature take its course. Someone like Wei Mo was of the proper age to begin with, and he was cultivating a technique of extreme yang on top of that. His qi and blood were more vigorous than most, hence he had equal needs to match. Add someone maliciously enlarging his need, the original

glass of need had become a bucket of need. It would have been strange if an issue had not arisen. If the issues then continued to persist for some time, even his dantian and his qi ocean might collapse, to say nothing about breaking through the earth sage realm.

Elder Zhuo's expression went through all sorts of changes. He felt extremely conflicted upon seeing Jiang Chen precisely identify Wei Mo's symptoms in a few words. He was both hopeful this person might help solve Wei Mo's issue, but worried that he was merely babbling nonsense and might end up harming Wei Mo's future. If presented with a choice, Elder Zhou was definitely willing to stand on Wei Tianxiao's side. After all, Wei Tianxiao was House Wei's legitimate lord. To follow Wei Tiantong went first against his convictions; second against propriety, since Wei Tiantong wasn't legitimate; and third, according to Elder Zhuo's own observations, Wei Tiantong's designs were devious—he was absolutely not the best choice for House Wei.

"Brother Zhen, is there a way to solve Brother Mo's issue?" Wei Jie asked.

"Young master Mo's issue isn't very serious. I only fear Elder Zhuo doesn't trust my humble self and is willing to be led by the nose instead. What can I do then?" Jiang Chen smiled.

Wei Jie watched Elder Zhuo with a profound look.

Wei Mo actually responded, "Grandfather, your grandson knows that you did some things against your conscience for my sake. I trust the friend Brother Jie invited over." Facing this group of

straightforward young men, Elder Zhuo's face suddenly flushed a little red, feeling a little hot. He even had trouble directly looking into Wei Jie's eyes.

"Grandfather, I shouldn't speak out of turn about major house matters. I know nothing about fifth uncle's character either. However, I've had some dealings with fifth uncle's son, Wei Xiu. That person is not a good soul. If you truly have to choose a side between the house lord and fifth uncle, then your grandson firmly supports the house lord," Wei Mo solemnly declared, making his stance known.

Jiang Chen laughed out loud. "Very well! Sir Mo's words alone are enough to make me help him this once, no matter Elder Zhou's decision!"

Listening to Jiang Chen, Elder Zhuo suddenly revealed a firm expression. "Jie'er, Pill Master Zhen, if Mo'er's issue can be resolved, then this old man is willing to stand behind the house lord and help set things right in House Wei, even if I have to sacrifice my life, be torn to pieces and crushed!" The old man finally made his resolve and expressed where he stood.

"Very well!" Jiang Chen clapped his hands and smiled. "In that case, trust my humble self with Sir Mo's issue. I guarantee Sir Mo will break through without a problem in one month."

"What?" Elder Zhuo and Wei Mo were both taken aback.

Even Wei Tiantong hadn't spoken so firmly. They'd only

hemmed and hawed about decreasing the dangers of breaking through to earth sage realm and increasing the probability of success. But this “Pill Master Zhen” Wei Jie had invited over actually dared to offer such guarantees, and even had the guts to set a time frame? Guaranteed to break through within a month? These words sounded like empty talk no matter how one thought of them!

Jiang Chen knew that his words were more than a little shocking. He smiled faintly nevertheless, “Sir Mo should already be aware of his own potential. In truth, he has already prepared as much as he needs to. It’s nothing more than some malicious individuals using him and creating some setbacks in his body that caused a trace of an internal demon to appear in his consciousness. These issues are all easy to solve. I can cure his ills merely by prescribing him a secret recipe and giving him two pills.”

“Is it that simple?” Elder Zuo asked, astonished.

“It wasn’t a large matter to begin with.” Jiang Chen waved it off, staring at Wei Mo instead. “However, Sir Mo needs to stay far away from Wei Tiantong’s people during this time, especially that sinister pill master. The excessive stimulation of yang within your body is all due to him.”

“This means they single-handedly orchestrated this plan?” Wei Mo’s face suddenly turned cold.

“I can’t fully say that, but I’m at least ninety percent confident.” Jiang Chen turned to Elder Zhuo, “Elder Zhuo, you have to carefully look after those in your residence during this time. Even

if Sir Mo is fine, they can always act against someone else if they want you in their clutches."

Though Elder Zhuo was a little skeptical, he still leaned toward believing this pill master deep in his heart. Between Wei Tianxiao and Wei Tiantong, Elder Zhuo would definitely put more faith in Wei Tianxiao. Wei Tianxiao might not be very outstanding when it came to competency or charisma, but one could never accuse him of being treacherous. He would never commit such acts.

"I have to thank Pill Master Zhen in advance then. Let this old man say it again. As long as Mo'er can recover, I'll definitely stand behind the house lord without wavering!" Elder Zhuo resolutely declared his stance.

Wei Jie said with a sigh, "Brother Wei's matter is resolved, but Elder Feng is still in the dark. It's regrettable. Wei Tiantong has already betrayed him, yet he's still feeling deeply grateful, toiling away for him. He's being taken advantage of."

Elder Zhuo blinked. "Are you saying that Elder Feng..."

Wei Jie sighed, "Elder Feng's temperament is even more obstinate. I haven't paid him a visit yet. But according to Pill Master Zhen's analysis, his situation is most likely also some funny business caused by Wei Tiantong's sinister pill master. Nothing untoward has ever happened in our house for all these years, but the younger generation of the family have all met with one mishap after another in recent months. Isn't that too much of a coincidence?"

These words were like a bolt of lightning for Elder Zhuo, shifting his expression through a variety of changes. The elder fixed Jiang Chen with a deep gaze all of a sudden. “Pill Master Zhen, how certain are you of solving Mo’er’s issue?”

“I am a hundred percent certain about helping Sir Mo. If an accident were to happen, Elder Zhuo may hold me accountable.” Jiang Chen’s eyes were sincere and resolute at the same time.

Wei Jie also chimed in, “Since Brother Zhen says he is a hundred percent certain, then if an accident is to happen, I am also willing to be punished together with him. Beaten or killed, Wei Jie will utter no complaint no matter what Elder Zhuo chooses.”

Elder Zhuo could see that both of them were completely sincere. He also sighed, “Very well, very well. Wei Jie, your old man has fathered a good son. Trust the ones you call upon, and don’t call upon those you doubt. This old man will accompany you in your madness. Let’s go. I’ll take you to Elder Feng and put in a good word for you!”

Clearly, Elder Zhuo’s mood had been infected by those young men. He had been seized by the sudden urge to act with the recklessness of youth. When all was said and done, the elder wasn’t willing to see House Wei in Wei Tiantong’s hands, and he was even less willing to see House Wei switch their allegiance and rely on the Majestic Clan. Something like that would tarnish House Wei’s good name forever. They would be seen as betraying the Coiling Dragon Clan. Even more so, they would become the object of ridicule amongst the nobility in the Capital!

Chapter 744: The Secret Recipe That Makes Wei Mo Blush

Jiang Chen and Wei Jie were delighted. They hadn't thought Elder Zhuo would be so easy to convince. They'd never even imagined that they'd not only persuade him to back the house lord, but that he'd even take the initiative to spring into action himself, bringing them to persuade Elder Feng. Wasn't that a delightful surprise? If they could take this opportunity to sort out Elder Feng as well, then Wei Tiantong's plan would end in utter failure. He would've gone for wool and come back shorn instead.

Elder Feng had clearly not been expecting a sudden call from Elder Zhuo. It seemed that he'd even come visiting with Wei Jie in tow, the house lord's son. Elder Feng was rather baffled. Elder Zhuo and him deciding to back Wei Tiantong's side was a secret that wasn't supposed to be spoken of. But today, Elder Zhuo was here with Wei Tianxiao's son. Wasn't that just putting himself in an awkward spot? Fortunately, Elder Feng and Elder Zhuo's relationship had been good to begin with. Both of them had previously belonged to the same neutral camp. They hadn't been particularly intimate with Wei Tianxiao, while their relations with Wei Tiantong had been middling as well. "What brings you here today, elder brother Zhuo?" Elder Feng looked at Wei Jie standing beside Elder Zhuo, some doubt flashing in his eyes.

Elder Zhuo didn't offer a straight answer. "Old friend, call for your direct disciple. I have urgent business."

"Brother Zhuo, who are you talking about?"

“Whose matter have you been distressed about in these past few days?”

Elder Feng looked pensive. He wondered what tune Elder Zhuo was singing, but he’d always respected the elder very much. He instructed his servants to go and summon his disciple without further delay. Elder Feng’s direct disciple, Mu Ge, came soon as soon as he heard the summons.

Mu Ge was a fair and good looking fellow, but there was a black line etched through his forehead, making the area between his eyebrow seem black. His entire person seemed to be in a rather bad condition.

“Mu Ge, come and pay your respects to Elder Zhuo,” Elder Feng hurriedly said when he saw the disciple he was most proud of come their way.

Mu Ge was clearly very familiar with Elder Zhuo. He looked at Elder Zhuo, then at Wei Jie and offered a cupped fist in salute. “Mu Ge respectfully greets Elder Zhuo and young master Wei.”

Wei Jie responded with a smile, “Mu Ge’er, long time no see.”

Mu Ge smiled and nodded, but he didn’t say anything else, docilely taking his spot behind Elder Feng. Seeing the situation turn a little awkward, Elder Feng looked at Elder Zhuo and whispered, “Brother Zhuo, what on earth’s happened?”

“Old friend, there are no outsiders here, so I’ll get straight to the point.” Elder Zhuo fixed Elder Feng with a profound gaze, “Our previous decision was too rushed. I’ve turned it over and over in my head. Us two old men cannot be the sinners of our house.”

Elder Feng blinked. “Old brother, aren’t your words too strong?”

Elder Zhuo shook his head,“I fear that this is not me being an alarmist, but rather the result of careful consideration. Add to that some information that young master Wei provided... I’ve discovered that some things that we assumed have gone beyond our imagination.”

“What?” Elder Feng was growing steadily more confused.

“We’ve been taken advantage of by Wei Tiantong...” Elder Zhuo immediately recounted the whole sequence of events in full detail. By the end of the explanation, Elder Feng’s face was shrouded in frost, his expression grave and solemn. “Brother Zhuo, when all’s said and done, this is only a one-sided assertion. Are you certain?”

Elder Zhuo sighed softly, “This old man may not have definite proof, but when comparing both sides, I would rather put my trust in the house lord. Wei Tiantong’s behavior is something even you’re aware of. Even if this matter doesn’t take his conduct into account, if we were to rent our store in the Farmer God Market to House Tong, we would be proclaiming to the entire Capital that our house has gone under the Majestic Clan’s banner. What would the Coiling Dragon Clan think then? How would the entire Capital look upon us? Are we truly going to let the whole of the Capital poke fun at us behind our back?”

In truth, this was a thought Elder Zhuo had mulled over countless times himself. Only, he'd previously numbed himself with lies for the sake of his grandson's future. He'd comforted himself by saying it was merely renting a store, and not a true reflection of the whole of House Wei. However, this was just self-deception.

Eyes and ears were everywhere in the Capital. Who would've missed House Wei renting an important store to House Tong, and the clan lord of the Majestic Clan paying them a personal visit? How would Elder Feng be ignorant of these arguments? It was just that Wei Tiantong's flowery words and various incitements, plus his deep concern for his direct disciple Mu Ge, had momentarily made him soft hearted and accept Wei Tiantong's request. "Brother Zhuo, things have already come so far, do we still have any other choice? Who was it that asked you to come persuade me? The house lord?" Elder Feng glanced at Wei Jie.

Jiang Chen started chuckling before Elder Zhuo could speak. "How amusing. When faced with the principles of the house and what is right and wrong, the proper action should be in everyone's heart. Why would the house lord need to speak?"

Elder Feng's expression sank. "Who might you be?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "Who I am doesn't matter. Elder Feng only needs to know that I am someone who can rescue your direct disciple, and also someone who can salvage your esteemed self's reputation."

“Your tone’s pretty big for an ignorant kid,” Elder Feng had a fiery temperament by nature. He naturally wasn’t happy with Jiang Chen’s interruption or biting words.

Elder Zhuo hurried to speak, “Old friend, he is no trivial person. Perhaps you can let him have a look at Mu Ge’s poison.”

Elder Feng’s expression was a little unsightly. “Brother Zhuo, I have many disciples, but Mu Ge is the only one with extraordinary innate talent. You know that this isn’t a gamble I can afford.”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “You can’t afford the gamble, so you would rather shoulder infamy and ruin House Wei’s foundations?”

Elder Feng suddenly erupted in anger. “Kid, if you speak one more rude word, don’t blame this old man for not showing mercy!”

Wei Jie was also silently signaling Jiang Chen with his eyes, telling him not to anger Elder Feng. Jiang Chen erupted in laughter, as though he hadn’t seen him. “Elder Feng, I came to visit with good intentions, trying to share your woes, but you can’t seem to recognize a friend even in front of you. Even when some people have schemed against you, going so far as to poison your disciple and then coming to you so hypocritically claim that they can cure him, you’d still rather consider them friends. Tell me, what the hell are you on, huh?” Jiang Chen wasn’t being impulsive. He could tell that this Elder Feng had a fiery disposition and a willful temperament. Convincing him would probably not be an easy task. Reason might not immediately resonate with someone like this. Instead, butting heads might end in a happy

surprise.

Elder Zhuo also spoke again, “Old friend, this matter is indeed very fishy. Our house has always been peaceful, but things keep happening to the younger generation in the past few months. Don’t you think it’s all too strange?”

Huffing with anger, Elder Feng said, “Brother Zhuo, this matter is indeed strange, but they’re directly accusing it all of being Wei Tiantong’s doing. However, they have no proof either that they aren’t the ones pulling the strings.”

It was Wei Jie’s turn to feel unhappy. He stood up abruptly, “Elder Feng, I’ve stayed respectful thus far because you are my senior. However, those words treat our goodwill and sincerity as nothing more than cheap deceit. If we plotted this matter, then may the heavens strike us dead!”

Wei Jie was normally a calm and even tempered man, but Elder Feng’s words had clearly pricked at his self-esteem. It was true he wanted to pull Elder Feng to his side. However, Elder Feng stubbornly refused to discern friend from foe. He was even suspecting Wei Jie and father of orchestrating this matter, confusing right and wrong. This was something that Wei Jie couldn’t sit by and tolerate.

Elder Feng seemed to realize that his words had crossed a line. He humphed softly, but didn’t say anything else.

However, Jiang Chen actually started chuckling. “Elder Feng,

you aren't afraid of believing Wei Tiantong nor afraid of shouldering the infamy of betraying House Wei, so why are you afraid of facing reality?"

"Face reality? Are you asking this old man to sit down and watch his beloved disciple die?" Elder Feng's tone was a mixture of sorrow and indignation.

"Who said your brilliant disciple has to die? Is there only a single pill master in existence? Without Wei Tiantong's pill master, is there no one else in the whole world who can cure your disciple's poison?"

"What... What do you mean?" Elder Feng was unexpectedly subdued by Jiang Chen's imposing demeanor.

"My only meaning is, what will you do if I cure your disciple?" Jiang Chen didn't beat around the bush either. He knew he'd goaded this old man about as far as he should.

"Can you cure it?" Elder Feng snickered. He had no faith in Jiang Chen, since in his eyes, Jiang Chen was far too wet behind the ears. "If you can cure him, then whatever you say goes. If I object to anything you say, then I'm a son of a bitch."

Jiang Chen roared with laughter and stood up. "Elder Zhuo, did you hear that? Then let us consider this as a bet between Elder Feng and me. If I can cure Mu Ge..."

Elder Feng wheezed with anger, “Kid, stop talking in circles! I know you came here on behalf of the house lord. I’ll have you know that I have no opinion about the house lord. If you can truly cure Mu Ge, I will assist the house lord with unwavering will and nary a stray thought for the rest of my life.”

“What if Wei Tiantong comes up with some other shenanigans in the future? I rather fear a certain someone will be swayed again,” Jiang Chen said with a faint smile, continuing to prod.

Elder Feng’s hair was nearly on end with fury. “Do you think I’m the kind of bastard who’d go back on their words?”

Elder Zhuo was also frowning. “Pill Master Zhen, I can vouch for my old friend Feng’s character. As long as you can solve these problems, then us two old sacks of bones will single-mindedly support the house lord for the rest of our lives, never having another thought.”

Wei Jie was delighted at these words. He’d been completely won over by Jiang Cheng’s pill-making. Though he hadn’t seen it many times, every time had been an earthshaking experience. Since Jiang Chen was so utterly confident, Wei Jie naturally knew that Jiang Chen was completely assured of success.

Elder Feng suddenly spoke coldly, “You talk a big talk, but I have to remind you that Wei Tiantong will put forth a proposal for a house meeting the day after tomorrow. We’ll be discussing the matter of the store in Farmer God Market then. You only have two days.”

Jiang Cheng's smile was faint. "No need for two days. I'll return a lively disciple to you tonight."

"Those are your own words. And what if you can't?"

"If I can't cure him, then by all means, please do not hesitate and stand with Wei Tiantong when the time comes. We won't have anything to say." Jiang Chen practically brimmed with confidence.

Elder Feng glanced at Elder Zhuo, then looked at Wei Jie. "Gentlemen, those were his own words. For Mu Ge's sake, I'll have no choice but to stand with Wei Tiantong when the time comes, even if I have to go against my convictions."

Jiang Chen laughed in response, "Don't worry, you won't have a chance to stand with him." It wasn't empty talk. Wei Tiantong's pill master was definitely a pill king, but he was still far from the apex when it came to using poison. Whether the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder or Mu Ge's poison, neither were difficult issues for Jiang Chen.

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In Elder Feng's private library, Wei Jie drank tea with Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng. From time to time, his eyes fell on a private chamber. Inside, Jiang Chen was creating an antidote for, and treating Elder's Feng beloved disciple, Mu Ge. Wei Mo stood at Elder Zhuo's side. Jiang Chen had already given him two pills, as well as a secret prescription, telling him to go back and follow

what was written.

“Mo’er, what secret prescription did that pill master Zhen give you?” Elder Zhuo suddenly asked, feeling curious.

Wei Mo’s face nearly combusted with heat as he spontaneously turned red. He hemmed and hawed and mumbled and stammered, uncertain how he should answer. He could only hand the prescription to Elder Zhuo in the end. Elder Zhuo’s old face instantly froze as soon as he read it, awkwardness written all over his face. Wei Jie and Elder Feng exchanged a glance at the sight of this scene. It’s just a secret prescription, do you two have to go this far?

Chapter 745: Great Success

“What’s the matter, Brother Zhuo?” Elder Feng couldn’t help but ask when he noticed Elder Zhuo’s strange expression. Concern causes confusion. He was curious about Mo Ye’s secret prescription, and also worried about the possibility that this Pill Master Zhen might not be reliable and harm his disciple in an attempt to cure him.

Elder Zhuo squeezed out a wry smile and handed the prescription to Elder Feng. The latter’s expression also became amazingly complicated with a single glance. He slammed a hand down on the table. “Utter drivel!” Elder Feng’s character was of the stubborn and old-fashioned sort. He naturally erupted in anger upon seeing this ludicrous prescription and was on the verge of charging into the private chamber and hauling Mu Ge out, interrupting the detoxifying session right then and there.

Wei Jie didn’t know what this secret prescription was either. He took it and glanced over it, with his expression also turning incomparably strange, a similarly wry smile frozen on his face.

There were only a few words written on it. Nine women at night, repeat for three days. Then, take my pills and you will recover.

“Old friend, what are you doing?” Elder Zhuo saw Elder Feng storming off to the private chamber and hurriedly pulled him to a stop.

“Brother Zhuo, if this kid is messing around to this degree, is his

cure going to work? I'm not so sure that all of you haven't been made fun of by a charlatan!" Elder Fang was shaking in his anger. With his old-fashioned character, nothing would make him believe that that preposterous prescription was normal.

However, contrary to expectations, Elder Zhuo was rather pensive. He remembered that Pill Master Zhen had said Wei Mo's symptoms were in fact just a small problem. His diagnosis had been that it was merely an excess of yang energy combined with someone using medicine to overstimulate it, leading to a surplus of qi and blood, which made Wei Mo hyperactive and lustful. Would orthodox pill kings even direct their thoughts in that direction when faced with such symptoms?

Elder Zhuo had also invited some pill kings to diagnose Wei Mo. All of them had expended their efforts at finding poison, and none of them had come to any reliable conclusion. This secret prescription gave Elder Zhuo a new explanation. Perhaps, it was truly an excess of yang?

Even still, this prescription was indeed a little preposterous. It almost looked like a child's prank. But when the elder thought back to the confidence in the pill master's eyes, his calm when he offered his guarantees, as well as Wei Jie's decisive demeanor in offering to shoulder the responsibilities together, he couldn't quite disbelive them. None of that had looked fake. Elder Zhuo's mood had also been infected by these two young men. It was why he'd brought them with him to visit Elder Feng and gone so far as to put in a good word for them. Therefore, he was naturally willing to put his faith in that young man in this moment.

“Old Feng, the treatment is in session and isn’t something you can disturb. If you go in rashly like this and if by any chance they are at a crucial juncture, your actions might lead things far more astray. It may even end in immediate death. How can you be so rash?”

Elder Feng breathed hard in anger. His wrath obviously still hadn’t vanished.

The door to the secret chamber opened slowly just as the two of them stood at an impasse. Jiang Chen walked out, his face as tranquil as the drifting clouds. Seeing the two elders standing right in front of the door, he smiled, “There isn’t any need for you two elders to be so courteous, is there? Going as far as standing at the door and welcoming me in person? How did you know I was done?”

Even Wei Jie and Wei Mo felt the urge to laugh. The two old men were struck dumb, momentarily lost for words. Elder Feng was worried about his beloved disciple, so he was still the first to break the silence in the end, “Where’s Mu Ge?”

“He’s fine. Actually, he’s meditating inside. If Elder Feng doesn’t wish to disturb his beloved disciple’s meditation, then please hold your peace and wait patiently for a few hours.” Jiang Chen stretched and saw Wei Mo still standing there. He spoke with an exaggerated tone, “Young master Mo, why are you still dilly-dallying here? The sooner you follow the prescription I gave you, the better. Your yang energy doesn’t look seem like it’s erupting out of control, but it’s already disturbing your consciousness. If you still don’t channel it away, then the internal demons will

completely settle in, and you'll be in big trouble."

"Ah?" Wei Mo was still a virgin. He was thrown into complete chaos when he heard Jiang Chen's words.

"Truly, don't end up harming yourself no matter what. Remember, when it comes to the number, you can always go higher, but never lower. As to the quality, you'll have to take care of that yourself. Remember, avoid women cultivating evil arts at any cost, otherwise they'll absorb your yang energy and turn you into their cultivation furnace. It really wouldn't be worth it if your yang energy is taken to bolster a woman's yin energy." Jiang Chen patted Wei Mo's shoulder. He guessed Wei Mo was one of those martial fanatics who were so devoted to cultivation that they were clueless when it came to women.

Wei Mo blushed bright red. Wei Jie laughed, "Brother Mo, do you want this old brother to help you?"

Elder Zhuo rushed to speak before Wei Mo could decline, "Jie'er, you really have to help him in this matter. You young people can share your experience in that area." The old man quickly felt ashamed at his own words. What the bloody hell was that?

The group continued to chat and laugh. As for Jiang Chen, he sat unperturbed, drinking his tea and tasting a few pastries, looking very much the image of an honored visiting guest. He didn't pay any mind to the probing looks Elder Feng shot in his direction every now and then.

A few hours later, Mu Ge walked out of the chamber. Elder Feng froze as soon as he saw Mu Ge, as though he were struck by a bolt of lightning. The present Mu Ge was refreshed and relaxed. His face brimmed with vigor, and his entire being seemed full of life, radiating a formidable aura of vitality. How was this the look of someone who'd been poisoned?

"Ge'er, are... are you cured?" Excitement and strong disbelief chased each other around in Elder Feng's voice.

"Honored master, your disciple's poison has been entirely removed. And thanks to Pill Master Zhen's guidance, I seemed to have comprehended some new insights. I seem to be showing signs of breaking through."

"What?" Elder Feng's expressions became quite rich and varied all of a sudden.

Mu Ge smiled faintly. He went to Jiang Chen and saluted him deferentially. "Many thanks for saving my life, Pill Master Zhen, and many thanks for your guidance. I will forever remember these two favors."

Jiang Chen smiled, "Mu Ge'er, there's actually no need to be so polite. You also know that I did it for the sake of my bet with your teacher."

Mu Ge was still as serious and earnest as ever. "It might have been a bet, but I was still the beneficiary of these favors. A drop of water shall be repaid with a welling spring, and a favor needs to be

paid back in full. If one day you ever have a need of me, I will answer the call even if I have to go through fire and water." Mu Ge was clearly an honest man who knew to repay his debts.

Jiang Chen casually waved it off. He didn't give any thought to having his favor repaid. Instead, he leveled a calm gaze at Elder Feng. What he cared about was Elder Feng's attitude.

An endless stream of expressions flicked across Elder Feng's face. In the end, he gave a long sigh. "Well oh well. It seems I've grown old and confused, I'd forgotten that the next wave always overtakes the old. Let us just say that you've taught this old man a lesson today." Elder Feng looked at Wei Jie and added, "Young master Jie, go back and tell your esteemed father that I will stand firmly at his side as long as I live, so that we can set House Wei aright once more!"

Wei Jie was delighted. He knew that any one of the four great elders were great heavyweights and men of their word. They would never break their promises. "Many thanks, Elder Feng!"

Elder Feng shook his head with a wry smile. "Why are you thanking me for? I should be the one thanking you. Of course, it's mostly due to your friend. I take his hat off to him."

There were good things about stubborn people as well. If they were on the right path, you were assured of their reliability. Jiang Chen's tone turned modest. "Elder Feng, I was merely playing some petty tricks previously to goad you, rather than intending to disrespect you."

Elder Feng sighed. “This old man isn’t completely blind yet. How would I fail to notice the obvious tricks of youth? To tell the truth, the old man was also steering along with the current and taking advantage of the situation. I wanted to see what you were really made of. Now, it seems I’ve made an error in judgment. It seems House Leader Tianxiao has a son with a good eye.”

Elder Zhuo shared the same thoughts. He and Elder Feng both hadn’t been persuaded by Wei Tianxiao, but his son accomplished what his father could not. When it came down to it, the potential Wei Jie’d just displayed was far above what Wei Tianxiao had shown back in his youth. Elder Zhuo suddenly noticed Wei Mo still standing dazedly off to one side. The elder smacked him upside the head as he berated, “Why are you still standing dumbly here for? Go back and follow Pill Master Zhen’s instructions.”

“Ah!?” Wei Mo shouted in surprise, his face turning red again.

Wei Jie slung his arm around Wei Mo’s shoulder. “Let’s go, brother. I’ll help you with the search. Our house has many maids, but we still have to be rather picky in our selection. We can’t let these evil female cultivators get one over us!”

Everyone laughed heartily. Wei Jie suddenly thought of something just as he was about to leave and turned to Elder Feng and Elder Zhuo, “Elders, this junior has another request. I hope the matters today can stay behind these doors. We’ll only have our opportunity to strike back at Wei Tiantong at the house meeting in two days. There, we’ll make him expose himself. Only then will we gain evidence of him betraying the house.”

Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng looked at each other, both of them nodding. “That is sensible, let it be so.” Since they had now chosen to stand with Wei Tianxiao, they had to protect their side’s interests.

Jiang Chen didn’t forget to remind them, “Gentlemen, let me tack on a few more words. Wei Tiantong’s evil pill master still has many tricks up his sleeves. If you gentlemen don’t want anything else to happen, you will need to stay on high alert. If we let this fellow succeed with some other shenanigans, the situation might well change yet again.”

Elder Zhuo nodded. Elder Feng also looked pensive.

……

Jiang Chen released a silent sigh when he returned to his temporary lodgings. House Wei’s situation had been imperceptibly turned around. His next task was to finish his preparations for the pill store.

He’d found the time to train and organize the Regal Pill Palace members during these past few days. He’d decided to organize them in three levels.

Shen Trifire and Rong Zifeng made up the first level. The two of them were going to be the main pill masters in the pill store, especially Shen Trifire with his innate fire constitution. Although he wasn’t as outstanding as Mu Gaoqi, possessing three sources of

fire definitely made him a good candidate for pill refining.

Jiang Chen decided to focus on mentoring Shen Trifire. He would be in charge of refining some of the important pills. Shen Trifire wasn't a fool either. He could tell Jiang Chen intended to train him, so why would he refuse? He'd already been won over by Jiang Chen back in the Regal Pill Palace after their pill contest. Now that he'd experienced Jiang Chen's pill dao abilities for himself, he was even more willing to bow down to Jiang Chen. He was dead-set on following his senior brother, going as far as suggesting that he take Jiang Chen as his master. However, they both came from the same sect after all. For the sake of the Regal Pill Palace, Jiang Chen couldn't take him as a disciple. It was more suitable for them to be fellow disciples.

It was fortunate that everyone was a disciple of the Regal Pill Palace. The sect had originally been a sect that had focused on pill dao, so every disciple had a solid foundation to build from. As a result, they all made great strides forward under Jiang Chen's tutelege. As for the ten saint realm slaves, Jiang Chen wasn't planning on training them into pill masters. They were outsiders after all. He planned to have them to run daily operations in the pill store and work in the front.

Chapter 746: Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill

Everything was going all according to Jiang Chen's plan. Two days later, We Jie came calling to invite Jiang Chen once more. "Brother Jiang, as expected, Wei Tiantong has sent out a request to hold a family meeting. It will be held this evening. My father has requested your presence at the meeting to ensure that everything goes smoothly, as well as participate in the discussion about the shop."

Jiang Chen knew that this was likely the last time Wei Tianxiao and Wei Tiantong were going to clash against each other. He himself didn't want to skip this meeting. Although Wei Tianxiao's victory was firmly in hand, Jiang Chen wouldn't feel at ease unless he saw this matter through to the end with his own eyes. Wei Tiantong himself might not be able to cause any sort of trouble, but he had that pill master right by his side. That was why Jiang Chen had to be on guard.

Judging from Wei Tiantong's stance, although Jiang Chen still had no idea who the Majestic Clan was, he guessed that Wei Tiantong had sworn loyalty to the Majestic Clan in secret a long time ago. Jiang Chen had seen numerous high level conflicts in his capacity as the son of the celestial emperor in his past life. Even if House Wei was a ninth ranked aristocratic house, even if they were a reputable force in Veluriyam Capital, the act of switching patrons carelessly was absolutely inadvisable. If Jiang Chen wasn't involved in this conflict, he wouldn't have cared either way. However, he was now in the same boat as House Wei, he couldn't possibly just sit by and watch the disaster unfold. Moreover, his cooperation with House Wei would be null and void if Wei Tiantong really did take over House Wei.

Brother Jiang, have you figured what you want to name your pill shop?”

“Taiyuan Tower,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly. Taiyuan had been his father’s title in his past life and the name had blossomed in his mind at first light. Although he wasn’t sure if the Taiyuan worlds and planes in his past life had anything to do with the Divine Abyss Continent, there was no harm in naming a pill shop Taiyuan Tower.

Wei Jie mulled over the name for a moment before praising, “What a good name!”

Jiang Chen smiled. He suddenly recalled something and asked, “Brother Wei, just call me Brother Zhen in the future. We should keep our stories straight. From here on forth in Veluriyam Capital, my name will be Zhen Shi.”

Wei Jie was surprised for a second, but quickly felt that it was a sound idea. It was better to use a single appellation. After all, what if he accidentally slipped up one day and used the wrong name?

Jiang Chen hadn’t told Huang’er to join him even though he was heading out with Wei Jie. He wasn’t willing to involve Huang’er in House Wei’s affairs.

“Be careful, Sir Jiang,” Huang’er reminded Jiang Chen before he went out. Their thoughts met as they looked and smiled at each other.

……

Inside the manor, Wei Jie had gone to meet Wei Tianxiao first with Jiang Chen in tow. He also greeted Wei Tianxiao's uncle, Wei Zhi. Wei Zhi was one of the four House Wei elders and Wei Tianxiao's confidante. He was the only one out of the four elders who'd remained absolutely loyal to Wei Tianxiao. Thanks to Wei Jie's introductions, Jiang Chen also came to know this elder whose eyes were filled with unspoken wisdom.

"Father, great uncle, it would seem that Wei Tiantong is ready to bare his fangs at this family meeting, no?" Wei Jie started the conversation.

Wei Tianxiao nodded slightly and gave Wei Jie and Jiang Chen an appreciative glance, "Jie'er, thank goodness that you and Pill Master Zhen are present, else they might have actually taken me by surprise. With Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng on our side, victory is all but certain."

"House lord, are you sure that Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng will support us?" Wei Zhi still looked a little worried.

Wei Tianxiao cast a glance at Wei Jie and smiled, "Both Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng are not people who make promises easily. If they've given their word, they will definitely not go back on it." He looked at Jiang Chen as he spoke again, "You're not an outsider anymore, Pill Master Zhen. What do you think of Elder Zhen and Elder Feng?"

“I doubt that the two elders will turn against us. In fact, I don’t think Wei Tiantong will be much of a threat at all. However, I am worried that the pill master next to Wei Tiantong would cause trouble. He may be able to change the situation if he were to act, so you must be on guard against him, house lord.”

Wei Tianxiao’s expression froze. In reality, his biggest worry was the same as Jiang Chen’s. He was afraid that that evil pill master would be up to no good. House Wei was currently lacking a pill king. They really had no countermeasure for him, making their moves far more difficult and inconvenient. However, Wei Tianxiao’s eyes immediately fell on Jiang Chen’s face with a hint of expectation, “You must have readied a plan, Pill Master Zhen?”

Jiang Chen smiled and took out a pill bottle, “Young master Jie mentioned that we would be discussing our partnership today, so I’ve brought some pills with me. These are some pills I’ve refined called the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill. It’s the gold standard of pills that can prevent its user from being poisoned.”

“Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill?” Wei Zhi raised his eyebrows, “I’ve only heard of the Immortal Elixir Pill, but I’ve heard tales that all pills of its nature are held up to the Immortal Elixir Pill as a point of comparison. But what is this Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill?”

Wei Tianxiao was also looking curiously at Jiang Chen. It was obvious that he was very interested in this topic.

Jiang Chen smiled confidently at them and looked them in the eye, “Naturally, this Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill is better than the traditional Immortal Elixir Pill. The average Immortal Elixir Pill will only take effect one hour after it has been consumed. However, my Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill will take effect instantly even if it were consumed half a step before the user is poisoned. That is why it is called the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill.”

“You mean it will take effect instantly?” The look in Wei Zhi’s eyes sharpened.

“You could say that,” Jiang Chen sounded very confident.

“So what are the effects, and how long will it remain effective…” Wei Zhi asked further.

“It has a greater coverage of poisons than the traditional Immortal Elixir Pill, and lasts longer too. The traditional Immortal Elixir Pill lasts for only twelve to fourteen hours, but this Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill lasts for an entire day!”

Even Wei Tianxiao’s expressions changed slightly as Jiang Chen explained its characteristics. A hint of joy appeared in his eyes. He could sniff the scent of a business opportunity from Jiang Chen’s words. If this pill really was as effective as Jiang Chen described, then it was a pill that would utterly annihilate the traditional Immortal Elixir Pill! Although poison prevention pills weren’t the most mainstream pills on sale, they were still very popular. Moreover, while there were plenty of poison prevention pills in Veluriyam Capital’s market, their effects were all mediocre and

unimpressive. Poison prevention pills had always been a great problem in the world of pill making, and an especially convincing poison prevention pill had always been difficult to find. The Immortal Elixir Pill was one of the top contenders amongst the lower ranking pills. If this pill really was better than the Immortal Elixir Pill, then the resulting profits would be shocking once it was released into the market!

This business opportunity... once the effects rippled through the market, House Wei would immediately advance in the pill industry from a third-rate faction to a second-rate faction. They might even be able to make a dash to capture a spot as a first-rate faction. When his thoughts travelled to this point, Wei Tianxiao asked in a deep tone, “Pill Master Zhen, if I could inquire about the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill’s refinement cost, difficulty and refinement period...”

These were all important elements of a pill. Even if the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill was better than the traditional Immortal Elixir Pill, they wouldn’t be able to earn anything if the cost of production was overly high. If the cost wasn’t high, but the refinement process was either too difficult or too long, the pill’s inability to be mass produced would also mean that it had no market value. A pill had to possess all of the marketable characteristics before a power could use it to dominate the market.

Since they were working with each other, there was no need for Jiang Chen to keep this part of the process vague. He answered smilingly, “The cost would be twenty to thirty percent lower compared to the traditional Immortal Elixir Pill, but it’ll be slightly harder to refine. However, I can help solve that problem.”

Joy appeared in both Wei Tianxiao and Wei Zhi's eyes when they heard this. They were both worldly people, and both could now smell the business opportunity in this pill.

Wei Jie smiled, "Father, great uncle, Pill Master Zhen has come up with the name for his shop already. It will be called 'Taiyuan Tower'. All that's left is to open it."

"Taiyuan Tower? That's a good name, a very good name!" Wei Tianxiao applauded with a smile.

Jiang Chen chuckled and poured out a few pills from the bottle, "Everyone, please keep a Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill with you in case the evil pill master tries to do anything during the family meeting."

Wei Tianxiao and Wei Zhi didn't turn down his offer. They were also worried about the same thing. When the the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill entered their palm, they noticed that it brimmed with a wondrous aura even though it looked rather small. It definitely looked like it was of a higher quality than the traditional Immortal Elixir Pill too. Wei Tianxiao and Wei Zhi exchanged glances with each other. They were obviously quite satisfied with the appearance of this pill.

"Young master Jie, give the others to Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng when you welcome them later," Jiang Chen poured out the rest of the pills and gave it to Wei Jie.

Wei Jie sighed, "We're using up quite a bit of money with this."

The traditional Immortal Elixir Pill cost about fifty thousand saint spirit stones or five hundred thousand origin spirit stones. It wasn't really too expensive. But if this Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill really was better than the traditional Immortal Elixir Pill, then it could easily be sold for sixty to seventy thousand saint spirit stones.

"Alright, it's almost time. Jie'er, come join your father in welcoming our guests. Third uncle, please accompany Pill Master Zhen." It was obvious that Wei Tianxiao hadn't informed Wei Zhi of Jiang Chen's true identity due to his worry that the latter would let his imagination run wild. The duo began to exchange some small talk.

Fifteen minutes later, the leaders of House Wei entered the room in succession. Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng arrived together into the meeting, but they were not accompanied by anyone else. Wei Tiantong came together with his trusted elders. There were two people who were always standing by Wei Tiantong's side, the sinister looking pill master and his son Wei Xiu.

Wei Tiantong swept a glance across the room as they entered the hall, stopping his gaze on Jiang Chen. He laughed loudly, "I see that there's an uninvited guest in this room?" His tone was both arrogant and a little overbearing.

Wei Zhi responded coldly, "It doesn't look like that person next to you is someone you can bring to a family meeting either, does it?" It was obvious that Wei Zhi was talking about the pill master next to Wei Tiantong.

However, Wei Tiantong laughed leisurely, “Haha, today is a good day to introduce Pill Master Yu to everyone, so I’ve brought him along with me. From today onwards, Pill Master Yu will become House Wei’s guest pill king. With him in residence, he will surely be able to fully display his abilities and bring House Wei to new heights like never before!”

Wei Tiantong was in high spirits as his confident tone rang through the room. He cast a glance at House Lord Wei Tianxiao once before smiling somewhat subtly at both Elder Feng and Elder Zhuo, “You’re early, Elder Zhuo, Elder Feng.”

They both smiled faintly in return. It was obvious that Wei Tiantong thought that the two elders were fully under his thumb, so he didn’t bother chatting further. Instead, he locked his gaze onto Jiang Chen, “House lord, a family meeting is a secret matter. Shouldn’t we send all unrelated personnel away first? House Wei’s doors aren’t opened to just any random strays, you know.”

Any random strays? Wei Jie’s face immediately changed at the comment. Jiang Chen was his savior and the helper he’d personally invited. How dare Wei Tiantong call Jiang Chen a random stray?!

Chapter 747: A Battle Between Pill Kings

“Fifth Uncle, since we’re talking about unrelated persons, shouldn’t you take a look around yourself first? I don’t recall those random strays by your side being allowed to attend a house meeting.” Wei Jie’s countenance was displeased, and his frosty words pointed directly at Wei Tiantong.

According to the house meeting rules, as the son of the current house lord, Wei Jie was the heir and thus had the right to attend meetings. On the other hand, while Wei Tiantong was second-in-command, he was not technically a candidate for house lord. In the unforeseen event of the house lord’s incapacitation, the second-in-command could only take over temporarily before the successor was decided. As such,the second-in-command had no actual claims to the position. Thus, though Wei Tiantong had the right to attend the house meeting as well, one couldn’t say the same for his son Wei Xiu.

Despite this, it was customary for Wei Tiantong to flaunt his importance, and he brought his son to every meeting. Because of Wei Tianxiao’s lack of opposition, no one else was in a position to criticize him. Under more serious scrutiny and taking into account the current situation, Wei Xiu’s presence became a blemish.

“What do you mean by that, Wei Jie? I deserve some credit for inviting Pill Master Yu here. Don’t I qualify to be here?” Wei Xiu threw a dirty look at his cousin.

“Inviting Pill Master Yu? Who sent the invitation? I don’t remember an invitation from the lord of the house to any such

person," Wei Jie smiled faintly.

When it came to bickering, Wei Xiu was no match for Wei Jie. Wei Tiantong's face darkened, and he looked straight at Wei Tianxiao. "House lord, I only invited Pill Master Yu out of the desire to contribute to the house. Surely he shouldn't feel unwelcome and unwanted? In recent years, our lackluster performance in the arena of pills has wholly failed to live up to our title as a ninth-ranked aristocratic house. I almost become mad with worry whenever I dare think about it. My acts are for the good of us all, should I be shamed because of it?"

The speech both appealed to the listeners and attacked Wei Tianxiao's lack of ability. It implied that he was to blame for the poor performance of House Wei's pill business and bringing shame to its good name.

"Ole Fifth, why not take a seat first? You've always liked to raise a clamor. Acting so high and mighty already, who knows how overbearing you'll become when things are settled?" Wei Tianxiao's voice was disinterested, taking the insult in stride.

"House lord, I'm not being high and mighty. How can I help it if House Wei's pill business is doing poorly? Rather, I think I am doing a big favor for the house." Wei Tiantong chuckled, squarely sitting down on his seat with a flourish. Wei Xiu laughed mockingly before finding a place to sit down behind Wei Tiantong, well aware of his place. He looked towards Jiang Chen immediately after he sat down, clearing wanting to stir up more trouble.

Wei Zhi saw through the young man's intent at once, and coldly intervened. "Cut the chatter. Pill Master Zhen here is a pill king that both the house lord and young master Jie have invited. We were just about to discuss pill-related affairs with him. It is your own fault that you arrived late. The plans that Pill Master Zhen drafted just now were quite enticing, and I have full confidence in his ability to bring House Wei's pill business back into the spotlight of Farmer God District."

A pill master? Wei Tiantong was stunned. The presence of this new pill master was an unexpected twist to his plans. But when he recalled Pill Master Yu's abilities, he settled back into his chair with a sneer. "Pill Master Zhen? Where is he from? He looks quite unfamiliar. Is there someone like this in Veluriyam Capital?" Wei Tiantong deliberately spoke with exaggerated surprise.

"I haven't heard of him either, surely he can't be a common mountebank?" Wei Xiu's head shaking performance surpassed his father's in hyperbole.

Wei Tiantong's elder confidante piped up as well. "Elder Zhi, at your age, you shouldn't be tricked by a charlatan. If pill kings were really this easy to find, House Wei wouldn't have spent so many years ..."

"If you're not old enough to go senile, how could I old enough to be tricked? So you're allowed to invite a so-called pill master, but we're not permitted to petition a bonafide pill king?" Wei Zhi interrupted coldly.

"Really, a real pill king? We should all take a close look. Pill

Master Yu, they think that we're the counterfeits, and that he's the real thing," Wei Tiantong roared with laughter.

"Everyone knows how to brag," Pill Master Yu was expressionless as he responded distantly.

Not wanting to waste time on argument or spare Pill Master Yu even one look, Jiang Chen smiled to Wei Tianxiao. "Sir house lord, let's get to the main topic."

"Yes, we shall proceed without further ado. Everyone, please take a seat," Wei Tianxiao nodded, his smile broadening.

Wei Tiantong was upset at being ignored, but he knew that he could overlook the slight. The first thing he did after taking his seat was glance seemingly carelessly in Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng's direction. The two elders in question kept their heads down. There was hardly any response to his gaze. What, are these two old coots playing at being honorable? When the moment comes, they'll still have to side with me. Hiding a sneer, Wei Tiantong cussed silently to himself.

In truth, Wei Tiantong found both Elder Zhuo and Feng quite grating. He retained some courtesy with them only because they were still useful. When he fully grasped the reins of power in the house, he would discard them at the first opportunity. What was the point of keeping them around if they weren't fully obedient?

With everyone seated, Wei Tianxiao knocked lightly on the long meeting table. "As Elder Zhi has mentioned already, we invited Pill

Master Zhen today because he desires to collaborate with us. Pill Master Zhen is a second rank pill king with a lot of potential. It is excellent news for our House Wei."

"Second rank pill king? Forgive my bluntness house lord, but is a second rank pill king really suitable for House Wei?" Wei Tiantong's expression grew solemn.

In the Upper Eight Regions, a second rank pill king was only fit to work for a third-or fourth-rate sect. As a ninth-ranked house, House Wei surpassed the typical third-rate sect in many aspects, and matched select second-rate sects in some. In terms of requirements, House Wei demanded at least a mid-tier pill king. Fourth rank was the lowest they would go.

"Ole Fifth, your words are quite big. House Wei hasn't had even a single pill king in many years. Now that we have the opportunity with Pill King Zhen, you want to act contrary?" Wei Zhi was displeased.

"Being contrary? Hardly. Pill Master Yu behind me is a fourth rank pill king. You want to hire a second rank while a fourth rank is available ... do you want people to make fun of us?" Wei Tiantong laughed.

A fourth rank pill king? All present were shocked, their eyes widening with amazement. No one had expected Wei Tiantong to enlist such capable help, Wei Tianxiao included. A fourth rank pill king ...!

Even Wei Jie was a little startled, concentration plain on his face. He couldn't help but glance at Jiang Chen, but the latter's expression was still as cool as ever. There was no hint of surprise on his face. Wei Jie's worries instantly disappeared. So what if he was a fourth rank pill king? Hadn't Jiang Chen already countered Pill Master Yu's techniques one by one? A contest between pill kings didn't merely comprise of a comparison of rank. Jiang Chen's skills were miraculous enough to go toe to toe with sixth rank pill kings, much less a fourth rank one.

"There's no need to elaborate on the difference between a fourth rank and second rank pill king, I think? It's pure irresponsibility for everyone to choose a second rank pill king and neglect a fourth rank! Elder Zhuo, Elder Feng, what do you say?" Wei Tiantong's confidante grinned. Obviously, the gesture was to force Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng to voice their opinion. Wei Tiantong smiled slightly at Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng as well.

"In theory, a fourth rank pill king does surpass a second rank in level. However, a contest must be held to determine relative strength when it comes to pill dao." Elder Zhuo was expressionless.

Wei Tiantong wasn't particularly satisfied with the reply. He had hoped for a clearer show of support from both elders. He also knew however, that the old man enjoyed maintaining a good reputation, and was thus unsurprised. The only thing I really need their support for is the matter of the Farmer God Market store. Them not taking Wei Tianxiao's side is enough when it comes to these smaller matters. Wei Tiantong sneered silently to himself.

"Pill King Yu, it seems that not everyone here believes in your

abilities. May I suggest that you make a show of them?" Wei Xiu suddenly interrupted behind Wei Tiantong.

Pill Master Yu smiled coolly, directing a frigid stare at Jiang Chen. "Would you be up to play a round?" Disdain oozed from both his eyes and voice, mixed with a few degrees of provocation as well.

"Playing around with you is a little unbecoming of me, but since everyone is so interested in the result, I guess it's not a problem stooping to your level for once," Jiang Chen returned a casual smile.

Stooping to your level? The people on Wei Tiantong's side were exasperated to the point of spitting out blood. How could a second rank pill king with unverified authenticity be so audacious? So pretentious in front of a fourth rank pill king?!

Pill Master Yu's eyes narrowed briefly, like a venomous snake. He sneered, "A trick like that is child's play. Are you trying to anger me? How naive."

"Anger you?" Jiang Chen burst into laughter. "Aren't you thinking too highly yourself? Are the likes of you worthy enough for me to actively try to anger?"

Pill Master Yu was truly aggravated now. His face darkened in displeasure. Wei Xiu interjected heatedly. "Kid, disregarding whether you're actually a pill king, do you not understand the rules? A second rank pill king is a junior before a fourth rank. How

can you talk like that to your senior?!”

Jiang Chen laughed in spite of himself, but didn’t spare Wei Xiu a glance. “A fellow who doesn’t even have the right to attend a house meeting is speaking so shamelessly… what a curious affair.”

Wei Xiu’s face froze, and he almost toppled from his seat. Wei Tiantong harrumphed, “Kid, your eloquence doesn’t matter here. To stand with House Wei, you need to have some genuine skill. If you don’t, I’d advise you to leave as early as possible.”

Pushing against the foot of a table with his own, Jiang Chen slid his chair backwards. Arms crossed, he looked leisurely at Pill Master Yu, “Why don’t you come up with how we’re going to play?”

His extreme arrogance was enough to provoke even the shrewdest of persons, Pill Master Yu among them. If not for Wei Tiantong’s message to stay calm, he almost wanted to explode right then and there. His gaze affixed to Jiang Chen, Pill Master Yu cackled, “Kid, I’m not going to make this complicated. Let us set up a trap for each other, and see which of us can last past fifteen minutes in the other’s. How about it?”

Hearing that, Jiang Chen immediately understood that his counterpart wanted to compete with poison. Poison? Jiang Chen almost laughed out loud. He would’ve been unsure of how much real knowledge his opponent had in anything else, but he was utterly confident when it came to poison. Jiang Chen was immune to all toxins after incorporating the golden cicada bloodline into his blood. What could he possibly be afraid of?

Chapter 748: A Game of Life and Death

“House lord, does Pill Master Zhen dare to play this game? You invited him, after all. The stakes are life and death. I hope they’re not too high, hmm?” Wei Tiantong smiled, his tone layered with a false kindness.

Wei Tianxiao snuck a glance at Jiang Chen, who nodded imperceptibly. Emboldened by the gesture, he laughed, “Ole Fifth, it is I who should say that to you.”

“There are never any stakes too high for me,” Wei Tiantong chuckled. “Pill King Yu, my reputation hangs on you today.”

Smiling faintly, Pill Master Yu flicked a glance at Jiang Chen with some vehemence. “Kid, this place is too cramped. There’s no room for us to show off our abilities without hurting the others here. How about we find an open space?” Pill Master Yu jerked his head towards Jiang Chen in challenge.

Standing up slowly, Jiang Chen headed outside.

“Come on everyone, let’s go watch.” Wei Tianxiao took the lead after him with an easy smile.

Wei Tiantong was amused at his brother’s feigned calm, and looked on him with scorn. Wei Tianxiao, you really don’t come around until you hit a dead end. You may be pleased now, but you’ll soon be miserable! Thinking that he had definitely gotten the best of Wei Tianxiao, Wei Tiantong didn’t wish to lose in

posturing. “Let us spectate the proceedings. It would be a shame not to,” he clapped.

The House Wei courtyard was quite spacious. Pill Master Yu and Jiang Chen occupied the east and west sides respectively.

“Kid, can you finish your arrangements in ten breaths? If you can’t, you better say so now so I can let you off easy.” The pill master raised his gaunt eyebrows, his tone sinister.

Jiang Chen scoffed, “Ten breaths? Do you work at a snail’s pace? If you can’t get it done in three breaths, you should boot yourself out of here. Needing ten breaths and claiming to be a pill king... I am quite suspicious of your actual qualifications.”

The people on Wei Tianxiao’s side laughed uproariously at those words. Pill Master Yu had been handedly repelled, but he was inwardly stern. Three breaths? Was this kid all brag and bluster, or did he have real knowledge and skill? He hesitated a little in the heat of the moment.

On the other hand, Jiang Chen was impassive about the entire affair. “Excuse me, can one of you declare the start of the competition? Who’s going to keep time?”

Elder Feng suddenly intoned, “I shall.”

Being a neutral elder in name, Elder Feng’s oversight of the situation was agreeable to both parties. “Are you prepared? Then,

begin!” The elder’s words were certainly clear-cut.

Though a breath of time in the world of martial dao differed from the time of the breath of an ordinary person, three was still a remarkably short time. Knowing that there would be a fierce battle today, Jiang Chen had made a few preparations before setting out. At Elder Feng’s signal, Jiang Chen swiftly and expertly deployed a small formation into the surroundings. His quick movements showed off the significant extent of his improvement in the art, and he set at least four poisons into the formation.

One was the Divine Tree of Dreams, pacifying and sedating those who were exposed to it. One was Spirit Restraint Powder, which he had snatched from the hands of Wei Qing of the Walkabout Sect within the Myriad Domain. It had played a significant role in dealing with Gong Wuji and company. Yet another was a type of poison that Jiang Chen had mixed himself. Though it was not particularly strong, it was the most evident. Jiang Chen planned for it to deceive his opponent. The last and deadliest was a toxin Jiang Chen had made from the Divine Befuddlement Miasma. It was hidden within the formation as the finishing blow. All but the most masterful pill kings would easily miss it.

Incorporating both clear and hidden elements, the fourfold poison formation was four separate layers of insurance. It was quite clever. And yet, Jiang Chen had accomplished this easily within three breaths.

Comparatively, Pill Master Yu was in somewhat in a rush. He had proposed ten breaths because he felt that he was already quite fast, and wanted to use the time frame to trip up Jiang Chen.

Unexpectedly however, it'd turned out to be a snare for himself instead. His setup could be considered only satisfactory after three breaths.

Jiang Chen was in no hurry and smiled merrily. "Pill Master Yu, it seems that you have not yet mastered your skills. Three breaths may be too hard for you. Shall I give you a handicap of seven more? That way, you can have some more time to prepare so that you are not sore when you lose."

Though Pill Master Yu wanted to take him up on the proposition, he was unwilling to lose face in front of so many people, and harrumphed. "Kid, the only thing you have left is your glib tongue. I hope you're still able to laugh about it in a bit."

As he said this, he left his own arrangements and began to walk into Jiang Chen's. The same was true for the latter.

"Good, now, please enter your opponent's trap. The countdown ... begins!" Elder Feng bellowed.

Sneering, Pill Master Yu walked with great strides into Jiang Chen's predetermined area. However, his gaze was not on Jiang Chen's trap, but on his own. He was quite confident in his own arrangements. Upon entry, not even a sixth rank pill king would last a quarter hour, much less a second rank one. Seeing Jiang Chen step into his trap, Pill Master Yu let the hint of a malicious smile peek out. Kid, you ignored the easy way out. You just had to bring yourself to ruin. Let's see how stubborn you are in a bit! I won't remove the poison even if you beg on your knees, heh heh... I'll see you ravaged by the poison to a slow and agonizing demise.

It will truly be a marvelous scene… Pill Master Yu's heart was filled with an indescribable happiness upon thinking of that cruel outcome.

For a master of poisons, to have an enemy wail beneath one's feet in their death throes was the highest reward and the greatest fulfillment. He spent some time leering in his daydreams before remembering he was also present in his opponent's trap, and spared it a casual look. A young second rank pill king, possibly not even a real one… what kind of wondrous trap could his opponent set? He didn't believe it at all. It's still a thousand years too early for you to trick me!

As a master of poisons, Pill Master Yu was consequently also an expert of antidotes. He held no regard for ordinary poison setups, and had even experienced some extraordinary ones, so he did not lack appropriate stratagems. He was unafraid of spending even several hours in one, much less fifteen minutes.

"Hmm? This looks like a formation," Pill Master Yu scrutinized it carefully, his heart reeling a little. "That kid has a few tricks up his sleeve. Hmph, is he shaming himself by bringing out such an obvious poison formation? And another, Spirit Restraint Powder… haha, it may be rare, but such a poison cannot stop me!" He'd already discovered two poison setups in a short span. "Someone who can set up something like this in only three breaths can't be considered only good for show. I shouldn't be too complacent, perhaps he has other hidden poisons here."

Experiencing Jiang Chen's abilities firsthand, Pill Master Yu no longer underestimated the young man. He began to closely inspect

the surroundings. Though he was confident, he did not feel the need to be blind with arrogance. It was his life's creed. He could boast a perceptive certainty, but without unseeing hubris.

Suddenly, sighs of marvel came from the crowd. Startled, Pill Master Yu looked across the courtyard. He sneered faintly when he saw the results. His opponent had already sat down cross-legged within his trap. I thought the kid was actually skilled, but I guess that wasn't true after all. Is he already failing to hold on? Fifteen minutes... he'll be lucky if he can last half that time! Sitting like that to seal off his qi ocean and consciousness to avoid the poison... it's too late already! If not for worry of his own situation, Pill Master Yu was almost ready to thoroughly admire his opponent's pathetic state within his poison trap. It would be excellent entertainment.

On the outside, both Wei Tianxiao's and Wei Zhi's expressions froze. From what they could see of the situation, the person in their corner seemed to have the disadvantage. Jiang Chen was already sitting down cross-legged, and looked like he was in full defense. However, the opposing Pill Master Yu was free to peruse the condition of his opponent. The comparison of skills was obvious.

Wei Tiantong was pleased by the turn of events, especially with the gradual replacement of Wei Tianxiao and Wei Zhi's confident smiles with expressions of shock. He had the impulse to throw his head back and laugh. "House lord, the second rank pill king you invited looks like a sham, huh? Is he giving up this quickly? That's just embarrassing," Picking at the opportunity, Wei Tiantong smiled with contempt and ridicule.

“Just like I said, he’s a common mountebank. And you didn’t believe me! How right I was,” Wei Xiu laughed with a similar pleasure and then turned to Wei Jie with a lecturing tone. “Younger brother Jie, look at you, fraternizing with these knaves all the time. I don’t mean to patronize, but I am truly worried about this less-than-upstanding behaviour!”

Wei Jie was about to throw up. “House brother Xiu, have you already single-handedly declared victory? The fifteen minutes are not up yet, but you’re in such a hurry. Those who aren’t in the know would think you’re just a scion from a minor house, inexperienced in the matters of the world!”

Wei Xiu’s face colored, “Why don’t you keep trying to beat your head against the wall, you’ll get a reality check soon.”

Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng glanced at each other. Given the circumstances, even they thought that the contest was already over. Pill King Zhen was quite skilled, but perhaps the pill king Wei Tiantong had hired was still one step ahead.

Pill Master Yu’s expression changed suddenly. He stared into the middle of the formation, his eyebrows slightly upturned, like he’d discovered something new. In fact, he had found the third poison setup. The tasteless, scentless Divine Tree of Dreams. Though he didn’t know precisely what poison it was, it had a soporific effect on him. His eyelids fluttered together, and his mind was assaulted by a wave of fatigue.

Several pills of refreshment in succession were taken out and swallowed rapidly before Pill Master Yu managed to suppress the

hypnotic feeling. His forehead beaded with cold sweat, “What a horrifying poison! This kid has more than a few devious tricks up his sleeve! Good thing I didn’t miss it!” Mentally rejoicing, he looked across the courtyard again. A silent Jiang Chen was seated there, statuesque and unmoving. It looked like the youth had lost all vital signs!

Chapter 749: Sudden Turnabout

Pill Master Yu was secretly full of glee when he noticed the state his opponent was in. He'd deployed several layers of poisons there. He hadn't been completely thorough because he'd been short on time, but the blend of all the various poisons would have an even stronger and more immediate consciousness-sealing effect. It would destroy a man's consciousness as soon as it penetrated inside, making him living dead!

Judging from the situation over there, could his opponent have failed to spot even a consciousness-assaulting poison like this? Pill Master Yu couldn't stop himself from silently shouting in glee. Poisons striking at the consciousness were usually easy to spot, because pill masters usually had a very keen consciousness. However, by the looks of it, his opponent had clearly failed to notice it. His consciousness seemed to have been sealed already! Hence, Pill Master Yu was simply overflowing with pride. The allotted time of fifteen minutes was also about to end!

Just when Pill Master Yu was strutting with assurance, a warning sign suddenly came from consciousness. What's going on? Pill Master Yu's heart quailed. Why had his consciousness suddenly produced a warning for no rhyme or reason? He hurried to check, then almost leapt upwards.

Ominous clouds had unexpectedly appeared some time around his consciousness, like thick, black clouds darkening the sky before a rainy day. Pill Master Yu was almost frightened out of his wits. He'd still been proud and complacent just moments ago. He'd thought his opponent so weak to fail to even notice the consciousness-assaulting poison. He'd then discovered the

following instant that his own mind had been imperceptibly surrounded by dark clouds! On top of that, the power of this encirclement was surprisingly dreadful. It even seemed it could devour and annihilate his consciousness at any time!

No! Pill Master Yu finally felt a glimmer of fear.

Just then, Elder Feng proclaimed the end of the allotted quarter of an hour. As though a great weight had been lifted off his shoulders, Pill Master Yu leapt outside the formation.

Wei Jie laughed heartily. “Pill Master Yu, does that mean you’re conceding defeat?”

Pill Master Yu snapped, “Concede defeat? Let’s first see if he’s still alive!”

Everyone froze. What did that mean? Did Pill Master Yu mean that his opponent was already dead? He sat down cross-legged without expounding and tried a variety of methods to blockade his consciousness and defend himself against the invasion of these dark clouds. Only, no matter what he did, the invasion of the dark clouds still pushed inexorably on forward after a slight delay. Pill Master Yu sprang violently to his feet and went inside the formation he’d arranged.

Wei Jie yelled, “Pill Master Yu, you’re breaking the rules!”

Pill Master Yu didn’t have time to spare in wasting words. He

walked towards Jiang Cheng. He wanted to locate the antidote on Jiang Chen. His opponent had already become the living dead, so wasn't he allowed to do as he pleased?

Just as Pill Master Yu drew near, Jiang Chen suddenly opened his eyes and stretched lazily, standing up slowly with an exaggerated yawn. He had an apologetic expression on his face, "My bad, how long has it been? I accidentally fell asleep. It was actually a pleasant nap." He nodded at Pill Master Yu with a faint smile. "Pill Master Yu, did you even set up anything? Why didn't I feel any danger? It made me nap instead."

Everyone almost fell to the floor with shock. No one was a fool. Everyone could see Jiang Chen was only dissembling. He was simply purposefully smacking Pill Master Yu on the face! Weren't you well prepared? Weren't you going to send your opponent to the afterlife? And now look, your opponent's perfectly fine and dandy, he didn't even lose half a hair, and he also had a good nap!

Pill Master Yu swayed on his feet and almost fainted from anger. Wei Tiantong and his son were even more dumbstruck. Proud and complacent as they had previously been, they hadn't even had time to retract their smiles before countless slaps rained down on their faces in this extreme turnaround. The duo had been sprouting "counterfeit" and "swindler" just moments ago. In the end, Pill Master Yu was the one who looked more like a counterfeit, more like a swindler!

Wei Tiantong was utterly astonished. He saw Pill Master Yu pounce on Jiang Chen and was secretly taken aback, you wouldn't be losing your cool so easily, would you? You can't fly into such a

rage even if you lost the contest! “Pill Master Yu, please stop now!” Wei Tiantong yelled in hurry. One had to look at the bigger picture. Wei Tiantong very much wanted to choke the sudden appearance of this so-called Pill Master Zhen to death. But reason told him that were he to fall out with Wei Tianxiao now, the things he’d schemed might all become as fleeting as clouds if by any chance Wei Tianxiao were to kill Pill Master Yu out of anger.

“Pill Master Yu, keep the bigger picture in mind!” That clan elder who was Wei Tiantong’s confidant also shouted, “Even if we lose this round, we merely need to bet another few rounds. How could a fourth rank pill king lose to a second rank pill king?”

Pill Master Yu would never lose reason so badly in ordinary times, but it was currently a matter of life and death for him! If he couldn’t get his hands on the antidote, then he would be met with an untimely death the moment the dark clouds penetrated his consciousness. How could he still keep his composure when he thought of that? What would he still care about the bigger picture? No bigger picture was worth his own life!

Jiang Chen didn’t show any fear when he saw Pill Master Yu pounce on him. Pill Master Yu’s martial cultivation was merely at the earth sage realm. Although he hadn’t broken through the earth sage realm yet, with the number of sky sages he’d already contended against, what did he have to fear from a mere earth sage?

Besides, Jiang Chen could tell that Pill Master Yu’s talent in martial cultivation was far below his talent with poisons. Without the assistance of his poisons, there was no need to fear him at all.

Jiang Chen had at least seven or eight methods available if he wanted to kill Pill Master Yu right now. Only, the time for his opponent to die was already drawing near. What did he need to take action himself for?

The more he used his internal energy like this, the faster the toxicity of the Divine Befuddlement Miasma would flare, and the quicker he would die. Back then in Infant Shriek, even a powerhouse at the fourth level emperor realm like Gong Wuji couldn't bear the Miasma's toxicity, to say nothing of a trivial Pill Master Yu. Jiang Chen had gathered a great amount of poison from the Miasma in Infant Shriek. The toxicity might not have been as overwhelming nor as thick and omnipresent, but it was more than enough to deal with one pill master inside the formation.

Wei Tiantong also vaguely felt that something was out of place when he saw Pill Master Yu rampage like an enraged tiger. He hastily stepped up and clamped onto Pill Master Yu's wrist. "Pill Master Yu, please calm down." Wei Tiantong's plans still required Pill Master Yu's assistance. How could he let the pill master continue to run wild?

Pill Master Yu was belching fire from his eyes. "Calm your f*cking ass! Wei Tiantong, if it weren't for all your f*cking complicated chickenshits, I'd have poisoned everyone in your house already. Why would we be here today?" He swore like a sailor, looking like he'd gone insane.

Wei Tiantong was struck dumb. He'd never have imagined how someone usually rather calm would act so crazed all of a sudden.

Had the fellow been hit by some poison that'd made him lose his mind? Wei Tiantong berated him with a frown, "Pill Master Yu, what insane nonsense are you sprouting? Shut the hell up!"

Pill Master Yu swore even more viciously: "Wei Tiantong, you coward! I'd have stuck to my own plans if I'd known beforehand. It's my rotten luck to partner with useless trash like you!" He then fixed Jiang Chen with a ferocious stare, "You, Zhen, I don't care where a pill king like you comes from, just know your place and hand over the antidote! There won't be a slightest foothold left for you inside Veluryiam Capital otherwise!"

What? Antidote? The crowd finally faintly understood another implication from these words. Could Pill Master Yu have already fallen victim to Pill King Zhen's poison? Had he unwittingly fallen into a trap? What on earth was going on? Even Wei Tianxiao felt incredulous. This turnaround had come too fast. It was simply a great, wild and unrestrained ride up and down.

Pill Master Yu had previously been free and easy, as though he could wield the butcher's knife even blindfolded, while Pill King Zhen had been sitting cross-legged and not making a sound, leading everyone to believe he'd already succumbed to the poison and died. But in the end, Pill Master Yu was the one poisoned and was now raving like a madman, while the previously quiet Pill King Zhen hadn't lost a single hair and had even enjoyed a very pleasant nap instead!

Now that things came to such a head, even the most dim-witted person could tell that Pill Master Yu's skills were far worse compared to Pill King Zhen. What fourth rank pill king? He was

simply a charlatan with a false reputation! How could a fourth rank pill king be so weak? But how would they know that this Pill Master Yu was no charlatan at all. Rather, he'd met too fearsome an opponent, an existence far above a second rank pill king. Even a high-level pill king might not be a match for this "Pill King Zhen" when it came to pills!

Wei Jie was suddenly delighted. He shared a look with his father Wei Tianxiao. Both of them could see the gratification in each other's eyes. They'd wagered on the right person in gambling on Jiang Chen!

Wei Tiantong stared at Jiang Chen with a frown, "Pill King Zhen, this is a mere learning exchange. You won due to a fluke, and you better hand over the antidote now."

"Indeed, how about a couple more rounds if you're so sure of your skill?" Wei Xiu also chimed in.

Jiang Chen smiled in contempt. This father and son duo was really quite naive. Hand over the antidote? Why would he ever? "Both of you are laymen, so don't speak in your ignorance. Contests between poison masters are all struggles of life and death. If this pill master you invited had defeated my humble self, I would never have begged for pity." Jiang Chen's smile was faint, but his expression was unyielding. You want the antidote? Dream on!

Pill Master Yu shrugged off Wei Tiantong's arm when he heard this, "Wei Tiantong, why are you still foolishly standing there? Hurry up and grab this kid! Force him to cough up the antidote! You know the consequences if I die!"

Wei Tiantong humphed coldly at this naked threat right to his face, yet he was caught between a rock and a hard place. This Pill Master Yu was indeed a mole sent by the Majestic Clan. It would be hard for Wei Tiantong to gain control of the house without powerful backing. So he'd wanted to borrow this opportunity and switch his allegiance. He believed that the Coiling Dragon Clan, the great clan that House Wei relied on, had already lost its glories of yesteryear. The Majestic Clan would supplant it sooner or later as the premier great clan. If he could obtain the position of house lord and switch to the Majestic Clan's banner in one go, that would be killing two birds with one stone.

That was the only reason why he'd hit it off from the beginning with Pill Master Yu and made so many plans. He'd never imagined that Pill Master Yu's life would hang by a thread because of a trivial contest. This threw all his plans out the window without a doubt.

One had to remember, he was grasping Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng by the throat, and only Pill Master Yu could solve their problems. It was a given that these two elders would fall out with him as soon as Pill Master Yu died. Why would they still stand by his side then? An ominous expression dawned glinted on Wei Tiantong's face as he pounced on Jiang Chen.

Chapter 750: The Coming of The End

Wei Tianxiao had been prepared since the beginning, so he immediately waved a hand and forced Wei Tiantong out of the way almost the instant Wei Tiantong began to move. Wei Tiantong might be strong, but he was still a ways away from House Lord Wei Tianxiao. Wei Tianxiao wasn't particularly good at managing the house, but he had been able to become House Wei's lord because of his strong achievements in martial dao and potential. He was currently eighth level emperor realm and the undisputable strongest cultivator in the entirety of House Wei. In fact, he was amongst the top three strongest cultivators out of all the ninth ranked aristocratic houses in Veluriyam Capital! Wei Tiantong attacked several times, but Wei Tianxiao easily blocked all of his attempts.

"What do you mean by this, house lord?" Wei Tiantong frowned.

Wei Tianxiao replied coldly, "I'm the one who should be asking you this question. Why are you getting involved in the battle between two pill masters?" He was a house lord after all, and not lacking in authority as a house lord when he grew angry.

Wei Tiantong responded furiously, "He has already won the battle, so he should end things on a gracious note. But why isn't he giving his opponent the antidote? Is he going to take his opponent's life just because he won?"

"Don't gamble if you can't afford the consequences. It's not like Pill King Zhen was the one who started things. If memory serves, it was your Pill Master Yu who started things, no?" Wei Tianxiao's

tone was indifferent. He wasn't normally forceful, but they were practically an inch away from shedding all pretense of cordiality at the moment. Not only had that Pill Master Yu turned hostile against Yu Tiantong just now, he'd even swore to poison every House Wei member. How could they possibly conclude matters amiably?

Wei Tiantong gnashed his teeth and looked at Elder Zhuo and Feng, "Elders, Wei Tianxiao is abusing his status as house lord and ruling by hegemony here! As elders of the house, you should speak for justice!" Wei Tiantong had to mobilize all his forces to attack Wei Tianxiao at this point, or the situation would become very disadvantageous to him.

Elder Zhuo smiled indifferently, "I don't think there's anything wrong with this gamble, so what justice exactly are you expecting us to speak of? That being said, I do have a few words to offer on behalf of justice."

"What?" Wei Tiantong looked startled.

"If you don't do stupid things, they won't come back to bite you in the ass," Elder Zhuo's tone was indifferent.

Elder Feng also nodded, "That's right. If your Pill Master Yu hadn't called for this gamble himself, there wouldn't have been this bet and none of this would have happened in the first place. He's the one who insisted on doing stupid things, Tiantong!"

The two elders' attitude was such that Wei Tiantong almost

thought that something was wrong with his ears. Wei Xiu couldn't help but remind them, "Elders, are you... mistaken about something? Pill Master Yu is the cure to your... troubles."

Pill Master Yu was also staring coldly at Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng while smiling malevolently, "Are you going back on your promises, you old bastards? I guess you don't want to save your juniors anymore."

Wei Tiantong's trusted elder also persuaded, "Elder Zhuo, Elder Feng, you need to clearly state your positions at this time. Don't make a mistake by taking a stand on the wrong side."

"Hmph! Wei Tiantong, I thought what we agreed on earlier was about the Farmer God Street's shop, wasn't it? Are we talking about the Farmer God Street now?" Elder Zhuo sneered and retorted.

Wei Tiantong nearly broke out into a swearing rant, but he forcefully restrained his anger, "If Pill Master Yu dies from poison, then all the promises are for naught. He is the cure to your juniors' ailments. If you don't save him now, are you going to wait until he's dead and bury your juniors with him as well?"

Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng wouldn't have been that furious if he hadn't brought up the matter, but he had. It was Elder Feng who immediately broke out into a swearing rant, "Wei Tiantong, you're the one who invited enemies into our family! How dare you say that he's some 'cure to our troubles? Why didn't you bring up the fact that he's the source of our ailments too?"

The moment he said this, Wei Tiantong and that Pill Master Yu's expression changed slightly. Wei Tiantong denied the accusation, "I have no idea what you're talking about. What source?"

Elder Feng hectored angrily, "Cut the act already. This Yu bastard is the cause of everything. Elder Zhuo's grandson and my disciple were both poisoned by him! How dare the two of you then pretend to be the good guy! How dare you put on this front to recruit us two old men! Wei Tiantong, you're a good traitor alright! Look at this scheme of yours! We were completely led about by the nose!"

Wei Tiantong was completely dumbfounded by this turn of events. How had the two old bastards managed to figure out such a well hidden secret? No wonder they ignored all of his gestures even though he'd been constantly sending them signals earlier!

Pill Master Yu understood that the truth had been exposed, so he decided that he might as well drop all pretenses and screamed at Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng, "What are you old bastards waiting for then? Your juniors will be dead for sure without my unique skills to save them! If you're smart,then take down this pretender now and loot his antidote. If you present the antidote to me obediently, then maybe I can consider forgiving you two..."

Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng exchanged a glance with each other. They both thought that this fellow had gone crazy. Wei Jie even sneered, "Stop dreaming, Yu. Pill Master Zhen already took care of your little tricks a few days ago."

“What?” Pill Master Yu and Wei Tiantong turned pale at the same time. The duo exchanged a glance and saw countless complicated feelings in each other’s eyes. Wei Tiantong particularly, felt that the world was spinning beneath him. Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng’s betrayal meant that his schemes had completely fallen through today! His ambitions to seize the seat of house lord from Wei Tianxiao was completely and utterly trashed!

Wei Tianxiao didn’t miss the opportunity to hector, “Wei Tiantong, you and your son have colluded with the Majestic Clan and attempted to break the house apart! Your sins are unforgivable!”

The moment he said this, both father and son, as well as Wei Tiantong’s trusted elder all looked panic-stricken. The other three great elders, Wei Zhi, Wei Zhuo and Wei Feng, all immediately encircled the scene. Wei Tianxiao waved his hand and summoned his personal bodyguards from all directions. They immediately sealed off all of the exits. Wei Jie and Jiang Chen themselves had retreated to the back leisurely. At this point, juniors like them no longer needed to interfere with the matter.

Wei Tiantong’s face became distorted in face of the downward spiralling situation. The violent look of a trapped beast sprung to his face, and he stared coldly at Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng, “How dare you two old bastards play me like a fool! Don’t blame me for being merciless then!” He threw a glance at Pill Master Yu after this. The latter laughed malevolently and exclaimed in a soft tone, “Should’ve done this from the start!”

He made a hand gesture as he said this and instantly caused the

greenery around the backyard to explode. A formation immediately enveloped the entire area. The moment the formation came alive, all sorts of poison formations activated as well and suffused the air in white smoke.

"Wei Tianxiao, you're the one who forced me to this!" Wei Tiantong roared madly with eyes filled with malevolence. His tone indicated his madness. "You are the house lord, but not only have you failed to lead the house forwards, you've cause it to grow weaker day by day! As the house lord, you don't know how to be flexible. There's no way we'll have a bright future following a dying power like the Coiling Dragon Clan! The Majestic Clan will become the true premier clan in Veluriyam Capital in the future! Wei Tianxiao, your blind loyalty is outdated! Tell me, in what other aspects are you better than me? You're only slightly better than me in martial dao, so why should you be the house lord and I just the next-in-line?"

Wei Tiantong was almost shouting when he said these words. It was as if he was trying vent all of the frustrations he had pent up for hundreds of years. In the end, he even sounded like he was forcing out his words through gritted teeth. "From today onwards, I, Wei Tiantong will be the lord of House Wei. I won't kill you, Wei Tianxiao. I will disable you, imprison you and make you watch me, Wei Tiantong, lead House Wei into a brighter future than today! That's because I will always be better than you!"

Smoke was everywhere inside the poison formation. Wei Tianxiao and his men kept trying to break out of the encirclement and avoid the seeping poison attacks. Wei Tiantong immediately broke into a string of crazed laughter when he saw this, "Don't waste your time, Wei Tianxiao. This poison formation contains the

essence of Pill Master Yu's knowledge that he spent his entire life accumulating. Its poison isn't something that the lot of you can endure unless you've taken the antidote like I did beforehand. Hahahaha..."

Pill Master Yu was also laughing eerily, "Zhen, this is the time to turn in the antidote obediently if you're smart. We may even consider making a trade."

Jiang Chen observed his surroundings inside the poison formation for a moment, and he had to admit that the arrangement of this formation was both ingenious and well hidden. Even he hadn't noticed it until the moment it was activated. That being said, although the poison formation was set up ingeniously and the poison was quite strong, he had prepared the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill beforehand. Even if this poison formation could bring the others some harm, it was definitely not strong enough to be a critical threat.

As expected, when Jiang Chen looked towards Wei Tianxiao and the others, the group quickly realized that the poison formation hadn't inflicted any mortal danger despite their initial panic. Wei Tianxiao, Elder Zhuo and the others quickly calmed down after that.

"Wei Tiantong, is this your final struggle?" Jiang Chen's sneer rang from inside the smoke-filled formation.

Wei Tiantong turned furious, "How much longer can you keep up that tough act, brat?! Even if you're good enough to avoid these poisons, do you really think you can escape my grasp without Wei

Tiaoxiao's protection?"

Pill Master Yu said coldly, "If I were you, I would surrender now, brat!"

"You have no idea who's at the end of their ropes, do you?" Jiang Chen smiled disdainfully from inside the formation before casting a glance at Wei Tianxiao and Elder Zhuo. Wei Tianxiao nodded slightly and acted in unison with Elder Zhuo and Feng. They immediately pounced in Wei Tiantong's direction through the smoke.

"Mm? You all..." Wei Tiantong was caught off guard to see the four great experts charging towards him at the same time. They looked quite vigorous and brimming with vitality, no sign of being poisoned at all. For an instant, Wei Tiantong was completely confused. How could this be? They had tested out Pill Master Yu's poison formation many times. There were absolutely no problems with it.

Even Pill Master Yu himself was stunned silly. Disbelief covered his face as his pupils shrank rapidly. For a time, he actually forgot that he was facing a life or death situation. The domain of an eighth level emperor realm came to life, and Wei Tiantong's men were instantly suppressed by it. Pill Master Yu failed to act before he was slapped right out of the formation by Wei Tianxiao.

"Jie'er, this bastard poisoned you before. I'll leave him to you to exact your vengeance!" Wei Tianxiao was obviously furious.

The sudden turn of events caused Wei Tiantong to lose control completely. He yelled madly, “Impossible! How can I possibly lose to you, Wei Tianxiao!?”

Wei Tianxiao said coldly, “Are you still unrepentant in the face of death?”

Chapter 751: All Is Ready

On the other side, Wei Tiantong's trusted elder was destroyed by the combined force of Wei Zhi, Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng. Wei Tiantong's son, Wei Xiu attempted to escape, but no such possibility existed while he was enveloped inside the emperor domain. He too was killed by Elder Feng by a single palm strike. Elder Feng was a person who abhorred evil, and his fury had been completely kindled this time. It was because of Wei Tiangtong's urging of Pill Master Yu to activate the poison formation that both Elder Feng and Elder Zhuo realized that they actually hadn't been informed about this beforehand, despite being allies. This also meant that Wei Tiangtong might have been very well planning to take both of them out once he had dealt with Wei Tianxiao! How could Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng possibly show mercy after understanding this?

After they eliminated Wei Xiu, they joined the battle against Wei Tiantong and sealed off all of his possible paths of retreat. Since they were already planning to clean house, it was only natural to eliminate their enemies completely! If Wei Tiantong were allowed to escape today, he would definitely grow to become a threat again in the future. With Wei Tiantong's ability to cause trouble like a typical villain, he might very well collude with House Wei's enemies and return to harm them in the future. Wei Tianxiao was already stronger than Wei Tiantong to begin with, and now the three elders had completely sealed off his paths of retreat too. Although Wei Tiantong struggled at death's door and displayed a level of combat power that his limits, it didn't change the fact that he was still in great danger. It didn't take long before he was struck a couple of times by his attackers.

"Wei Tiantong, you colluded with House Wei's enemies and

attempted to bring harm to your own family. Are you still trying to resist even now?" Wei Zhi yelled from outside the battle and attempted to break down Wei Tiantong's will with words.

Wei Tiantong suffered repeated blows. His hair was disheveled, his body covered all over with blood, and he looked more like a trapped, despairing beast than the sixth level emperor realm cultivator he was. The graceful bearing he was used to as the person with the second most highest authority in House Wei was long gone. Wei Tiantong continued to scream madly while struggling like a doomed beast, "Damn you, heavens! I refuse to accept this! I am not in any way weaker than him, so why is he the victor in the end? Why?!"

Wei Tiantong really couldn't accept this outcome. Before they'd departed for the meeting today, he'd thought through today's plan and felt that it was perfect and multilayered. Be it in brains or brawn, he was certain that he could toy with Wei Tianxiao and Wei Jie to their deaths. He never imagined that he would be the one eventually toyed to death instead!

On the outskirts, Elder Zhuo said coldly, "Wei Tiantong, how can you possibly compare to our house lord? You have ambition, but not the ability to realize your ambition. You have skill, but not the heart to use it at the right place. What else do you have? Are you stronger than our house lord in terms of martial strength? Is your failure of a son better than young master Wei Jie? You're not even as kindhearted and generous as our house lord! You claim that you are better than our house lord, but at what, exactly?"

"Wei Zhuo, you two timing bastard! I'll haunt you even if in

death!” Despite his final struggles, Wei Tiantong was ultimately suppressed.

Wei Tianxiao and the three family elders came over to shower Jiang Chen with thanks, “Pill King Zhen, we must thank you for your Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill, or the consequences would’ve been unthinkable.”

Wei Jie had also just cleaved that Pill Master Yu in half before walking over to thank Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen didn’t claim the credit, however. They were all on the same boat after all. Everything he did was not just to help House Wei, but also himself. “Everyone, it is not time yet to feel relieved. Judging from that Pill Master Yu and Wei Tiantong’s words, Pill Master Yu was obviously a spy sent over from the Majestic Clan. Although these people had all been eliminated, the Majestic Clan may not necessarily decide to give up just like this!” Jiang Chen sounded the alarm for everyone.

Wei Tianxiao’s expression was dark, “The Majestic Clan is acting more and more outrageous as of late. They have stretched their fingers so long that they reach even into House Wei.”

The Majestic Clan’s ambition is an open secret. This is obviously a sign that they are declaring war against the Coiling Dragon Clan!” Elder Zhuo also sighed.

“It would seem that the competition to become the number one clan will only grow more and more intense in the future,” Elder Feng also nodded.

The look in Wei Tianxiao's eyes was deep as it fell on Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng for a very long time. Finally, he spoke seriously, "Elder Zhuo, Elder Feng, the threat in our family is temporarily removed after this battle, but there are still some things that I must say now as the house lord. No matter what happens, House Wei will not change their allegiance to the Majestic Clan. Even if the Coiling Dragon Clan falls from the limelight in the future, even if the Coiling Dragon Clan fell from the number one clan to the last ranking clan, House Wei will never abandon the Coiling Dragon Clan unless they'd thrown us out of the door themselves!"

His tone was exceptionally firm when he said this.

Elder Zhuo sighed softly, "House Lord, we didn't harbor any such thoughts from the beginning. We just had an agreement with Wei Tiantong to rent the shop at Farmer God District to House Tong. Thankfully, we managed to redeem ourselves in the end and stop from committing such a huge error. We had absolutely no intentions of turning traitor against the Coiling Dragon Clan, much less than submitting to the Majestic Clan."

"Elder Zhuo is correct. I, Wei Feng will never commit such a treacherous act. House Lord, the reason House Wei was able to become a ninth rank aristocratic family is largely due to the Coiling Dragon Clan's aid. Although the Coiling Dragon Clan has been slightly low key as of late, this may just be an act to fool their enemies. They may yet soar to the heavens and stand above all other clans one day!" Elder Feng also expressed his open support of Wei Tianxiao's decision as the house lord.

Wei Tianxiao felt much better after hearing the declaration from Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng. The great internal threat Wei Tiantong had been eliminated, and Elder Feng and Elder Zhuo had changed their stance from neutral to supporting him, the house lord. House Wei had finally regained its order. As long as House Wei stood together, they feared no one at all.

Wei Tianxiao was feeling very cheerful, but he hadn't forgotten that Jiang Chen was the one who'd contributed the most to their success. He smiled and came over to take Jiang Chen's hand. "The greatest contributor in regaining order in House Wei is without a doubt Pill King Zhen. Don't you think so, everyone?"

Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng both nodded.

"Pill King Zhen not only possesses brilliant, heaven defying skills, but is also a capable person who managed to turn the tides against Wei Tiantong. I thoroughly bow to him," Elder Zhuo had accepted Jiang Chen from the bottom of his heart. His grandson Wei Mo had improved noticeably after he had obeyed Jiang Chen's secret 'prescription' for the past two days. After consuming Jiang Chen's pills, even the gods looked like they were on Wei Mo's side as his grandson began showing signs of a breakthrough.

As for Elder Feng, he hadn't believe in Jiang Chen's abilities at all at the beginning, but now he too was impressed from the bottom of his heart. Not only had his disciple Mu Ge recovered under Jiang Chen's treatment, his cultivation had even progressed a little. Not only was the elder thoroughly admiring of Jiang Chen, he was also immensely grateful for the pill king's assistance. "House lord, you were saying that Pill King Zhen intends to work with our House

Wei? What exactly do you mean by that? I'm truly looking forward to it," asked Elder Feng.

"Come, let's discuss things inside," Seeing that the dust had settled and knowing that there would be no obstacles whatsoever in the path of cooperation with Jiang Chen, Wei Tianxiao couldn't help but feel very cheerful.

The death of Wei Tiantong meant that the six great leaders in House Wei had dwindled down to a number of four. Since Jiang Chen shared a great relationship with all four leaders, this also meant that their partnership was confirmed in a joyous atmosphere. House Wei would be responsible for providing the shop and raw materials of the pills, while Jiang Chen would be responsible for providing the technique and manpower. All income would be split fifty fifty. If this deal had been brought up before the end of the Wei Tiantong incident, it would've been very difficult for Jiang Chen to convince either Elder Zhuo or Elder Feng into an agreement with his current identity of an unknown second rank pill king.

But after witnessing Jiang Chen's abilities with their own eyes, both Elder Zhuo and Elder Feng had become a diehard fan of 'Pill King Zhen'. Moreover, the plans Jiang Chen had outlined for his pill shop also convinced everyone in House Wei and showed them a bright, perfect future. Take today for example, Jiang Chen's Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill had played an absolutely critical role in the suppression of Wei Tiantong. If Jiang Chen hadn't told them to consume the pill earlier, they would've suffered a great disadvantage under the effects of Pill Master Yu's poison formation. It was obvious that this Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill was much more effective than the traditional version of the pill.

There was no doubt that this pill would herald in a bright future if it was released to the market.

Jiang Chen also passed on the first list of necessary ingredients to House Wei. They agreed to officially open the shop half a month later. House Wei would be responsible for marketing and promotion, while Jiang Chen would be responsible for refining the pills.

……

Inside the main residence of the Majestic Clan. The Majestic clan lord had summoned a few of his aristocratic family house lords to meet him. “So Wei Tiantong was just useless trash in the end,” the clan lord sighed softly, his voice revealing a hint of disappointment.

“Father, something’s not quite right here. According to my understanding, Wei Tiantong should’ve taken control of the situation, so why did he have the tables turned against him all of a sudden? There must be a deeper reason behind this,” spoke the clan lord’s son, Wang Teng.

“I will shall send someone to investigate into this matter, of course. However, Wei Tiantong’s failure has disrupted our plans, especially in regards to House Wei’s shop at Farmer God District. I was planning to use that shop to do a little something, but now that Wei Tiantong has failed, it is highly unlikely that Wei Tianxiao would ever rent that shop to us,” Clan Lord Wang Ting pondered.

“In my opinion, there’s no need for us to show them too much courtesy. If they will not submit to us willingly, then we should force them to.” The suggestion given by the lord of House Tong was incredibly forceful.

The lord of House Sikou, Sikou Yuan, also echoed this suggestion with eyes full of expectation, “Clan Lord, perhaps we should put on a show of force to House Wei and teach them a lesson or two.”

House Sikou and House Wei were ancient enemies to begin with, and House Sikou had been suffering from bad luck recently. They had still found no clues whatsoever to the Myriad Puppets Pavilion robbery, and this failure had caused a bit of anger to accumulate in Sikou Yuan’s heart. His anger might subside a little if his sworn enemy, House Wei would suffer some misfortune as well.

Wang Teng also looked eager, “Why don’t you leave this to me, father? I guarantee that I’ll force their obedience in full.”

The clan lord mulled over the suggestion for a moment, but ultimately shook his head, “Teng’er, small skirmishes of no importance, but if you are to oppress House Wei openly, the Coiling Dragon Clan won’t just sit by and watch it happen. After all, House Wei is a central supporter for the Coiling Dragon Clan.”

Wang Teng seemed to agree with his father after thinking over the matter for a bit, and he followed up with a question with glittering eyes, “Father, what on earth is that Coiling Dragon Clan planning?”

The Coiling Dragon Clan had always been the indisputable number one clan in the entire Veluriyam Capital. Their status in Veluriyam Capital was as high as one could imagine, and although they had been extremely low key for the past few years, they were still the premier clan in Veluriyam Capital in many people's eyes. The Majestic Clan might be hotly ambitious, but even they didn't dare to tear down all pretenses of cordiality before the time was right. However, it was extremely odd that the Coiling Dragon Clan, the foremost clan in Veluriyam Capital, would act so low key for the past few years.

Despite their thirst to become the top clan in Veluriyam Capital, even the internal ranks of the the Majestic Clan weren't sure why the Coiling Dragon Clan had acted so low key. Because of this, the Majestic Clan was wary despite their eagerness to replace the Coiling Dragon Clan's position.

Chapter 752: The Veluriyam Pagoda

Both the House Tong and Sikou were diehard loyalists to the Majestic Clan, and understandably wanted it to replace the Coiling Dragon Clan's position in the capital.

"Clan lord, I hear that the lord of the Coiling Dragon Clan has entered a bottleneck in his cultivation which he cannot progress past. His lifespan cannot increase, and he has been fully focused on a breakthrough in recent years to do so. Is this rumor true?" The lord of House Tong asked probingly.

Sikou Yuan nodded as well, "I have heard of this rumor also. The Coiling Dragon clan lord is at his wit's end, and his strength has almost left him entirely. There are several others with the qualifications for the next clan lord, accompanied by much internal strife. The Coiling Dragon Clan has no energy to focus on the affairs of the Veluriyam Capital. Is all of this true?"

Though they were only ninth-ranked houses, they were still privy to a few secrets of the great clans. Information about the Coiling Dragon Clan's lord occasionally circulated the upper echelons of the Veluriyam Capital, but its authenticity was never known. They wished to receive a definite answer from the Majestic Clan's lord, but they were doomed to disappointment. A faint smile hung on the Majestic Clan lord's face, its meaning uncertain.

"Clan Lord?" The lord of House Tong was unwilling to give it up.

The lord of the Majestic Clan spread his hands, his lips curved

slightly. “Next year, the Veluriyam Pagoda opens once again. All seven of the emperors must attend the ceremony. The same is true for all the leaders of the notable factions. All rumors will be confirmed or not then.”

The Veluriyam Pagoda? The expressions of all present tensed at those words, a sense of fascination surfacing. The symbol of the Veluriyam Capital, the Pagoda held the empyrean decree and relic that had belonged to the Veluriyam King of yore. The light and miracles from the Veluriyam King had shone upon the fortunes of the Veluriyam Capital for a hundred thousand years. Every resident of the capital held the Pagoda in highest faith and regard. It was the ultimate totem in their hearts. However heinous or benevolent one was, the Pagoda was held as a mark of pride. The people’s hearts were universally filled with fervor and fanaticism towards it. The Veluriyam Pagoda commanded unshakable devotion from the Capital.

The Pagoda opened for a single year every sixty years. During the entire period of its opening, the Capital celebrated their grandest and most festive holiday. From the Titled Great Emperors at the top to the ordinary peasantry at the bottom, everyone was filled with anticipation for the year in which the Pagoda opened. The Pagoda was composed of a main pagoda and two ancillary pagodas.

Standing at the very center of the city, the main pagoda was sacrosanct and inviolate. No matter what vantage point one was at in the capital, the sacred Veluriyam Pagoda rising to the heavens from the center of the city was always visible. The two ancillary pagodas flanked the main pagoda from the left and right.

One was the Pill Pagoda, and one was the Martial Pagoda. True to their names, the Pill Pagoda opened for those advanced in pill dao, and likewise the Martial Pagoda, for martial dao. The opening of the Veluriyam Pagoda was split into three stages.

The first stage was the opening of the Pill Pagoda.

The second, the Martial Pagoda.

Only the third stage was the opening of the main pagoda.

Not everyone had the right of entry to the three pagodas. There was a grueling series of contests, filtering away the chaff at every layer, until a limited number of such privileged candidates arose. This sort of competition was very fierce, largely because of the extremely controlled availability of entries as well as the timeframe—threescore years was a long time.

To receive the right of entry was a paramount glory. Not only that, but the ability to cultivate inside the pagoda was a great reward as well. One day within was equivalent to a fortnight without. Thus, all of the pill and martial dao geniuses of the Veluriyam Capital saw the Pagoda's quota as a superb honor. Their energy was fully saved up in order to secure a spot.

Both the house lords of Tong and Sikou were uncommonly elated at the news of the Pagoda's opening. The Majestic Clan lord's gaze swept past their faces. "The geniuses from the Coiling Dragon Clan have taken first place in the last three consecutive terms. That is the reason they are considered the foremost clan of the Veluriyam

Capital. If we are to overtake the Coiling Dragon Clan, we must completely crush them in the competitions to enter the Pagoda. Otherwise, the thought of becoming the foremost clan is nothing but hot air."

Infected by emotion, the house lords present all rushed to express their loyalty.

"Let the clan lord bear witness, all the geniuses of House Tong will fully exert their strengths!"

"We at House Sikou will not hold our faction back!" Not wishing to fall behind, the other house lords thumped their chests as well in guarantee.

Finally, the Majestic Clan lord settled his gaze on his son, Wang Teng. "Teng'er, I leave the matter of House Wei in your hands. However, you must remember, before we shed all pretenses with the Coiling Dragon Clan, you cannot openly use force. Instead, you must use your wits, so as not to leave a source of gossip." The Majestic Clan lord was quite satisfied with his son. He wished to use this as an opportunity to test him, to see if his son was worthy of weighty tasks.

……

As time passed, the day for the grand opening of Taiyuan Tower approached ever closer. Jiang Chen's time passed in a very fulfilling manner. He would spend at least half his days on training his fellow sect members from Regal Pill Palace to become

professional pill masters. After witnessing them firsthand, his peers all held Jiang Chen's pill dao skills in heartfelt reverence, and they were wholly grateful for his tutelage. They learned with great haste and concentration.

This was also to their great fortune. The Jiang Chen from his previous life would not even accept them as herbal apprentices, much less tutor them personally. Shen Trifire's fire constitution revealed its advantage now. His increase in ability could only be described as miraculous, and he almost seemed to match the Elder Yun Nie of yesteryear. Jiang Chen was very satisfied with his speed.

Rong Zifeng and Ouyang Chao closely followed after Shen Trifire. However, though they were quite talented as well, Shen Trifire still forged ahead. Jiang Chen did not demand much more of them. Difficult work must be slowly trudged through. There were many days ahead of them, and under his guidance, it would be more difficult for them not to progress. "Trifire, your talent is outstanding and greatly surprising to me. I hope that in three months, you can become skilled enough to pass the pill king test in Veluriyam Capital."

"Pill king?" Shen Trifire was mildly taken aback.

Jiang Chen grinned slightly. "Don't be surprised. I say these words to you alone. Though Rong Zifeng and Ouyang Chao are reasonably talented as well, I doubt they will be able to pass the pill king test even in three more years. But you... you are different. In terms of talent, yours is comparable to Mu Gaoqi's. Though his natural gifts are measurably better than yours, what is lacking in

natural temperament may be made up through learning. In particular, your talent in this area is exceptional, and I look forward to your future achievements in the art of pill dao." His speech was almost like that of a senior to a junior.

However, Shen Trifire didn't feel uncomfortable in the slightest. How could he not see Jiang Chen's talent after all this time? Jiang Chen's pill dao knowledge was more vast than all of the elders at Herbal Hall put together! The skills that Jiang Chen had showed at the Regal Pill Palace were only the tip of the iceberg. How laughable that he had tried to challenge Jiang Chen at the time with the bet and the pill competition. It'd ended in embarrassing loss, but he was only thankful it hadn't been worse.

Shen Trifire was sure by now that though Jiang Chen was only senior brother by name, he should be treated as a venerated master, perhaps even a forefather of pill dao. Following Jiang Chen would result in a future brighter than Regal Pill Palace's by a hundredfold!

"Trifire, I have only one thing to ask of you. No matter how great your accomplishments in the future, never forget that you are a disciple of Regal Pill Palace. You have a mission to restore the Palace. Perhaps it is not yours alone, but you must remember it eternally."

"Senior brother Jiang Chen, that Shen Trifire is here today is completely thanks to Regal Pill Palace. A man must show gratitude, how would I forget the sect's nurturing kindness? As long as I still draw breath, I will not forget the sect!"

“Very good,” Jiang Chen nodded, “I hope you quickly grow capable enough to stand on your own feet in the Veluriyam Capital. That would lighten my burdens a bit.”

Jiang Chen was helping his fellow sect members entirely out of moral considerations. He had no interest in a life of babysitting. If Shen Trifire could become strong enough to maintain Taiyuan Tower on his own, he had no qualms about letting Trifire take charge while he worked behind the scenes.

Jiang Chen took out two pill bottles, placing them on the table. “There are two pills here. One is the Origin Doubling Pill, and the other is the Holy Screening Pill. The Origin Doubling Pill allows you to raise your cultivation level within the origin realm without limitation once, and the Holy Screening Pill will give you a thirty to fifty percent increased chance to breakthrough to the sage realm!”

Shen Trifire was overjoyed. His eyes rolled wildly, glowing with excitement as he seemed to think of something.

“Trifire, if you wish to attain the title of pill king, your martial dao ability must be at least sage realm. You are only eighth level origin realm, so you cannot do so without outside help. I hope these two pills are of help to you!”

Refined from Firstcloud Dew, the Origin Doubling Pill had been given to Jiang Chen from Elder Yun Nie himself, three of them in total. One had been used by Jiang Chen himself, and another was given to Lordmaster Ye Chonglou. Jiang Chen had wanted to give the last one to Gouyu, or perhaps Xue Tong and the rest. But the

ensuing changes in circumstance meant that he never had the chance to give the pill away. Now, Shen Trifire would make the most use of this remaining Origin Doubling Pill. As for Gouyu and Xue Tong, Jiang Chen would make it up to them through other ways.

Shen Trifire's face was flushed red, his heart filled with eagerness and gratitude. There were a few hints of shame as well, upon remembering his opposition of Jiang Chen at the Palace. In that instant, he was at a loss for words. Buying popularity was not Jiang Chen's intent. He was giving Shen Trifire these two pills out of realistic considerations, not because he wished to be repaid.

"Do well. I hope that you'll reach sage realm earlier rather than later, and obtain a pill king's token. With that token, no one will underestimate you anywhere in the world."

"Senior brother, I am slow of tongue. You need only see my actions!" Shen Trifire nodded emphatically.

Smiling, Jiang Chen patted Trifire's shoulder before he walked outside. He was greeted with the sight of Wei Jie's arrival.

"Brother Zhen, I have some good news and some bad news. Which would you like to hear first?" Wei Jie opened with a playful question.

Jiang Chen started, glancing at Wei Jie in surprise. Playing a trick like this... he seems in a good mood!

Chapter 753: An Astonishing Secret

“Let’s have the bad news first,” Jiang Chen responded with a faint smile.

Wei Jie tittered, scratched his head, then spoke with a wry smile, “Let me give the good news first, because the bad news is related to the good news.”

Jiang Chen shrugged, “Stop with the nonsense, don’t waste time.”

Wei Jie laughed mischievously. He knew Jiang Chen wasn’t truly angry, but he still didn’t leave the other hanging any further. He said, “The good news is, the number one auction house in the Capital is going to hold an enormous auction tomorrow. I hear there will be quite a few good items on sale.”

“What about the bad news then?” Jiang Chen frowned.

“The bad news is, our house is only allotted two participating seats.” Wei Jie was obviously somewhat depressed when talking about it.

“What kind of auction is so upscale that even House Wei is only allowed two seats?” Jiang Chen found it hard to fathom. Since it was a large-scale auction, with House Wei’s status inside the Capital, they shouldn’t have been restricted to so few seats.

Wei Jie responded dejectedly, “This auction’s main theme is related to pills. Our House has had a rather weak presence when it comes to pills in the recent past, so it’s normal to be overlooked on the invitation list. Giving us two seats is already a show of respect for our status as a ninth-ranked noble house. Our House doesn’t have any pill kings, so no one would cry foul even if they didn’t allot any to us at all!”

Related to pills? Jiang Chen felt a twinge of interest when he heard this. The number one auction house in the Capital and an immense auction related to pills. Just these two things made Jiang Chen perk up with interest. He wanted to establish himself in the pill business inside the Capital, so a gathering like this was one he couldn’t miss no matter what. He’d already visited various shops in the Farmer God Market, but he could only observe and get to know part of the situation. Some details still required long-term observation before he could grasp them. This auction would be a perfect opportunity to observe the Capital’s pill world.

Wei Jie noticed Jiang Chen’s interest and hurried to say, “Brother Zhen, my father intends to give you one of these two seats no matter what happens. Only…”

“Only, I’m not your House’s guest pill king, so you’re also afraid it’d be hard to justify, correct?” Jiang Chen said, a hint of a smile floating on his lips. In fact, he was aware House Wei very much wanted to invite him to remain as a guest pill king. They were merely too embarrassed to ask him for now.

Wei Jie chuckled mischievously. “Brother Zhen, this thing is really a little hard say upfront. I already mentioned it to you last

time, our House had a pill king before, but he passed away because of some old affair. So, every pill master in the Capital knows now there's some danger in assuming the post of guest pill king in our House. That's the reason why... our House didn't dare request it of you."

Wei Jie had already previously mentioned this matter. Jiang Chen had thought it curious back then, but hadn't inquired too much. After all, he hadn't known much about House Wei back then, and wasn't much interested in becoming a guest pill king. Since he was working with House Wei nowadays, and also had some understanding of the house, Jiang Chen actually thought he wouldn't object to becoming House Wei's guest pill king. Only, he didn't understand what kind of danger there could be in assuming the position.

Would the noble houses use pill kings as scapegoats in their conflicts? However, what did Jiang Chen have to fear even so? In contests between pill kings in the world of noble houses, he was truly unafraid of anyone. When it came to pill making, the pill king who could trounce him utterly probably hadn't born yet on the Divine Abyss Continent.

"Young master Jie, you should know me by now. I'm not one to fear trouble, I only fear a lack of sincerity," Jiang Chen faintly said.

Wei Jie froze, then hurried to explain, "Brother Zhen, we're absolutely not hiding this from you on purpose. It's just too awkward, too hard to ask you upfront."

“What do you mean?”

Wei Jie thought for a moment then heaved a sigh. “With regards to this matter, our House in fact suffers from a great injustice. The reason why our House is in such an awkward situation is also related to it. You should be aware that we have thrown our lot in with the Coiling Dragon Clan. The reason why we became a ninth ranked aristocratic house, thanks to their assistance and protection. So our House is faithful and true to Coiling Dragon, our loyalty unwavering…”

Jiang Chen frowned, “Please get to the point.”

Wei Jie said with a wry smile, “Brother Zhen, this thing involves a secret. After I tell you, please never ever spread it around, or else all hell will break loose.”

Jiang Chen gave a slight nod.

“I have to start first by mentioning a secret of the Coiling Dragon Clan. Several decades ago, rumors developed that the clan lord of the Coiling Dragon Clan was at a bottleneck with his cultivation. the Coiling Dragon Clan’s clan lord is also the most senior and aged amongst all clan lords in the Capital. Rumors have it that he’s already past three thousands year old, while his cultivation has actually stopped at ninth level emperor realm. He’s missing a step and can’t rise to the realm of a great emperor.”

“The realm of great emperor?”

“Indeed. At the pinnacle of the emperor realm, one further step forward takes you to the great emperor realm. However, this step is one countless ninth level emperor realm powerhouses have failed to cross even after a lifetime of struggles. the Coiling Dragon Clan’s master is one of them. If he could cross this step, then he would be the eighth great emperor in the Capital. But if he can’t cross it, then it’s very possible he can’t even maintain his clan’s position as first in the Capital. Such is the ruthlessness in the world of martial dao, even more so in the Veluriyam Capital. A single step away, yet a thousand miles apart.”

Wei Jie heaved a sigh, his voice lamenting as he went on. “The Coiling Dragon Clan lord couldn’t surmount this step even after trying many secret methods. On a certain day ten years ago, he had the premonition that his cultivation would dissipate within a few decades. The dissipation of cultivation is the portent of life is drawing to a close.”

It wasn’t something Jiang Chen was unfamiliar with. An emperor realm’s cultivation dissipating was something he’d already seen inside the ruins in the Paramount Realm back in the Myriad Domain. Cultivation dissipating was the cruelest thing for a powerhouse of martial dao, and also the most inexorable thing. It signified life drawing to a close, that the cultivation accumulated throughout a whole life time would become fleeting as clouds when all was said and done.

Back when he’d been cultivating in the four great sects inside the sixteen kingdoms, Jiang Chen had once seen a Redscaled Firelizard tormented by a group of fire crows with lowly cultivation. Cultivation dissipating was akin to a tiger out of its mountain cave, trapped on flat plains. As inexorable as the sun setting in the west,

as merciless as the finals days of a glorious hero.

Back in the Myriad Domain, the Great Cathedral's Sacred Elephant head Xian Wentian had been nearing the end of his predestined life and was soon going to see his cultivation dissipated. That was the reason why he spared no capital to desperately buy a Longevity Pill. Xiang Wentian had been a mere ninth level sage realm, yet he still spared no cost and latched onto an opportunity to prolong his life. He wouldn't let go of it no matter what. He turned hostile to whoever tried to compete with him.

Meanwhile, the Coiling Dragon Clan lord was a ninth level emperor realm cultivator. He was a great figure ruling the roost and riding the herd even in the whole of the Upper Eight Regions. Each and every one of his gestures were naturally even more far-reaching. One had to lament no choice but to lament when such a personage's cultivation dissipated.

And so, Jiang Chen could understand Wei Jie's sigh. This House Wei truly has bad luck. They aligned themselves with the Coiling Dragon Clan, then the clan lord's lifespan drew to a close. They follow the Great Emperor Peafowl, but Emperor Peafowl's direct disciple, young master Fan, also passed away. This House Wei must have stepped on some dog shit to have such a halo of bad luck.

"Young master Jie, what's the relation between what you just said and your house's pill king?" a distracted Jiang Chen asked, his train of thought coming back to the original issue.

“It’s related, highly correlated,” Wei Jie said with a sigh. “Back then, the various noble houses under the Coiling Dragon Clan were all dimly in the know. They all wanted to offer some contribution. Alas, it was because of our House’s eagerness to render service and gain merit that we trusted our guest pill king too easily back then. Maybe that guy went mad trying to fawn to a superior. He actually said he had some way, or maybe he was hopeful he could help the clan lord postpone the arrival of his cultivation dissipating…”

Jiang Chen understood the gist of things after hearing this. It sounded like House Wei had been conned by that hasty guest pill king. That was the reason why they found themselves in such a situation today, forsaken by all. So many things had happened, yet the Coiling Dragon Clan hadn’t even offered a word of sympathy. With House Wei’s status as a ninth ranked aristocratic house, they shouldn’t have received such a cold shoulder. It turned out that this was the problem!

“That pill king must have made a mess of things?” Jiang Chen said with a sigh.

Wei Jie’s smile was bitter, “Not only he made a mess of things, he even somewhat aggravated the clan lord’s situation! From there on, our House had also fell from grace in his wake. There are even people who said our House did it on purpose. There are those who wrongly accuse us of following orders from the Majestic Clan…”

“It’s really hard to reason with them even if you’re innocent.” Jiang Chen was actually a little sympathetic with House Wei’s bitter experience. It was just like yellow mud dropping onto one’s trousers. It was viewed as shit, even if it wasn’t.

“Isn’t it?” Wei Jie also felt a little wronged. “Our House is so loyal and true to the Coiling Dragon Clan, how could we be following Majestic Clan orders?”

“Did you investigate that pill king?” Jiang Cheng was curious. Even though there’s surely no issue with your House, you can’t guarantee there wasn’t any issue with that pill king.

“There shouldn’t have been any issue with that pill king either. After all, he’d been in our house for more than a hundred years. If there’d been a problem with him, it should have come to the fore long ago. No matter how treacherous the Majestic Clan is, they still couldn’t have planted a pill king in our House a hundred years beforehand, could they? Have you ever heard of such a far-reaching plan?”

That matter was clearly to be an unsolved case. Jiang Chen hadn’t seen it with his own eyes, so it was difficult for him to draw any conclusion from a few words from Wei Jie. Moreover, all this was water under the bridge. There was no medicine for regret, even if they talked about it over and over again. Jiang Chen didn’t plan on looking into ancient matters of the past.

“So how did that pill king die in the end?” This was Jiang Chen cared about. “Did the Coiling Dragon Clan order his execution?”

Wei Jie was dejected, “What’s truly depressing is that we don’t know either how on earth that pill king died. He just suddenly died one day in the streets.”

“How could that be?” A conflicted expression emerged on Jiang Chen’s face, “That’s even more detrimental to your House.”

“Isn’t it?! Him dying an obscure death, some people said our House did it to prove our innocence to the Coiling Dragon Clan. Some people also said that the Coiling Dragon Clan secretly gave the order, as not to make us lose too much face. Some others said the Majestic Clan were the one who dispatched people to do it, to strain the relations between our House and the Coiling Dragon Clan. All these sound credible, and they made our House’s situation more awkward day by day! Alas…” Wei Jie was often sighing now that his words had reached this part.

Obviously, the series of blows that House Wei suffered after that matter had greatly damaged the House’s vitality. They were caught between the Coiling Dragon Clan’s suspicions and the Majestic Clan’s threats interspersed with cajoling. House Wei was truly struck between a rock and a hard place, pressured on all sides.

Jiang Chen finally understood where House Wei’s awkward situation came from. No wonder no pill king was willing to come to House Wei. Who’d dare to? Who knew, one might well suddenly die in the streets one day, and one wouldn’t even know if one had been wiped out by the Coiling Dragon Clan or by the Majestic Clan, one’s death a puzzling, unsolved affair!

“Brother Zhen, I’m not trying to explain anything, and I’m even less trying to rope you in. These matters have been buried in our hearts and minds for truly too long. I grew up in such awkward circumstances, so I have a deep feelings about it. A grand scion of a

noble house like me might not even have it as easy outside as a son from a lesser house!”

Chapter 754: Long Xiaoxuan About to Break Through

Wei Jie's mood had clearly been agitated. He seemed a little emotional. Jiang Cheng could understand Wei Jie's dejection. House Wei had been collateral damage in this matter from the very beginning, the most innocent of victims. The Coiling Dragon Clan lord might have been somewhat affected, but as a man with his cultivation on the eve of dissipating, it would take a heaven-defying method to reverse fate.

"Young master Jie, in your situation, you should in fact clearly explain yourself to the clan lord." There were only so many suggestions Jiang Chen could offer.

"The clan leader is magnanimous. He is aware of our House's loyalty. However, those beneath him don't share the same views. People in the clan, and also the noble houses under the clan's banner were jealous of our House's status to begin with. They wouldn't pass by an opportunity to supplant us. They slander and suppress us again and again. Even if we're innocent, their wagging tongues make us guilty."

Jiang Chen was also aware of the effects of slander. Situations like these truly couldn't be explained away with a few words. House Wei's awkward situation wasn't one that could be overturned with the wave of a hand.

Wei Jie suddenly thought of something, his eyes betraying a little hope and eagerness. "Brother Zhen, I heard that back then in the Myriad Domain, you once refined a pill called the Longevity Pill

that can prolong someone's life for five to eight hundred years. Is that true?"

Jiang Cheng laughed in spite of himself. This Wei Jie's schemes truly reached far enough, he even accounted for the Longevity Pill. He shook his head with a soft sigh. "The Longevity Pill is only useful for cultivators at the sage realm, it's of no use to cultivators at the emperor realm. It might even worsen the situation instead."

Hearing it might worsen the situation, Wei Jian couldn't help but be reminded of his House's previous pill king's disaster. Once bitten, twice shy. His expression suddenly froze. "Is it absolutely useless?"

"It might possibly be somewhat useful, but there's a greater probability of side effects occurring." Jiang Chen knew Wei Jie was very keen on seizing the opportunity to restore their relationship with the Coiling Dragon Clan. Only, it wasn't something he could achieve with the Longevity Pill, because the Longevity Pill was only suitable for sage realm cultivators. There was actually a pill that could extend an emperor realm cultivator's life. It was called the Pine Crane Pill. Jiang Chen even had one of the two main raw materials required: the first sky-level spirit plant he'd obtained from Mt. Rippling Mirages—the Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine. That pine's cone was one of the main materials required to refine the Pine Crane Pill.

As to the other ingredient, it was a Goldencrown Cloudcrane's heart, also a spirit beast very hard to come by. The Goldencrown Cloudcrane might not be the Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine's match when it came to rarity, but when comparing them one to

one, a Goldencrown Cloudcrane's heart was even more precious than a Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine cone. After all, one Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine could produce many pine cones, while a Goldencrown Cloudcrane only ever have one heart.

Of course, this thing was a mere passing thought in Jiang Chen's mind. He didn't even plan on refining the Longevity Pill, to say nothing of an earth shattering pill like the Pine Crane Pill. His identity would inevitably be exposed as soon as he refined the Longevity Pill. It was hard to tell how many people would keep a close watch on him by then. Not to mention that the Pine Crane Pill was a pill at least ten times more valuable than the Longevity Pill. With Jiang Chen's status and identity, he simply couldn't handle everything the Pine Crane Pill would bring with it. Even House Wei wouldn't be able to. This matter might be somewhat possible only if Jiang Chen were to cooperate directly with the Coiling Dragon Clan.

However, no one could read a man's heart. Jiang Chen had already suffered once because of the Longevity Pill. It was unrealistic to ask him to take out the Pine Crane Pill now for no rhyme or reason. Let alone, amongst the materials needed to refine this Pine Crane Pill, the Goldencrown Cloudcrane's heart wasn't easy to collect at all. He had no desire to leap into a quagmire of his own volition.

"Then, Brother Zhen, will you sell Longevity Pills in Taiyuan Tower? If you sell it, I fear you'll be immediately recognized. It'd be detrimental to you."

Jiang Chen shook his head, "I will refine the Longevity Pill in the

future, but the time isn't ripe yet."

"It's better this way. The Veluriyam Capital might be formidable, but it's still hard to guard against the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect secretly causing trouble." Wei Jie nodded in understanding.

That was one of the reasons why Jiang Chen rather appreciated Wei Jie. At the very least, this young man knew discretion, knew the importance of things, knew when to advance and knew when to retreat. He wouldn't force someone into something. He could put himself in the other's shoes and think from their point of view. That was a virtue rarely seen from the scions of noble houses. "Young master Jie, tell your father when you go back that if your house doesn't find me lacking in qualification, I'm not opposed to being House Wei's guest pill king."

Wei Jie was overjoyed when he heard. "Brother Zhen, are you serious?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "Do you think I'm someone to speak recklessly?"

Wei Jie slapped his thigh. "That's great! I never dared to ask you upfront out of fear I'd implicate you. But in fact, you might not necessarily be in such a great danger."

Jiang Chen smiled. "I came all the way here from the Myriad Domain. Do you think the path was lacking in danger? Am I not still here anyway?"

“That’s true, but you still need to be on your guard. How about I send you my personal butler and protector Qixia so he can act as your bodyguard?” Wei Jie suggested.

“No need for that.” Jiang Chen waved it off, his refusal firm. Wei Qixia might be a powerhouse at the first level of the emperor realm, but Jiang Chen truly had no use for him. If there were a situation he himself couldn’t handle, then one more Wei Qixia would also be useless.

Their conversation concluded, Wei Jie went back home in high spirits, carrying good news with him. The benefits of having Jiang Chen as their House’s guest pill king was obvious for all to see. House Wei was going to break away from the awkwardness of not having a pill king, while his House’s pill business would once again go back on track. Everything was developing in a favorable direction!

Wei Jie felt his entire body overflowing with enthusiasm and motivation. His feelings for Jiang Chen nowadays were almost akin to adoration and blind trust already. In particular, that scene Jiang Chen had defeated Pill Master Yu had made Wei Jie realize even more deeply that this genius from the Myriad Domain, who’d hacked his way through a mountain of corpses and blood, would also one day illuminate the Capital with his extraordinary abilities. He’d been fortunate enough to meet such a genius. It that wasn’t luck, then he didn’t know what luck was. House Wei might still be in a difficult spot for now, but Wei Jie firmly believed that they was bound to soar in Jiang Chen’s wake, ascending like a boat rising with the tide.

…

Jiang Chen was about to cultivate after seeing off Wei Jie when Long Xiaoxuan transmitted a message to Jiang Chen, “Young master Chen, I think I’m going to break through to the emperor realm. You better find a place and make some preparations. Dragons breakthroughs come with a vast aura and momentum, so I don’t want to do it in the center of the Capital.”

Jiang Chen didn’t know if he should be happy or worried instead at the sudden news. He was happy because Long Xiaoxuan was finally breaking through after spending so long at the pinnacle of the sage realm. The dragon was definitely going to make a terrific hired thug as soon as he entered the emperor realm. With the dragons’ innate dominating power, Long Xiaoxuan could probably face a powerhouse at the fifth or sixth level emperor realm head on without falling downwind even at initial stage emperor realm, He might even withstand a later-stage emperor realm at the seventh level without suffering defeat.

After all, for the lineal descendants of the dragons, the higher their cultivation, the stronger the power of their bloodline would manifest, and the more ridiculous their fighting power would be. It wasn’t an exaggeration to say that Long Xiaoxuan would increase his fighting prowess tenfold in the blink of an eye after breaking through to the emperor realm.

His thoughts distracted for a moment, Jiang Chen then composed himself. He asked, “Brother Long, about how far off are you?”

“Somewhere between a month and three. Maybe even closer.”

Jiang Chen thought a moment. Taiyuan Tower’s grand opening was in three days. He would be relatively freer after that. When the time came, he would find a remote spot, deploy a concealing formation and suppress as much as he could the signs of Long Xiaoxuan’s breakthrough. Otherwise, the dramatic heaven and earth phenomena during a dragon’s breakthrough would certainly attract attention from all parties. He didn’t want Long Xiaoxuan to stir up a hornet’s nest.

Jiang Chen nodded. “Leave it to to me. After you break through to the emperor realm, your cultivation in the secrets of dragon shapeshifting should also come to fruition. By then, you can transform into human shape and move about in broad daylight inside the Capital without needing to worry like now.”

Long Xiaoxuan snorted softly, “This world full of mundane temptations might not be to this dragon’s liking anyway.”

Dragons were ever like thus, haughty, posers. Jiang Chen didn’t believe Long Xiaoxuan would ever come to dislike the mortal world. He chuckled mischievously, “We’ll see when the time comes whether you like it or not. Don’t tell me you want to be always hiding. Isn’t that really boring?”

“Don’t delay with the preparations,” Long Xiaoxuan snorted, but he didn’t say anything further.

Wry disgruntlement mingled with happiness in Jiang Chen's sigh, "I never thought I would be fated to a life of playing nanny. I have to worry about my fellow sect disciples, and now that it's over, I have to worry about these guys instead."

Long Xiaoxuan breaking through the emperor realm was good news when all was said and done. It would have spared him a lot of trouble when he came to the Capital if Long Xiaoxuan had already broken through to the emperor realm back in the Myriad Domain. Jiang Chen silently sighed with emotion. In spite of himself, his thoughts veered to those people from the Regal Pill Palace. He wondered how they were now.

He hadn't heard a word from Palace Head Dan Chi. Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi were certainly still in Veluryiam Capital, but he didn't know whether House Sikou had sold them or kept them for themselves. This was also a matter he had to investigate as soon as possible. If House Sikou were using the two themselves, then he had to rescue them no matter what. Apart from Mu Gaoqi and Elder Yun Nie, there was also sister Ling Bi'er. Back the in the Regal Pill King Palace, when the several of them had separately returned to their own dwellings, Jiang Chen had been surrounded, Shen Qinghong captured, but Ling Bi'er had seized an opportunity to run away. He wondered where was Ling Bi'er nowadays?

Jiang Chen was rather concerned about Ling Bi'er. He knew that this frosty senior sister of his had tacitly pledged her heart to him already. Back then in that desperate situation in the Paramount Realm, Ling Bi'er clearly could have hoped to make good her escape alone, but she didn't run away by herself. Jiang Chen wasn't a dunce. How would he fail to see these feelings? Their friendship was something Jiang Chen had no reason whatsoever to

disregard, to say nothing about the feelings between man and woman.

Apart from Ling Bi'er, there was also her father and her younger sister. The two of them should have come to the Veluriyam Capital and met up with him, but neither of them had arrived even after so long. Jiang Chen was also somewhat worried. Only, he had so many things vying for his attention at present. He was too busy to inquire about Ling Su and Ling Hui'er. He could only hope that they would arrive safe and sound, that the Eternal Celestial Capital or the Ninesuns Sky Sect hadn't captured them. It would be enormous troubles otherwise.

Jing Chen mused for a moment, but he simply had too many things to attend to. So he simply stopped thinking about them, sat down cross-legged, and started cultivating. He hadn't stopped his cultivation during these days. With the assistance from countless Heroic Sage Pills, his cultivation pace was blistering. He'd lacked resources before, but his cultivation speed had been frightening even back then. Now that his resources were abundant, his cultivation speed would naturally be surging. There were already faint signs of him breaking through the fourth level of the sage realm.

"Who knows. I might well first break through to the fourth level before Brother Long's breakthrough!"

Chapter 755: Face Slapping At the Auction

Wei Jie cheerfully arrived at Jiang Chen's residence the dawn of the second day. "Brother Zhen, father was up the entire night with happiness when he heard that you were willing to become a guest elder for House Wei. He has already prepared to announce the news on the opening day of Taiyuan Tower, as the icing on the proverbial cake. Announcing that you're joining House Wei to all here in the capital and opening the store on the same day... we'll make a grand ceremony out of it!" A joyous expression danced across his face. He was clearly in good spirits.

"Compared to Taiyuan Tower's opening, the ceremony is of lesser importance. Preparations must be made, lest a few select stubborn ones come to cause trouble," Jiang Chen smiled back.

"Father has thought of this as well. Certain precautions are already being put into place. Brother Zhen, the auction will start soon. Here are a hundred thousand saint spirit stones, as a token of our sincerity to you. Perhaps it will be useful at today's auction. I have word from father that I can call for up to five hundred thousand saint spirit stones, as long as it is something Brother Zhen wants!"

Five hundred thousand saint spirit stones was equivalent to five million origin spirit stones. It was a princely sum. Jiang Chen could feel Wei Tianxiao's sincerity. It seemed that House Wei had been wholly impressed by his actions during the conflict with Wei Tiantong. The generosity in House Wei's goodwill was no longer simply enticement—it veered towards appeasement now. Having done so many things for House Wei, Jiang Chen was perfectly comfortable in accepting the money. He was neither embarrassed

nor hesitant. He accepted the gift with a faint smile. “Young master Jie, please make sure to give your father my thanks when you return.”

“What is the point in thanks? You deserve it. The auction begins fairly early, so we should depart right now!” Wei Jie chuckled. Still engaged in conversation, they departed for the auction.

Joined Ridges Auction House, or Joined Ridges Pavilion, was the uncontested top dog of the auctioneering business in Veluriyam Capital. Accordingly, it was located within the most bustling district in the city—the Farmer God District. Upon arrival, the duo discovered that the district was clearly even busier than usual. The auction seemed to have attracted quite a few people. Though not everyone could enter, that had no effect on the high passions of those present. Even without going inside, it was still good to experience the atmosphere from the door. Potential gossip about the secrets of the upper classes was even better.

The two of them encountered some of Wei Jie’s acquaintances on the way there. Jiang Chen astutely noticed they were polite but distant, whether by happenstance or on purpose. The situation facing House Wei was ample cause for caution. Close association with the house certainly had the potential to draw indirect heat. This distant behavior was not unusual to Wei Jie.

The two soon came to the entrance of Joined Ridges Pavilion. The auction house’s porter was very gracious, and didn’t trouble them solely because they were from House Wei. They were cordially escorted inside after handing in their invitation, an act that fully showed the establishment’s equanimity. The experience

raised Jiang Chen's opinion of Joined Ridges. This was the appropriate attitude that a leading member of any industry in Veluriyam Capital should have. Mistreatment due to background would have put Joined Ridges Pavilion's purported history into doubt.

Past Joined Ridges' doorway was an expansive courtyard. Many who came to participate in the auction were gathered here in twos and threes. Evidently, no one was permitted to go further before the auction's formal commencement. It was one of Joined Ridges' rules, one that no one was in a position to criticize. Besides, the courtyard was not simply a place to be idle. Various amenities were amply scattered around, alongside a liberal provision of snacks and refreshments. Seating was also adroitly placed throughout the area, organically blending in to the overall aesthetic.

"Let's find a place to wait a while. It'll be some time still before the auction begins." Wei Jie scanned the surroundings and beckoned to Jiang Chen after finding a comparatively empty spot.

Just as Wei Jie was about to take a seat on a chair, a nearby person suddenly stumbled. The drink in his hand spilled outwards as he stumbled, splashing towards Wei Jie with a mind of its own. His reflexes swift, Wei Jie gracefully sidestepped, avoiding the liquid just in time. Only the tips of his shoes were sprinkled, but the remainder caught the chair he was about to sit in.

"My apologies, my apologies." The person apologized incessantly before curving his mouth into a sudden smile. "Ho, isn't this House Wei's young master?" The man speaking was a youth, and looked a little younger than Wei Jie. He had a babyish face, but the

negligent flash of a lazy smile tipped Jiang Chen off. He was definitely not as easy to get along with as he appeared.

"Younger brother Tong, your house is ninth-rank, right? Did you not have enough to eat? Is that why you can't even walk straight?" Wei Jie frowned.

The youth was the son of House Tong's lord, Tong Kun.

Tong Kun's smiling face changed in a heartbeat as it sank. "Young master Wei, have you brushed your teeth this morning? Your mouth is rather foul."

How could Wei Jie not see that Tong Kun was here intentionally to pick a fight? He sneered back, "Tong Kun, I have no interest in squabbling with a beardless youth like you. If you're still up for it, then wait until we're outside Joined Ridges Pavilion, I'll be around anytime."

It could be seen that Wei Jie had no love for Tong Kun. House Tong was a major faction under the Majestic Clan, and so they stood on different battlelines. In fact, it could be said that they were directly opposed. The fact that Tong Kun had deliberately tried to soil his clothing was something Wei Jie could figure out with his big toe. If he engaged Tong Kun here, then Wei Jie himself would be likely to lose face next. Thus, he didn't dawdle on the topic, cleanly cutting off the conversation. Wait until we're out of Joined Ridges Pavilion. Saying that was sufficiently forceful, but also placated Joined Ridges. It showed the auction house great respect.

Even Jiang Chen recognized the deftness of his words, his eyes appraising Wei Jie. He had always thought Wei Jie was too soft, and lacked authority and dominance. Now, it seemed that Wei Jie only expressed his dominance in front of enemies. He'd merely refrained from showing it to Jiang Chen. To be honest, Jiang Chen quite admired this kind of dominance. In this situation, harmony and conciliation would have caused Jiang Chen to dismiss the youth. This kind of obvious provocation wasn't something that could be resolved via placating the enemy.

Sure enough, Tong Kun was unsure how to respond to Wei Jie's retort. At this time, another youth clad in silver robes came over. His expression was cold and imperious, his eyes indifferent. He was the heir of House Sikou, Sikou Nan.

"Wei Jie, long time no see. Your temper seems to have grown." Sikou Nan scrutinized Wei Jie from top to bottom, a challenge in his inspecting gaze. He acted as if this was the first time they'd met. Rubbing his forehead in pretense, Sikou Nan slowly declared, "If I remember correctly, today's auction relates mainly to pills. Does House Wei have a presence in that industry that they can speak of? Or are you here just to watch the show?" The words were quite malicious, meant to destroy House Wei's standing and cause them to lose face.

Tong Kun didn't simply stand by, either. "Brother Sikou, the reason they're here is to remind us they still exist despite their awful showing in pills! Otherwise, the entirety of Veluriyam Capital would probably forget that there was still a ninth-ranked aristocratic house called House Wei, hahaha!"

Sikou Nan laughed as well, “Younger brother Tong, your words are easily misleading.”

“Misleading how?”

“People might be misled into thinking that House Wei has an unearned reputation, and are unsuited to being counted a ninth-ranked house,” Sikou Nan chuckled.

“You can’t say that it’s misleading. If we’re talking about pills alone, then does House Wei have a right to be here? They haven’t had a pill king for so many years now, no? Joined Ridges Pavilion is generous enough in their willingness to give House Wei some face, but when all is said and done, isn’t it just a handout? Otherwise, a house with no pill king would definitely be disqualified from attendance. I hear that many eighth-ranked houses with pill kings of their own are greatly wanting for invitations, but haven’t received any! I wonder, does this situation count as an example of ‘occupying the toilet without doing the business’?” Tong Kun barked in laughter.

The duo’s banter caused those around them to erupt in raucous laughter. Though the subject of their conversation wasn’t relevant to the onlookers, it was still a fun spectacle to see a full-on brawl between ninth-ranked house scions. What bystander was scared of a good show?

Wei Jie was enraged. A feeling of shame crept up his heart. He was about to fire back a retort when he heard Jiang Chen’s soft

laugh. “House Sikou and House Tong are certainly occupying toilets and doing business, alright. Two dense and smelly results are walking in front of me right this moment… how unappetizing.”

The crowd crowed in even greater laughter at these words. Jiang Chen had compared Tong Kun and Sikou Nan to shit! The rapidly escalating war of insults attracted attention from people that had paid no heed to the goings-on here before. Whose sharp tongue was this that lashed the young masters of Houses Tong and Sikou so? The roars of mirth caused Sikou Nan and Tong Kun to turn crimson with deep shame.

“And who are you, kid? There’s no room for lessers when their masters are talking.” In anger, Sikou Nan automatically assumed that Jiang Chen was Wei Jie’s servant.

“As I thought, heaps of shit lack even basic eyesight. If I were you, I would stay in the latrines. There’s no reason to show off your… ah, qualities… to other people,” Jiang Chen sighed.

Wei Jie took the opportunity to follow up. “Sikou Nan, Tong Kun, my words are the same as before. I’ll take you on anytime after we’re out of Joined Ridges Pavilion. Also, wash the idiocy out of your eyes. This here is a pill king that House Wei invited, and our honored guest, not some servant. Remember, don’t tell such stupid jokes next time—House Wei has a guest pill king!”

Sikou Nan and Tong Kun were stupefied. They had greatly ridiculed House Wei’s lack of a pill king only moments ago and used that as a basis to claim the house had no right to be here. But

in the blink of an eye, a guest pill king of House Wei had appeared. It was a biting slap to the face. The pair's faces smarted with pain as they stood here, momentarily lost for words.

Chapter 756: The Young Lord of a Clan

Just when the situation was looking a little awkward, a new disturbance suddenly started from the crowd. A path automatically appeared in the crowd. A young man dressed in expensive brocade walked over while being escorted by several guards. Jiang Chen immediately recognized this young man at first glance. It was the Wang family descendant he'd seen back at the entrance to House Wei's shop, the son of the Majestic Clan lord. No wonder he had showed up in such a high profile manner!

"You're here, Brother Wang. This House Wei boy is a savage! I think he needs a good beating," Tong Kun shot a malicious glare at Wei Jie.

The young lord of the Majestic Clan slowly walked over. He carried with him the bearing of a superior, so much so that even Jiang Chen was secretly inwardly surprised. This young lord of the Majestic Clan actually seemed to be as powerful as the Ninesuns Sky Sect's true disciple, Cao Jin!

If the descendent of a clan could possess the cultivation level of one of the ten true Ninesuns Sky Sect disciples, then what about the seven emperor's successors and the true emperor level young lords of Veluriyam Capital? For a moment, even Jiang Chen was impressed by Veluriyam Capital's strength. He had only a vague idea as to how much stronger Veluriyam Capital was compared to a first rank sec for the longest time. It was only now that there was a real comparison that he understood it for real.

Although the young lord of a clan possessed great status, they

were ultimately incomparable to the greatest young geniuses of Veluriyam Capital. The seven emperors were the rulers of Veluriyam Capital, and the young lords beneath them should be the true greatest geniuses in the entire Veluriyam Capital. If this was true, then Veluriyam Capital's strength seriously wasn't empty talk.

Although Wei Jie's seventh level sage realm cultivation was quite impressive, his bearing and radiance was overshadowed by this Majestic Clan young lord. This Majestic Clan young lord was obviously well versed in creating an atmosphere for himself. The moment he appeared, he immediately gave off the aura of a protagonist and caused everyone around him to give way before they realized it. This alone showed that this Majestic Clan young lord was no ordinary person. One had to know, only the successors of the seven emperors and the emperor level young lords were normally qualified to receive such treatment.

"Wei Jie, isn't it?" The young lord of the Majestic Clan swept a glance across Wei Jie. "Are the likes of House Wei planning to cause trouble at Joined Ridges Pavilion? Take a look at yourself in the mirror. Don't bring trouble down on yourself," Once done, he immediately walked past Wei Jie as if the latter was made of thin air. The young lord couldn't even be bothered to lift an eyelid.

This scene angered Wei jie so much that he was one moment away from spitting blood. What do you mean bring trouble upon ourselves? It was the Majestic Clan's dogs who were causing trouble? This is the pot calling the kettle black!

Jiang Chen was so angry that he smiled in response too. He had

seen plenty of shameless bastards such as the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect. But he had to admit that he had never seen someone quite as shameless as Wang Teng until today. He actually inverted the facts and accused Wei Jie of being the troublemaker who'd brought trouble on himself. "A thief's bite sinks three inches into the bones. Did you learn something new today, young master Wei? The pot is calling the kettle black!" Jiang Chen sneered. His words were so loud that everyone present looked stunned by the outburst.

Is this guy really a House Wei pill king? How bold is he to openly contradict a clan's young lord? Isn't he just making himself miserable? As expected, Wang Teng's footsteps came to a sudden halt. However, he didn't turn around as he frowned and yelled, "Who the hell are you to speak out of turn?"

"Who the hell are you then? Since when are you qualified to point fingers at House Wei business? Are you a judge? Or are you the master of Veluriyam Capital?" Of course Jiang Chen wasn't going to back down from this confrontation. He had seen people at least ten times better than Wang Teng. There was simply no way that a show off like Wang Teng was going to intimidate him.

Wei Jie obviously hadn't expected Jiang Chen to stick by him so strongly. Now that things had come to this, he dared not showed weakness either, "Wang Teng, House Wei is not your subordinate. You've gotten the wrong family if you're in the mood of scolding people. Anyone present today who isn't blind would know that we aren't the ones who picked the fight. If you're planning to slander our House Wei and sully our name, then I can tell you that you've made a mistake."

Wei Jie's attitude caused great satisfaction among the crowd. The fight is on. Rumors were rife now that House Wei was planning to rebel against the Coiling Dragon Clan and pledge allegiance to the Majestic Clan instead. Although the news didn't sound all that likely, there were some rumors that were pretty plausible. Now it would seem that this was not the case.

Wang Teng's expression darkened, "Oh? Are you going to teach me how to behave, Wei Jie?"

Wei Jie was just about to speak when Jiang Chen stopped him and smiled faintly in response, "Whether you want to behave as a man or as a dog has nothing to do with us, so please keep your decision to yourself. If you're that eager to flex your muscles, you may do so after your family has become the master of Veluriyam Capital, but that act is completely pointless for the nonce. We aren't the type to suffer your nonsense. This is Joined Ridges Pavilion, and not even you can act as you like here."

Wang Teng's expression turned stiff. He seriously didn't expect someone with a silver tongue like Jiang Chen to show up in support of Wei Jie. He had thought that he would be able to overwhelm Wei Jie with the momentum he had built. At very least, he thought that silencing Wei Jie wouldn't be a problem at all. However, not only had his plan had ended in utter failure, he had even been ridiculed by his opponent and shamed greatly.

Wang Teng's face chilled, and he was just about to scold Jiang Chen and Wei Jie when another person suddenly walked over. His tone was indifferent, "I see you haven't grown up at all since we last met, Wang Teng. What, is it really that fun to flex your

muscles at those beneath you? Is it really that enjoyable?”

Everyone at the scene fell silent when he said these words. Another great figure had shown up. He was young lord Ji San of the Coiling Dragon Clan. He was also one of the most outstanding young genius besides the young lords of the seven emperors in Veluriyam Capital!

Young lord Ji San’s sleeves danced gently in midair, and he appeared both charismatic and charming as he waved a paper fan in his hand. He was dressed in a set of loose, elegant robes that gave him a graceful and prominent appearance. When Wei Jie saw young lord Ji San, he went forward and greeted him politely, “Wei Jie greets young lord Ji San.”

Young lord Ji San was a member of the Coiling Dragon Clan, and he was at the very least Wei Jie’s boss in name. It was impossible for him to sit by and do nothing when he saw this. House Wei was the Coiling Dragon Clan’s subordinate in name no matter what. If he, a member of the Coiling Dragon Clan, were to sit by and do nothing while Wang Teng bullied House Wei, then it wouldn’t just be smearing House Wei’s reputation, but the Coiling Dragon Clan’s too. Therefore, young lord Ji San had absolutely no reason to overlook this confrontation.

Wang Teng himself seemed to realize that he would gain the upper hand now that young lord Ji San had arrived. Therefore, he sneered and said, “Ji Ole Third, House Wei nearly killed your clan’s old man, but I see that doesn’t stop you from protecting your subordinate.”

He was naturally referring to the old incident where House Wei's former pill king had caused the Coiling Dragon Clan clan lord's illness to worsen. Anyone else might not know about this, but Wang Teng wasn't ignorant of the incident.

Young lord Ji San said coldly, "If you want to fight, then all you need is to say the word. I'll keep you company as long as you like. But do keep those empty outbursts to yourself, Wang Teng. I can't bring myself to stoop that low."

One must say that none of these clan members were easy pickings. Young lord Ji San had forgone bickering and challenged Wang Teng to a fight the second he noticed that the situation was disadvantageous for him. He couldn't be bothered to talk nonsense with Wang Teng, and his method of dealing with him was simple, violent and direct. By now, the members of other clans had shown up as well, and the members of Joined Ridges Pavilion soon showed up too.

"Please, both of you, show the Joined Mountain some face. Today's auction is about to begin. You can vent all your grievances on the auction instead. I am sure that everyone will look forward to it." This mediator was none other than the young lord of Joined Ridges Pavilion.

He was close acquaintances with both people, so he couldn't take either sides. Left without a choice, he could only act as the mediator between the two. Thankfully, Joined Ridges Pavilion's reputation possessed some measure of weight, and be it the Coiling Dragon Clan or the Majestic Clan, none of them were willing to offend such a heavyweight without good reason. Young lord Ji San

raised a cupped fist salute, “I shall give Joined Ridges this face.”

Wang Teng sneered at did the same, “I have no intentions of causing trouble at Joined Ridges Pavilion either.”

Joined Ridges’ young lord chuckled, “Thank you for your understanding. The auction is set to begin, so please come into the hall! I hope that you’ve all brought enough spirit stones, and that you will spend them happily, hahaha!”

This young lord of Joined Ridges Pavilion was obviously the type who was very good at doing business. He was also good at speaking in public, and he gave off a very smooth air.

Young lord Ji San cast a glance at Wei Jie and nodded. He didn’t say anything else and walked into the hall. Wei Jie himself understood that there was no need for him to explain anything to young lord Ji San in this situation, so he smiled at Jiang Chen once and the two entered the hall together.

There was great meaning behind the auction’s seat arrangements. The seats of the great clans, ninth rank aristocratic families and eighth rank aristocratic families were all reasonably arranged. No one could pick any fault from the arrangement even if they wanted to. House Wei’s seat was among the ninth rank aristocratic families, and they were considered as one of the more famous families too.

Since the participants of this auction were all forces of Veluriyam Capital, the organizers didn’t bother too much with privacy. They

hadn't prepared any private, secret rooms for any powers either. There were some important auctions in which processes were managed with tight security. In those type of auctions, every power that participated in the auction would be given a private room. This was to keep the participants separate and protect their safety. Today's auction didn't need such a measure, however.

The auction quickly began after everyone had taken their seats. To everyone's surprise, the young lord of Joined Ridges Pavilion had made a rare appearance as the host of the auction. This demonstrated just how much effort Joined Ridges Pavilion had put into making this auction grand. "Everyone, today's auction is a little rushed, but we've notified all reputable powers in Veluriyam Capital," The young lord smiled as he spoke with a clear and bright voice, "There are plenty of things that will be auctioned in today's auction. My only hope is that you've all brought enough spirit stones to show off the grace of wealthy powers to us Joined Ridges!"

Jiang Chen sent a message to Wei Jie, "Is anyone from the seven emperors attending this auction?"

Wei Jie shook his head, "The seven emperors sit high and above their thrones, and they very seldom get themselves involved in the worldly matters of Veluriyam Capital. The same goes with their successors. The seven emperors can obtain their successors anything they want, so they don't need to worry about such matters at all."

Jiang Chen gave the thought a moment and agreed with Wei Jie. The successors of the seven emperors were the topmost existences

in the entire Veluriyam Capital. There was no need for them to fight for the things they needed personally.

Where would one find a resource in the entire Veluriyam Capital that wasn't earmarked for their needs first? They only needed to ask if they wanted anything, there was no one beneath them who dared withhold the goods they requested. It was at this moment the young lord of Joined Ridges spoke up once more, "Today's auctioned item is a space lockdown glyph. The initial price of this item is one million saint spirit stones. All bids must not be lower than increments of ten thousand saint spirit stones."

Chapter 757: Three Longevity Pills!

Space lockdown glyph? That set the crowd on its ear. An escape glyph was an item commonly seen in auctions, but a space lockdown glyph was a rare treasure. They seldom appeared in auctions. But the first item of the day was already a space lockdown glyph. Didn't that instantly elevate today's auction to a whole new level? Even Jiang Chen was rather surprised.

A space lockdown glyph was much more valuable than an escape glyph of the same grade. The first item on auction was already so luxurious, it seemed today's auction would be a high class one indeed. However, Jiang Chen still didn't have much interest for this space lockdown glyph. He did have the one million saint spirit stones, but he wasn't planning on spending them like this. Not to mention, this was merely the starting bid. The price would increase further afterwards.

Indeed, just as he expected, all the rich folk in the Capital were quite crazy. Crazed bidding swiftly drove the price above the two million mark. Jiang Chen couldn't help but admire these people's pockets. Back then, one Longevity Pill selling for ten million spirit stones had caused a brouhaha across the whole Myriad Domain. Ten million spirit stones was the equivalent of a mere million saint spirit stones. Those moneybags though, they'd casually raised the price to two million!

Jiang Chen was hard pressed to discern which one was more precious out of a space lockdown glyph or a Longevity Pill, but if he had to choose one, he'd certainly choose the latter. After all, the Longevity Pill could prolong one's life. That was an advantage no glyph or talisman could replace.

The emergence of the space lockdown glyph instantly ignited the atmosphere. The bidding very quickly stormed past two point eight million. In the end, a noble house's scion won the space lockdown glyph for a steep three million. Jiang Chen quietly clicked his tongue in surprise. This was really too extravagant. Squandering three million on just a whim? Saint spirit stones at that! It was the same as thirty million spirit stones! He even saw the winner brim with excitement, as though he felt'd he won this glyph on the cheap! Jiang Chen suddenly had to reevaluate a ninth-rank noble house's financial resources.

It seemed that even the Joined Ridge Pavilion's young master wasn't very satisfied selling a space lockdown glyph for three million. Jiang Chen heard him say, "Ladies and gentlemen, this space lockdown glyph was a mere appetizer, it seems your appetite haven't been whetted yet! In that case, I hope our second item will be enough to put you in the mood!" He then deliberately left them hanging for a moment, sweeping his eyes through the crowd and back, a slight smile floating on his lips. Only then did he loudly say, "The second item, three mid-rank Longevity Pills! I trust everyone here has heard of the famous Longevity Pill. These pills come from the Myriad Domain. The news of their existence stirred a storm of blood in the Myriad Domain, while the sect possessing them suffered an even worse fate of complete annihilation! Haha, I'm not painting an exaggerated slaughter, I'm merely emphasizing the value of these pills to all of you. One Longevity Pill can extend the life of someone at the sage realm for five to eight hundred years. Reversing time, divine craftwork! One could even say it wrestles fate away from the heavens. Such a miraculous pill, I would like to ask all of you, can you feel its lure?"

Indeed, the scene rumbled with commotion as soon as the crowd

heard the name Longevity Pill. All the participants started to whisper amongst themselves. This pill's fame was clearly too resounding. It could turn back time and extend one's life. It was something extremely tempting for anyone. Only the cream of the Capital was present at the scene, and the majority of them could hope to break through to the emperor realm. They wouldn't possibly always stay in the sage realm. However, the two mere words "prolong life" were enough to make anyone crazy, to say nothing of all the rest.

Since ancient times, "death" was what men feared the most, whether for mortals or for cultivators. Prolonging one's life, pursuing immortality, that was almost everyone's dream. Cultivators defied the heavens and changed their own fates. Apart from their thirst for formidable martial power, their quest for immortality was also eternal. From scions of great clans to sons of noble families, all of them wore solemn expressions.

Everyone had more or less heard about the Longevity Pill, and they also knew the Myriad Domain's Regal Pill Palace had been ruined because of it. It was impossible for a matter like this not to spread around the Capital. In particular, the Veluriyam Capital had been abuzz with the matter about the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Regal Pill Palace. Those present were all people of stature and power and had naturally heard about it.

All of them felt their heart suddenly tremble when they heard the Longevity Pills had made their way to the Veluriyam Capital. Even if they couldn't use them themselves, everyone felt their hearts racing at the two words "prolonging life." Even if they couldn't use the pills, it would still be pretty good if they could buy a few and study them back home. They'd make a fortune if by any

chance they could decipher this pill's recipe. Sage realm cultivators were too many to count in this word. Who didn't want to extend their lifespan? One could imagine the value of this pill even blindfolded!

It's value didn't merely lie in prolonging life. For the Veluriyam Capital, it had an even greater business opportunity, a tremendous opportunity! Even Coiling Dragon's young master Ji San frowned, his heart stirred. Countless thoughts came and went in his mind. Longevity Pill, prolong life for five to eight hundred years! Ji San couldn't help but be reminded of his clan's lord! The clan master's life was drawing to a close, his cultivation soon to dissipate!

If they could obtain this Longevity Pill and delay it... Though it was a pill for the sage realm, it might not be entirely useless for the emperor realm. They didn't need five to eight hundred years. Even fifty to eighty years were enough! As long as they had time, the clan master could hope to break through the pinnacle of the emperor realm and stride into the great emperor realm. As long as he achieved the realm of a great emperor, his life would automatically be extended!

After all, three thousand years was the minimum lifespan for a great emperor. Most of them could live for five or six thousand years. Some ancient great emperor had even lived past ten thousand years old. Ji San felt a rush of excitement all of a sudden. Only, while those thoughts churned in his mind, he seemed to sense someone secretly observing him from the side.

As soon as the faint feeling came to him, Ji San detected it came from Wang Teng, Clan Majestic's young lord! Ji San feigned

ignorance, but his thoughts were grave. This Wang Teng must be aware of our Clan's situation. The kid must have realized my intention already. He probably won't stop at anything to bid against me! As though he were facing a mortal enemy, Ji San inwardly came to a firm resolution. He had to win these Longevity Pills no matter how much money he had to waste.

Meanwhile, Wei Jie was also a little curious. Fortunately enough, everyone's attention was drawn away. No one could possibly be attending to him. As a result, no one noticed the inquisitive glance Wei Jie stole in Jiang Chen's direction.

Jiang Chen extended his consciousness and swept it through the Longevity Pills on the stage. He was also secretly taken aback. None of these three Longevity Pills carried the slightest sign of his own refining. In other words, these three pills were not his own handiwork. He also remembered that out of the three pills he'd given to Palace Head Dan Chi back then, one of them was lower rank, the other two mid rank. The lower rank pill had been handed over to Honored Master Tian Ming from the Dark North Sect a long time ago. The palace head hadn't fallen into the Eternal Celestial Capital's clutches either, so they couldn't have seized the other two pills. Did that mean that the Eternal Celestial Capital had refined these three pills on their own? Jiang Chen couldn't help but admire the Eternal Celestial Capital's efficiency. This manufacturing speed was simply astounding.

He'd left the recipe with the Regal Pill Palace while he spent two years in the restricted area inside the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect on Mt. Rippling Mirage, but the sect hadn't been able to refine the Longevity Pill even after these two years. Meanwhile, how long had the Eternal Celestial Capital obtained the recipe? They refined

it already, and they'd even taken it to the Veluriyam Capital to test the waters! One had to admit that the foundations of a first rank sect were indeed formidable. It wasn't something the Regal Pill Palace could match.

Looking at the quality of these three Longevity Pills, though there was still some differences with a mid-rank Longevity Pill that Jiang Chen would refine himself, they were nevertheless genuine mid-rank pills.

Seeing the inquisitive glance Wei Jie snuck his way, Jiang Chen shook his head faintly and transmitted, "The Longevity Pill's recipe has been seized by the Eternal Celestial Capital. These are pills the Eternal Celestial Capital brought here to test the waters. They have nothing to do with me."

Seeing his own exclusive recipe seized by the Eternal Celestial Capital, seeing them refine the Longevity Pill and auction it right beneath his eyes, it was the same feeling as having his things snatched away and paraded right in front his face. One could imagine the depths Jiang Chen's anger. However, he'd never imagined even Joined Ridges Pavilion would attach such high value to a few Longevity Pills. And judging from all those these bidders' reactions, it seemed all of them also attached great importance to these pills?

Isn't it merely extending the life of sage realm cultivators? Can they be under the impression it can also be used for the emperor realm? Jiang Chen had a little trouble understanding why these people would value it so strongly. In Jiang Chen's memory from his former life, the Longevity Pill's recipe wasn't any

extraordinary recipe. After all, the horizons of his former life far surpassed these.

The auction house young master was clearly whetting everyone's appetite on purpose. He arrayed the three pills in his palm and displayed them several times in every direction. Only then did he smile and say, "I trust everyone already has a preliminary understanding of these Longevity Pills. Now, let's begin the auction. The starting bid for these three Longevity Pills is five million saint spirit stones."

Five million? Jiang Chen was slightly taken aback when he heard this number. Five million saint spirit stones, that was a whole fifty million origin spirit stones! Back when he'd auctioned a low-rank Longevity Pill, the Great Cathedral head's Xiang Wentian had paid ten million origin spirit stones, but that was due to there being only one of them, leading to crazed bidding. Meanwhile, the starting price for these three middle-grade Longevity Pills was already five million saint spirit stones. Even per pill, the price was above sixteen million origin spirit stones! And this was merely the starting price. Even twice that number might not account for the final winning bid.

What intense profit! All of a sudden, Jiang Chen realized why these people would all be glaring at the pills like tigers eyeing their prey. As it turned out, they weren't merely thinking about its life-prolonging use, but also about the business opportunity they represented! Three pills had already created such a situation, then if they were to be mass produced, it wouldn't be making a profit anymore, but daylight robbery!

With a secret wry smile, Jiang Chen finally understood the twists and turns of these people's thoughts. The Longevity Pill was a mere ordinary pill for him, but for the entire cultivation world, it was without a doubt a restricted pill difficult to acquire. What was a restricted pill? It simply meant an exclusive possession, one that couldn't be sought, only stumbled upon.

"I bid six million!" Tong Kun of House Tong lifted high his placard, a faint smile on his face. He'd instantly upped a million as soon as the bid began.

"Seven million!" Sikou Nan wasn't to be outdone.

Wei Jie was thoroughly dumbstruck when he heard these numbers. Since when had Tong Kun and Sikou Nan become so generous? These two guys had about the same status as Wei Jie. All of them were sons of noble houses. The money might not be an amount a noble house's son couldn't afford, but their outspoken boldness had already surpassed the style befitting noble house. Wei Jie was at a complete loss all of a sudden. The only thought he had was that the world had gone mad. He couldn't make any sense whatsoever of what he was seeing!

Chapter 758: Wang Teng's Sinister Scheme

"Ten million!" An extremely resonant, unmistakable voice rose at the scene. One could immediately recognize young master Ji from the Coiling Dragon Clan. With this bid, the competition became even more crazy. A leap from seven million straight to ten million! Many noble sons had been eager to give it a try, but such boldness instantly made them throw the flag down in surrender. Are you kidding, ten million! It wasn't something an average son of a ninth rank aristocratic house could usually afford!

On top of that, judging from young master Ji's attitude, he was clearly determined to win no matter what. His air and manners suggested he would do in anyone who had the gall to go against him. Joined Ridge's young master was flushed with delight when he heard that price. He said, smiling, "Young master Ji's boldness is without compare, instantly catapulting the price to ten million. This extravagance is worthy of the number one heavyweight among all the heavyweights in our Capital! However, is there only one heavyweight in town?" His words were very unsubtle, extremely provocative, even. However, as the foremost auction house, they weren't afraid of offending anyone.

Indeed, at his goading, another son of a great clan promptly called out, "Eleven million."

"Very well, eleven million. The Steelwing Clan bids eleven million! That right there is the style of our Capital's heavyweights. Any more bidders?"

Without even sparing a glance for his opponent, young master Ji

lifted his hand and spoke, “Fifteen million!”

Everyone present was a wealthy dandy of a top-rate faction in the Capital. Who would be afraid? The temperament of a young master was clearly surfacing in young master Ji. A figure at his level would naturally not blame the young master of the Linked Ridge Pavilion for fanning the flames. That was what the auction business was all about to begin with. Nothing he did would be excessive. On such an occasion, the weapons one fought with were precisely boldness, wealth, and who possessed the strongest charisma. All of them were young masters from top-rate factions. It was a contest of ne’er-do-wells, and everyone was a troublemaker. Who was afraid of anyone?

“Haha, fifteen million. Worthy of clan that held the spot of number one in our Capital for more than a hundred years in succession! There’s simply no one who can obstruct this style, this bearing, this wealth!” Seeing young master Ji so obliging, the auction house’s young master sighed in admiration and publicly proclaimed the Coiling Dragon Clan as the number one clan. His words weren’t incorrect in any case. Indeed, in the Capital, the Coiling Dragon Clan was still the number one clan in name.

However, public ranking was one thing and what everyone thought in private was another. But in any case, the Coiling Dragon Clan was still the foremost clan in name. This was something no other clan could openly contest.

Only, these words had obviously made the Majestic Clan’s young master a little unhappy. As an underling, Sikou Nan immediately lifted his arm as soon as he saw Wang Teng’s expression sour.

“House Sikou bids eighteen million!”

This bid created a commotion. House Sikou? House Sikou was a mere ninth ranked aristocratic house, were they openly challenging a great clan? It was a fight between scions of great clans, what was the trivial House Sikou butting in for? However, folks quickly understood.

House Sikou’s efforts were all for the sake of the Majestic Clan. They were embarrassing the Coiling Dragon Clan on purpose! In their opinion, the Majestic Clan’s young master was clearly the one who wanted to bid, but Wang Teng was for some reason, not acting personally. Instead, he was letting his subordinate do it in his stead, thereby grossing out young master Ji. Young master Ji, aren’t you a picture of poise and elegance? I’ll embarrass you and make you compete with my Clan’s underlings, I’ll infuriate you and make you look like a clown! This Wang Teng was extremely sinister.

Even Jiang Chen could tell that from his position in the rear. This Wang Teng was definitely embarrassing young master Ji on purpose by making House Sikou vie over the three Longevity Pills. On top of that, it was obvious Wang Teng had struck young master Ji’s soft underbelly. He knew the young master was determined to obtain the Longevity Pills no matter what, so Wang Teng was bidding like a madman, forcing young master Ji to constantly raise the price and act like a foolish wastrel. Jiang Chen frowned. He might not have much feeling for young master Ji, but Wang Teng’s actions were even more repulsive.

“Brother Zhen, you were saying that the Longevity Pill really is

useless for emperor realm cultivators?" Wei Jie had noticed the problem therein. Seeing young master Ji's attitude, he knew he wanted to use the pills to postpone the hour of the clan master's cultivation dissipating.

"There's no much use. There's a greater probability of side effects occurring," Jiang Chen's answer was very firm.

"Then, should I tell young master Ji?" Wei Jie was a little hesitant, because there was now a clear split between House Wei and the Coiling Dragon Clan after the matter of the pill king. He wasn't intimate with young master Ji either. The young master might not believe him if he were to speak at a time like this. If by any chance young master Ji's thoughts took a crooked turn, he might even think Wei Jie was preventing him from obtaining the Longevity Pill on purpose. Then, he'd buy even more strongly into what people said about House Wei being the Majestic Clan's agent. As a result, Wei Jie was a little conflicted. He didn't want young master Ji to be taken advantage of and be made to endlessly raise the price, but he didn't to be misunderstood either.

Jiang Chen saw Wei Jie's expression wholehearted devotion and knew he was brimming with House Wei's sense of loyalty. He glanced at young master Ji's determined attitude. Secretly smiling wryly to himself, Jiang Chen transmitted his voice, "Wei Jie, do you think young master Ji will listen to you? He definitely won't listen to you if you tell him now that Longevity Pills are useless for the emperor realm, and he'll even be suspicious of your motives. Do you feel confident you can convince him? Besides, this young master Ji doesn't look like someone short on money to me. Let him bleed a little, waste some money. It doesn't matter."

Wei Jie heaved a sigh. “It’s not a matter of money. Young master Ji is indeed not lacking in money. Even at ten times the price, he could clench his teeth and still pay it out. But right now, these people are clearly making fun of him on purpose and forcing him to constantly raise his bid. They’re making him dance like a monkey!”

Wei Jie apparently felt his words were a little disrespectful to young master Ji, but the present scene was indeed like a circus. Everytime the young master upped the bid, the gazes gathered on him were all very conflicted. There was derision, sympathy, and also resignation. It was obvious that since the bidding price had reached such a step, it wasn’t a bidding war anymore, but a grudge match.

Unfortunately, young master Ji couldn’t even admit defeat, or he would become the object of ridicule. A grand scion from the Coiling Dragon Clan unable to beat even the son of an aristocratic house? If rumors were to spread out, where would he hide his face?

However, if they were going to increase their bids with no end in sight...The price was already close to thirty million, and the bidding war wasn’t showing signs of stopping any time soon. At present, the other sons of great clans had already stopped bidding and switched to watching to the current act as spectators instead, watching young master Ji and Wang Teng’s fiery and explosive contest.

On the Coiling Dragon Clan’s side, young master Ji hadn’t called upon his underlings. There were several noble families under the

clan's banner, House Wei as well, but they didn't dare intrude without the young master's order. Jiang Chen had an increasingly strange feeling about the situation. Wang Teng's attitude was very odd. If he were trying to embarrass young master Ji, then his goal had already been long accomplished. Why was he still driving up the price so wantonly? Was it truly for a mere three Longevity Pills? For the Majestic Clan, bidding forty million for these three pills was already far beyond their true value.

In Jiang Chen's opinion, they were simply driving up the price on purpose. "What on earth is this Wang Teng plotting?" Jiang Chen frowned. His feeling was that there was definitely something else to Wang Teng's bidding other than simply opposing young master Ji.

Only, what on earth was Wang Teng's real scheme? Though Jiang Chen knew that guy had his motives, he couldn't still piece them together no matter how hard he racked his brains. Wang Teng was presently feeling free and leisurely, quite proud of himself while enjoying young master Ji's expressions. From the very beginning, the Majestic Clan had been the one who'd brought out the three Longevity Pills to test the waters. He'd also drove up the price on purpose to take advantage of young master Ji's sense of urgency.

First, he'd embarrassed young master Ji, humiliating his archenemy.

Second, he was naturally magnifying the allure of the Longevity Pill, making it the center of attention and a popular topic in the Capital. The reason was that the Eternal Celestial Capital had

already made the Majestic Clan the exclusive retailer for the Longevity Pill! After this auction, the pill would be publicly available for sale! Wasn't this the best form of advertising today? After the Longevity Pill's public launch, the price certainly wouldn't be as high as in the auction.

When the time came, young master Ji would find out that the Longevity Pills he'd bought at a sky-high price were something from his archenemy to begin. The entire Coiling Dragon Clan would lose all its prestige at that time. They would turn completely into a foil for the Majestic Clan to soar to new heights. One had to admit that Wang Teng's plan was extremely sinister, killing several birds with one stone. Meanwhile, young master Ji had no choice but to fall into the trap! Wang Teng was greatly pleased with himself.

"I bid fifty million!" The usually poised and elegant young master Ji was starting to to lose his temper at Sikou Nan's constant price raising. He was well aware Wang Teng was embarrassing him on purpose. However, he still had no choice but to push through and continue bidding.

"Fifty five million." The more he raised the price, the more relaxed Sikou Nan appeared to be, as though House Sikou was the true first moneybags in the Capital. How could he not be relaxed? No matter how much he raised the price, he wouldn't have to pay anything at the end in any case! After all, this thing belonged to his house's master to begin with! Besides, he didn't think young master Ji would give up.

"Sixty million!" Young master Ji finally had a little trouble

holding his anger in check. “Wang Teng, if you want to grab it, then come fight with real swords and spears. What’s the meaning of hiding behind a sidekick?”

Jiang Chen sighed silently when he saw young master Ji’s manners. Wang Teng has finally succeeded pissing this young master off. Just as he thought, Wang Teng smiled easily, “Old chap, you must be imagining things. I don’t have the slightest interest in these Longevity Pills. I wonder though, why do you cling so fiercely to them? If you don’t have the money, how about I have Sikou Nan give you one to play with after he wins the bid?”

He’d simply grasped his tone, manners, and cadence to perfection and sent a vicious slap to Young master Ji’s face. Even Jiang Chen had a little trouble sitting still. When he saw Wang Teng’s proud and smug face, and thought back to the fact that the Longevity Pill was his own thing that this wretch was using to face-slap another with, Jiang Chen also started to grow angry. Trying to slap his face are you? Then I will make you fail!

With a turn of his thoughts, an idea occurred to Jiang Chen. The price was still climbing as his thoughts swirled, flaring past seventy million in the blink of an eye. At this rate, it was thundering straight to a hundred million. Even though young master Ji had money, everyone thought he really was being a good-for-nothing this time. The real value of these three Longevity Pills was capped at ten million saint spirit stones at most. One would be a stupid dandy to pay any more than that. And judging from Wang Teng’s attitude, he clearly wanted to turn young master into a fop unparalleled in the whole of the Capital! His side was incredibly excited and expectant at the moment, looking forward to mercilessly crushing the young master of the Coiling Dragon Clan

under their boots.

Chapter 759: Face Slapping and Counter Face Slapping

Indeed, young master Ji couldn't stop midway; he could only keep riding the tiger. How could he be ignorant that this was an act with Wang Teng as the director? The goal was to make him lose his composure, make him fight over the Longevity Pills for ten times their worth, and to give him a vicious slap on the face. However, Ji San had no other choice.

He was also aware that these Longevity Pills might not be of any use to the clan lord. Only, even one chance in a million was still a hope. He didn't want to let go of that hope. After all, Coiling Dragon's clan lord had tried countless methods during these years, but the only thing he'd gained for his efforts was disappointment, more disappointment, and endless, boundless disappointment. As for the Coiling Dragon Clan, once celebrated as the undisputed foremost clan, it was now in imminent danger.

Various influences and factions within the clan were already engaged in an endless power struggle, trying to take advantage of the clan lord's imminent demise to seize his seat. Meanwhile, the aristocratic houses under the Coiling Dragon Clan were also uncertain which path they ought to walk in the future. There was no sense of security for any of them. One could say that though the Clan wasn't engulfed in chaos yet, it wasn't far from it. As soon as the clan lord's cultivation started dissipating, the clan was bound to enter a chaotic struggle for power and influence. This was a foreseeable future that no one would be able to prevent.

Young master Ji was an outstanding figure amongst the younger

generation in the clan, but he was young after all, his experience shallow. He didn't have the qualifications to take over as the clan lord. Hence, his fate was also bound to experience stormy waves. This proud clan scion, blessed by the heavens, might very well become a sacrificed pawn in the internal struggles of power.

This was what young master Ji least wanted to face. On a public level, he didn't wish for the Coiling Dragon Clan to fall into chaos and break to pieces. On a private level, he didn't wish to become a scapegoat in his clan's internal struggle. For that reason, he wouldn't give up these Longevity Pills even if they offered but the tiniest shred of a hope. No price would make him give up.

A contest of wealth? Then let's fight with wealth! Being derided as a useless dandy? Then he might as well be one this one time! Being schemed against by Majestic Clan's young master? Then let him strut for a while! Ji San clenched his teeth, and upped the bid once again, "Eighty million!"

Sikou Nan laughed, "Hehe, ninety million!"

This was a pure contest of pride now. Sikou Nan upped the ante without even blinking, making the crowd secretly sigh with admiration. Joined Ridges Pavilion's young master had to be one of the happiest. This terrific price was also a bolt out of the blue for him and he was most delighted with the situation. The higher the price, the greater the share for their auction house!

Wang Teng suddenly smiled, "Old chap, we all know you're rich. One hundred million, do you dare?"

It made young master Ji regain his composure instead. His determination to win was already firm as steel, so he didn't appear as restless as before. "One hundred million." Three faint, indifferent words, but they revealed young master Ji's resolve to push onwards.

Sikou Nan giggled, "One hundred twenty million."

This caused a storm at the scene. Sikou Nan was well on his way to make a mortal enemy out of the Coiling Dragon Clan. Even if your faction's a trusted confidant of the Majestic Clan, you still don't need to act like this, now do you? Are you so dead certain that you're on the same side with the Coiling Dragon Clan?

Wei Jie's face clouded, foul-mouthed words coming out his mouth as he swore something or another. Clearly, he felt a bone-deep hatred for the Majestic Clan and House Sikou at the sight of this situation. Were it not for his words carrying little weight due to his low status, he would even be tempted to interfere. Only, he knew that with his rank and identity, he would be more of a hindrance at a time like this and would make young master Ji dissatisfied instead.

Jiang Chen threw a faint glance in Wei Jie's direction, glanced at young master Ji, then looked again at Wang Teng's proud and complacent air. He was also feeling very ticked off. He couldn't let Wang Teng keep acting so high and mighty. Jiang Chen couldn't sit still any longer! At present, if there was still one person left who could turn the situation around, it was Jiang Chen. He originally had no desire to be involved in this matter. It was just that he felt

very unhappy when he saw Wang Teng looking like he was dead certain he had young master Ji by the neck. Wang Teng, how will I possible tolerate you using my Longevity Pills to act tough? Steeling his resolve, Jiang Chen decided to go into action.

"Wei Jie, whether you can restore your relationship with the Coiling Dragon Clan today will depend on how you take advantage of the situation!" Jiang Chen said, transmitting his voice to Wei Jie.

Jiang Chen had already sent a message to young master Ji before Wei Jie could react "Young master Ji, Wang Teng is deliberately toying with you today. I have an upper rank Longevity Pill in my possession. I only ask ten million saint spirit stones of you."

He wasn't making this up out of nowhere. He had indeed refined another cauldron of Longevity Pills afterwards. After giving three of them to Palace Head Dan Chi, he'd kept some of them himself. One of them was precisely a Longevity Pill of the upper rank variety. It was much more outstanding compared to these mid rank ones. Jiang Chen also knew that, were he to tell young master Ji that the Longevity Pill were useless for emperor realm cultivators, the young master would never believe him at a time like this. Instead, young master Ji might believe him yet if he said he had a Longevity Pill.

Sure enough, young master Ji froze, then looked in the direction of the voice. His eyes stayed a moment on Jiang Chen, then looked at Wei Jie beside him. Though Wei Jie hadn't heard the contents of Jiang Cheng's words, he was likely aware that Jiang Chen had gone into action.

Jiang Chen transmitted his voice to Wei Jie next, “Young master Wei, if you dare use your House as guarantor, then there’s an opportunity to restore your relationship with the Coiling Dragon Clan today. Do you have this courage? Everything rests on it.”

Just as Wei Jie was pondering this, young master Ji transmitted his voice to Wei Jie as expected. “Wei Jie, is the one beside you a new guest pill king of your House? Is it true that he has a Longevity Pill?”

Hearing this, Wei Jie immediately understood Jiang Chen’s intention. He was immensely grateful. He knew Jiang Chen was taking out his own Longevity Pill to reverse the current situation. He was also inwardly admiring of Jiang Chen’s quick thinking. Young master Ji was certain not to believe them if they’d told him that the Longevity Pill was of no use. Instead, using a Longevity Pill to convince him would be a hundred percent effective. Understanding Jiang Chen’s intention, Wei Jie also understood that Jiang Chen meant for him to vouch for his House’s new guest pill king.

He immediately responded with a solemn vow, “Young master Ji, I am willing to vouch on my life that Pill King zhen truly has a Longevity Pill. If there is any deception, House Wei is willing to submit to any punishment. House Wei and the Majestic Clan are enemies that cannot live under the same sky, we are loath to see young master Ji played and made fun of by them. The heavens and the earth are witness to House Wei’s loyalty.”

There was no insincerity whatsoever in Wei Jie’s words. Young

master Ji couldn't help but take them seriously. To tell the truth, the Coiling Dragon Clan harbored suspicions about House Wei after the drama with House Wei's pill king. That was the reason why they'd given the house the cold shoulder. Young master Ji's first reaction to Wei Jie's words today was skepticism.

However, they didn't seem false upon looking at Wei Jie's expression and hearing his tone. Young master Ji was tempted. If he withdrew at a time like this, confidently and leisurely, then it would no doubt be the best way to strike back at Wang Teng. He could even buy an upper rank Longevity Pill at a cheap price afterwards, so why squander his money and be the foolish buyer? However, he was also afraid that if by any chance the information turned out to be false, it would sever this hin strand of hope! Who knew when the Longevity Pill would appear next?

The previously always firm and decisive young master Ji was suddenly a little hesitant as to what to do. Seeing him hesitate, Jiang Chen faintly spoke once more. "Young master Ji, if you're distrustful even of your most loyal subordinates, then the Coiling Dragon Clan will truly be one day supplanted by the Majestic Clan, and you will be the only ones to blame. You are a grand scion of the number one clan, surely you can't be afraid of being deceived by us?"

Young master Ji frowned when he heard. A decision arose in his mind. They heard Wang Teng's voice again just then. "Heh heh, who would have thought we would one day see the wealthy and extravagant young master Ji also cower in fear. Old chap, tell this brother if you're short on money. Lending you thirty or fifty million won't be a problem."

Young master Ji gave a long, lengthy peal of laughter. He didn't even spare a glance for Wang Teng. His eyes fell straight on Joined Ridges Pavilion's young master instead. "How much did they bid earlier?"

The auction house's young master responded with a smile, "A hundred and twenty million."

Young master Ji slapped his thigh. "Alright, then let them have it! Have them pay on the spot and take the items away. Be sure they don't cheat and renege on their bid, otherwise this young master will suspect your auction house of conniving with them to maliciously drive up prices and disrupt the normal bidding process."

This unforeseen turnaround had truly happened too suddenly. Did that mean that young master Ji was throwing in the towel? His free and easy manners didn't give off the resentful feeling of one who'd been defeated at all! Everyone at the scene was confused. Was it young master Ji toying with the Majestic Clan, or the Majestic Clan making a fool of young master Ji instead? Why was the plot so hard to follow?

Joined Ridges Pavilion's young master was slightly surprised when he saw young master Ji give up. But he was already very, tremendously, absolutely satisfied with the price they'd already reached. However, Sikou Nan was struck dumb. They'd never imagined young master Ji would give up all of a sudden. Their bottom line had been to reach two hundred million before letting go. From their understanding of young master Ji, two hundred million was definitely a sum he could afford. However, young

master Ji had put the lid on at a hundred and twenty million already? That wasn't young master Ji's style. Didn't he want to obtain the Longevity Pills and use them to prolong the Coiling Dragon clan lord's life?

Even Wang Teng was stupefied, to say nothing of Sikou Nan. Young master Ji's sudden withdrawal threw all their plans into disarray! It was young master Ji who wasn't willing to let them go now. He asked with a faint smile, "What? You were bidding so enthusiastically a moment ago, are you reneging on your debt now? Are you trying to slap Joined Ridges Pavilion's face?"

Bidding and concluding the transaction on the spot, this was the rule the auction house had set for this auction. Sikou Nan truly had a little trouble sitting still. He hadn't brought so much money with him. Moreover, they didn't have so much money as to throw it away by spending so much for three Longevity Pills, no matter how wealthy House Sikou was. They were still smarting from the robbery at House Sikou's Myriad Puppet Pavilion, and funds had been a bit short lately.

If they were to lose another hundred twenty million here, then it would be fuel on the fire for House Sikou. Sikou Nan made a beseeching signal at Wang Teng with a plaintive expression. Wang Teng's face was also drained of color. He'd been counting his eggs before they'd hatched, so the instant reversal quite ticked him off. He spoke with a grim smile at young master Ji, "Old chap, it seems you aren't concerned in the least about your clan lord's matter! You're cowering at a mere hundred twenty million?"

Wang Teng's tone was one that was wholly unreconciled.

Chapter 760: The Skysnatcher Cauldron

Young master Ji smiled easily, “Little brat Wang, I was fully aware you would come up with this trick, I played along with your bidding just now merely to tease you. What Longevity Pill, our Clan obtained it a long time ago already! What need do I have to squander money here for no reason? I hear that your Majestic Clan has earned quite a fortune with underhanded methods these years, so I think you guys are better suited the part of being the foolish buyer, hahaha!”

With young master Ji’s sudden withdrawal, he could posture any way he wanted. His words immediately caused an uproar. Sure enough, there were schemes a-plenty between the scions of great clans. Everyone thought at the start that Wang Teng was the one toying with young master Ji, baiting him hook, line, and sinker like a fisherman. But no one imagined the one fishing was young master Ji instead, and the Majestic Clan had been the ones reeled in like a sucker!

This spectacular play had been a perfect face slapping and counter face slapping! Wang Teng was struck utterly dumb. He was very dubious about the truth of young master Ji’s words. However, what about it even if young master Ji was merely putting up appearances? He was the one who needed to fork the money!

Though the Majestic Clan had been the ones to secretly supply these pills, he still couldn’t openly say that he was taking them back, could he? Their Clan would down in spittle if word of this got out! What was this if not dishonest business in maliciously raising the price of his own auction items?

If everyone was left with such a bad impression, they would be labeled as unscrupulous, dishonest businessmen before they even launched the Longevity Pill. On top of that, young master Ji was obviously not going to let go of him before he completed the transaction today!

Wang Teng's face turned white from anger. He had no choice but to pool the money. It was fortunate that Wang Teng had deep pockets. The several of them could still pool together the one hundred twenty million and avoid losing shame.

His heart was bleeding. Though the greater part of this hundred twenty million would go back into his pocket, Joined Ridges Pavilion would still take their twenty percent commission from it. The auction house's share was usually ten percent. However, as to not expose Majestic Clan itself, Wang Teng hadn't provided his real name when putting the three pills up for auction. Instead, he'd chosen an anonymous auction.

An anonymous auction was when the consigner's identity was hidden. Because the consigner's identity was hidden, the auction house would shoulder some risk. That was the reason why the auction house's commission was double in the case of an anonymous auction, the ten percent becoming twenty percent. The final price was one hundred twenty million, so the twenty percent share amounted to twenty four million. In other words, the Majestic Clan had lost twenty-odd million for their troubles in offering up the pills for sale and then taking them back. The items came from their clan, while the money also came from their clan. Apart from some advertising for the Longevity Pill, they squandered twenty two million for absolutely nothing, and they'd

even been cruelly toyed with by young master Ji, making a disgrace of themselves.

Wang Ten really felt like crying, even though he had no tears. He wasn't willing to accept this! Young master Ji was someone Wang Teng understood very well. This guy liked to posture, attract attention, and affect some elegant style, but his schemes weren't sophisticated and his acting nothing to sniff at. The sense of urgency young master Ji had just moments ago when competing for the Longevity Pills had definitely not been an act. What'd made him suddenly give up out of the blue? This was what completely puzzled Wang Teng, no matter how hard he racked his brain.

The auctioning of the Longevity Pills had experienced twists and turns, all kinds of face slapping and counter face slapping. The plot had come fast and furious, overwhelming the crowd, making them shout with pleasure and satisfaction. The curtains finally closed on this farce after Sikou Nan finalized the payment with a bitter face and took away the items. Joined Ridges Pavilion had ended up the biggest winner. Its young master was secretly beaming, his face simply radiant. He'd gotten twenty percent from this sale alone, twenty four million! This was even wilder than daylight robbery!

Two items followed after the pills. Both of those items were uncommon, both their initial bids starting above six million. Only, neither of these two auction items aroused private grudges or various schemes, so no sparks were seen during their auctioning. The bidding was also very intense, but as a whole, the proceedings tended towards the smooth. No matter how hard the auction house's young master fanned the flames, the atmosphere fell a little short. The previous dispute had clearly spoiled everyone's appetite already, making them a little numb.

“Our fifth item is different from the previous items. It’s a cauldron for pill refining. This pill cauldron is called the Skysnatcher Cauldron and is emperor realm, something very seldomly seen. It was allegedly once been used by a high-level pill king. The bidding starts at twenty million saint spirit stones!” The young master’s word once against set the crowd’s enthusiasm ablaze.

An emperor realm pill cauldron! That was an uncommon item! One had to remember that while pills were easy to find, pill cauldrons were rare goods. This was particularly true for good pill-refining cauldrons which were even more of a rarity. The scene was in uproar as soon as the cauldron appeared. The eyes of quite a few younger generations were shining bright with desire.

Wei Jie couldn’t help but feel self conscious. He’d previously given Jiang Chen a million saint spirit stones, and also promised he could make the call for bids below five million. However, the level of this auction had clearly exceeded House Wei’s estimations. Five million was only an appetizer here! The starting price of this emperor real pill cauldron was twenty million already! This sky-high price was simply astounding!

However, considering it was an emperor realm pill cauldron, this price was high, but not excessive beyond reason. One could read the restlessness and eagerness on the faces of many. Everyone was very much looking forward to it. Even Jiang Chen felt a rush of excitement. He’d refined pills for so many years, but the only good pill cauldron he’d ever had was one of Regal Pill Palace’s five treasures, the Skyweave Cauldron. In the Myriad Domain, the Skyweave Cauldron was indeed an outstanding cauldron amongst

all the outstanding cauldrons. However, now that he was in the Veluriyam Capital, its level was clearly lagging a little behind.

Now that he saw this emperor realm treasure, the relic of a high-level pill king, he could tell with a single glance that this cauldron was at least two levels above the Skyweave Cauldron. I should actually fight for this cauldron. It was the only one of the five items in which Jiang Cheng actually felt temptation. Twenty million saint spirit stones would have been an astronomical number for Jiang Chen back in the Myriad Domain, far from what he would have been able to afford. However, he'd gathered the rings of roughly four thousand persons after the battle at Infant Shriek. Converting the spirit stones he had on hand to saint spirit stones, he had quite a few hundred millions. Twenty million was naturally something he could afford!

"I bid twenty one million!"

"Twenty three million!"

"I'll bid twenty five million!"

"I'm bidding thirty million..." The rich folk of the Capital were once again exhibiting their domineering temperament, as though the prices they quoted weren't in saint spirit stones, but rather in common stones one could pick up anywhere off the street. Such an imposing style didn't even leave Jiang Chen a window with which to quote a price. When he very slowly bid thirty two million, three or four persons immediately upped the price, shooting the price to forty million in a few blinks.

Madmen, what a bunch of madmen! Jiang Chen swore silently. It wasn't that he lacked money, but with his present status, if he were to bid too high a price, it would be difficult to avoid undue attention. Competing with a bunch of descendents from the great clans? To say nothing about his present status as a mere second level pill king, even House Wei that Wei Jie represented might not be able to afford it.

There was nothing Jiang Chen could do. All those bidding were from great clans. In such a vast Capital with territories spreading over millions of miles, the resources were innumerable, but those who controlled the vast majority of those resources were still the twenty eight great clans, and only those twenty eight clans. One could deduce from this that each great clan was fully deserving of the title of a local king. Those scions of great clans could bid any amount they wished as long as they felt it was appropriate.

Otherwise, the previous three Longevity Pills couldn't have shot to a hundred twenty million. It had ended as a battle between the Majestic Clan and the Coiling Dragon Clan, but it had indeed been a straight competition between scions of great clans in its early phase. It was the same for Skysnatcher now. These guys were bidding with extreme frenzy because they liked it, because they felt it was appropriate. It was far from the imaginary scenes where a long time brewed between each bid.

Jiang Chen was inwardly depressed. It wasn't that he couldn't afford it, but it'd truly be unwise to compete on wealth with these fellows. The most crucial thing was that as an outsider, he would attract attention in seconds if his attitude was too flamboyant. It would be too easy to attract enmity. Inspiration suddenly struck.

His eyes stopped on young master Ji San. There was a helping hand readily available, why not make use of it?

"Young master Ji San, I'm determined to obtain the Skysnatcher. Lend me your name and help me bid for it. I will account for all the expense later. The price for the upper rank Longevity Pill is still as we previously agreed on!"

With young master Ji helping him bid, he wouldn't need to expose his own wealth and wouldn't attract enmity. Jiang Chen's sudden inspiration was a bright chess move.

What Jiang Chen didn't expect was while young master Ji had still been somewhat skeptical of him before, the young master suddenly believed Jiang Chen wholeheartedly after hearing this request. If he didn't truly have a Longevity Pill, then he wouldn't dare order Ji San about even as House Wei's guest pill king. Young master Ji's temperament of a wealthy scion suddenly flared, his bold daring suddenly soaring. He said in a loud voice, "I'm in a good mood today, I fancy this cauldron. Fifty million. I will fight all challengers to the bitter end!"

This sudden outburst of imposing momentum routed quite a few. Everyone had already witnessed his imposing dominance back when he'd bid against Sikou Nan. No one was keen to butt heads with this god of pestilence. If by any chance this young master Ji were to become angry and raise the price to insane levels, if it ultimately fell in their own lap, wouldn't they look like a fool just like Sikou Nan? All of a sudden, the voices previously bidding faded away one by one. They couldn't afford to offend the Coiling Dragon Clan for one, and secondly, Sikou Nan served as an

example that still lingered in everyone's mind. The scene instantly became absolute silence. There were still two who wanted to keep bidding, but they were also wavering with indecision. The previous scene of young master Ji flipping the situation onto Sikou Nan's head had obviously left shadows in everyone's hearts.

Chapter 761: The Goldencrown Cloudcrane

One had to admit, the scene which young master Ji San had delivered a sound face slapping to Wang Teng had been very memorable. The feverish atmosphere of the auction instantly chilled the moment he upped the bid. Although Wang Teng still wanted to cross paths against young master Ji San a little longer, he was once bitten, twice shy. He too was worried that he would be tricked by the young master again. Most importantly, they had reached the bottom of their pockets after the farce that was the Longevity Pill. There was no way he could afford tens of millions for the Skysnatcher Cauldron.

Two great clan members at the back tentatively increased the price twice for the cauldron, but both their attempts were thwarted by a Ji San who looked like he would devour them alive. In the end, young master Ji San successfully took home the Skysnatcher Cauldron at the price of fifty six million saint spirit stones. Although Joined Ridges Pavilion young master wasn't too pleased with this final price, it was almost at his target goal. Most importantly, he couldn't fault young master Ji San for winning the bid. The Longevity Pill wouldn't have ended at such an insane price if young master Ji San hadn't competed for it.

Jiang Chen let out a sigh of relief when he saw that young master Ji San had successfully won the Skysnatcher Cauldron. Upgrading his equipment was a necessity if he were to establish himself in Veluriyam Capital, and the cauldron was one equipment he absolutely needed to improve. Although the price of fifty six million saint spirit stones was a little higher than he would've liked, it didn't make that big of a dent in his current wealth. This cauldron was absolutely worth hundreds and thousands times the cost in his hands.

After the Skysnatcher Cauldron was bid, the sixth auctioned item showed up on stage. It was an ancient formation disk that caused the crowd to fight crazily for it once more. This time, Jiang Chen showed no interest even though this type of formation disk was very rare. He had obtained several himself at the forbidden grounds of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. The quality of this formation disk was about the same level as the Minor Artifice Formation, and that made it of little value to him. After all, Jiang Chen possessed the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect most precious Ancient Crimson formation disk. It was capable of emulating the ten great formations of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect! To this day, Jiang Chen was only able to use it once and barely summon ten to twenty percent of its true strength, but there was no denying its might.

But to other people, this formation disk was without a doubt a precious treasure. The price quickly soared to over sixty million saint spirit stones. In the end, the disk was won by a great clan member at the price of eighty million saint spirit stones. The greatest advantage of such formation disk was that it could instantly be deployed. Unlike the normal formations, it neither needed a formation flag or set up to be deployed. This instantaneous reaction saved time, and while it might not be able to kill the enemy in the critical moment, it would be able to delay the enemy long enough to save one's life. After all, even the strongest expert would be caught by surprise if a formation had suddenly appeared out of nowhere. An abrupt moment of surprise might be all that was needed to save a person's life in battle.

Two more items was put up after the ancient formation was won, but Jiang Chen was still uninterested in either of them. Jiang Chen held no expectations whatsoever considering that the auction was

about to end.

However, his heart skipped a beat when he heard the name of the ninth auctioned item from the Joined Ridges Pavilion young master. “The ninth auctioned item is a Goldencrown Cloudcrane.”

A Goldencrown Cloudcrane! Jiang Chen couldn’t help but cast a glance at young master Ji San after he heard these two words. Now this was what young master Ji San should spare no effort in obtaining, no matter what! He never imagined a coincidence like this would happen. He’d just been thinking about the Pine Crane Pill when the Longevity Pill had been auctioned. He’d never thought that a spirit beast like the Goldencrown Cloudcrane would then show up in an auction like this.

The Goldencrown Cloudcrane’s rank wasn’t too high, and its combat power was average at best. However, it was an incredibly rare species. It was a species of the Cloudcranes, but the one with a golden crown on its head was incredibly rare. Every part of a Goldencrown Cloudcrane’s body was precious. There was even a wealthy man who’d once used the feathers to weave a robe that was impervious to water and fire, and also reduced all metal attribute attacks by half. It was incredibly precious equipment. Moreover, the Cloudcrane’s flesh was also extraordinarily tasty. It was publicly acknowledged as a delicious delicacy in the world of martial dao. The heart especially, was a famous medicinal ingredient in the pill making industry.

The two main ingredients of the Pine Crane Pill was the Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine pine cone and the Goldencrown Cloudcrane heart. This was why Jiang Chen had been startled when he heard

the Goldencrown Cloudcrane being announced. As the last item of the auction, it was obviously set at an expensive price. Its starting bid was thirty million saint spirit stones, and many parties were bidding madly for the creature.

Unexpectedly, young master Ji San himself didn't seem all that interested in this item at all. He wore an indifferent look on his face, and his mind didn't even seem to be on the auction anymore. Jiang Chen couldn't help but sigh helplessly on the inside when he saw this. This was what the young master should've staked his life to bid, but the man himself was showing no reaction at all.

Jiang Chen was hesitant. Should he remind this fellow to make a bid? After all, a creature like the Goldencrown Cloudcrane was a priceless creature that could only be encountered serendipitously. There might not be another in ten or even twenty years. But how should he remind the young master? Would young master Ji San suddenly bid for a spirit animal he had zero interest in at all? Would he even listen? Jiang Chen wasn't sure either how he should answer young master Ji San if pressed for a reason.

After all, Jiang Chen couldn't tell him about the Pine Crane Pill. The pill's influence was too great, and even he dared not imagine the consequences if its existence were to be revealed. That being said, Jiang Chen couldn't help but feel a bit impressed by young master Ji San's spirit and heart when he recalled that the young master had won the Skysnatcher Cauldron on his behalf without asking a single question. A moment of hesitation later, Jiang Chen ultimately decided to give young master Ji San a reminder. "Young master Ji San, this Goldencrown Cloudcrane is very important for you. You should bid on it. If you still have enough spirit stones, you should be ready to do everything in your power to win this

Goldencrown Cloudcrane.”

Jiang Chen’s reminder obviously caught young master Ji San off guard. He hadn’t hesitated at all when he bid on the Skysnatcher Cauldron for Jiang Chen earlier. However, he couldn’t help but feel a bit of puzzled astonishment this time, because he couldn’t fathom how this Goldencrown Cloudcrane could be useful to him in any way. “My friend, it’s not that I don’t trust you, but this spirit animal can only be used to weave a feathered robe. It’s not all that useful to me, not to mention only a single one isn’t even enough to weave a complete robe,” young master Ji San labored to explain his thoughts.

“Young master Ji San, you were willing to spend a hundred million saint spirit stones to bid for the Longevity Pill earlier, weren’t you? I can tell you now that this Goldencrown Cloudcrane is worth that price more than the Longevity Pill is. If you trust me, then bid for the Goldencrown Cloudcrane. If you don’t, the just pretend that I’ve not said anything. I’m just reminding you out of goodwill.” This was as far as Jiang Chen could advise him.

If young master Ji San trusted him, then he could consider revealing more of the secret. If young master Ji San couldn’t trust him, it still wouldn’t change the fact that Jiang Chen had reminded him out of a sense of obligation. Morally speaking, Jiang Chen would be in the right. After all, he didn’t need to say anything in the first place.

Young master Ji San had helped him bid for the Skysnatcher Cauldron, but Jiang Chen had saved him from the trap that was the Longevity Pill as well. The exchange of favors was equal at

best, and Jiang Chen owed Ji San nothing at all. Young master Ji San pondered over the choice for a moment. Although a brief moment of hesitation did pass through his mind, he ultimately decided to trust Jiang Chen. Trust the people you chose, and forego the ones you doubt.

He had chosen to trust Jiang Chen once on the Longevity Pill, so what was the harm in trusting him once more? If he were to lose, he might as well lose completely. And in the same vein, a total victory was better than a partial victory. When his thoughts travelled to this point, young master Ji San once again displayed his ultimate dandiness and declared, “Sixty million!”

Everyone was guessing that the next bid was going to be forty million or so, but his bid had suddenly come in and shattered everyone’s expectations. He even casted a taunting glance at Wang Teng after making the declaration. His meaning was obvious. I’m making another bid, and I dare you play this game with me again!

Wang Teng’s face was livid. This auction was a complete wash. He had sunk all of his money into the Longevity Pill, so where on earth was he going to find the spare change to accept Ji San’s challenge? Moreover, he suspected that young master Ji San was only trying to drag him down further. He had already fallen for the ploy once, and Wang Teng would rather suffer a bit more humiliation than lose even more money. He couldn’t afford tens of millions at the moment anyways.

Jiang Chen was amused when he saw young master Ji San’s actions. He was inwardly impressed by the young master. As expected, there were no easy pickings amongst the great clans at

all. Young master Ji San's unpredictable actions was obviously a cat and mouse tactic. He wanted very much to win the Goldencrown Cloudcrane, but had purposely taunted Wang Teng into bidding against him. As a result, Wang Teng actually didn't dare to raise the bid. After all, Wang Teng had suffered a loss in Ji San's hands already. He was still reeling from the blow right now.

That being said, though Wang Teng didn't try to compete this time, there were a few great clans who were also interested in this auction. In the end, young master Ji San won the Goldencrown Cloudcrane at the tall price of eighty million saint spirit stones without even batting an eyelid. He left all other bidders in dust. This outcome stunned everyone present. The foremost clan was still the foremost clan alright! His ability to spend spirit stones like water was shocking.

He had casually raised the bid of a mere Longevity Pill to a hundred million saint spirit stones. Although he didn't win it in the end, his charisma was undeniably astounding. Now, he had spent slightly over a hundred million to buy a single cauldron and a single spirit animal. It was unlikely that an ordinary clan member could do the same. It was obvious that young master Ji San had prepared more than enough money to win the bids with ease. He had become the main focus of the event and Joined Ridges Pavilion's favorite customer. Young master Ji San had not only made two amazing final bids himself, he'd also been the number one contributor in raising the price of the Longevity Pill to one hundred and twenty million saint spirit stones.

Joined Ridges Pavilion only wished that they could find a way to better welcome such a wonderful customer. This extraordinarily entertaining auction ended perfectly with the wide smile on Joined

Ridges Pavilion's young master's face. They were obviously the biggest winner of this auction.

The most dejected of them all was without a doubt Wang Teng's group. Although everyone else had splashed out just as much money to win, they had at least gotten what they wanted. However, the bid he'd won had belonged to him in the first place, and as a result he had to hand over a twenty percent commission for free. That twenty four million saint spirit stones! Wang Teng was enraged when he saw young master Ji San's smile, "Ji Ole Third, I dare you to smile again when your clan lord's cultivation dissipates!"

He was feeling pretty wretched, and so he left the scene with his subordinates and a dark look on his face. Meanwhile, young master Ji San made his way leisurely outside the entrance, waiting for Wei Jie and Jiang Chen outside the courtyard.

Chapter 762: The Generous Young Master Ji San

Jiang Chen saw the young master waiting for them outside the entrance, but didn't approach him. Instead, he sent a message, "Let's find a quiet place to speak, young master Ji San."

Young master Ji San waved his paper fan and showed no change on his expression despite having heard Jiang Chen's voice. A moment later, he transmitted, "Wei Jie, I'll be booking a table at Little Leisurely Clouds. Follow me there."

Little Leisurely Clouds was an extremely high class restaurant in Veluriyam Capital. It was an exquisitely built building at a quiet location, and its rules of reception was exceptionally strict. It wasn't a place where common folk could get a table. In fact, even a ninth rank aristocratic family member might not be able to reserve a table in Little Leisurely Clouds. Only a great clan member could reserve a table for certain. Even Jiang Chen was a little surprised when he arrived at Little Leisurely Clouds with Wei Jie. He didn't think that such a tasteful restaurant existed in a place as expensive as Veluriyam Capital. Situated between hills and rivers, the restaurant gave off an incredibly pleasing atmosphere. From Wei Jie's reaction, it would appear that even he didn't have the chance to frequent Little Leisurely Clouds often. The duo had just arrived at the entrance when a steward welcomed them with a professional smile, "My apologies, but are you two young master Ji San's friends?"

Wei Jie nodded, "Has young master San arrived?"

“Young master Ji San is waiting for you two upstairs. Please, follow me.” This manager obviously held a high position in Little Leisurely Clouds, but the fact that he had welcomed them personally was a great honor. Wei Jie understood that this honor wasn’t granted on behalf of him, but young master Ji San. The foremost clan in Veluriyam Capital still held great influence.

The dishes were already set on the table when they arrived at an exquisite room. The young master’s tall figure was standing beside the table, a hint of anxiety spilling from his normally calm expression. It was obvious that young master Ji San was extremely concerned about the Longevity Pill. Seeing that Jiang Chen had come together with Wei Jie, young master Ji San immediately instructed the steward, “Thank you for your service, but we won’t be needing it for now. We will take care of ourselves.”

The steward was a very discreet person, and understood that he or the staff wasn’t to be privy to the guest’s private talks. He immediately smiled, “Please enjoy your meal.”

Once all Little Leisurely Cloud staff had exited, young master Ji San waved his hand, “What is your friend called, Wei Jie?”

Wei Jie still looked a little uncomfortable in young master Ji San’s presence, but quickly answered, “He is the new guest pill king House Wei has hired. You can call him Pill King Zhen, young master.”

Young master Ji San nodded before examining Jiang Chen for a brief moment with a complicated look. He greeted Jiang Chen, “I apologize for being ill-informed, for this is the first time I’ve heard

of your reputation, Pill King Zhen. May I have the pleasure of knowing who your master is?”

Young master Ji San’s tone was a little probing, but Jiang Chen didn’t mind such little transgressions. At the very least, this young master Ji San hadn’t greeted him with the hypocritical, ‘it’s an honor to meet you at last’ when he didn’t even know of Jiang Chen. From this angle, he judged that young master Ji San was at least an aboveboard person who didn’t beat around the bush too much.

“Young master Ji San, there are no outsiders here,” Jiang Chen smiled, “So let’s not beat around the bush trying to probe each other’s background, shall we? I’m very sure you won’t know my master even if I were to tell you.”

Jiang Chen made himself at home and took a guest seat with a flourish, presenting the upper rank Longevity Pill he had prepared since long ago. He pushed the pill bottle gently and sent it sliding towards young master Ji San. No words were as persuasive as reality. The only reason young master Ji San was trying to delicately probe him was because he suspected Jiang Chen’s claims of possessing the Longevity Pill. In that case, there was nothing more persuasive than putting the Longevity Pill on the table.

As expected, young master Ji San lifted an eyebrow instantly and grabbed the pill bottle with a bit of agitation. He gave it a little sniff, and joy immediately blossomed on his face. He could say at least that this pill presence was on point. Moreover, this pill was indeed of a higher grade than the one auctioned by Joined Ridges Pavilion. Obviously in a hurry, young master Ji San tipped out the

upper grade Longevity Pill and gently rolled it around in his hand. He probed it continuously with his consciousness. The more he looked, the more he lost his serious expression and relaxed. The joy on his face grew clearer and clearer.

"Good, good, good! This pill is genuine. It is definitely the Longevity Pill. True enough, it's even better than the one auctioned by Joined Ridges Pavilion. You are a man of your word, Pill King Zhen." The clouds on young master Ji San's face faded quite a bit, and even his smile had turned courteous, "Wei Jie, your House Wei has finally found a reliable pill king. I must congratulate you."

His one line caused their rather stiff relationship to thaw a little. Wei Jie hastily replied, "Pill King Zhen is the biggest reason we were able to settle our internal strife. His pill dao talent is immeasurable."

Young master Ji San nodded with a smile and played with the Longevity Pill admiringly for a long time. The joy on his face looked just like a child who had just obtained a delicious sweet for the first time.

"Pill King Zhen, if those three middle rank Longevity Pills could be sold for a sum of a hundred twenty million, then they would be worth forty million each. Therefore, your upper rank Longevity Pill would be worth at least fifty million. So here, take your Skysnatcher Cauldron. We'll save each other the trouble and cliche of exchanging money!" This young master Ji San was a surprisingly refreshing character. He took out the Skysnatcher Cauldron and pushed it directly to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen cast a glance at the Skysnatcher Cauldron, feeling rather impressed by young master Ji San's heroic character. He had spent fifty six million saint spirit stones to win this cauldron. However, this upper rank Longevity Pill's true value was in reality only worth two to three million saint spirit stones.

The reason its price had been raised to such insane heights earlier was purely because the Majestic Clan had manipulated young master Ji San's anxiety and butted heads with him. There was no doubt that Jiang Chen would benefit greatly if he were to exchange this upper rank Longevity Pill for a Skysnatcher Cauldron just like that. But Jiang Chen understood that he couldn't accept this trade, at least not like this. Instead of putting away the Skysnatcher Cauldron in a hurry, he looked at young master Ji San with sincere eyes. "Young master Ji San, I am very much impressed by your heroism. However, you'll be suffering a huge loss if we trade this way, and as such I cannot accept this trade with a good conscience."

Young master Ji San frowned, "Money is not a problem for me, my friend. You can set yourself at ease if your qualms lie purely in the difference between prices. I make my friends completely based on my own preferences, and it is not uncommon for me to spend tens of thousands in one go."

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and replied, "It is not just a problem of the price difference."

"What is the problem then?"

Jiang Chen spoke seriously, “It is exactly because you’re such a heroic character that I don’t wish to take advantage of you, young master Ji San. If you were a vile person like Wang Teng, not only would I take full advantage of you, I’d be laughing behind your back too.”

Young master Ji San laughed loudly in agreement upon hearing Jiang Chen’s description of Wang Teng, “Well said! That Wang Teng is pretty vile alright.”

“I see that your mind is set on the Longevity Pill, and I’ve seen you willing to suffer through Wang Teng’s wiles and part with a hundred million saint spirit stones just for it. May I ask why?” In reality, Jiang Chen already knew the truth, since Wei Jie had told him about this earlier. But he couldn’t let young master Ji San think that Wei Jie was a blabbermouth, which was why he had purposely feigned ignorance and asked this question.

As expected, the young master was caught off guard momentarily before he cast a thoughtful glance at Wei Jie. He nodded and responded slowly, “Wang Teng brought this up multiple times at the auction, and the rumors have already spread throughout Veluriyam Capital. I suppose it is unlikely that the news will be hidden for much longer. Yes, it’s true. The Coiling Dragon clan lord is nearing the end of his lifespan, and he will lose all of his cultivation in three years time. So when I heard of the miraculous abilities of the Longevity Pill, I thought…” Young master Ji San halted at this point. There wasn’t any need to speak on.

“Young master San, I suspected so, which is also why I’ve stopped you from fighting for the Longevity Pill against Wang

Teng. If you spent over a hundred million on this Longevity Pill and discovered later that the pill was in fact, completely useless for an emperor realm cultivator, you would've become the laughingstock of the entire Veluriyam Capital." Jiang Chen understood that the truth was a little cruel, but he didn't wish to lie to young master Ji San either.

Young master Ji San's expression changed abruptly when he heard this. All smiles on his face vanished immediately as his complexion took on a shade of deathly white. "Pill King Zhen, is there any... basis behind your claim?"

Jiang Chen declared without batting an eyelid, "I can speak with my life as a guarantee that the Longevity Pill is almost completely ineffective for an emperor realm cultivator. In fact, the side effects might be even greater than usual. It may even have the opposite effect."

Young master Ji San stared closely at Jiang Chen's eyes. It was obvious that he was trying to discern whether Jiang Chen was telling the truth. Jiang Chen sighed softly, but never once broke eye contact with young master Ji San. He simply looked back at him calmly. Young master Ji San's expression transformed from joy, to shock, to disappointment and finally to despair. He looked lost and completely downcast. "How could this be? How could this be? Is this truly the fate of our Coiling Dragon Clan?" Young master Ji San muttered bitterly.

Wei Jie wanted very much to console young master Ji San, but when he thought of his inferior status and useless words, he wasn't quite sure what to say. Although young master Ji San had lost his

composure for a moment, it lasted only for an instant. He quickly regained his cool and pushed the Skysnatcher Cauldron towards Jiang Chen. “Pill King Zhen, the truth is a little cruel, but your honesty is something I admire. Take this Skysnatcher Cauldron, and I will take this Longevity Pill back with me.” A price gap of several tens of millions really was nothing to young master Ji San.

Jiang Chen looked a little surprised. He thought that he had made the pros and cons clear, and that this Longevity Pill no longer held any meaning to the Coiling Dragon Clan. “Young master Ji San, you absolutely must not make a gamble with the Longevity Pill. This is my sincere advice,” Jiang Chen advised.

Young master Ji San sighed helplessly, “You may not understand the Coiling Dragon Clan’s situation, Pill King Zhen. Our clan lord has only three years time left, so even if I don’t take this risk, the only thing the clan lord can do is await his death. If that is the case, I may as well try.”

“Forget three years, even three days may be enough for a miracle to happen in the world of martial dao. The Longevity Pill may be useless for your predicament, but it’s not like you don’t possess a sliver of hope right now, young master Ji San,” Jiang Chen thought for a moment and ultimately decided that he could divulge a bit of the secret. He could see that this young master Ji San was a frank and candid person. Jiang Chen was also willing to give him a little hint based on his generosity alone.

As expected, the light of hope dawned once more in young master Ji San’s eyes when he heard this, “What do you mean by that, Pill King Zhen?” He immediately grew animated the second he heard

that there was hope yet.

“Do you remember the last item you won?” Jiang Chen asked with a smile.

“The Goldencrown Cloudcrane?” Young master Ji San looked moved. He was just about to ask Jiang Chen the reason why he had spent eighty million on the spirit animal. He had simply refrained from doing so because of the matter of the Longevity Pill.

“Exactly, the Goldencrown Cloudcrane,” Jiang Chen nodded, “An extraordinary teacher taught me pill dao when I was young, and he once told me that there are all kinds of pills that can extend one’s lifespan in this world. He said that the Longevity Pill can extend a sage realm cultivator’s lifespan around five to eight hundred years, but an equivalent pill can do the same for an emperor realm cultivator…”

“What?” Young master Ji San immediately jumped to his feet. Wild joy filled his eyes, and incredulity riddled his face, “Does such a miraculous pill really exist in the world?”

Even Wei Jie was shocked as he stared at Jiang Chen in astonishment.

Chapter 763: News of the Pine Crane Pill

It was obvious that Jiang Chen's sudden reveal of something this stunning had greatly surprised both young masters. The appearance of the Longevity Pill had already caused a sizable shock to the pill industry, despite the fact that it could only extend the life of a sage realm cultivator. It was amazing, but it wasn't so great that it could overturn the entire pill industry. But to claim that there was a pill that could extend even the life of an emperor realm cultivator? If such a pill truly existed in the world, wouldn't the order of pill dao be shattered that very instant?

Even someone as widely read as young master Ji San couldn't help but feel that Jiang Chen's claims were over the top. He couldn't help but doubt. "Pill King Zhen, I'm not doubting you, but is there really such an amazing pill in this world?"

"I really don't know if such a pill exists in this world, but that extraordinary master of mine did tell me this. Moreover, he was the one who'd refined the Longevity Pill that I gave you just now. He gifted me just nine words: The world is big, and its wonders are endless."

Both young master Ji San and Wei Jie exchanged a glance. They almost believed Jiang Chen completely now. The Longevity Pill was a piece of solid evidence that supported his words! Who would've believed that there was a sage realm pill that could increase a sage realm cultivator's life by five to eight hundred years before the appearance of the Longevity Pill? If a sage realm cultivator could extend their lifespan, then why not an emperor realm cultivator?

“Pill King Zhen, did that extraordinary senior leave behind the pill that can extend an emperor cultivator’s life?” Young master Ji San was quite moved by Jiang Chen’s claims.

Jiang Chen smiled wryly in response, “Back then, I told him that sure, I’ll believe that the sage realm Longevity Pill exists, but a pill that extends an emperor realm cultivator’s life? Why don’t you refine one and show me? My teacher said that it was very difficult to refine the pill, but not impossible. However, he couldn’t do anything without the ingredients in hand.”

Naturally, Jiang Chen couldn’t explain his memories from a past life. Therefore, he claimed that all of his knowledge had come from this mysterious teacher. The world of martial dao was enormous anyways. No one could prove that such an extraordinary teacher didn’t exist in the first place.

Young master Ji San wasn’t disappointed by the answer. He fired off another question, “May I know what the pill that can extend an emperor realm cultivator’s life is called?”

“The master says that the pill is named the Pine Crane Pill.” There was no need to hide the pill’s name.

Young master Ji San slapped his thighs and wore a look of joy, “Good, what a good name that is! The pine and crane that extends life! This name is full of profound meaning. It may very well exist in this world.”

Wei Jie abruptly recalled something and asked, “Brother Zhen, the Pine Crane Pill… did you tell young master Ji San to bid for the Goldencrown Cloudcrane because it is an ingredient of the Pine Crane Pill?”

Young master Ji San was so excited that he hadn’t made the connection himself. Now that he was reminded by Wei Jie, the realization struck his head like a bolt of lightning. He whipped his head around to stare expectantly at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen nodded, “Although my master hadn’t told me the refining method, he did mention that the Pine Crane Pill has two main ingredients. The first is the pine of an Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine, and the second, the heart of a Goldencrown Cloudcrane. Both ingredients are absolutely irreplaceable in order to refine the Pine Crane Pill.”

“The Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine, the Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine…” Young master Ji San was overjoyed. “Good, good, good! The Coiling Dragon Clan will employ every tactic at our disposal and scour the entire Divine Abyss Continent for this Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine!” He suddenly recalled something and asked, “Pill King Zhen, your master must be a supreme expert who has withdrawn from the world. Fortune truly smiles upon you! Is it possible for you to contact him and request his aid in refining this pill?”

Jiang Chen smiled wryly, “I’ve no idea where he went since we’d parted ways. He is incredibly elusive, and it would be very difficult to find him. That being said, there is such a thing as fate in this world. You have run into the Goldencrown Cloudcrane during the

auction in Veluriyam Capital today. This means that the heavens haven't closed all doors for the Coiling Dragon Clan yet. Anything is possible in three years time."

"You're right, you're very right!" Young master Ji San's eyes turned red with excitement. Jiang Chen's words resonated with the core of his heart. "Anything is possible! The heavens haven't yet closed all doors to the Coiling Dragon Clan yet!" He repeated. "Well said, Pill King Zhen! Why haven't I met someone as wondrous as you before!"

Young master Ji San was feeling much, much better after obtaining this information. He personally poured a cup of wine for Jiang Chen and said, "Come, come! I shall toast three cups of wine to you, Pill King Zhen! I'll drink first."

Young master Ji San might looked like a cultured gentleman, but the way he drank wine was straightforward and unhesitating. He knocked back three cups of wine in no time at all. Jiang Chen echoed his sentiments and downed three cups of wine as well.

Young master Ji San cast another glance at Wei Jie without the previous distant feeling and indifference he'd held. Instead, he said, "Wei Jie, everyone in the Coiling Dragon Clan has been incredibly prejudiced against House Wei. We had no way of confirming if your family had truly been bought by the Majestic Clan either. But today, it would seem that the facts speak louder than words. I shan't be a pretentious person and apologize for my past behavior. From today onwards, you are my most trusted person, Wei Jie!"

Young master Ji San carried himself with a bearing that was impossible to ignore every time he spoke. His frankness, genuine sincerity and behavior overwhelmed Wei Jie with every word. “Young master Ji San, it was our fault for using the wrong person and causing the clan lord’s condition to worsen. House Wei has always blamed itself for this terrible mistake. Wei Tiantong may have been sending all sorts of signals to the Majestic Clan all these years, but the mainstream forces of House Wei haven’t forgotten the care the Coiling Dragon Clan has shown us over the years. There is absolutely no way we’d seek to change allegiances.” Wei Jie’s response was also full of great sincerity.

Although the long period of misunderstanding wasn’t something that could be resolved with just a word or two, this was still a turning point and a good beginning. Now that the misunderstanding had finally been resolved, the atmosphere turned harmonious with the aid of wine.

“Pill King Zhen, thanks are unnecessary when it involves favors. Regardless of the outcome, I still owe you a big favor.”

“It’s alright, young master Ji San. If the situation turned out for the better, it will benefit Veluriyam Capital greatly. I am happy to see this outcome myself,” Jiang Chen wasn’t trying to play things off. If the Coiling Dragon Clan successfully solidified its position, House Wei and Jiang Chen’s attempt to establish himself in Veluriyam Capital would obviously benefit from it. If the Majestic Clan were to become the number one clan in Veluriyam Capital, and if the Coiling Dragon Clan were to crumble to dust, the next person on the chopping block would most likely be House Wei. If House Wei were to crumble, then his plans to establish himself in Veluriyam Capital would also end in failure. Therefore, he had

every reason to support the Coiling Dragon Clan.

He only needed a short period of study to find the method to refine the Pine Crane Pill. After all, he had memorized its pill recipe. The Pine Crane Pill might be a high level pill, but it was ultimately just an emperor level pill. It wasn't an empyrean level pill. It would be incredibly difficult for Jiang Chen to refine an empyrean level pill with his current strength. Even a single attempt would likely strain him quite a bit. But Jiang Chen was ninety percent confident of his chances of refining an emperor level pill. If necessary, he could borrow his 'extraordinary master's' title and refine a Pine Crane Pill himself. There were no problems there.

However, Jiang Chen understood that the Pine Crane Pill carried great influence. The moment it was revealed, it would absolutely cause an earthquake in the pill industry. This was absolutely not alarmist talk. Emperor realm cultivators were the true masters of each region. Their needs for the Pine Crane Pill would absolutely make it the legendary pill of the pill industry of this world.

"Young master Ji San, you absolutely must keep news of this pill a secret. There'll be endless trouble if its existence were to be revealed." After a moment of thought, Jiang Chen ultimately decided to give young master Ji San a reminder.

Young master Ji San answered seriously, "My mouth is sealed. Even if the Pine Crane Pill is refined one day, I wouldn't announce it to the whole world either."

"Indeed. Its existence involves too much, and its exposure would

make us the target of a great deal of attacks," Jiang Chen absolutely wasn't exaggerating when he said this.

Young master Ji San knew Jiang Chen's words to be true, and nodded with a serious expression on his face. Then, the trio then brought up House Wei's matters and talked about the Taiyuan Tower that was about to open in two days' time. Young master Ji San looked extremely interested and promised to support House Wei with a group of people on the day of the opening. Naturally, Wei Jie was extremely pleased by young master Ji San's promise. They had unknowingly accomplished something big for House Wei!

Of course, Wei Jie also understood that he was simply bathing in Jiang Chen's limelight. If it wasn't for Jiang Chen, young master Ji San would never have forgiven the misunderstandings of House Wei, much less come to congratulate them. The gathering at Little Leisurely Clouds ended with all sides pleased. Everyone felt like they had returned with full pockets.

Young master Ji San's cheerful mood was almost a foregone point. Ever since he learned about the Pine Crane Pill, his entire person grew spirited, and he felt as if his fighting will had grown by leaps and bounds. He didn't fear obstacles; he only feared that no light existed at the end of the tunnel. If there was hope, then even the hardest predicament had an ending.

Wei Jie was even happier than young master Ji San. The resolution of the misunderstanding between House Wei and the Coiling Dragon Clan was absolutely the best news they had heard for the past couple of years.

Jiang Chen's gains were quite decent as well. His new friendship with young master Ji San was beneficial to his attempts to further his network within Veluriyam Capital. As long as he remained useful to the Coiling Dragon Clan, his status in Veluriyam Capital would only solidify further. At that point, he wouldn't need to fear much even if his identity were to be exposed one day. With an ally like the Coiling Dragon Clan, he could entrench himself in Veluriyam Capital without needing to worry about the Eternal Celestial Capital or the Ninesuns Sky Sect. Most importantly, the Coiling Dragon Clan's support would smoothly pave his path towards establishing himself in Veluriyam Capital. On the way home, Jiang Chen didn't forget himself despite being in a cheery mood. On the contrary, there was yet one more trouble that was plaguing his mind.

The Longevity Pill.

Jiang Chen's powerful intuition told him that the three Longevity Pills that had suddenly appeared in the auction today was absolutely not as simple as they seemed. The appearance of the three Longevity Pills proved that the Eternal Celestial Capital had begun stirring waves in Veluriyam Capital. The fact that these three Longevity Pills could appear without a hitch also proved that their network in Veluriyam Capital couldn't be underestimated. In fact, Jiang Chen suspected that the Eternal Celestial Capital had already found a backer in Veluriyam Capital.

"Brother Zhen, why do you look so gloomy despite all the good things that happened today?" Wei Jie looked curious.

“Young master Wei, you too saw the Longevity Pills auctioned today. I suspect that they are but pieces laid to test the waters of Veluriyam Capital. I am certain that the Longevity Pill will enter Veluriyam Capital’s market in full force after today, and that the pill industry in Farmer God District will grow very interesting in the near future. I only hope that the worst case scenario won’t happen…” Jiang Chen sighed.

Chapter 764: Bad News Before the Day of Opening

"How do you say that?" Wei Jie's heart suddenly pounded when he heard Jiang Chen's serious tone.

Jiang Chen had been considering this matter along the way and analyzed it all repeatedly. When he combined it with Wang Teng and his group's behavior at the auction, he couldn't help but smell a thick sense of conspiracy, one that had to do with him. "Young master Wei, don't you think Wang Teng's actions were a little strange today?" Jiang Chen asked. Surprised, Wei Jie pondered for a moment, but couldn't figure out Jiang Chen's meaning.

"Why did Wang Teng induce Sikou Nan and young master Ji San to bid for the Longevity Pill? Moreover, Wang Teng didn't look like he was just trying to anger or embarrass young master Ji San. I felt that he was trying to build marketing momentum for the Longevity Pill," Jiang Chen's tone was serious.

Wei Jie's expression changed the moment he heard this. He was fast to pick up on things, and he immediately comprehended Jiang Chen's implied meaning. "Brother Zhen, you mean... that the auction of the Longevity Pill was planned by Wang Teng all along?" Wei Jie was quite shocked by this.

Jiang Chen narrowed his eyes slightly and spoke in a frigid tone, "I hope it's just my imagination, but I just couldn't shake off this idea when I noted Wang Teng's actions. Although I disrupted his plans at the end and stopped him from embarrassing young master Ji San, he still managed to achieve his goal."

“Brother Zhen, don’t you think that your assumption is a little too farfetched?” Wei Jie still looked a little doubtful.

Jiang Chen nodded, “That’s just my assumption, but think about it, the Eternal Celestial Capital has the ability to refine the Longevity Pill. However, would Veluriyam Capital allow the Eternal Celestial Capital to openly corner the market? Of course not, not to mention that the Eternal Celestial Capital themselves wouldn’t dare do so. But despite this obstacle, they still wish to enter the market. What do you think they would do to achieve that goal?”

The doubt on Wei Jie’s face slowly disappeared as he listened to Jiang Chen’s deductions. It was replaced with a look of gravity instead. “They would find a reseller, a powerful force who’s willing to cooperate with them in Veluriyam Capital.”

“That’s right,” Jiang Chen nodded, “Now, the Longevity Pill has been successfully auctioned off at Joined Ridges Pavilion. Do you think they could’ve built such an enormous momentum in such a short time if they weren’t aided by someone in Veluriyam Capital? Which power is most suitable to become an agent in Veluriyam Capital? The Coiling Dragon Clan? It is true that the Coiling Dragon Clan may be the most suitable candidate, but they are currently embroiled in their own troubles and suffering from internal strife. In that case... an ambitious clan who has every intent to compete for the status of number one clan in Veluriyam Capital would undoubtedly be the most suitable candidate.”

With this deduction, that the Majestic Clan was this candidate

was almost a certainty. Combining that with Wang Teng's performance today, Wei Jie believed Jiang Chen's deductions almost completely. "The Majestic Clan... the Longevity Pill..." Wei Jie muttered and sighed to himself, "If that really is the case, then the Majestic Clan is seriously going to earn a fortune this time."

"If this is true, this fortune will also become a central pillar in the Majestic Clan's attempt to challenge the Coiling Dragon Clan in the future," Jiang Chen's irritation had reached a high point when he said up to this point. It would be stranger still if he wasn't infuriated by the fact that something belonging to him was being manipulated by the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Majestic Clan as they liked.

Jiang Chen returned to his own accommodations after parting ways with Wei Jie. There were only two days left before the opening of Taiyuan Tower. He had made preparations on all fronts. Everyone had gone through a series of strict training and acquired new identities. Now, the only thing they needed to do was await Taiyuan Tower's opening. Huang'er was very happy for Jiang Chen, seeing that all of his preparations were proceeding smoothly.

Taiyuan Tower's signboard was installed in the last two days, and several recruitment notices put out in serious fashion as well. All of these preparations were of course, a smokescreen for his subordinates so that they could openly and justly enter Taiyuan Tower with their new identities and not be discovered by House Sikou.

All of his Regal Pill Palace sect members had been assigned to

work behind the scenes on logistics and finances. Jiang Chen had passed the authority over finances completely to Rong Zifeng. This was also a show of great trust in Rong Zifeng. Rong Zifeng himself didn't think that Jiang Chen would trust him this much, so he was overflowing with pride, excitement and gratitude towards Jiang Chen. In reality, the person Jiang Chen trusted the most was Shen Trifire, but Jiang Chen's plans for Shen Trifire were for him to become a pill king as soon as possible. Therefore, there was no need for Shen Trifire to handle such affairs. The other ten sage realm cultivators were handpicked by Jiang Chen to guard the store, welcome customers and receive items.

The fact that a newly established pill store had ten sage realm guards obviously meant that it was no ordinary store. But it wasn't that eye catching either, since there was no emperor realm cultivator present. Jiang Chen didn't bother worrying about opening day decorations, popularity and attractions. He had almost no connections in Veluriyam Capital, so naturally he had no channels he could draw on. There was nothing he could do about it even if he wanted to, so he simply passed on that task to House Wei completely.

Jiang Chen felt that the situation wouldn't improve by much considering House Wei's current situation. After all, the current House Wei had almost no weight in the pill industry, not to mention House Wei itself was currently in decline. Many people believed that House Wei would find it very difficult to maintain their status as a ninth rank aristocratic house in the future. Moreover, House Wei was blindly loyal to the Coiling Dragon Clan, but in the public's eyes the Coiling Dragon Clan had lost trust in House Wei since a long time ago.

Therefore, there really weren't many who were willing to build a close relationship with House Wei. The number of people willing to show up on the day of the opening would likely be few and far in between. After all, everyone knew that House Wei had become a thorn in the Majestic Clan's side. Veluriyam Capital was a place where news spread quickly. It was common knowledge that House Wei had refused to rent their store to House Tong, refused Wang Teng's invitation and even eliminated a pill king spy that Majestic Clan had sent into their midst...

The day before the opening, Jiang Chen led his people and officially entered the Farmer God District.

He had to admit that House Wei's store at the Farmer God District was excellent. It was large and strategically located. It was so good that it even excelled his expectations. Even Jiang Chen felt a tinge of excitement during the night before the opening. After arriving at Veluriyam Capital for such a long time, he was finally taking the first step in establishing his own force here.

The next day morning, Jiang Chen woke up at a very early time. The team he brought over was already busying themselves with things. Considering how big their store was and that today was the first day of opening, there were naturally many things to do. House Wei's men also showed up one after another. Wei Jie was the first person to show up. However, he brought rather bad news with him.

"Brother Zhen, House Tong has gone too far! I'm not sure how, but somehow they managed to buy the store across from Taiyuan Tower and turn it into a pill store too. They've also chosen to open

today. They sent their invitations to all reputable factions in Veluriyam Capital last night."

Jiang Chen was surprised when he heard this. Everything about the news was just too startling. House Tong had chosen today of all days to open their store? It was obvious they were purposely butting heads against House Wei. This was surely the beginning sign of a string of attempts to beat down on Taiyuan Tower! An unnamed anger rose inside Jiang Chen's heart. He had been quite low key since he arrived at Veluriyam Capital, and truly hadn't provoked anyone on his own accord. But even then, troubles just kept coming in droves.

He could pretend it was nothing if House Tong had only opened a pill store on the opposite side of Taiyuan Tower. But the fact that they had chosen to open their store on the same day and sent out their invitations overnight was a blatant display of their true intentions. They were absolutely trying to make life difficult for Taiyuan Tower and drag them into an open confrontation! Burning with fury on the inside, Jiang Chen cast a glance at Wei Jie. "When did we send out our own invitations?"

"We've sent out our invitations three days ago. Every letter reached their destination.." Wei Jie smiled wryly, "However, it would seem that the situation is still extremely disadvantageous to Taiyuan Tower. Brother Zhen, this isn't your fault. The real fault lies on us, House Wei and our situation for the past few years..."

Jiang Chen waved his hands and said, "Save such disheartened words for later!"

Naturally, Jiang Chen knew that House Tong hadn't done this to butt heads with 'Pill King Zhen'. In the eyes of those aristocratic families and great clans, 'Pill King Zhen' wasn't really all that important. They might not even think much about him at all. The reason House Tong had done this was to attack House Wei! The mastermind behind their actions was absolutely the Majestic Clan. House Tong was a core subordinate for the Majestic Clan. While it might appear on the surface that House Tong was leading the charge, there was a high probability that the Majestic Clan was the one who was pulling the strings in the dark.

"What do we do?" Wei Jie himself wasn't quite sure what to do. He was most worried about his guests running over to the opposite store, leaving behind an empty Taiyuan Tower. If that happened, it would be an enormous stain in House Wei's reputation. It would also be the biggest blow to the newly opened Taiyuan Tower.

The Majestic Clan had seriously infuriated Jiang Chen today, and he sneered, "What do we do? We do nothing at all! This is the perfect opportunity for us to see who we can trust, who are opportunists, and who can't be trusted!"

Wei Jie smiled wryly, "That's true. Today's situation is the best chance to test their loyalty."

House Lord Wei Tianxiao also arrived while they were talking. He was wearing a forceful smile on his face. When he, Jiang Chen and Wei Jie were alone in a room, Wei Tianxiao's expression immediately dissolved to utmost seriousness. "Pill King Zhen, I've just received confirmation that that pill store is controlled by the Majestic Clan, even though House Tong is its apparent owner. It's

just the pawn. Most importantly, they will also be revealing a most astounding pill for sale today."

"What?" Jiang Chen frowned and had a bad premonition.

"The Longevity Pill!" Wei Tianxiao couldn't help but cast a glance at Jiang Chen when he said this. The Wei father and son were the only ones who knew of Jiang Chen's true identity in the entirety of House Wei. Naturally, they knew where the Longevity Pill had really come from as well. The Longevity Pill had came from the Regal Pill Palace, but now it was Majestic Clan property. Both Wei father and son was very unhappy with the injustice Jiang Chen was being served. Surprisingly, Jiang Chen didn't look astonished at all. Instead, a look of understanding stole across his face as he cast a knowing glance at Wei Jie. Wei Jie let out a long sigh, "Just as we thought, this is the worst case scenario."

Jiang Chen had already suspected earlier that the Majestic Clan was colluding with the Eternal Celestial Capital. Now, reality had proven that everything was progressing towards the worst case scenario! The Majestic Clan's momentum would be doubled with the Longevity Pill. It was an important card in their plans to replace the Coiling Dragon Clan as the foremost clan. If the Longevity Pill were to dominate Veluriyam Capital's market, the income it would bring was absolutely an astronomical number. Flames of fury leapt and roared within Jiang Chen. He absolutely couldn't accept this outcome.

Chapter 765: The Aggrieved Wei Father and Son

You destroyed my sect, stole my pill recipe, and now use my things to strut in front of my doors. Even Buddha struck back after being hit thrice! How could Jiang Chen possibly take all of this lying down?

"Majestic Clan... you've truly enraged me!" Jiang Chen's smile turned vicious in his anger. He looked at the Wei father and son as he remarked faintly, "Come what may. We'll just do our part well and react accordingly to other matters."

His tone may have sounded calm, but the flames of his rage had thoroughly been stoked. He was already crafting his counterattack. It was at this time that another large disturbance broke out outside. It seems that many voices had risen in anger. "Let's go take a look." Jiang Chen's expression darkened as he led the way.

Outside the door, those of Taiyuan Tower were furiously yelling at those from across the street. None of the ten sage realm cultivators Jiang Chen had chosen were easy characters. They'd all rolled up their sleeves and were having the time of their lives cussing at the workers across the street. The opposing party wasn't giving up easily either. They had a bit more people and gave back as good they got, speaking so rapidly that spittle flew everywhere. The scene was akin to two groups of harlots meeting in the street and erupting into conflict. Their battle strength was off the charts as the insults and curses grew ever dirtier with each minute.

Those in the know recognized them for sage realm cultivators,

and those who didn't simply thought that street thugs were duking it out publicly. When the Taiyuan Tower group saw Jiang Chen and House Wei walk out, their morale grew as they gave vent to their feelings with increasing ferocity. Over on the House Wei's side, Wei Qixia rolled up his sleeves and was about to dive into the fray when Wei Jie held him back. "Qixia, what's going on?"

Qixia huffed back out, "Take a look at that, young master! This House Tong is simply too much! We're Taiyuan Tower, and they've gone and called themselves Taiyuan Lodge. They're obviously trying to show us up!"

Wei Jie was shocked as he looked across the street. Indeed, the store sign that had just been hung up was carved with large letters —Taiyuan Lodge!

Jiang Chen was utterly and thoroughly enraged. Taiyuan Tower was a name that had been derived from his father's title in his past life. Of all his bottom lines, this one was absolutely inviolate. How dare this House Tong shop use the same name and make such an obvious target out of Taiyuan Tower? Jiang Chen suddenly exploded with thick killing intent. He glared at the shop sign, anger consuming his thoughts, "House Tong! Majestic Clan! Do you two think you're worthy of using the word Taiyuan? Blasphemy against the Celestial Emperor, heresy against the gods! I, Jiang Chen, will let you know what divine retribution is!"

He'd already been in a state of extreme irritation, and now things had progressed far beyond the point of no-return. He mentally pronounced a death sentence on the Majestic Clan pill shop. Even if he had to reveal his identity, even if he would become Veluriyam

Capital's number one public enemy, he would annihilate them! His father was taboo in Jiang Chen's heart, whether in this life or past. It was a forbidden zone that no one could trespass. Whoever did so would die!

Jiang Chen stared coldly at the store across from him. Some fellows dressed in luxurious clothing sauntered out from within. It was the House Tong father and son, as well as some heavyweight elders from the family. All of them had haughty, arrogant expressions on their faces as they strutted forward. The look in their eyes and their posture were full of provocation.

"What's all this racket about?" A House Tong elder put on the show of lecturing his own men. "Don't forget yourself. What's all this fighting with some random strays off the street for? Don't throw away face for Taiyuan Lodge!"

This was a backhanded way of insulting Taiyuan Tower, a way of mocking House Wei and the new pill shop. As for Jiang Chen? They couldn't even be bothered with him. Indeed, the House Tong group were all rather pleased with themselves and stopped jeering and catcalling, putting on the expressions of a victor and standing behind their house lord.

Wei Tianxiao reigned in his anger and glared at the House Tong house lord. "What do you mean by this, old Tong? We named our shop Taiyuan Tower and you name yours Taiyuan Lodge? Are you trying to gross out the public?"

Tong Xianwei flicked a dismissive glance at Wei Tianxiao, speaking brazenly, "Wei Tianxiao, are you trying to get one up on

us? Taiyuan Lodge is a name we settled on long ago. I haven't taken you to task for your transgression yet, and here you are trying to question me first?"

Faces over on the House Wei's side all turned furious when they heard this. This House Tong was truly shameless to voice words that completely flipped the truth around in such a self righteous fashion!

Wei Tianxiao smiled through his anger. "Tong Xianwei, you're the house lord of a ninth ranked aristocratic house. Do you really plan on embarrassing yourself like this? House Wei sent out the invitations a few days ago, and everyone knew of Taiyuan Tower's opening in the Capital. You sent yours out only last night and purposefully made your opening day the same as ours. You even chose the spot in front of ours and picked a similar name. Just how much do you admire House Wei, hmm?

Tong Xianwei laughed riotously, "Admire House Wei? Wei Tianxiao, take a piss if you want a mirror to look at! House Wei is acclaimed trash in the arena of pills, so what need does my House Tong have to look up to you? What degree of idiocy have you fallen to if you think that?"

Young lord Tong Yun of House Tong snorted derisively off on the side, "Father, what need is there to speak with this declining family? Even if they imitate us, without any skills to back themselves up, they can only watch us grow rich. Why don't we take a seat and watch the show, and see how many days it takes for this so-called Taiyuan Tower to close up shop!"

“Haha, my son speaks well. House Tong is gracious and won’t take them to task for copying us. Everyone, get ready, our honored guests will soon visit. We have a very important mission to greet them all today, so everyone should be prepared.” Tong Xianwei threw a supercilious smile over at House Wei.

Many guests arrived one after another, but they were unwilling to approach the shops when they saw House Wei and House Tong screaming at each other in the street. However, those on the House Tong’s side had sharp eyes and approached the guests, leaving the latter with no choice but to walk into Taiyuan Lodge. Some did so apologetically, others guiltily, but none dared look over at House Wei.

The Tong father and son duo were standing at the front door in high spirits, full of energy and ambition as they welcomed the guests from all sides. Almost all of these guests had received both sets of invitations, but most of them chose to head into Taiyuan Lodge. Some neutral guests gave into peer pressure when they saw most people heading to Taiyuan Lodge, creating a very disparate distinction between the two shops. House Tong’s Taiyuan Lodge was bustling and had a fervent atmosphere. Apart from their diehard supporters, most of the guests had also chosen them.

If one looked at percentages, ninety percent of the guests had chosen to head into Taiyuan Lodge, and only ten percent into House Wei’s Taiyuan Tower. This was an extremely awkward and unpleasant scene, but the Wei father and son still had to remain standing at their door to welcome their guests. Their hearts were dripping blood, but they had to put on looks of warm welcome and force themselves to smile broadly. One side of the street was all a hustle and bustle, and the other side looked almost abandoned, the

sparrows pecking around in the courtyard.

The Tong father and son continuously flung challenging looks at their Wei counterparts as they welcomed their guests, a look of petty victory clear on their faces. At this time, another disturbance grew at the street entrance. Everyone looked over to see the young lord of the Majestic Clan arriving with a large horde of Majestic Clan executives and members in tow. The emergence of the Majestic Clan resulted in quite a grand scene, and the Tong father and son hurried to walk up to them.

“The young lord of the Majestic Clan brings great honor to Taiyuan Lodge with your personal appearance!” Tong Xianwei was quite adept at flattery.

“Brother Wang, Taiyuan Lodge has drawn quite a crowd today, everyone’s shown us a lot of face because of the Majestic Clan!” Tong Kun also followed up with more fawning words.

Jiang Chen wasn’t unfamiliar with the Majestic Clan young lord Wang Teng. It was his third time running into the young lord now. Wang Teng halted at the door to Taiyuan Lodge with a faint smile on his face. He nodded, “Not bad, the arrangements are well done. Taiyuan Lodge must have an auspicious beginning if it wishes to grow big and become a heavyweight pill faction.” When he finished, he seemed to register the existence of House Wei across the street for the first time. He flicked a glance at the Taiyuan Tower sign and asked with incredibly insincere confusion, “What’s going on here?”

“Oh, it’s like this. The opening of our Taiyuan Lodge might have

caused others to grow jealous. Some dejected houses seemed to have imitated us and opened something called the Taiyuan Tower. It's truly both a laughable and maddening occurrence. What an affront of the young lord!" Tong Xianwei hastened to explain.

Tong Kun also piped up, "Don't worry, Brother Wang. A shop like this won't survive for long. Just treat it as some comedic relief for the opening of our Taiyuan Lodge, some free entertainment for everyone. It's good to have a laugh now and then. We'd have to pay a circus if we wanted one to come perform."

Wang Teng's expression was distant as he nodded, "It's best if there's a minimum of this sort of bad culture. That father and son looks a bit familiar, they should be some respected personage in the Capital. How could they have done something so shameful? Go investigate which great clan they belong to."

These words weren't spoken particularly forcefully, but they just so happened to be loud enough to travel across the street. The Wei father and son were fit to burst. This Majestic Clan was simply too shameful, and that Wang Teng brat too good at acting! What "looks a bit familiar"? They were a ninth ranked aristocratic house, how could Wang Teng possibly not recognize them? Besides, it'd been the Majestic Clan pulling all the strings behind the scenes, but now they were pretending that they didn't know anything at all. Just who were they putting on this act for? They were the ones who'd copied House Wei, Taiyuan Tower, and purposefully pitted themselves against House Wei! But now it was House Wei in the wrong?!

Even Jiang Chen couldn't bear watching any longer, much less

House Wei. As he watched how much of an air Wang Ten was putting on and the cocky Tong father and son, his plan for counterattack finished forming in his mind.

Chapter 766: Jiang Chen Loses His Cool

Tong Kun knew that the young lord was of a mind to work over the Wei father and son when he heard those words. He chuckled and put on a scathing tone, “There might be some things you’re unaware of, young clan lord. That father and son across the street are actually people of some importance. They’re actually a ninth ranked aristocratic house—House Wei under the Coiling Dragon Clan’s banner.”

“House Wei?” Wang Teng was nonplussed. “Isn’t House Wei a premier house beneath the Coiling Dragon clan? How could they sink to such a depth?”

“Who knows? Perhaps they’ve been irrelevant in the area of pills for too long and have thrown away the dignity befitting a ninth ranked aristocratic house. Maybe the desire for money has driven them crazy?” Tong Xianwei chuckled. “Young clan lord, please come this way. There’s no need to dirty your ears with this kind of talk.”

Wang Ten sighed on purpose, gracing the Wei father and son with a look of grave disappointment as he lifted his feet to walk inside.

“Pretentious posers,” Jiang Chen smirked coldly. House Wei didn’t even bother accompanying those two words; it was everything they wanted to say. Everyone present heard him, as the words hung in the air like an iron weight Wang Teng’s look of noncommittal elegance instantly dropped off his face as the Majestic Clan group simultaneously halted, glaring back over at

House Wei with looks of concerted fury.

"Who was that?!"

"Which bastard spoke just now?!"

"Step out if you dare!" Those of the Majestic Clan were more than used to getting their way in Veluriyam Capital. The seven emperors rarely intervened in the mundane world, so the capital was normally left in the hands of the great clans, of which the Majestic Clan stood at the foremost. House Wei didn't dare say anything in front of them, even at a situation like today's. Therefore, while Jiang Chen's insult had been a sweet thrill, it undoubtedly set the scene ablaze.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly in the face of such an imposing atmosphere and walked forward, his tone as casual as ever, "Did I speak incorrectly? My Taiyuan Tower has spent at least a month preparing for our opening and sent out the invitations long beforehand. We also thought of the store's name well in advance. Who's the one copying here? Who's the one shamelessly imitating the other? Don't try to talk yourself out of this in such a ludicrous fashion. Everyone here knows what's really going on. Alright then, you copied us, so what's with this act huh? You won't be satisfied until you grind your imitation in our face, huh? You'll die if you don't strut around like you're actually something, is it?"

Jiang Chen had been harboring a bellyful of rage, and he would've cussed out the clan lord of the Majestic Clan himself, much less their young clan lord. Their usage of "Taiyuan" had deeply triggered him. How could such vile, base characters defile

his father's title? He felt so much better after letting loose on them. He'd kept a low profile ever since he'd entered the Capital, and had held it all in even if he'd experienced a bit of suffering. But now, he would stay quiet no more! It was one thing for the Majestic Clan to use the Longevity Pill to stir up waves, and another thing to imitate Jiang Chen and open a Taiyuan Lodge. Even then, they would compete on basis of true skill, and Jiang Chen might have been fine with that in the end. However, these fellows had gone too far. They'd stolen his shop name, robbed him of the Longevity Pill, and then wanted to follow up all that with a kick to his head! This was the spark that set alight all of Jiang Chen's accumulated rage! If even this can be tolerated, then what else is left?!

Pin drop silence reigned for a long moment after Jiang Chen's words, and was promptly shattered by the loud abuse rising from the other side after they gathered their wits.

"And who the hell are you, brat? What kind of right do you have to speak here?"

"No respect for your superiors, ah? I think you're looking to die, brat!"

"Young clan lord, I'll go destroy that brat and teach House Wei some manners!"

Jiang Chen snorted coldly and readied himself. He wouldn't give a damn even if they erupted in open hostility today. The gods fought over each worshipper, and humans fought over their principles. He truly couldn't take this lying down any longer.

There was no need for him to endure things. Just as the situation started to reach a dangerous precipice, a loud shout broke the air. “Wang Teng, you’ve been quite full of yourself lately! What show are you planning on putting on today?”

House Wei was delighted; they recognized that voice. It was young master Ji San’s voice!

Ji San was striding in from the distance, a large group of people with him. His retinue was a good six times greater than Wang Teng’s. Not only did they include his personal guards, but many of them were also Coiling Dragon Clan confidantes. Quite a few of them were all great personages in Veluriyam Capital, and they were all walking over to Taiyuan Tower.

When he saw Ji San appear, Wang Teng’s face sank. “Ji Ole Third, there seems to be none of your business here, hmm?”

Young master Ji San laughed heartily, “What nonsense are you sprouting? House Wei is a ninth ranked aristocratic house under my clan’s banner. I’ve specially come here on the day of Taiyuan Tower’s opening to prevent any riffraff from making trouble. Just as I thought, I happened upon some unsavory scenes.”

He was someone from the great clans alright. Ji San had taken control of the situation as soon as he opened his mouth, instantly clapping Wang Teng with the label of “riffraff”. When it came to throwing his weight around as a rich second generation, young master Ji San was an acclaimed adept in the Capital. It would be exceedingly difficult for Wang Teng to gain the upper hand against Ji San.

“Ji Ole Third, this is the opening day for Taiyuan Lodge, I can’t be bothered to bicker with you!” Wang Teng snorted coldly.

Ji San wasted no time in firing back, smiling lazily, “Taiyuan Lodge? Never heard of it. I’ve only heard of Taiyuan Tower opening today. What kind of cheap imitation is Taiyuan Lodge? Wang Teng, this is another one of your harebrained schemes, is it? Your Wang family always loves playing these dirty little tricks. Can’t you actually amount to something instead of wasting time and effort on these petty schemes? Can’t you be a bit more aboveboard? Do you think the likes of you actually has a chance of replacing my Coiling Dragon Clan as the top clan in the Capital?” Young master Ji San’s eloquence was quite off the charts, and everyone’s hearts trembled as the barbs kept coming. The Majestic Clan and Coiling Dragon Clan had always fought overtly and in the shadows, but no one had ever dared to openly speak of it. Young master Ji San was acting out of the ordinary today!

Wang Teng laughed coldly, “Ji Ole Third, you seem to be sticking your nose where it doesn’t belong! You can’t even handle affairs at home, and you want to interfere in my clan’s matters? You better go back and make your preparations. Who knows, your own backyard might be set afire one day.”

These words were obviously picking at the Coiling Dragon Clan’s wounds, hinting that they would lose power soon and fall into the shambles of internal conflict. As soon as the clan lord’s cultivation dissipated, they would surely sink into civil conflict. Young master Ji San waved his fan with a smile, “Even if we’re on fire, we’ll certainly take you down burning with us. Of that you can be sure of.”

These words were a blatant threat. You think your Majestic Clan is something? If my Coiling Dragon Clan falls into disarray, we'll drag you straight down into hell with us! Indeed, Wang Teng's face changed slightly. He really didn't dare fire back. It wasn't as if similar things hadn't happened in the Divine Abyss Continent before. Some experts would crazy things right before they died. Sometimes they would hack their way into their enemies' home and slaughter whoever they saw, committing suicide and taking down the strongest character on the enemy's side. In this way, the enemy would be hurt almost as equally as them, and both sides would come out even in the end. This would prevent one's own faction from being suppressed after the expert's death. This kind of destructive ending was prohibited by the rules, but no one could guarantee that something like this really wouldn't happen.

"Ji Ole Third, don't try that shameless act with me. It's useless on me! Today is the Taiyuan Lodge's grand opening. You say that the Lodge is copying the Tower? I say the Tower is copying the Lodge! We can sit here and trade empty words all day, but it's all just talk. We should have a contest of pills! If I recall correctly... House Wei has always been a non mainstream force when it comes to pills?" Wang Teng's words took a turn as he diverted his firepower into another direction. Aren't you trying to prove that you're actually something? Have a contest of pills if you dare then! One had to say, this was quite a vicious move. Everyone knew that House Wei almost had no standing in the world of pills, and House Tong had always had a decent level of achievement in this arena. With the Taiyuan Lodge's grand opening today, all of the guests had basically gone over to their side and hadn't chosen Taiyuan Tower. This was evidence of House Tong superiority over House Wei and an example of how the Majestic Clan had surpassed the Coiling Dragon Clan! This was why Wang Teng was acting so

triumphant.

Tong Xianwei also called out, “The young clan lord is right. Justice is determined by the people, and the fact that most chose to enter our Taiyuan Lodge explains everything.”

One had to say, the truth was very disadvantageous for House Wei, but it had also been carefully manipulated. Firstly, many of the customers had heard that Taiyuan Lodge was going to introduce an earth shattering pill today, and everyone wanted to be the first to lay eyes on it. Secondly, they all knew that the Majestic Clan was behind Taiyuan Lodge, and only House Wei stood behind Taiyuan Tower. There was no other power supporting it in the shadows. Thirdly, House Wei was in an awkward situation in Veluriyam Capital. They’d fallen out of favor with the Coiling Dragon Clan, and hadn’t switched to the Majestic Clan. Without a backer, House Wei was in a very delicate position. With House Tong and the Majestic Clan on one side, and only House Wei on the other, the natural risk averse tendencies of people would lead them to choose Taiyuan Lodge. This was the cruel nature of reality.

Young master Ji San also knew that the Coiling Dragon Clan had to bear a large portion of the responsibility for why House Wei was in this awkward position. Jiang Chen cast a glance at Wei Jie and the latter immediately understood. He spoke loudly, “The guests have only been hoodwinked. You say your pills are much better and that you didn’t copy us, but just what kind of pills can you bring out, hmm?”

Ji San also fixed his gaze on Wang Teng after he heard Wei Jie

speak, “Right, Wang Teng, how can you prove it’s not you copying us after all that talk?”

Wang Teng was delighted to hear all this. “What, is a mere House Wei really planning on challenge House Tong to a contest of pills?”

Jiang Chen spoke faintly, “Stop bringing House Tong into this again and again. Just say the Majestic Clan already. Who doesn’t know that they’re actually the ones behind all this? House Tong? And what is House Tong? Dare you swear to the heavens that the true boss behind Taiyuan Lodge isn’t the Majestic Clan?”

Ji San laughed loudly, “Well said! Straight to the point. Wang Teng, everyone knows that your Wang family likes to play these shallow tricks!”

Chapter 767: Showdown Proposal

Jiang Chen tearing off Wang Teng's mask of hypocrisy twice in succession infuriated the latter to no end. He'd never thought that a trivial pill master from House Wei would have the gall to offend the dignity of a scion from a great clan like him, and two times in a row at that! When had trivial pill kings from aristocratic houses become so bold? Ordinary guest pill kings only participated in matters related to pills, rarely involving themselves in the struggles between houses and clans. It was only natural for them to leave a backdoor for themselves, just in case the house they followed fell into ruin. They could then turn elsewhere and carve out a new living. Guests pill kings, in the end, were guests after all. Very few would choose to die together with their houses.

But this inexplicable pill master from House Wei seemed to defy convention, raining down abuse on him instead. Apart from anger, Wang Teng also couldn't believe his ears. His gaze suddenly chilly, he stared at Jiang Chen and spoke coldly, "A tiny pill master like you? Why don't you first consider your status before intruding in a conversation between great clans? Are you even qualified to interrupt?" Then, he fixed the House Wei father and son with a penetrating gaze. "No matter what, your House is still a ninth rank aristocratic house. Do you not understand even the most basic of manners? It seems someone needs to teach your house a lesson on how to behave!"

Young master Ji's ire was roused at those words. "Wang Teng, is there no end to the nonsense you can spout? House Wei is a faction under my clan's banner. If they required manners, we'll be the ones who'll take charge of teaching them. As a matter of fact, I've always admired Pill King Zhen, and I've consulted him multiple times on pill matters. His words may be unpleasant to hear, yet

they're still irrefutable. Isn't your clan the one posing as a saint while acting like a villain? Isn't yours the hand in the shadows? Wang Teng, it's not that I look down on you, but you're truly afraid to swear beneath the heavens' watchful eyes. Your clan will forever be unable to act fairly and honorably, to face the public candidly."

This was classic reverse psychology. It wasn't very subtle, but it aimed straight at Wang Teng and cut off his retreat. If he admitted to anything, then the Majestic Clan would indeed be lacking forthrightness and uprightness. If he didn't admit anything, then he'd appear to be weighed down by a guilty conscience. After all, the Taiyuan Lodge really did belong to the Majestic Clan. House Tong was merely the sidekick standing in front of the stage and raising a racket in their stead.

Wang Teng was clearly not longer eager to continue this line of conversation. He smiled, still as cold and arrogant as ever. "Ji Ole Third, you can't conceal your guilty conscience no matter how much you squabble. When it comes to the pill business, what matters are the pills, not how much of a spectacle you make of yourself. If you're certain of your skills, then take out a peerless pill and let us compete. If you don't have the skills, then continue to feast on empty wind while you watch my Taiyuan Lodge make a fortune."

Young master Ji laughed boisterously. "Does that mean you admit that Taiyuan Lodge belongs to your clan?"

"And what of it? Ji Ole Third, don't take offense, but it's rather embarrassing to watch you quibble over these trifles like a

common street urchin."

Without waiting for young master Ji to speak, Jiang Chen responded, "Well said. What matters are the pills themselves. Mighty young master Wang, since you're so full of confidence, with the street packed so full of guests, we might as well have a pill contest right here. What do you say? Words alone hold no weight."

A pill contest? Young master Ji, as well as father and son from House Wei, were all stunned by his words. All of them turned to look in Jiang Chen's direction. Jiang Chen nodded at them, full of confidence.

Jiang Chen certainly couldn't stay low-key any longer now that the situation had developed to such a degree. If he were to let Taiyuan Lodge have a successful opening, then it would certainly suppress his Taiyuan Tower in the future. It would be much more difficult for him to grow. Since they'd already dropped the act, he might as well throw everything he had in rather than letting them grab him by the throat in the future.

Wang Teng sneered at his words. "A contest of pills? Ji Old Third, does this underling of yours speak for you?"

"Wang Teng, don't put me in your shoes. This Taiyuan Tower is House Wei's property, it isn't my place to decide in their stead."

Wang Teng looked at father and son from House Wei, his eyes full of derision. "What say you, House Wei?"

Wei Tianxiao also realized there was no turning back, now that things had reached such a degree. If he were to fall back half a step here, they would never reverse Taiyuan Tower's fortunes in the future.

"Why not, let's have a contest," Wei Jie took the initiative. "Why would my Taiyuan Tower be afraid of some bandwagoner?"

Wang Teng clapped, his smile a grim slash. He looked at Tong Xianwei. "House lord Tong, please invite all the guests inside to come back out. We'll wage a contest right here in the market street for all to see. Let us see who is the real thing between Taiyuan Lodge and Taiyuan Tower!" It wasn't blind arrogance on Wang Teng's part. He truly had a basis for his confidence. Not only did he have the Longevity Pill as a marquee item for today's opening, he also had several choice pills developed in the last few years up for display. They had been planning on launching them together in the wake of the Longevity Pill's prominence, seizing the opportunity to break into the market and instantly build a name for Taiyuan Lodge. This wasn't something Wang Teng had come up himself on the spur of the moment. Rather, it was a plan the Majestic Clan's strategic council had come up with after repeated simulations and strict calculations. Therefore, Wang Teng felt very emboldened, especially with the Longevity Pill in hand, a pill that could almost topple the established order in the pill world. A mass launch was definitely bound to create a craze.

Tong Xianwei naturally knew the basis for the Majestic Clan's confidence. He secretly sneered to himself at the thought that the reckless House Wei actually wanted to have a pill contest with the Majestic Clan. "Alright, I'll go invite them." Tong Xianwei was all smiles. The sidelong glance he shot at House Wei sent the clear

message that he was looking at idiots. You can't blame anyone else for the oncoming public humiliation. You're feeling proud of yourself right now, but you'll be crying until no tears are left in just a bit. Also, young master Ji, you want to wade in these turbid waters too? We'll also slap your face in a little while, two for the price of one!

As the news that Taiyuan Lodge and Taiyuan Tower were going to hold a public pill contest in the streets spread, the guests in Taiyuan Lodge all filtered outside, brimming with interest. Jiang Chen signaled Wei Jie with his eyes. Catching his meaning, Wei Jie also called out all the customers who'd gone inside Taiyuan Tower.

The streets were suddenly drowning in people, approximately three thousand strong. The number kept increasing as others had caught wind of this and rushed to watch the show. Even those who hadn't been invited came of their own volition. In normal circumstances, a showdown between House Tong and House Wei would be attractive enough already. But now, they also represented the Majestic Clan and the Coiling Dragon Clan standing at their backs, which made it all the more dramatic. One could almost say this was a head-on collision between the Majestic Clan and the Coiling Dragon Clan.

Just the build up was enough to make hot blood thrum in their veins, to say nothing of the eventual result. Opening on the same day with almost identical names, fighting each other tit for tat, any and every detail was proof this was a fight both sides would see to the bitter end. Out of those two pill factions, only one would be left standing!

No matter which side fell, it would be a significant change to the current landscape. Would the Coiling Dragon Clan suppress the Majestic Clan, or would the Majestic Clan overthrow the Coiling Dragon Clan? A collision like this at the very summit of Veluriyam Capital was very attractive. Soon, almost ten thousand people were crowding around these two stores. It was fortunate the avenue in the market was very wide, but it was still extraordinarily crowded, the sea of men packed like sardines.

Young master Ji was also aware that this matter might very well have a negative impact on the Coiling Dragon Clan if it were to be blown out of proportion. If Taiyuan Lodge were to gain the upper hand today, the Coiling Dragon Clan would also lose face. However, seeing Jiang Chen's calm and confident manner, young master Ji became a little more confident without any apparent reason. He originally had some misgivings, but now he tossed them aside. What was the use in hesitating anymore? Retreating now would be an admission of fear. In any case, the Coiling Dragon Clan's situation was already bad. The worst that could happen was that it would become a little worse, but what did that matter?

The most important factor was that young master Ji was particularly confident in Jiang Chen. Their meeting in Little Leisurely Clouds had definitely imprinted this Pill King Zhen from House Wei in young master Ji's mind. The information about the Pinecrane Pill in particular had impressed the young master even more. He had the nagging feeling this Pill King Zhen would continue to bring him pleasant surprises.

"So, Wang Teng, how do you wish to compete?" Since Ji San had made his decision, he didn't hesitate in stepping forward and showing his support for Taiyuan Tower.

“And how do you want to compete?” Wang Teng’s smile was cutting, his eyes a little contemptuous.

Ji San swept his eyes across the sons of great clans present at the scene. “Mere words carry no credibility. If there is to be a contest, we first need to find arbitrators. My first proposal is, why don’t we have some judges?”

“That’s for the best, or else you might refuse to acknowledge your defeat.” Wang Teng would naturally not be opposed.

The influence of the two strongest clans in the Capital was naturally nothing to be scoffed at. It took no time at all to select nine judges. Each of the judges were advanced pill kings. Even the worst among them was a seventh rank pill king. The highest ranked judge was actually a ninth rank pill king. With but a single step forward, he would be able to assume the mantle of a pill emperor. These judges all enjoyed outstanding reputations in the pill world. There was no need to be worried about partiality. The dao of pills had its own rules. At the very least, the pill kings had their professional integrity. They would never be partial to a certain side because of the degree of their relationships.

Of course, it was not to say that relationships wouldn’t play a little part, but none of these nine pill kings were especially close to either clan. The issue of impartiality was henceforth settled. The most important thing was that everyone had a discerning eye when it came to such contests. Favoritism would be very easy to detect. If a pill king were truly to be partial under several thousand pairs of watchful eyes, his credibility would plummet, damaging

his personal reputation.

"Esteemed pill kings, since we are to have a contest, then we can't be the ones to decide the rules. I would like to trouble the nine of you to formulate the rules of this competition," Ji San proposed.

Wang Teng wasn't one to fall behind, quickly nodding, "Each of you is a leading figure in the world of pills. The Majestic Clan has full trust in you. I apologize for troubling you this time."

The spectators also made their views known, "Indeed, you nine pill kings are all great figures, everyone can trust you. You should be the ones to make the rules."

"Esteemed pill kings, don't fail to live up to everyone's expectations!"

There was no need for House Tong and House Wei to speak anymore. Things had already progressed to where it was no longer a mere showdown between their two subordinate houses. It was more of a confrontation between the Coiling Dragon Clan and the Majestic Clan. While this confrontation might not influence the final situation, it would at least somewhat represent its future direction.

Neither wanted to lose; neither could afford to lose. Seeing that Wang Teng looked like he still had cards left to play, the majority of the crowd felt that the Majestic Clan had come prepared. Their odds of winning should be somewhat higher. After all, merely

judging by their staffs and their styles, the Taiyuan Lodge that the Majestic Clan operated was on a completely different level compared to House Wei's Taiyuan Tower.

Chapter 768: Let's Go A Little Mad With the Gamble

When everyone looked over at the Taiyuan Lodge side, they immediately glimpsed several pill kings in their midst. The highest ranked one was obviously a high order one, and there were two more mid order ones at fifth and sixth rank pill king. There were even low order ones acting as assistants. That a pill king was acting as an assistant was a mark of how deep Taiyuan Lodge's pockets were!

When their eyes swivelled over to Taiyuan Tower, the contrast was stark and jarring. They didn't have a single person dressed in the clothing of a pill king! Jiang Chen stood next to the Wei father and son, wearing a set of casual clothes. It was difficult for anyone to match his appearance to that of a pill king's. The blatant contrast caused a significant bias in the winning predictions of everyone present. Given House Wei's lackluster performance in the pill arena as well as the Majestic Clan's insatiable expansion in recent years, there didn't seem a need for careful analysis. Even a three-year-old child knew which side victory was favoring. Some of the more reserved and mature onlookers shook their heads inwardly. The normally elegant young master Ji San had been far too brash this time. He'd finally fallen into the Majestic Clan's trap.

"To think that the Coiling Dragon Clan is finally about to abdicate its status as the number one clan of Veluriyam Capital after two hundred years..."

"Ah, it's truly a shame that the Coiling Dragon Clan's lord is

facing his twilight years."

"As the foremost clan, though the Coiling Dragon Clan is a little forward, it has never tyrannized anyone. If the Majestic Clan really replaces it, I'm afraid that the situation in the Capital will become worse than before!" Many of the onlookers mulled over the tradeoffs in their hearts. They did not wish to see a drastic shift to the order within Veluriyam Capital. Such a change often necessitated much strife, conquest, conflict, bloodshed in its name...

As the foremost clan, the Coiling Dragon Clan had maintained reasonable order within Veluriyam Capital, and was a force to be reckoned with in the Upper Eight Regions. The Veluriyam Capital owed much of its past two hundred years of stability to the prominent work of the Coiling Dragon Clan. A change in leadership, to the Majestic Clan, birthed uncertainty in the hearts of many. After all, from what could be seen of its actions thus far, the Majestic Clan was without a doubt greedier, more profit-oriented, even tyrannical. Thus, though many of the guests chose Taiyuan Lodge, it didn't mean they were actually loyal to the Majestic Clan. Their choice was merely an instinctive act of self preservation, a selection of the more favorable choice between the Majestic Clan and House Wei. At the bottom of their hearts, at least half of those present did not wish for the Coiling Dragon Clan to be replaced by the Majestic Clan.

The nine judges huddled together for only a short while before they drafted an outline for the contest. "Young master Ji San, young master Wang, we have the outline for the contest." A ninth rank pill king with shockingly bright white hair walked towards them.

“Pill King Yu, please speak.” Neither Ji San nor Wang Teng dared flaunt their stature in front of the pill king, and showed only the utmost respect.

“Since today is the opening ceremony for both of the stores, and a store opening is naturally accompanied by new kinds of pills, the first round of the contest will be about pills. Each side will bring out three pills to evaluated by all nine of us judges. The side that receives more votes will be counted as the victor for this round,” Pill King Yu said. It was a predictable suggestion. Both stores were pill shops, so what would one bet on, if not for pills? This round was essential.

“There’s a first round, so there must be a second as well. What’s the topic of the second, if I may ask?” Wang Teng smiled slightly.

Pill King Yu declared, “Besides attractive pills, talented employees are important as well. Therefore, we believe that a competition between pill kings will be appropriate for the second round. Strong talent signifies a flourishing store—an indisputable fact, no?”

Every pill shop had its own in-house experts. Big stores had pill kings, but even the most insignificant of stores hired a few pill masters to hold down the fort. It was undeniably true that talented people formed the backbone of a pill shop. Any pill shop would be quite popular with a genius pill king sitting inside. A genius pill king was actually even more enticing than a desirable pill.

Pills were made by people. Even the hardest pill only took three to five years to make. But the development of a pill king took at minimum 30 to 50 years. It was not uncommon for ten times that time span to pass again before a pill king reached a high rank. A competition between pill kings? Everyone found the details of the second round amusing, especially those on the Taiyuan Lodge side. Insults and jests started to fly.

“Pill king? House Wei’s Taiyuan Tower has a pill king?”

“Isn’t this too hard on Taiyuan Tower? Haha, a competition between pill kings? We’d have to wait until House Wei finds a pill king first!”

“Look, you can’t say things like that. Perhaps House Wei is requesting a pill king from the Coiling Dragon Clan as we speak.”

“Do Coiling Dragon Clan’s pill kings have any relation to House Wei?”

However, those on House Wei’s side were unexpectedly calm. The was none of the panic and tension on their faces that Taiyuan Lodge wished to see. Young master Ji San was the first to speak, interjecting softly, “Pill King Yu, excuse my verbosity. Taiyuan Lodge has many pill kings, but do any of them have tokens identifying their employment? If not, doesn’t that count as cheating? If that is permissible, then I take it that I can call in support from the Coiling Dragon Clan’s pill kings?”

The question was certainly reasonable. Glancing at Wang Teng,

Pill King Yu nodded, “Young master Wang, are all of these pill kings representative of Taiyuan Lodge?”

Wang Teng spoke equally unassumingly, “Is this round by specific designation? Or random selection?”

Pill Master Yu looked at House Wei, seeking their opinion.

“It is best for the contestants to be designated specifically, lest there be cheating,” Wei Tianxiao hurriedly responded.

Wang Teng scoffed in disdain. Cheating? Aren’t you guys overestimating your importance? Implying that we need to cheat to beat House Wei … what a riot. Wang Teng directed his question at the mass of pill kings behind him with a turn of his body. “Which of you is willing to take the stage?”

“I am!”

“Young clan lord, send me!”

“Is there a need to fight? Of course it’s me.” The pill kings scrambled over one another in their bids for the position, save for the higher-ranked pill king who stayed silent. Clearly, as a seventh rank pill king, he held himself in too high an esteem to make such a public appearance. Wang Teng had a sudden stroke of inspiration. “Does House Wei have a pill king?”

“Wang Teng, your eyesight isn’t very good, hmm? This humble

one is House Wei's guest pill king and am the sitting pill king at Taiyuan Tower."

"You?" Wang Teng flicked a cold glance at Jiang Chen. How could he not know who Jiang Chen was? He had only asked the question in order to shame House Wei. In truth, Wei Tiantong and Pill Master Yu's prior failure had already drawn attention to House Wei's new pill king. Wang Teng looked over Jiang Chen coolly. The latter didn't have three heads and six arms, nor did he appear to be an amazing pill dao prodigy. There was nothing for Wang Teng to beware of. He spoke to the sixth rank pill king, "Pill King Rong, you go. Teach this kid a lesson in life."

The chosen pill king's face lit up. "Understood. I will not fail my mission."

After both sides locked in their choices, everyone focused their attention upon Pill King Yu again. The first round was a comparison of pills, the second round was a competition of pill kings, but what of the third? "We have rounds one and two, so there must be a round three, right?"

Pill King Yu nodded, "If each side wins a round within the first two rounds, then we naturally will have a deciding third round. But, if one side wins two in a row, then the third round is unnecessary. Still, let us mention it in passing. It will be a round based on personal judgments from the nine judges. The content being judged can be discussed when the time comes."

All three rounds had been explained. "So, do both sides understand the rules?" Pill King Yu asked.

House Wei nodded in agreement, but Wang Teng was not content. “The rules are quite clear, and the nine pill kings are all pillars of the pill world. There is nothing for us to be concerned about. But, since it’s a competition, there should be some stakes as well. What’s in it for the winner? What happens to the loser?” He curved his lips in a grin.

This was the crux of the issue.

This extensive setup Wang Teng had orchestrated wasn’t simply for fun or show. His ultimate objective was to close Taiyuan Tower before it even had a chance to open, and thereby stomp House Wei into the ground completely. It would also be a slap to the face for the Coiling Dragon Clan.

“What do you want?” Ji San asked scornfully.

“Everyone knows the old adage that a mountain has no room for two tigers, not to mention two stores directly facing each other with similar names! I suggest... winner takes all,” Wang Teng laughed.

“Take all of what, exactly?”

“It’s very simple. The loser closes shop and removes their store sign. They’re also forbidden from appearing within a thousand metres of the winner’s store.” Wang Teng had everything thought out already.

“You call that ‘winner takes all’?” Jiang Chen smirked before young master Ji San had a chance to respond.

“Then what do you propose?” Wang Teng sneered.

“Winner takes all should be absolutely everything, including the deed to the properties!” Jiang Chen’s words bewildered not only the onlookers, but House Wei as well. This was not within their original plans. Seeing Wei Jie and Wei Tianxiao’s quizzical looks, Jiang Chen conveyed, “Lord Wei, if I lose, I will recompense House Wei with the formula for the Longevity Pill.”

The formula for the Longevity Pill. Wei Tianxiao was instantly reassured at these words.

The others present wore astonished expressions. The bystanders were especially dazed, a strange suspicion popping into their heads. Was House Wei’s mysterious pill king yet another double agent from the Majestic Clan? Why else would he up the ante in such an absurd way? Everyone knew that House Wei’s Taiyuan Tower would be the loser. Since their loss was assured, wasn’t it too much to offer up the property deed to the store as well?

After all, the store was located in one of the best spots in Farmer God Market. Moreover, House Wei’s store occupied a rather large area, and excelled in many aspects. Even the Majestic Clan had salivated over the store for a long time. Wasn’t House Wei’s pill king delivering the goods right to the door then? The previous pill king from House Wei was already suspected of being an

undercover agent from the Majestic Clan. Given the current way of things, that the same thing was happening again was a natural conclusion for the onlookers to draw. The more they mulled it over, the more it appeared to be the case.

Chapter 769: Wang Teng, You Can't Afford the Bet?

Jiang Chen didn't care what the bystanders thought. His gaze was so intense that Wang Teng found it difficult to avert his eyes. One was an unknown pill master, and the other was a young lord of one of Veluriyam Capital's foremost clans. For any normal person, the two weren't even on the same level. But, to everyone's surprise, the guest pill king of House Wei was fearlessly looking straight at Wang Teng.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen smacked his forehead with a laugh. "I almost forgot. The store opposite isn't actually the Majestic Clan's property. I don't think young clan lord Wang can actually make any decisions here. Well now, since you can't afford to make the bet, let's pretend I didn't say anything." Jiang Chen's words took a drastically different turn, tugging at the hearts of their onlookers yet again.

What was this? From his tone, it seemed that House Wei's guest pill king really did want to pick a fight with the Majestic Clan. He really wasn't an undercover agent? The challenge wasn't particularly clever, but it was still sharp as a sword. The attack was a direct jab at Wang Teng, who found it difficult not to engage. As large as Veluriyam Capital was, how many people in it dared to say "you can't afford to make the bet" to the Majestic Clan?

Was there a bet that the Majestic Clan couldn't afford?

Though the store didn't belong to the Majestic Clan, there were countless methods to take possession of it! Even though Wang

Teng had reminded himself time and again to keep calm, he couldn't help but feel fury eat away at him because of Jiang Chen's attitude. Sneering, he turned his attention the Wei father and son. "Wei Tianxiao, no wonder House Wei has been more dead than alive. Bad upbringing and manners can't be helped. Since when can a guest pill king act on House Wei's behalf?"

Wei Tianxiao was cautious by nature, but he was surprisingly calm in that moment. He knew there was no backing out now. The Majestic Clan wanted to seize this opportunity to utterly crush House Wei. Even if Jiang Chen hadn't made his promise about the Longevity Pill, they would still have to step up to the plate. Steeling himself for the worst, he smiled faintly. "Young clan lord Wang, there's no problem with being forthright if you really can't afford to make the bet. We at House Wei are not in the habit of forcing people's hands. As for Pill King Zhen, I have already given him full authority for today's matters. Anyone whom we entrust a position with has House Wei's complete trust."

It was another mention of "you can't afford to make the bet"! Perhaps he might have begrudgingly endured things if the words had come from anyone else, but what kind of person was Wang Teng? Was he someone that a ninth-ranked house could say "you can't afford to make the bet" to? Where was his dignity? Wang Teng's angry grimace was telling of his extreme displeasure, his eyes glinting with disdain. "Good, very good, House Wei has some guts alright! If you really must give this store as a present to me, I'm happy to take it."

Still, he couldn't figure out House Wei's intentions. Using the store as the ante had been wholly unexpected. The stakes were too high for them. From Wang Teng's perspective, House Wei was

blustering with all their might; they had no bite. They were feigning aggressiveness in order to force him to step back. But, what did they take him for? How could Wang Teng not take the bet?

Jiang Chen smiled coldly. “I wouldn’t hurry to accept if I were you. The winner is still undecided. If you want to put the property itself on the line, you should first acquire the rights to Taiyuan Lodge. Otherwise, who do we collect from if you’re betting with someone else’s belongings?”

He spoke as if House Wei’s victory over the Majestic Clan was assured. Wang Teng’s anger no longer knew any bound. He had never before been met with such arrogant provocation in Veluriyam Capital. Indeed, the Majestic Clan didn’t own Taiyuan Lodge. It was also true that the Majestic Clan had used forceful means to coercively rent the premises for a time. He scanned the surroundings for the owner of the store. It belonged to another ninth-ranked aristocratic house, not subordinate to either the Majestic or Coiling Dragon Clan.

“House Lord Teng, I am willing to use my family’s store in the Heaven Road section of the Farmer God Market as collateral. If I lose your store today, then that store will belong to you. As you know, it’s located in a superior position and occupies a larger area.” In his anger, Wang Teng was willing to pledge a superior store as collateral.

The lord of House Teng wasn’t comforted, however. He had no interest in meddling in these factional affairs. He complained with a wry face, “Young clan lord Wang, it’s not that I don’t trust your

word, but something like this... there is no guarantee in a verbal promise."

Wang Teng was enraged by these words. This house lord's distrust was blatant. How could an entity as great as the Majestic Clan lose to a mere House Wei? Though the store was collateral, that was only in name. What else did he need aside from a verbal promise?

Ji San chuckled at the scene. "Wang Teng, you're gambling in such a carefree way with someone else's property. Generosity at the expense of others... truly a masterful plan. If you lose, you can just up and leave. Since there's no guarantee, are you expecting House Teng to pry that store from the Majestic Clan's hands?"

Ji San was adept at finding weaknesses. His commentary was clean and upright, and drew much cheering and applause from the crowd. After all, the Veluriyam Capital had twenty-eight clans. Though many of the other clans couldn't compare to the Majestic Clan, that didn't mean the latter held absolute power either. Wang Teng's attitude carried an overbearing overtone that, alone, was enough to cause mild dissatisfaction amongst onlookers. He'd thought he was giving sufficient face to the lord of House Teng, but Ji San's interjection made him look like a menacing bully instead. He suppressed the boiling anger in his heart, glancing at Ji San coldly. "Ji Ole Third, I'm not the type of person to cheat others out of something as insignificant as this. You on the other hand... what will you placate House Wei with after they lose the store, hmm?"

"Don't try to change the subject by mentioning unrelated things. No guarantee, no bet," Young Master Ji San smiled serenely. Wei

Tianxiao loudly backed him up. “Young master Ji San has the right of it. Any bets that House Wei makes must be transparent and open. We cannot allow young clan Lord Wang to wager the property of others.”

Wang Teng had been backed into a corner by Ji San and Wei Tianxiao’s verbal barrage. “Get some pen and paper.” If he was going to leave some proof, he was going to be unequivocal about it.

“We are cultivators, what need is there for pen and paper? Even if written proof exists, what can House Teng do to you if you want to get out of it?” Young Master Ji San grinned coolly. “Cultivators are beholden to different rules. A heavenly oath is far more convincing than any contract.”

House Lord Teng’s eyes brightened, looking to Ji San with gratitude. Clearly, he was very supportive of an oath. Jiang Chen frowned. “Wang Teng, you are the young lord of a clan, yet you fuss like an old woman. Are we betting or not? If you aren’t confident enough in your chances, then say so earlier. Why waste everyone’s time?”

Wang Teng was so angry he almost spat blood. If looks could kill, everyone standing by House Wei would be a fresh corpse. Forcing himself to calm down with some effort, he locked eyes with Wei Tianxiao. “Wei Tianxiao, you’re freely taking potshots now, but just wait a while and I’ll show you what for. You won’t even be able to cry!” Saying this, he turned to the lord of House Teng. “Lord Teng, if you want a heavenly oath, I’ll give it to you. But you will soon know that your worry is unnecessary. The Majestic Clan’s victory is certain.”

In that moment, Wang Teng was filled with fortitude and pride, brimming with determination. He swore a heavenly oath with the crowd as witness. Wang Teng did not leave any textual loopholes in the oath, and expressed that if House Teng's store really was lost to House Wei, he would reimburse House Teng with the Majestic Clan's better premises within the Farmer God Market. With the oath made, Wang Teng cheered up greatly. "The wager is set. Now, let's see what other tricks you have up your sleeve!" He looked contemptuously at his opposition.

"Pill King Yu, with both the stakes and the rules in place, why don't we begin? Time is money. I'm sure this true for everyone." Having lost the advantage in the verbal exchange, Wang Teng had a lot of frustration bottled up. He eagerly awaited a crushing, convincing victory against House Wei. He could almost taste the pleasure of taking their store for himself.

Pill King Yu reiterated the rules and the wagers for clarity. "No final questions from either side, yes? Then the competition begins!"

An empty space was quickly cleared. The nine judges fanned out in a solid line; the betting parties separated themselves to either side. Taiyuan Lodge had the absolute advantage in both line up and formation. "For the first round, each side must submit three types of pills. Remember, there is no need to deceive us with rare pills. The pills must be suitable for mass production and sale. Our purpose is not to view your personal pill collection, but rather to compare the quality of each side's pill supply," Pill King Yu warned sternly.

A duel between two pill stores had to involve pills actually available for sale. There was no point in bringing out the pills that were rare and sought-after, those kept solely in personal collections. After all, those pills were hardly representative of a shop's capabilities.

Ji San had wanted to secretly return the Longevity Pill he'd accepted from Jiang Chen to bolster his side, but Pill King Yu's words forbade it. From his perspective, Taiyuan Tower had no way of making the Longevity Pill. However, Jiang Chen had no intention at all of using the Longevity Pill from the beginning. The situation wasn't even close to dire, so why expose himself? Moreover, it wasn't as if the pills he'd prepared earlier were ordinary either.

He quickly picked out three types of pills. The Heptarune True Dragon Pill for breakthroughs, the Tiger Eruption Pill for battle strength, and the Half-Step Immortal Elixir Pill for poison. As for the cosmetic Aeons Evergreen Pill, Jiang Chen decided against taking it out in front of the judges. The pill kings here were all male, and this kind of pill held no attraction for them. To the contrary, it was possible that they would deem it as unorthodox tomfoolery.

For the sake of fairness, the three pills weren't taken out simultaneously by both sides. Rather, they were presented one at a time, and neither would what pill the other would bring. The Heptarune True Dragon Pill Jiang Chen chose for the first round was placed in a jade box, labeled with Taiyuan Tower as its origin, and brought before the nine pill kings.

Each of the nine judges began to investigate and examine the two pills. They were all well-traveled and knowledgeable. Though the grade of pill presented was high on both sides, they were not shaken. After about fifteen minutes, voting began among the pill kings.

It wasn’t long before the results were out. As the first of three pills in the first round, Jiang Chen’s Heptarune True Dragon Pill scored the initial victory with a 6-3 advantage!

Chapter 770: Losing to Oneself

“The pill, the Heptarune True Dragon Pill, is excellent in quality, and a wonderful pill for the tribulations that come from breakthroughs…” Pill King Yu took the forefront on behalf of the judges to explain why the Heptarune True Dragon Pill had won Taiyuan Tower the first round.

The fact that Taiyuan Tower had scored first blood took many onlookers aback. A murmur began to circulate quietly among the crowd. It was obvious that no one had thought that Taiyuan Tower would actually possess skill. This Heptarune True Dragon Pill did indeed seem quite good, and the fact that it scored first blood seemed to be deserved.

However, this was only the first round of the first stage of the match. One had to win at least two out of three rounds in order to win the first stage. House Wei had won the first round, but could they win a second time? For a moment, the onlookers who thought that this was going to be a one-sided battle grew a little more hopeful. They were hoping that House Wei could surprise them even more and make this bet more entertaining.

Both sides presented their second pills amidst such expectations. This time, Jiang Chen presented the Tiger Eruption Pill. He wasn’t very sure that this pill would win because he hadn’t expected to fight a pill battle during the grand opening and thus, hadn’t prepared a particularly powerful pill to stun the crowd. This Tiger Eruption Pill was a result of his own improvisations of a pill from a rather neglected branch of knowledge in the field. Although it wasn’t bad, there was no telling if it could beat the Majestic Clan’s selection. As expected, his opponent had come prepared. Their

second pill was obviously an entire level higher than the Tiger Eruption Pill.

The Majestic Clan had actually produced the True Emperor Pill! The True Emperor Pill was a quasi-emperor rank pill that could increase one's chances of reaching the emperor realm by ten to twenty percent. Although listed as a true saint rank pill, the market viewed it as an emperor rank pill and priced it accordingly. The True Emperor Pill beat the Tiger Eruption Pill immediately after it appeared.

"The True Emperor Pill is a pill any peak sage realm cultivator must have. It is incredibly sophisticated and difficult to refine. Although Taiyuan Tower's Tiger Eruption Pill is also a worthy pill in its own right and an interesting improvisation, it cannot close the level gap. Taiyuan Lodge wins this round," Pill King Yu announced the result of the second round.

Jiang Chen wasn't that angry to lose to the True Emperor Pill. He could refine this pill himself if he wanted to. After all, Taiyuan Tower had just taken its first steps. He hadn't planned to kick things into high gear immediately. However, this consideration caused him to suffer quite the disadvantage.

The first stage of the match was now a 1-1 draw. The onlookers were actually disappointed to see Taiyuan Lodge winning the second round. They'd been hoping to see Taiyuan Lodge lose the first stage. House Wei's pill master was almost fated to lose against the Majestic Clan's pill king in the second stage. This outcome was almost a sure certainty. Now that Taiyuan Lodge had taken back a round, momentum was obviously back on Taiyuan Lodge's side.

They were disappointed to see the Majestic Clan reassert control once more. This was because everyone knew that the Majestic Clan had prepared a trump card. Everyone in Veluriyam Capital had heard the rumors.

House Wei was also feeling a slight bit of anxiety. It was obvious that they were slightly worried about how the situation was progressing. Although they had managed to score a draw after the first two rounds, Taiyuan Tower almost had no chance of victory if Taiyuan Lodge were to produce the Longevity Pill. The situation could change if Jiang Chen produced a Longevity Pill himself, but it was highly unlikely for him to do so.

Jiang Chen himself had thought of this possibility. He was also hesitating whether he should reveal his Longevity Pill. In the end though, he decided against the impulse. As everyone expected, the Majestic Clan produced the Longevity Pill amidst much cheering. The moment the Longevity Pill showed up, every pill king present was conquered. This was a truly unique pill, in fact, the only pill to cause a ripple of shock in the pill industry for the past few hundred years or so. It wasn't that there were no other pills that increased one's lifespan in the market, but their effects were all average and forgettable.

The Longevity Pill's appearance had immediately filled up this void. Although it only worked for sage realm cultivators, that was impressive enough already. Jiang Chen knew that the third round was looking bad for him the second he saw his opponent produce the Longevity Pill. He had sent in the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill, and would have likely won if his opponent had offered any other pill. However, no matter how impressive the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill was, it was simply not as shocking as the

Longevity Pill.

There was no need for a comparison at all. The judges' opinions were unanimous. Although they were very impressed by the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill, they had all cast their votes for the Longevity Pill. Pill King Yu announced, "I never thought that Taiyuan Lodge would produce the Longevity Pill. I believe all of you have heard of this pill by now. It is most definitely a revolutionary pill. Although Taiyuan Tower's Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill was also excellent and made with astounding skill, it is ultimately a shade paler compared to the Longevity Pill. Therefore, Taiyuan Lodge wins this round!"

The color on the Wei father and son's faces immediately drained when they heard this. Meanwhile, a cheer broke out from Wang Teng's corner. House Tong was especially pleased as they laughed raucously. Even Wang Teng couldn't hide the smile on his face. However, young master Ji San exclaimed, "Wait!"

The judges looked surprised for a second, then Pill King Yu asked indifferently, "Are you questioning my judgment, young master Ji San?"

Young master Ji San hastily replied, "I have no questions regarding your judgment, but I do have a question regarding the Majestic Clan's pill. As we all know, Wang Teng spent 120 million saint spirit stones to win the bid of three Longevity Pills during the Joined Ridges auction. The rules of this stage of the match is that the sect must be able to mass produce and sell the pills they show."

Pill King Yu thought that young master Ji San's words had a lot

of sense to them, and so he turned towards Wang Teng. “Young master Wang, young master Ji San’s question is reasonable. How do you answer?”

If the Majestic Clan had gone against the rules, then they would be declared the loser instead. If that happens, then House Wei’s Taiyuan Tower would turn the tables and win the first stage of the match with a 2-1 victory instead. Wang Teng smiled faintly and clapped his hands, “Bring over a batch of Longevity Pills and show them to Pill King Yu.”

Someone came over immediately and displayed twenty Longevity Pills at once! Now even young master Ji San was a little tongue tied. Pill King Yu nodded slightly and acknowledged Wang Teng’s proof. He was going to declare Taiyuan Lodge the winner of the first stage. But before he could answer, Jiang Chen suddenly asked, “I would like to ask just one more question: did Taiyuan Lodge really refine these Longevity Pills themselves?”

Jiang Chen didn’t believe that Taiyuan Lodge could refine the Longevity Pills. These Longevity Pills had most likely been refined by the Eternal Celestial Capital before they were entrusted to the Majestic Clan to be sold in Veluriyam Capital.

Wang Teng sneered, “I don’t think we need to prove this to you, do we? Are you saying that we need to report our store’s sources to you?”

Pill King Yu also nodded, “The rules only says that the pill must be an item that can be mass produced and sold. The number Taiyuan Tower produces is enough to prove them abiding by this

rule.”

Wang Teng smiled and said, “The rules do say that the pill must be capable of being mass produced, but it never said that we must be the one to do it. We have our channels and our connections. They represent our abilities too!”

Although this logic was a little shameless, it was still acceptable. Pill King Yu ignored Jiang Chen and declared, “Taiyuan Tower is the victor of the first stage!” Seeing Pill King Yu making his declaration, Jiang Chen didn’t say anything else even though he was frustrated. The reason he’d even spoken up was because he was a little put off by the Majestic Clan beating him with his own pill. It wasn’t that he couldn’t take a defeat with grace.

Although he’d lost the first stage, this battle was far from over. His first loss was also a suitable reminder to himself that he should treat the next two stages seriously and not underestimate the enemy. His loss couldn’t be chalked up to a lack of skill. The Majestic Clan had used his own goods to beat him. He could even say that he had beaten himself, not the Majestic Clan. After all, hadn’t the Majestic Clan won the first stage using the Longevity Pill? And who was the real master of the Longevity Pill? Although Jiang Chen knew that the Majestic Clan had won this stage in a rather dishonorable manner, arguing further would only leave a bad impression on the judges.

“The first stage of the battle has concluded. The second stage will be a battle between pill kings. Just like before, the stage will be conducted in three rounds. The contestant who wins two rounds wins the second stage.”

The entire pill battle had three stages; the side who won the majority would be declared victor. The same went with the three small rounds in each stage.

“Sigh, House Wei’s foundations are ultimately too shallow. They’ll probably lose horribly.”

“I know right? I doubt they can even survive this second stage.”

“Sigh, have you guys ever heard of this pill king from House Wei? He seems pretty young.”

“I actually suspect he’s a Wang family spy. Why else would he have bet his own store? Oh poor House Wei, they’ve actually gone and made the same mistake twice.”

“Wei Tianxiao’s cultivation is strong, but as a house lord he seems a little naive.”

“The Pill King Rong that the Majestic Clan just sent out seems to be a sixth rank pill king. He’s only one step away from becoming an upper rank pill king. But I heard that this pill king from House Wei is a second rank pill king?”

“A second rank pill king versus a sixth rank pill king... where on earth does House Wei get their confidence from? Have they given up already?” The crowd buzzed with the rising and falling voices of hushed murmuring.

Both sides of this conflict looked nervous, but they were surprisingly silent. Pill King Rong walked over and cupped his fist towards the nine judges, “Please forgive me for my performance today, seniors.” He then turned to glance at Jiang Chen with a bit of a nasty smile. “Tell me your name, brat. I don’t bully nameless people.”

Jiang Chen smiled indifferently and answered, “The master and the servant are just the same, eh? If you want to fight, then fight already. Save the drivel for the mirror.”

Surprisingly, Pill King Rong didn’t grow angry, cackling oddly instead. “No wonder the young master told me to teach you better manners. You are as arrogant as you appear.”

“A dressed up animal dares to talk about teaching manners? What a joke,” Jiang Chen’s words were aimed at Pill King Rong, but his eyes had swept briefly and indifferently across Wang Teng’s face.

He cupped his fist towards the nine pill kings and said, “Please start the competition, venerable pill kings.” Jiang Chen had a stomach of anger to vent after losing the first round.

Chapter 771: The Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma

Although Pill King Yu wasn't sure where House Wei's guest pill king come from, privately speaking, he admired Jiang Chen more of the two competitors. This was because of the three pills Jiang Chen had brought out. Despite their average rank, they had all been incredibly pure, with a level of quality that couldn't be found at the hands of an average pill master. Moreover, all three pills had a unique personal style that Pill King Yu thought he'd encountered in the past. He just wasn't able to put his finger on it. Be it the Tiger Eruption Pill, the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill or the Heptarune True Dragon Pill, they all possessed the marks of a confident master's hand. These pills were quite extraordinary. If he wasn't a judge who was ensuring the match's fairness, Pill King Yu would've admitted that he liked Taiyuan Tower's pills more.

The reason Taiyuan Lodge had been able to win was because its pills was of a higher rank. To put it bluntly, they were just bullying the weak. They were using emperor rank pills to compete against true saint rank or even saint rank pills. Although they'd won the stage, their victory rang slightly hollow. Moreover, everyone knew where the Longevity Pill came from. Even Pill King Yu himself didn't believe that Taiyuan Lodge had the capability to refine the Longevity Pill. It was likely the force who'd obtained the Longevity Pill's pill recipe who had refined it. They had probably only entrusted the Majestic Clan with selling them.

Of course, the rules said nothing about the store refining their pills with their own hands. A consigned batch of products was still within the rules. Although Pill King Yu admired Taiyuan Tower's pills more, he couldn't go against his conscience and claim that the

Longevity Pill wasn't comparable to the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill. Even if he did, the rest of the judges wouldn't do the same.

Yet, House Wei's pill king was actually calling out to Taiyuan Lodge with absolute confidence and fearlessness. His fighting will surprised even Pill King Yu. Regardless of the final outcome, Pill King Yu had to admit to feeling some sympathy and admiration for House Wei. After all, House Wei had proven themselves to possess genuine talent and skill. The fact that a ninth rank aristocratic family could resist the Majestic Clan this far was an incredible feat already. With Pill King Yu's intelligence, how could he not notice that the grudge between Taiyuan Lodge and Taiyuan Tower was a ploy by the Majestic Clan to suppress House Wei?

Taiyuan Tower had sent their invitation to him early on, whereas Taiyuan Lodge's invitation had only reached him last night. It was obvious from this alone that Taiyuan Lodge was aiming for Taiyuan Tower. To put it bluntly, the Majestic Clan had affixed House Wei in its crosshairs from the beginning. Pill King Yu was a person of great virtue and prestige. Although he had seen much darkness in this world, he hadn't lost sight of what was right and what was wrong as a pill king. Even though his sentiment wasn't so strong that he would unequivocally support House Wei, emotionally speaking, he was absolutely leaning towards their side. He stared rather meaningfully at Jiang Chen before casting a second glance at Pill King Rong of the Majestic Clan. Pill King Yu cleared his throat and spoke again, "The second stage of the first set is an ancient enigma. I'd come across this once in an ancient scripture long ago. To be honest, even after several hundred years of research, I have yet to crack all its mysteries..." At this point, Pill King Yu waved his hands. "I have two scrolls here written with a set of materials each. To be specific, 36 types of spirit herbs. The contents of the scrolls are completely identical. Your task is to use

these 36 materials to brainstorm as many pill recipes as you can. The more the better. Whoever comes up with the most pill recipes wins the round. You have one hour. Remember, these spirit materials can be used infinitely. If you've written it down in one pill recipe, you can use it again in another pill recipe."

Once he was finished, Pill King Yu shook his sleeves slightly and delivered the scrolls into Jiang Chen and Pill King Rong's hands. Pill King Rong looked excited. It so happened that the pill recipe composition was one of his strengths. The thing he loved to research the most in his life was none other than the assembly and disassembly of all kinds of pill recipes. Jiang Chen revealed nothing on his face. When he received the scroll, he looked through it and felt the shapes of all thirty six spirit herbs flashing past his mind. Jiang Chen smiled inwardly when he looked through roughly thirty spirit herbs. He immediately figured out the true identity of the 'ancient enigma' Pill King Yu spoke of.

It was indeed an 'ancient enigma', and a very old one at that. This was because Jiang Chen had seen this enigma once or twice during his era. It possessed a very nice sounding name, the 'Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma'. It was called thus because this puzzle contained a total of thirty six spirit herbs, and they secretly corresponded to the thirty six calendar animals of the skies. It also just so happened that these thirty six spirit materials could produce a total of thirty six pill recipes, not one more and not one less.

It was impossible for the puzzle to contain even one more pill recipe. But if the answer lacked even one pill recipe, the enigma was imperfect. Countless pill dao seniors had spent who knew how much effort to put together the ultimate list for this ancient

enigma. It was an exquisite pill riddle that countless geniuses wanted to crack. Those who couldn't solve it wanted to complete it even at the cost of their life. As for those who knew the 36 solutions, they wanted to overturn the answer key and come up with a 37th pill formula with equal determination. Unfortunately, no one had ever been able to come up with a thirty seventh recipe, despite the relentless efforts of countless pill dao masters.

Jiang Chen never imagined that this Pill King Yu would know the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma. However, it sounded like he hadn't mastered this pill enigma yet. Had he only heard of its reputation or understood only part of it? Either way, it wasn't Jiang Chen's problem, so he picked up his brush and paper and began writing in a masterful manner. He remembered this Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma so well that he could write it down backwards. He filled out all thirty six pill recipes of the puzzle in less than fifteen minutes.

It wasn't as if this pill enigma was some supremely confidential industry knowledge. To put it bluntly, it was just an interesting interlude of the pill industry. It was just like scholars who challenged customers with rhymed couplets, or chess players who studied all kinds of ancient chess puzzles.

"Are you done?" Pill King Yu was stunned when Jiang Chen suddenly stood up and turned in his paper. He never thought that Jiang Chen would finish in just fifteen minutes' time. An entire hour had been allocated for the round, but House Wei's pill king was turning in his answer already? Was this fellow just giving up? If that really was the case, then Pill King Yu would have to withdraw that bit about admiring Pill King Zhen earlier. Pill King Yu's original impression of House Wei's pill king was favorable,

but if he was a weak minded person who gave up so easily, then he would not amount to much in the pill field. After accepting Jiang Chen's scroll with a flash of disappointment, Pill King Yu responded indifferently, "Please be seated and wait. The allotted time isn't up yet, and we cannot review your answer until then."

That was the proper rule. Taiyuan Lodge's Pill King Rong was still busy racking his brains on the other side. Every onlooker were stunned when they saw Pill King Rong so deep in thought and Taiyuan Tower's pill king submitting his answer so early.

What's going on? Pill King Rong, the sixth rank pill king well known for his research in pill recipes was looking harried, but the unknown Pill King Zhen of Taiyuan Tower had turned in his answer in less than fifteen minutes? This scene puzzled and surprised people to no end.

"I told you, didn't I? This Pill King Zhen of Taiyuan Tower is definitely a spy sent to House Wei by the Majestic Clan. He's a trap!"

"Hah, I'm actually starting to believe you a little. It does look like he's fooled House Wei."

"Sigh, can he at least not make it so obvious that he's screwing over his victims? Turning in his answer in fifteen minutes is just..."

Jiang Chen's actions had once again drawn the suspicion of onlookers at the scene. After all, his behavior were just too

unusual. However, Jiang Chen returned to his own seat and looked completely unmoved by the comments tossed in his direction. His consciousness would occasionally flit over to the judges. In reality, he understood that he didn't need to worry about foul play. It was impossible that the judges would change his scroll or aid Pill King Rong in cheating.

The calmer Jiang Chen became, the more anxious and paranoid Pill King Rong became. Onlookers could freely suspect Jiang Chen of being a spy, but Pill King Rong knew that this Pill King Zhen of Taiyuan Tower certainly wasn't a member of the Majestic Clan. Since he wasn't sent by the Majestic Clan to trap House Wei, there shouldn't be any reason to give up just like that. But if he hadn't given up, then why did he turn in his answer so early? It couldn't be that he had come up with enough pill recipes to be assured of a complete victory? He refused to believe this. There was simply no way a nameless small fry could possess such skill!

For a moment or two, Pill King Rong wasn't able to calm down at all. It was Wang Teng who picked up some clues to his mood and sent a message to Pill King Rong, "Don't panic. That kid may be trying to disturb your mind so that you lose your concentration. Don't fall for his trap and just perform at your usual level!"

Pill King Rong trembled slightly when Wang Teng's reminder reached his ears. Taking a breath, he calmed down. He concentrated on the enigma once more and studied it seriously.

On the other side, Jiang Chen wasn't looking at Pill King Rong at all. He wasn't even looking towards the opposite side. Pill King Rong's performance wasn't concerning him in the slightest. No

matter how well he performed, the prerequisite to even get a draw with Jiang Chen was to master the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma. In other words, this match was going to be a draw at best.

But if his opponent had mastered the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma beforehand, then he wouldn't be scratching his head anxiously and furrowing his eyebrows in thought. He should've turned in his answer a long time ago just like Jiang Chen. That was why Jiang Chen's mindset was as firm as a mountain. He'd known early on that this round was his already. Meanwhile, House Wei was unsure as to what Jiang Chen was planning. Thankfully, they had seen all sorts of miracles from Jiang Chen, so they didn't try to interrupt him, even though they itched to do. However, they weren't able to hide their anxiety from appearing on their face.

Finally, the hour passed. Although Pill King Rong was feeling a little reluctant, he turned in his paper obediently. He also shot a fierce glare at Jiang Chen in passing, as if it could increase his morale and aid him in beating his enemy. Jiang Chen smiled disdainfully and swept his glance right past Pill King Rong like he was watching an idiot preen.

Now that both scrolls had been turned in, Pill King Yu was anxious to look at Jiang Chen's answer. He had been observing Jiang Chen since the beginning, and didn't find any signs of the impatience he'd expected. So why had he turned in his answers so early?

In Chinese, this name is derived from puzzles often found in Chinese weiqi/Japanese Go. The stones are set on a weiqi board in a predetermined pattern, and it's up to the player to determine the proper moves to finish it. Decans are 36 groups of stars used in Ancient Egypt astronomy as well as the East Asian zodiac. In the

zodiac, the groups of stars form clusters known as the 36 Calendar Animals. There are four main clusters, with each cluster made up of nine deity animals. The four clusters represent the cardinal directions, and each cluster is further divided into triads of animals.

Chapter 772: Comparisons Beget Frustration

Pill King Yu was rather eager to announce the results—he simply couldn't see through House Wei's guest pill king. Was he a frivolous person pretending to be earnest, or did he truly have other tricks up his sleeves? The judge put Pill King Rong's scroll to one side and opened Jiang Chen's first. Nobody felt it odd that the earlier submission was being reviewed first. It was in the following moment that a truly baffling scene played out. Pill King Yu`s eyes were glued to the scroll after a first sweep through its contents. It was as if some invisible force was drawing him in. He jumped up from his seat in excitement—appearing both shocked and delighted as his face eventually lit up—it was almost as if he was intoxicated. Every change in expression were vividly displayed on his face.

The audience was stunned by the scene playing out before them. What within the scroll was so attractive that it could cause a dignified, solemn pill king to act in such an odd manner?

The other pill kings couldn't help but come together to discuss this matter. The other judges were also racking their brains while glancing at the scroll. Their expressions were similar to kids fighting over candy; no one was willing to give way.

"Hahaha..." Pill King Yu suddenly broke into laughter. His eyes were tinged red as tears fell uncontrollably. He stayed hunched over the desk and sobbed. This odd scene petrified everyone present.

And what was the matter now? Why had Pill King Yu broken into tears without rhyme or reason? Was there a reason to be so emotional? Could it be that the pill king from Taiyuan Tower had submitted some melodramatic tale instead of pill recipes? How on earth could he have forced a pill king, who had lived for no less than a thousand years, to lose his composure and even break down into tears?

"I'd never have thought... thought that I would live to see a completed Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma. Who would've thought? This... is this divine providence?"

Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma? Many pill kings were shocked after hearing these six words. They had heard of the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma before, but most of them were only familiar with the name and not its contents. They didn't fully know the 36 spirit herbs, to say nothing of 36 pill recipes. However, many had still heard of the famed Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma.

Being a senior in pill dao, Pill King Yu was vastly experienced and informed. He was conversant with the 36 spirit herbs, but had never seen the completed 36 pill recipes of Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma. That was why he had lost his composure so dramatically, and couldn't help but break into loud sobs after seeing Jiang Chen's answer scroll. He was particularly excited. Despite his advanced level in pill dao and the hundreds of years he`d poured into studying the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma, he'd only been able to unravel some twenty odd pill recipes. He'd always suspected, deep in his heart, that this Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma was bogus, a pretentious trick of their forebears. He'd thought that creating 36 pill recipes might not actually be possible. But today, he'd discovered that he was still truly a frog at the bottom of the well

despite being a ninth rank pill king. The Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma was an ancient and renowned pill riddle. How could it be fake?

The other judges studying the scroll were intoxicated by the contents as they lost themselves within. It took a good while before they finally came back to themselves. They then turned to Pill King Rong's scroll and found nine pill recipes described within. Under normal circumstances, completing this much within an hour was quite good. But it was no better than trash when compared to Jiang Chen's scroll. After regaining control of his emotions with visible effort, Pill King Yu announced loudly. "For the first round, the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma, the victory goes to Taiyuan Tower by an overwhelming margin!"

A fair amount of subjectivity was obvious within Pill King Yu's tone. Normally, words like "overwhelming margin" shouldn't be used by a judge. Pill King Yu, however, still felt that to be insufficient to express the ecstatic delight in his heart. "Countless top ranked pill kings in the Divine Abyss Continent have been unable to crack this Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma. Who would've thought that today, it'd be revealed in its entirety? Having lived for so long, I finally understand why a man enlightened in the morning would accept if he were to die in the evening!"

Although the less educated were unable to fully comprehend these erudite words, they were able to grasp the general idea. Pill King Yu was greatly moved and felt that being able to see the completed Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma was a great revelation. He would have no regrets even if he died then and there. Many turned pale with astonishment as word spread through the surrounding pill kings.

The completed Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma? There was actually someone in the Divine Abyss Continent who could complete the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma? This was a legend of the Divine Abyss Continent—a pill riddle for which there was no solution! A mere pill king of House Wei was actually able to decipher the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma and write down all 36 pill recipes?

This news once again petrified everyone present. Even Wang Teng couldn't help but speak out. "Pill King Yu, I hope I don't come across as skeptical, but I've also heard of this Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma. I`ve heard it to be an unsolvable riddle. Could this brat have deliberately misled everyone?"

Pill King Yu's expression turned solem. "Young master Wang, are you suspecting our professional integrity or questioning our working standards?" Pill King Yu was obviously upset. The Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma was a divine puzzle to him. How could he tolerate Wang Teng's blasphemy? He spoke loudly, "This old man has been trying to unravel the mysteries behind this riddle for hundreds of years and am most qualified to judge this matter. I've only been able to come up with twenty three pill recipes in total. The ones I've discovered are all in this answer scroll along with the thirteen that I haven't! Whoever questions the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma is committing blasphemy!"

Pill King Yu's attitude made everything clear. The other judges all nodded in agreement. They had all studied this Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma at some point in their lives and knew that the answer scroll wasn't fake.

An unreconciled Wang Teng continued to press his case, “Pill King Yu is one of the most prominent experts of the pill trade in the Veluriyam Capital. Even you, your excellency, can only deduce twenty three recipes, and yet a mere guest pill king was able to decipher the whole pill chart in just a quarter of an hour. Does no one else find this odd?”

Wang Teng immediately shifted the spearhead towards Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smiled nonchalantly and glanced at Wang Teng as though the latter was an idiot. “Could it be that I’m required to report how I mastered the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma to Sir Wang?”

He was giving them a taste of their own medicine. When they had previously discussed the origins of the Longevity Pill, Wang Teng had stated that they had no need to prove nor report anything regarding the source of the pills to him. Jiang Chen was simply returning the favor in kind.

Wang Teng’s ears turned scarlet, momentarily lost for a retort. On the other hand, Pill King Yu was feeling a complex blend of remorse and curiosity. He was regretting looking down on House Wei’s guest pill king earlier, thinking the latter was giving up on the competition. But he was also curious as to how this guest pill king from House Wei was so knowledgeable about the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma.

“Pill King Zhen, this old man means no offense, but I hope you can indulge my curiosity. The Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma is an

unsolvable conundrum of the Divine Abyss Continent. Where... where did you see this completed version?" Pill King Yu wasn't deliberately making things difficult for Jiang Chen. He was truly just curious, and his tone was that of requesting a consultation.

Jiang Chen laughed, "Actually there's no such thing as an unsolvable conundrum. I had the fortune of meeting a sage during my youth, from whom I learned the dao of pills for over ten years. My mentor was a rather eccentric senior. He told me many interesting stories about the field of pills and medicine. I heard of this Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma`s solution when I was ten, and committed it to memory ever since."

Pill King Yu was absolutely dumbstruck when he heard Jiang Chen's words. He had studied this riddle religiously for hundreds of years, but this person in front of him had mastered it at the age of ten. This... this is what was meant by comparisons begetting frustration! However, Pill King Yu was already an elder and naturally wouldn't succumb to jealousy. He was surprised, but now even more curious after hearing Pill King Zhen's description of his mentor. Just how powerful a pill dao expert would his master be? Pill King Yu's mind was besieged with a great many questions. He wanted nothing more than to sit down and chat with Jiang Chen deep into the night, nay, for three days and three nights straight! But he didn't forget that he was currently judging a wager between two houses. It wasn't proper for him to express too much of his emotions at this point. It might lead to unnecessary finger-pointing.

He suppressed his curiosity for the moment and nodded slowly before glancing communicatively at the other eight judges. They all came to a unanimous final decision that there was no doubt

about Taiyuan Tower's victory in the first round. Wang Teng was utterly dissatisfied and full of suspicions. But the other party had no obligation to report anything to him, much like the matter regarding the Longevity Pill. He gnashed his teeth in frustration, but could only pinch his nose and eat the loss. Fortunately, this was just an unexpected development. "Damn, what a lucky bastard! This brat mastered the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma a long time ago. He just won by pure luck this round!" Wang Teng consoled himself.

Pill King Yu slowly regained control over his emotions. "The second round of the pill king contest takes a different approach from the first, but still moves in the same direction. This time, we'll be testing not only the pill kings' theoretical knowledge, but also their practical skills." As he explained, he waved his hands to summon two assistants to his side.

Each assistants carried a large tray, on which was an identical set of forty eight spirit herbs. The grade of these ingredients weren't very high. Most of them were only spirit herbs suitable for use by origin realm cultivators.

"You will both be given a set of forty eight spirit herbs with some of the strongest fusion properties. A large number of possible combinations are possible between them. Your objective is to compose a pill recipe with these and then refine your pill. The competitor whose product is of a higher rank will be declared victor. We'll judge based on the purity and quality of the pills if the final products are of identical rank. Supreme rank pills are the most optimal, followed by upper rank, and then mid and lower rank." Pill King Yu read the rules out loud. Jiang Chen was already quite familiar with them. These contests were quite popular in the

Divine Abyss Continent. He had already experienced a similar competition back at Mt. Rippling Mirage.

After receiving their respective trays, the two contestants were immediately isolated from the outside world by restrictive formations. “Remember, the time limit for this stage of the competition is two hours. If every aspect of your products are identical, the person who first completes the refinement is the winner,” Pill King Yu reminded.

Chapter 773: An Odd Choice of Materials

The round officially started after the judge's declaration. Both participating pill kings were isolated inside a restriction formation that allowed the people outside to see through it, but not vice versa. Therefore, there was no need to worry about copycats. The one thing Jiang Chen was most familiar with during his past life was refining pills. The moment the restriction activated, he immediately attuned himself with nature. The forty eight spirit materials appeared in his mind and merged with each other over and over. His mind was like highly precise machine that swiftly tested all kinds of combinations. To Jiang Chen, this state was as easy as eating or sleeping.

The level of all forty eight materials definitely wasn't high. They were just saint rank spirit herbs that corresponded to origin realm cultivators. True saint rank herbs were the ones that corresponded to sage realm cultivators. There were pitifully few true saint rank spirit herbs in the given forty eight, just eight. They were obviously insufficient for a pill recipe.

Jiang Chen's mind began to spin quickly. He had two lifetimes of pill refining experience, so the thing he lacked the least was experience. These spirit herbs felt as familiar as his own fingertips. Countless thoughts and inspirations came to him. A couple of pill recipes appeared in his mind. However, the level of the pill recipes weren't that high. They could barely be considered a quasi-true saint rank recipe, but this wasn't the result Jiang Chen wanted.

"This is an incredibly demanding round. I'll be able to win as long as the pill's level is high enough. Therefore, the key to victory for this match lies in the sophistication of my pill's level, not its

level of precision." Jiang Chen understood the rules and knew that a high level would automatically deliver victory to him. If the spirit herbs were all of the same rank, then it would be a competition of precision, purity and quality.

Jiang Chen swept his gaze across the spirit herbs again. Once, twice... Two hours had been allotted for this round. Therefore, it was unrealistic to dream of creating an exceptionally high level pill. However, he couldn't guarantee victory if the pill's level was too low.

Suddenly, an idea came into Jiang Chen's mind. As of late, he had spent plenty of time researching the Deviant Pill Faction. Wasn't their creed one about using the strangest materials to create the most unique and famous pill recipes? The most direct pursuit of the Deviant Pill Faction was to use strange materials and unexpected refining methods to create familiar pills. They also sought recipes that cut costs to a minimum. A pill made by the Deviant Pill Faction might cost less than half of what other people used when creating the same pill.

The Deviant Pill Faction was known for their uncanny craftsmanship, seeking a path in pill dao that went against orthodoxy. They were often able to use cheap materials to refine high level pills. It wasn't uncommon for them to come up with extraordinary results that looked like true alchemy as they sought to excavate the maximum potential of spirit herbs. This was also the biggest charm of this faction, or they wouldn't have become an outstanding name among many other pill dao factions, drawing the fanatical admiration of countless pill masters and turning them into diehard fans of the Deviant Pill Faction.

It was undeniable that many pill kings had great skill in pill refining. However, most of them had an obscene amount of wastage when it came to their refining process. Any high level pill they refined was the result of mountains of high rank spirit herbs. They would ensure success with pure quantity, and then skill. Even if they wasted their materials, it only made them look better to their peers.

Meanwhile, the Deviant Pill Faction hated inefficiency to the core. If they could refine a pill just using saint rank materials, they would never use a true saint rank materials. This was the charm of the Deviant Pill Faction. Their pursuit for cost reduction had reached an insane level of devotion. Quite a lot of inspiration came to Jiang Chen after he started to approach things like one of the Deviant Pill Faction. Suddenly, a pill's name appeared in Jiang Chen's mind.

The Triphase Pill! This pill could create the cycle of earth, wood and fire elements inside one's body. The term 'Triphase' represented the cycles of the three elements. Earth grows wood, wood feeds fire, and fire reduces all to earth... The Triphase Pill differed from the great five phase cycle. It was a three phase cycle that enabled cultivators who cultivated these three elements to instantly replenish their inner energy.

There were no cultivators – even the emperor realm cultivators – whose inner energy was inexhaustible. Cultivators cultivated energy, and energy was a consumable resource. A cultivator would use up large amounts of inner energy in battle, over long distances, or just practicing their art. Even Titled Great Emperors might exhaust their inner energy if they were embroiled in an intense battle and had executed several powerful techniques in a row. The

Triphase Pill was a pill that sought to remedy that by replenishing one's inner energy.

Of course, the target of the Triphase Pill was extremely specific. It was made only for cultivators whose attributes were that of earth, wood and fire. One could say that this pill was tailored for just those cultivators. Moreover, the most amazing thing about the Triphase Pill was that it had no cultivation restriction. It could be used by either origin, sage or emperor realm cultivators. The level of the pill was usually solely determined by the level of the user. If the pill worked for a sage realm cultivator, then it would be categorized as a true saint rank pill. If it worked for an emperor realm cultivator, then it would be categorized as an earth rank pill. In general, the Triphase Pill was most commonly used by sage realm cultivators. Thus, most often treated it as a true saint rank pill.

Jiang Chen stared at the materials in his hands and deduced that he absolutely could refine the Triphase Pill with them if he followed the style of the Deviant Pill Faction. Moreover, he was sure that the pill's level would be quite high. That was how incredible the Deviant Pill Faction was. It wasn't impossible to create an earth rank pill with saint rank spirit herbs. Of course, it was normally inconceivable for such a ridiculous leap in rank to happen.

Generally speaking, a leap of one rank was pretty common, but a leap of two ranks was definitely a lot more difficult. An apt comparison would be the notion of refining a sky rank pill with just true saint rank spirit herbs. It was a difficult task even for a Deviant Pill Faction pill master. Even the masters of the Deviant Pill Faction prayed for luck sometimes. They couldn't always

create a miracle anytime they wanted to. They had to combine all kinds of coincidences to be able to occasionally manifest a success.

Jiang Chen gave his Triphase Pill recipe a thorough simulation and was confident that he had a ninety percent chance of success. Normally, a pill master would jump straight to work if the pill even had a thirty percent chance of success. Jiang Chen took a moment to settle his emotions, took out the Skysnatcher Cauldron and began heating it...

He had spent a lot of time in researching the Skysnatcher Cauldron lately, and he had come to the conclusion that this cauldron was very much a product of the Deviant Pill Faction. The style of its creation and naming was very in keeping with an outstanding achievement of the Deviant Pill Faction. Skysnatcher was as its name implied. Its function was to snatch fortune from heavens' hands. This school of thought was definitely deserving of this claim.

Jiang Chen had used the Skysnatcher Cauldron a few times, and the results had been even better than he'd imagined. With the Skysnatcher Cauldron in hand, he felt like the chances of successfully refining the Triphase Pill had increased dramatically.

Two hours weren't long, and Jiang Chen wasn't willing to waste even a second. Once he had selected all the materials to refine the Triphase Pill, he immediately discarded the rest to a corner. The speed at which Jiang Chen had chosen his materials surprised a lot of the onlookers. The nine judges were exchanging glances with each other. They couldn't possibly overlook the fact that there was only one true saint rank spirit herb out of all the materials that

Jiang Chen had selected. The rest were all saint rank spirit herbs. Pill King Yu felt a twinge of surprise. Out of all forty eight types of spirit herbs, only eight were true saint rank spirit herbs. Technically speaking, Jiang Chen should have selected at least five of them to be able to refine a pill of the highest level. So why had this pill king of House Wei selected only one true saint rank spirit herb? The rest of his materials were all just saint rank spirit herbs. This selection was quite perplexing.

Pill King Yu really admired Jiang Chen. The Tiger Eruption Pill, Heptarune True Dragon Pill and Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill were obvious indicators of Pill King Zhen's youthful potential. The revelation of the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma especially, had laid out a new world before Pill King Yu's eyes. But now, he was a little disappointed at Jiang Chen's choice of spirit herbs. With those materials, the best he would be able to refine was an upper level saint rank pill. Even if he overperformed, the absolute best he could come up with was a quasi-true saint rank pill.

What was the quasi-true saint rank? That was the designation for pills that were in reality just a saint rank pill, though it could barely be categorized as a true saint rank pill. If the bar was set a bit lower, then it could be called a true saint rank pill. If the bar was a tad higher, then it could a saint rank pill. That was what quasi-true saint rank meant.

"This Pill King Zhen had the benefit of an extraordinary teacher in pill dao when he was young, but he ultimately lacks in practical experience. He may be well versed with many high level classics and fixed pill recipes, but he is too young and poor because of his age. His knowledge might not be able to make up for his lack of experience." Although Pill King Yu felt a little pity for Pill King

Zhen, the former's admiration hadn't fallen because of this conclusion he'd formed. In his opinion, Pill King Zhen was only suffering from a lack of age and experience. With his intelligence and comprehensive ability, he would most likely become a famous pill king in the future.

The rest of the judges were also shaking their heads inwardly after they saw Jiang Chen's choice of spirit herbs. They'd also seen the materials Pill King Rong had selected. As experts in pill dao, they already knew from his materials that he was aiming to refine a mid level true saint rank pill. It would be very impressive if he was able to do this in just one hour's time. Even if the judges were to take the field themselves, that was likely the best they could've come up with. Though it wasn't the highest possible level of pill they could come up with, Pill King Rong looked like he had a ninety chance of winning this battle.

After all, even if the pill master wished to create a high level pill and came up with the materials to do so, two hours were simply insufficient to refine a higher level pill. This two-hour time limit was extremely important in that it prevented either party from creating a higher level pill with the available spirit herbs. A limit on time and material squeezed the competitors down to the wire.

The audience wasn't as professional as the nine judges, nor their insight as sharp, but they still gleaned a bit from both pill masters' choice of materials. No matter how they looked at it, the choice of materials made by Taiyuan Lodge's Pill King Rong were of a much higher level than Pill King Zhen's.

Chapter 774: Stunning Fire Control Technique

Wei Tianxiao was somewhat disappointed after seeing Jiang Chen's herb selection, but he wasn't convinced of the outcome. He knew that having a second rank pill king compete against a sixth rank pill king was already quite unfair. But he also knew that there was no other way out. They would at least go down in style! Even if they lost the wager, they'd at least express their loyalty clearly to the Coiling Dragon Clan.

Young master Ji San's thoughts, however, were not on the competition. He was still in stunned shock. His thoughts had been wandering after Pill King Zhen had deciphered the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma. He recalled the Pine Crane Pill Jiang Chen had mentioned before. He had been somewhat skeptical at first, believing its effects to have been exaggerated. But after witnessing the completion of the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma, young master Ji San couldn't help but realize that this Pill King Zhen from House Wei might be a person of great origins. He wasn't privy to Pill King Zhen's actual identity, but was certain the latter had been mentored by a great master. Furthermore, this teacher should be at a much higher level than these top ranked pill kings like Pill King Yu. This also meant that his teacher might possible be one of those fabled pill emperors! But even so, one of those legendary existences still might not be able to grasp the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma in its entirety.

A pill dao expert with a complete grasp of the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma couldn't possibly be lacking in knowledge and experience. It was highly unlikely that Pill King Zhen's claim regarding the existence of the Pine Crane Pill was just an

irresponsible remark. Young master Ji San had only previously seven parts confident, but now he was absolutely convinced. “This Pill King Zhen is definitely someone with a glorious future. I, Ji Ole Third, have made countless friends but laughably, all are fairweather companions. Very few can be counted on in times of need. It’s actually this incidental acquaintance who might have such a potential. I must maintain this friendship no matter the outcome of this competition. Our Coiling Dragon Clan may yet rise again, if in the future, we find an opportunity to request a batch of Pine Crane Pills of his master .”

Imagining all the wonderful possibilities greatly excited young master Ji San. As for the present contest, he didn’t particularly care about it. What did temporary gains or losses matter? His thoughts and energy were focused on the Pine Crane Pill. They already possessed the Goldencrown Cloudcrane and only lacked the pinecone from the Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine. Young master Ji San firmly believed the heavens wouldn’t bar every path. No matter how concealed, there was bound to be a path towards hope and light amidst the heavenly dao.

In contrast to the young master Ji San who lost in reverie, those from the Majestic Clan were all highly focused and confident. The seventh rank pill king was the highest ranking member of Wang Teng’s entourage. He was reporting something to the latter. “Young clan lord, Pill King Rong’s selected batch of materials is higher than Taiyuan Tower’s by an entire level. We’re almost certain to win this round, considering Pill King Rong’s skill as a sixth rank pill king. Now it only remains for us to see whether he can successfully complete the refining within two hours.” This seventh rank pill king possessed piercing insight. He’d also observed the brilliance of Pill King Rong’s herb selection, just as the judges had.

Wang Teng had also noticed the technical disparity and nodded with delight. He was all smiles; he felt everything was proceeding according to plan. Taiyuan Lodge had already obtained victory during the first stage. Their opponent had won the first round of the second stage by sheer luck. But if Taiyuan Lodge won the second round, their scores would draw again. Then Taiyuan Lodge would only need to win the third round of the second stage to become the victor of the whole competition. House Wei's store would then change ownership and become the Majestic Clan's property!

Wang Teng was feeling ecstatic at the mere thought. He'd have trampled House Wei, slapped the Coiling Dragon Clan's face and secured House Wei's store in the Farmer's God Street Market at the same time. It was like killing three birds with one stone! Truthfully, Wang Teng had harbored certain misgivings before the contest had begun. He was suspicious of House Wei's unusual storefront wager. But at the moment, he was quite certain that it had been a bluff in order to force him to back off and suppress the Taiyuan Lodge's morale.

Humph! Did you think this kind of scheme can trick our Majestic Clan? You lot from House Wei think too highly of yourselves! Wang Teng felt inwardly disdainful and reckoned that House Wei must've be hopping mad at the moment. No one in their right mind would offer their only storefront at Farmer's God Market as a wager. A mere ninth rank aristocratic family wants to compete against my Majestic Clan? They're simply looking to die!

Wang Teng was supremely smug. Victory was now in sight and so close at that. This sense of accomplishment elevated his mood

greatly. It was as if he was already standing on the summit and taking in the panoramic scenery.

He couldn't help but glance at young master Ji San with glee. He wanted to see young master Ji San's troubled expression. But Wang Teng didn't expect to see the other lost in reverie as if the present contest didn't concern him in the least.

"Could Ji Ole Third have abandoned all hope?" Wang Teng felt a shred of uncertainty after seeing the young master's current state. He then turned to check on the father and son from House Wei. They were now looking rather distressed. This was especially true of Wei Tianxiao, who'd almost turned green. Wang Teng was reassured after seeing their expressions.

"Wei Tianxiao, this is what happens when you refuse my toast. You're forced to drink a forfeit! Our Majestic Clan gave House Wei an opportunity. Not only did you scorn our kindness, but you also worked to oppose us! You simply don't know how to recognize the change of the times!" Wang Teng's contagious delight affected the father and son from House Tong as well as their subordinates. Victory seemed almost assured for those from the Taiyuan Lodge.

Others from within the audience secretly sighed after seeing Jiang Chen's selection of materials. They were originally hoping that Taiyuan Tower would produce a miracle of sorts and take the second stage of the competition in one fell swoop. They wanted him to prove it was possible for the weak to triumph over the powerful! But as things stood, it seemed the powerful were still powerful in the end, just as the weak were still weak. The Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma was likely just an unexpected hitch!

Jiang Chen was now already lost in his own world of pill dao. Ordinary folks couldn't comprehend the methods of the Deviant Pill Faction. But the principles were clear as day to him. The two hour time limit was quite pressing. Jiang Chen couldn't and didn't hide his strength any longer. He began to exhibit all of his various techniques, and only the heavens knew just how many fire control techniques Jiang Chen had mastered. However, this was obviously not the right occasion to show off flashy techniques. He merely activated the True Fires of Ninety Nine, the technique that had thoroughly filled Shen Trifire with admiration back at the Regal Pill Palace. The True Fires of Ninety Nine utilized the principles of layering and demanded fine control skills and proficient composition ability.

Jiang Chen had played with the True Fires of Ninety Nine countless times during his past life. But he wouldn't have chosen to use it here if he didn't have to consider the strict time limit. But the current situation was urgent and required more intense flames than usual. Furthermore, the Deviant Pill Faction didn't reject such fire control techniques. On the contrary, they even preferred them.

Pill King Yu's eyes lit up the moment Jiang Chen started his fire control technique. He'd just been sighing after witnessing Jiang Chen's selection of herbs and immediately noticed something different about this technique. Simply watching this fire control ability felt breathtaking.

Pill King Zhen had selected a batch of mediocre ingredients, but his fire control was spectacular! The contrast was too extreme. Pill King Yu's wildly fluctuating impressions made it difficult for him

to accurately judge this young pill king. “Could it be that I’ve misjudged him? Is there some hidden wisdom behind his choice of unremarkable materials?” Pill King Yu was not one to go about with his nose in the air just because he was a ninth rank pill king. On the contrary, he was still full of passion and still hungered for new knowledge. Pill King Yu’s eyes naturally lit up when he witnessed a fire control technique the like even he’d never seen before.

“It seems this Pill King Zhen had truly been mentored by an illustrious master. His fire control technique is obviously extraordinary. I have travelled far and wide throughout the Upper Eight Regions and exchanged knowledge with countless peers, yet I’ve never seen such a technique of fire control. I truly wonder who Pill King Zhen’s master is.” Pill King Yu was afire with curiosity regarding Jiang Chen’s origins. How powerful would the mentor be if even the student is so accomplished? He had to admit that the mentor of House Wei’s pill king must be someone at a much higher level than himself. He was, no doubt, a pill emperor. Pill King Yu was even slightly envious of Jiang Chen at this point.

Jiang Chen’s fire control technique also gave pause to many who were previously certain of his defeat. Although not everyone was a pill dao genius, they were still able to discern the skill of such a technique. Not even a high ranking pill king might be able to perform such a high level fire control method.

“Who would’ve thought House Wei had invited a genius in fire control!” The spectators were secretly surprised. Even Wei Tianxiao felt momentarily enraptured and forgot to bother with calculating his potential losses.

The highly complacent Wang Teng began to frown after seeing Jiang Chen's fire control technique. "This brat wasn't just for show after all. It seems his fire control technique was indeed taught to him by a great master." Wang Teng was startled, but he didn't believe the opponent would win with just this fire control technique. In the end, pill refining required a comprehensive set of skills. Defeat was assured if one couldn't refine the higher ranked pill, no matter how dazzling his fire control abilities were. That was the reason why Wang Teng was still fairly calm despite being somewhat surprised.

The nine judges, however, had already forgotten to observe Pill King Rong—the latter's choice of materials and refinement methods were all conventional—they'd probably be performing the same procedures in his shoes. The process itself wasn't very different, the only distinction being the brilliance of one's methods. It wasn't exactly something to wait with bated breaths. But it was an entirely different matter with House Wei's pill king. His selection of ingredients was mediocre at best, but his fire control technique was extremely brilliant. How could a person with such deep knowledge of fire control techniques not know how to select materials properly? They all felt it impossible. They were all eager to be the first to witness what new and dazzling technique House Wei's pill king had to show them.

Chapter 775: The Triphase Pill

Jiang Chen had never underperformed on the matter of pills. Though it was only a small display of skill, the requisite degree of technique for this segment was rather high. Only experts could appreciate artistry; the rest were just along for the ride. Jiang Chen's plain choice of materials was universally deemed mediocre, because no depth of skill could be appreciated from the act. But when Jiang Chen began to show his fire-controlling skills, the experts present began to recognize his finesse.

Moreover, the methodology that followed caused more than a little head-scratching. It completely defied common expectations. The materials were thrown in with almost careless abandon. It seemed completely random. In that moment, even Pill King Yu was perplexed by the eccentricity of Jiang Chen's technique. What pill is he refining, really?

Pill King Yu was more than a little confounded. Jiang Chen's technique seemed to follow no rhyme or reason, and very little about it looked routine. Usually when making pills, the timing of inserting materials and how the fire should be controlled followed a series of rigid steps. A certain mastery and precision of heat and timing was needed. Doubtless, Jiang Chen's haphazard technique would have left a terrible impression on any pill king with a serious and inflexible personality. How was this attitude suitable for making pills? He was playing like a child!

However, after a period of careful observation, Pill King Yu noticed a hidden order to Jiang Chen's madness. Though his placement of materials seemed random, there was still some logic to it, although not a pattern of thinking normal people could make

heads or tails of.

“Pill King Zhen uses some strange techniques, but there’s a pattern. Each time, he first puts in an earth element spirit herb, then a wood element, then a fire element … this cycle is repeated three times, for a total of nine ingredients. …Hmm? What a unique pill-making technique. Isn’t it too simple with only materials from three elements? How would such monotonous elements be fused together?” Pill King Yu gleaned little insights from his observations. Though he didn’t miss a single detail, he couldn’t put the full picture together. He was utterly mystified by the proceedings.

“Pill King Yu, Taiyuan Tower’s pill king… what pill is he making?” Another judge poked his head over, asking in hushed tones. The other judges’ faces were similarly lit up with curiosity. Jiang Chen’s bizarre actions were too difficult for them to understand.

Pill King Yu smiled wryly, scratching at his head of white hair. “I can’t make anything of it either. His choice of material and methodologies are too radical. If he’s not just playing, then the only thing that comes to mind is that school that’s almost died out…”

“The Deviant Pill Faction?” Another pill king to the side piped up as a lightbulb flashed. The other judges turned solemn as well at the three words ‘Deviant Pill Faction’. That faction?

It was a pill faction that was almost legendary. Rumors had been circulating for ages, but a true master of the faction was

exceedingly rare. A few pills from that faction circulated through the open markets every so often, but many of those pills were such in form only, not in spirit. Though they claimed to be of the Deviant Pill Faction, they lacked the various essential qualities that were their trademark. Many followed the faction, but pill masters worthy of the name were pitiably few. Oftentimes, pill masters merely borrowed from the methods of the faction, or grasped only a few basics. They couldn't be counted as purists of the faction at all.

But, even so, as a mysterious faction in the pill world, the Deviant Pill Faction enjoyed an excellent reputation. Though some traditional pill factions were dismissive of the Deviant Pill Faction, and felt it was far too unorthodox for the mainstream, their discrimination and disdain was understandable. For the past thousand years or so, no master of the faction had risen in the Divine Abyss Continent. Let alone pill emperors, few pill kings were found worthy of representing the faction. Thus, the Deviant Pill Faction was quite a divisive topic for many. Those who worshipped the faction, and those who despised it—both sides took their views to the extremes. Of course, most pill experts didn't have such ardent views. They were amenable to learning from the philosophy of the faction without blindly worshipping it, and moreover would never go to the extent of declaring it worthless.

The sight of Jiang Chen's peculiar technique, coupled with Pill King Yu's reminder, shed a ray of sudden light into the hearts of those present. If not the Deviant Pill Faction, where else could such unusual pill-making techniques be found?

"It is said that the Deviant Pill Faction specializes in creating the extraordinary out of the ordinary. They focus on making high rank

pills with low rank medicine. I wonder if this Pill King Zhen can show us such a miracle?" Out of the nine judges, two were rabid fans of the faction. The one who had spoken was an eighth rank pill king.

"Hmph, many up-and-coming youngsters call themselves adherents of the faction, but which one of that rabble has actually made a name for themselves? Ultimately, the Deviant Pill Faction is just that—a bunch of deviants." With fanatic admirers came stubborn critics.

"Haha, Pill King Zhao, your thoughts do not keep up with the times. With the Deviant Pill Faction, one is either a great genius whose name resounds under the heavens, or falls to the wayside." Hearing criticism of the faction, the enthusiast who'd spoken prior fired off a displeased retort.

"Great genius?" Pill King Zhao sneered. "Then let us see what tricks he has up his sleeve. Deviant Pill Faction, heh heh..."

Pill King Yu didn't quite have a dog in the fight. He paid more mind to the techniques themselves. From his perspective, House Wei's Pill King Zhen was very likely a genius with actual skill, and not someone who merely made empty boasts. Two hours was a short time, but waiting through these two in particular was particularly arduous. An anxious fire was lit in people's hearts. Everyone was eagerly anticipating the results, judges included.

In the Veluriyam Capital, observing techniques from the Deviant Pill Faction was exceedingly rare. Though some works surfaced from time to time, the pill masters behind those works never

revealed their pill-making process. All of the faction's techniques were to be treasured in private, not casually shown to the masses. Their opportunity to publicly peruse Jiang Chen's technique was a rare occurrence indeed. Despite this, their ability to actually decipher the technique was uncertain, even after potentially watching it a dozen or hundred times. After all, there were many hidden details embedded within the techniques that couldn't be interpreted without extensive guidance. It was nearly impossible to decrypt the technique on one's own.

Time passed, and the two hours neared their conclusions.

Refining the pill was greatly taxing for Jiang Chen. Thankfully, everything went mostly according to plan, and he was just about to wrap things up. Nevertheless, Jiang Chen couldn't relax. Expertly making various hand seals without pause, Jiang Chen's fingers danced in the air.

"The Triphase Pill usually takes four to six hours to make. Compressing it into two really takes its toll." Jiang Chen felt a little fatigued, but he also felt very comfortable. He had a feeling that the batch of Triphase Pills would turn out well. At the same time, he rejoiced in his good fortune. "This kind of time saving refining process takes too much energy. I should be more careful about attempting it in the future."

As Jiang Chen slowly extinguishing the final embers of his flame, the temperature within the Skysnatcher Cauldron began to decrease. Tricolored smoke began to curl upward from the vessel. From the color of the smoke and the resonance of the pills audible to his Ear of the Zephyr, Jiang Chen knew that the risk he had

taken had paid off. The time it took for the Skysnatcher Caudron to completely cool also signaled the conclusion of the two hours.

Opening the cauldron, Jiang Chen was greeted by the sight of six Triphase Pills. Like well-worn jade, they gave off strong waves of vitality. His eyes lit up. The rank of these Triphase Pills were even better than he expected. Even if they could no be counted as quasi-earth rank pills, they were still peak true saint rank.

On the opposite side, Pill King Rong's refining was also coming to an end. His smile of satisfaction was a clear giveaway that he had been able to bring his skills almost fully to bear. As expected, he was the first to the judges' table.

"Honorable judges, I had the fortune of refining several Jade Marrow Pills of the true saint rank. Please feel free to give your judgment." The results that Pill King Rong submitted were not out of the judges' expectations. It had been easy to guess the pill king's intent of refining the Jade Marrow Pill from his choice of ingredients.

The Jade Marrow Pill was a true saint rank pill. Even a poorly made one would still be a lower true saint rank. A pill that was of somewhat better quality could be counted a mid true saint pill. If purity and flawlessness were achieved, then it was quite possible to appraise the pill as an advanced true saint pill. The Jade Marrow Pill was also a pill for restoring energy and was a commonly found pill. It was used by many sage realm experts. It was especially appropriate for human sage realm experts, but could also be be used for those in the earth sage realm. For sky sage experts, however, the Jade Marrow Pill was somewhat insufficient.

Naturally, there was an improved version of the pill, the Jade Marrow Goldpill. As the improved version of the Jade Marrow Pill, the Jade Marrow Goldpill was specifically made for sky sage realm cultivators, and was of use even to those in the emperor realm.

Supposedly, those at initial emperor realm used Jade Marrow Goldpills when they were strapped for money. If one wasn't enough, two were better. Of course, despite a difference of only one word, there was nevertheless a significant distinction between the Jade Marrow Pill and the Jade Marrow Goldpill.

Pill King Rong's Jade Marrow Pill had been limited by the amount of available time, and didn't quite achieve perfection. Its wholeness and purity were both a little lacking. After a round of examination, several of the judges came to a reasonably unified opinion. The pill was mid true saint rank at most. The rest of the judges gave their feedback to Pill King Yu, who found nothing wrong with their judgement, and announced, "Taiyuan Lodge's Pill King Rong has refined the Jade Marrow Pill, appraised as a mid true saint rank pill."

A flurry of cheers from Taiyuan Lodge's side accompanied this announcement. Mid true saint rank was the most they'd expected. Materials and time had been both limited; that Pill King Rong was able to accomplish this in the short span of two hours was testament to his status as a sixth rank pill king. He had truly made the most of the situation. Those on Taiyuan Lodge's side threw looks of ridicule and derision at the Wei father and son duo. What did Taiyuan Tower have that could compare to a mid true saint rank pill? Though the work of Taiyuan Tower's pill king remained to be seen, everyone considered their loss to be certain!

Chapter 776: The Brilliant Deviant Pill Faction

Even the onlookers believed that Taiyuan Lodge was the definite victor after seeing Pill King Rong refining such a high quality pill in just two hours, much less Wang Teng. Even House Wei were staring at Jiang Chen with very serious expressions.

Jiang Chen himself looked completely calm. He stood up indifferently, chose the most excellent pill from his batch and presented it respectfully to the judges.

“My lords, this pill is called the Triphase Pill. It emphasizes the cycle of three elements where earth grows wood, wood feeds fire and fire reduces all to earth. It is also a pursuit to achieve quasi-earth rank pill quality using saint rank spirit herbs. Please review it!” Jiang Chen wasn’t afraid that these judges would lack in knowledge. He just wasn’t sure if they would recognize the Triphase Pill. A brief introduction like this would at least tell them why this pill was amazing and where its key element lay.

Indeed, a change stole across everyone’s faces, including Pill King Yu. The onlookers were even more surprised by his words. Even Wang Teng felt his heart spasm. He subconsciously thought that Jiang Chen was just shooting off his mouth. A pursuit to achieve quasi-earth rank pill quality using saint rank spirit herbs? This boast is way over the top!

True saint rank came after saint rank, and earth rank was even more advanced than true saint rank! Was he claiming that he had skipped two levels and refined an earth rank pill using saint rank

spirit herbs? This was absolutely bullshitting. He hadn't even thought through his words before opening his mouth, had he!? But Wang Teng was the young lord of clan. As such, he wasn't in the best position to publicly question the validity of Jiang Chen's claims, even if he was highly skeptical.

However, the Tong father and son had no such qualms. They were here to act as the Majestic Clan's frontline troops from the beginning. Naturally, they wouldn't back off from the chance to sing of their opponent's downfall. House lord Tong Xianwei sneered, "That's a big boast to shoot off, kid. Even the best pill king might not dare claim that they could refine an earth rank pill using saint rank herbs. Do you think the judges are three year olds who'll fall for your pathetic lies?"

Tong Kun also yelled loudly, "How dare a self-taught bastard like you behave so atrociously in the pill industry of Veluriyam Capital? Do you think so lowly of Veluriyam Capital's pill industry?"

The father and son duo was going all out for the Majestic Clan. However, Jiang Chen couldn't be bothered to quarrel with them at all. He ignored the pair completely as he maintained the faint smile on his face. He continued to wear a smile that was neither obsequious nor supercilious as he awaited the nine judges' review. As long as these judges weren't blind or biased, his Triphase Pill would absolutely defeat his opponent's Jade Marrow Pill. If his opponent's pill had been a Jade Marrow Goldpill, then perhaps there might have been an actual competition. But it was just a Jade Marrow Pill. In Jiang Chen's mind, it was completely incomparable to his Triphase Pill.

Pill King Yu felt a bit of astonishment too when he considered Jiang Chen's claims. But when he set his eyes on the Triphase Pill, a strange light immediately appeared inside them. He couldn't help but pick up the pill, hold it in his palm and carefully sense its quality. A pill king could differentiate the level and rank of a pill with a single look. This was particularly true for high rank pill kings. Their eyes were better than any precise instruments, and they could distinguish any pill's rank with a single glance. Even if they failed to get a good look at the pill, a careful feel would still reveal its quality without too much error. What was good was good, and what was bad was bad. There was no faking when it came to pills.

The more Pill King Zhen examined the pill, the more his admiration grew. He asked, "Did you say that this pill is called the Triphase Pill? The cycle of the three elements?"

"Yes," Jiang Chen smiled and answered.

"Good, very good!" Pill King Zhen slapped the table once and exclaimed in amazement, "This is practically the work of the gods! What an amazing pill. I am thoroughly impressed by the usage of materials, the skill in refining, and the pill quality of this Triphase Pill. If I may ask, what is your name, my friend?"

Jiang Chen answered, "My name is Zhen Shi."

Zhen Shi? It was obvious that none of the nine judges had heard of this name before as they exchanged puzzled glances. But Pill King Yu knew that it was impolite to dig into one's roots, and so restrained his curiosity forcefully to praise, "My friend—I'm over a

thousand years old, so I do hope I'm not going overboard by calling you a friend—this is the first time I've seen your Triphase Pill. If I may ask, does your refining practices hail from the Deviant Pill Faction?"

The rest of the judges stared at Jiang Chen closely. They very much wanted to hear Jiang Chen's answer.

Jiang Chen knew that it wasn't something he had to hide. Therefore, he nodded, "It is as you say, the handiwork of the Deviant Pil Faction. The Deviant Pill Faction pursues the goal of creating high quality pills with low cost materials. They pursue the method that stands out from the masses."

"What an amazing goal that is!" Pill King Zhen smiled as he clapped once loudly. Then, he turned to the other judges and asked, "What do you think about this pill, everyone?"

The pill king who was a die hard fan of the Deviant Pill Faction hurriedly said, "This pill is absolutely at quasi-earth rank. In my opinion, this pill will be useful even for an emperor realm cultivator. Its rank is even a tad higher than the Jade Marrow Goldpill!"

"That is true. Even the Jade Marrow Goldpill seems a tad inferior compared to this pill, much less the Jade Marrow Pill." Another Deviant Pill Faction fan echoed in agreement.

Pill King Zhao, the judge who opposed the Deviant Pill Faction, wasn't sure what to say even though he wanted to criticize the

Triphase Pill's quality. He just couldn't go against his conscience and claim that it was inferior to the Jade Marrow Pill. The gap was so obvious that he would be lying to himself to claim that the Triphase Pill was inferior to the Jade Marrow Pill. His bias would then be criticized by the public too. Therefore, he could only smile wryly and say nothing. The rest of the judges had none of Pill King Zhao's bias, so naturally they wouldn't lie to themselves and claim that the Triphase Pill was inferior to the Jade Marrow Pill. The judges discussed amongst each other for a long moment. In the end, they all nodded at Pill King Zhen. They obviously thought that the Triphase Pill absolutely qualified as a quasi-earth rank pill. In fact, even if it was an entire rank lower, the pill would still be an upper level true saint rank pill. It beat the Jade Marrow Pill without question.

Everyone on Wang Teng's side could see from the friendly interaction between Pill King Yu and House Wei's pill king that the former admired the pill king very much.

For a while, everyone on Taiyuan Lodge's side was dumbfounded. How could this be? The ingredients that kid chose had been incredibly mediocre, so how did the situation turn on its head all of a sudden? Even Pill King Yu was praising him non-stop. Were they actually going to lose this round?

Wang Teng's face instantly darkened. He found the sudden turn of events a little unacceptable. It'd come out of nowhere! If Taiyuan Lodge lost this round, then the second stage of the pill king battle was lost. Both sides would be at a draw. As a result, the competition would enter the third stage. Although Wang Teng still thought that his side was certain of victory, it was hard to say if another shift in the situation like this would appear again.

For a long moment, Wang Teng's expression was extremely ugly. He looked at his own pill king with an obvious question in his eyes. The pill king smiled wryly and sighed, "Young clan lord, the situation doesn't look good. This round was really bizarre. Even if I were to attend the battle myself, I can only do as well as Pill King Rong. This pill king of House Wei is a little strange..."

Wang Teng grew even more displeased. He hadn't thought to bring the strongest pill king in the family with him on this trip. He never thought that the outcome of this battle would deviate so far from his expectations. Although the results hadn't been announced yet, the situation was obviously very disadvantageous to him. As expected, the judges quickly came to a decision and announced, "The Triphase Pill refined by Taiyuan Tower's Pill King Zhen is of incredible quality and is skillfully made. It is also a rare, outstanding work of the Deviant Pill Faction, and we are very impressed by it. We unanimously agree that the Triphase Pill is a quasi-earth rank pill!"

Quasi-earth rank!

The weight behind these three words was palpable when they came out of Pill King Yu's mouth. Pin drop silence reigned. It was obvious that everyone was stunned by this revelation. Their entertaining expressions of surprise were all frozen on their faces, like a statue. Taiyuan Tower's Pill King Zhen had refined a quasi-earth rank pill?

Why did this sound so utterly ridiculous? It was in stark contrast with their expectations. A long moment later, Taiyuan Tower was

the first to recover from their shock and break out into loud cheers. It was obvious from the happy tears flowing down their cheeks that they were besides themselves. This unexpected victory and pleasant surprise was something no one at Taiyuan Tower had foreseen. When Pill King Rong's pill was judged to be at mid true saint rank, almost everyone at Taiyuan Tower had been plunged into deep despair. In their opinion, the maximum anyone could do with such limited materials in just two hours' time was precisely that. However, Jiang Chen had literally forced his way out of an impossible situation through pure skill and seized victory for himself!

The tens of thousands of onlookers actually became infected by Taiyuan Tower's emotions and began to applaud. For a while, the entire place was filled with thunderous claps. Wang Teng's handsome face distorted. It was obvious that this unexpected blow greatly affected his emotions. He found it difficult to swallow the outcome.

Although the tens of thousands of people likely hadn't applauded to attack the Majestic Clan, there was no doubt that it represented at least a part of their true feelings. These fence sitters might not necessarily like Taiyuan Lodge more than Taiyuan Tower! It didn't matter if they were applauding because they sympathized with the weak, or if they were impressed by the exciting pill battle before them. These claps were still slaps to his and Taiyuan Lodge's face all the same!

When the applause slowly subsided, Pill King Yu added, "Taiyuan Tower has won two rounds in a row in the second stage and are therefore the victors of the second stage. The score is now 1:1. It seems that a third stage is unavoidable!"

Young master Ji San was also stunned and extraordinarily pleased by Jiang Chen's exciting performance. This Pill King Zhen was practically a genius bestowed from heaven! He felt especially vindicated to see Wang Teng's distorted expression. He smiled and said leisurely, "This second stage has been far more exciting than the first stage. During the first stage, Taiyuan Lodge borrowed outside help and the Longevity Pill of unidentified origin to win the match. But during the second stage, Pill King Zhen won through true skill and knowledge! I personally think that Pill King Zhen will take the third stage in one fell swoop! Don't you think so, everyone?"

Young master Ji San's voice was extremely moving. All forces loyal to the Coiling Dragon Clan roared loudly with agreement. As for the fence sitters, they obviously weren't afraid to fan the flames further and joined in the commotion. For a moment, the Majestic Clan actually became the side that lacked support!

Chapter 777: Wang Teng Panics

This outcome was an ordeal to Wang Teng. He'd never imagined that the Majestic Clan, at the peak of its glory, wouldn't be as welcomed by the citizens of Veluriyam Capital as he'd imagined. The guests had seemingly chosen to grace Taiyuan Lodge not because they respected the clan, but simply because they were afraid of the clan. This feeling felt as unpalatable as eating a fly. Reality was straying further and further away from his original predictions. The victory he had felt to be set in stone had acquired a layer of uncertainty.

No, we absolutely cannot lose this match. Wang Teng knew better than anyone that the loss of this pill battle meant that the plans and arrangements they'd made for months would all go to waste. They would even lose an excellent shop front in Farmer God Market. They wouldn't just be losing face, but also actual money.

"You may have to attend to this third stage personally, Pill King Han Zhu," Wang Teng turned around and spoke to a high ranked pill king beside him when his thoughts reached their grim conclusion.

Pill King Han Zhu was among the top five pill kings in the Majestic Clan. Although he wasn't the Majestic Clan's strongest pill king, he was one of the best. Judging from the current situation and his appearance, it was obvious that Pill King Rong had lost his confidence and spirit. Be it in terms of skill or morale, Pill King Rong shouldn't participate in the third battle. Wang Teng had no intentions of losing this wager. Therefore, Pill King Han Zhu had to participate in this battle. He was the best card the Majestic Clan could play at this moment.

However, Pill King Han Zhu was in fact quite reluctant to take part in the battle. Especially after witnessing the last two stages, the risks involved in this battle were incredibly hig. If he were to slip up even a little during this third stage, he would become the sinner who'd lost the Majestic Clan the entire gamble. Therefore, he didn't want to become involved even when Wang Teng voiced his preference. All experts had a kind of intuition they'd grow to rely on, and Pill King Han Zhu couldn't shake the feeling that House Wei's pill king was an extremely strange person wielding an equally unorthodox skill in pill dao. Even if he were to attend to the battle himself, he might not necessarily be able to defeat his opponent.

He wasn't afraid of his opponent, but he was just instinctively wary of the unknown depths of the Deviant Pill Faction. It was obvious that this Pill King Zhen of House Wei was an outstanding representative of the Deviant Pill Faction. After all, Jiang Chen had displayed his prodigal skill in pill dao in the previous two stages. Pill King Han Zhu was a cautious person, and he wasn't willing to participate in a pill battle where he had no confidence in winning. Thinking quickly, Pill King Han Zhu responded, "Young master, we've set the rules and chosen the participants before the start of the match. If we were to switch members now and are turned down by the judge, this crowd might grow even rowdier than before. It'll be extremely bad if our opponent were to use this as an excuse to attack us."

Wang Teng's expression turned chilly, and he gave Pill King Han Zhu a deep, meaningful glance. Pill King Han Zhu served the Majestic Clan. Although he had shown Wang Teng every courtesy deserving of a young lord, the only person who could make him cower was the clan lord of the Majestic Clan, not the clan lord's

son. Considering how awkward the previous matches had turned out, he had absolutely no wish of partaking in this battle. Even if he did win, he wouldn't be winning much glory for himself. And if he lost, then he would be turned into a scapegoat.

The judges hadn't noticed Wang Teng's little interlude. Pill King Yu cast a glance at both sides before saying, "We will review the third stage personally. There will also be three rounds in this third stage. Anyone who wins two rounds shall win the third stage. Does anyone have any objections?" Pill King Yu paused for a moment before continuing, "You should voice any objections before this final stage begins. The moment victory is decided, the gamble cannot be changed. Nothing you say later will change the outcome."

Candid words were spoken ahead of the battle. House Wei cast a glance at Jiang Chen. At this point, they trusted Jiang Chen fully and were dead set on supporting him no matter what. Whatever hesitation they might have had disappeared when Jiang Chen soundly defeated the Jade Marrow Pill with the Triphase Pill. Naturally, they had no objections to raise. At this point, it no longer mattered if they won or lost. Even if they did lose in the end, Jiang Chen's efforts had already won back House Wei's reputation and fame in full. Therefore, Wei Jie smiled calmly and said, "We have nothing to raise."

However, Wang Teng spoke up. "I would like to request a substitution."

The moment he said this, the entire scene became engulfed in an uproar, and Pill King Han Zhu's face had turned cloudy. It was

obvious that he was extremely displeased that Wang Teng had forcefully foisted this on him. Young master Ji San sneered, “Are you daydreaming, Wang Teng? We’ve already selected our participating pill kings before the gamble, and now you wish to send in a substitute? Do you think this is all a joke? Plus, aren’t you the one who wanted to send out Pill King Rong to teach Pill King Zhen a lesson in humility? The lesson hasn’t been taught yet, has it? Or are you hoping to take that lesson instead?”

Young master Ji San had a deadly silver tongue, and his words were far sharper than any actual face slapping. Wei Tianxiao was also smiling faintly, “Young lord Wang, you are the one who started this gamble, and the rules were agreed upon by everyone. By this substitution, are you trying to tell the entirety of Veluriyam Capital that the Majestic Clan is a sore loser?”

The notion of a ‘sore loser’ had popped up again.

Wang Teng was so ashamed he could die. Countless pairs of eyes were looking at him from all directions, and most of them held nothing but ridicule. It was obvious that everyone disdained his suggestions. Pill King Yu exchanged a glance with the rest of the judges and shook his head resolutely. “The rules cannot be changed once it has been agreed upon. If you must challenge this rule, then we can only announce that Taiyuan Lodge has lost the bet.”

These words completely destroyed Wang Teng’s request to substitute Pill King Rong out. Pill King Han Zhu actually let out an discreet sigh of relief . Thank goodness I don’t need to participate in this farce. On the other hand, Pill King Rong felt a little

dejected. He was depressed because Wang Teng's suggestion was a great humiliation to him. At the same time, he himself was a little unsure if he could win this battle. This was supposed to be a piece of cake, but now the outcome was shrouded in uncertainty. No one could predict who was going to win this battle anymore. In fact, he wasn't even the favored side. Wang Teng wouldn't have requested for a substitution otherwise.

"Alright, if both sides have no more objections, then the third stage of the pill battle will now begin."

The third stage of the pill battle was in fact quite similar to the second stage. It was still a competition between pill kings, and the process was almost the same. "For the first round of the third stage, please refine the pills you displayed during the first stage. You must be able to refine all three types of pills. Whoever finishes first shall win the first round."

Wang Teng grew furious the second Pill King Yu finished. "I object, Pill King Yu!" Wang Teng could no longer give a damn about losing face.

Pill King Yu smiled faintly and said, "Please go ahead, young lord Wang!"

"I suspect that this round is purposely disadvantageous for us!" Wang Teng exclaimed. The Longevity Pill wasn't their product to begin with, so how on earth could their pill king refine it? Wasn't this basically an announcement of their loss?

“Purposely disadvantageous, you say?” Pill King Yu smiled wryly, “Don’t you think you’re overthinking things, young lord Wang? I swear on my heart that we aren’t purposely making things difficult for anyone.”

“Then why must we refine the pills we showed during the first stage?” Wang Teng contained his anger with visible effort.

“You’re the ones who supplied these pills. You can view our request to have you refine those same pills as an extension of that previous stage. This is a decision we judges have unanimously agreed on. Also, considering how special those pills are, we would also like to witness their refinement process and broaden our knowledge as well. Since you’ve chosen us as your judges, then you should obey the rules we’ve set!” There was no need for Pill King Yu to give Wang Teng face.

The rest of the judges were neutral parties who shared no conflicts of interest with the Majestic Clan. Naturally, they had no reason to be biased towards the Majestic Clan. It was obvious that they had their own selfish motives when they set up this third stage. They were hoping to observe how the Longevity Pill was refined. Even if they couldn’t learn how to refine the pill, there was nothing wrong with observing its process.

“Wang Teng, you should just admit defeat if you’re going to be a sore loser. I can’t help but be ashamed of your incessant complaints, even if you’re not!” Young master Ji San had no intention to be polite, so of course he wouldn’t pass up the chance to strike his enemy while he was down.

The onlookers were also joining in with their opinions. “This content of this round is completely fair! They’re not telling you to refine your opponent’s pills, they’re telling you to refine your own! If you yourself don’t know how to refine the pill you’re selling, then you very well may have been cheating earlier!”

“That’s true. I can find no faults to pick at for this test.”

“You’re not trying to obstruct this battle, are you? Are you really afraid of losing, young lord Wang?” There were tens of thousands of people and mouths present at the scene. Wang Teng had no idea where these voices were coming from, but there was no doubt that they were exerting pressure on him.

If you couldn’t afford to make the bet, then why did you act so arrogantly earlier?

You want to slink away now that the situation is awry? You want to turn this battle into a mess?

The crowd says no, Wang Teng!

The scene was raucous for a while as all sorts of accusations were lobbed at the Majestic Clan. Wang Teng felt completely conflicted, and panicked. He suddenly had a feeling that he had shot himself in the foot.

Pill King Yu responded indifferently, “The match will begin now. If Taiyuan Lodge refuses to participate, you may forfeit this match.

If that happens, then Taiyuan Tower will win by default."

Such were the rules. The judges truly weren't trying to make life difficult for anyone on purpose. If the rules could be challenged whenever the participants felt like it, that would be a challenge to the judges' credibility and prestige. It meant that they could be challenged at the drop of a hat. It was obvious that Pill King Yu wouldn't accept this. Therefore, the contents of the bet wouldn't change regardless of Wang Teng's intentions!

Pill King Han Zhu also persuaded Wang Teng discreetly, "Young clan lord, please allow you pill king to do his best. While I don't know how to refine the Longevity Pill, I do know he knows how to refine the other two. What if this Pill King Zhen doesn't know how to refine some of the three pills that Taiyuan Tower produced too? It's not like we don't have a shot at victory if we quickly refine the two. Wouldn't it be a pity if we were to forfeit and lose the round without even trying?"

Thankfully, Wang Teng hadn't lost his reason. Although he was a little dissatisfied at Pill King Han Zhu's show of cold feet, he knew that this suggestion had the best intentions. And so he responded, "Pill King Rong, just do your best and perform to your usual standards!"

At this point, Wang Teng could only hope that this bullshit pill king of House Wei didn't know how to refine some of the pills he produced during the first stage. If that was the case, then the Majestic Clan would have a sliver of hope at obtaining victory.

Chapter 778: An Idol of the Deviant Pill Faction

With nine judges personally supervising the match, cheating was naturally impossible.

“Please prepare your ingredients swiftly, both of you. Time is limited, so don’t dilly dally,” Pill King Yu commanded.

Jiang Chen had no need to make any preparations. He was the one who’d refined his pills, so of course he had plenty of ingredients in stock. After all, he had chosen the Tiger Eruption Pill, Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill and the Heptarune True Dragon Pill after careful consideration. He was going to use them as Taiyuan Tower’s key products. If Taiyuan Lodge hadn’t muddied the waters, Jiang Chen was absolutely confident that these pills could help them break into Veluriyam Capital’s pill market and earn Taiyuan Tower a seat in Farmer God Market. He never thought that the Majestic Clan would strike out of nowhere and disrupt his plans. If they hadn’t crossed his bottom line, he wouldn’t have retaliated against them.

“At this point, the Majestic Clan can only be my sworn enemy. I must win today’s bet and defeat Taiyuan Lodge!” Jiang Chen knew very well that Taiyuan Tower could only open for business smoothly if he won this bet. As for making an enemy out of the Majestic Clan, now was not the time to consider such things. House Wei was never going to coexist peacefully with the Majestic Clan in the first place.

If the Majestic Clan failed to open their business on the opposite

side of the street, if their momentum was thwarted today, then it would be very difficult even for the clan to regain their vigor after the blow to their reputation. Jiang Chen shed all of his hesitation as his thoughts came to a close.

He had refined all three pills using the Deviant Pill Faction's methods. His selection of ingredients was just as unique. No one had it in them to be surprised anymore at this sight, not after witnessing Jiang Chen's Triphase Pill earlier. And unlike Jiang Chen, Pill King Rong was obviously still feeling apprehensive. After all, he couldn't refine the Longevity Pill. If he couldn't refine the Longevity Pill, then his chances to win this round were minimal at best. He knew this very well. Noting the pill king's mentality, Wang Teng couldn't help but send him another message, "Don't be distracted, Pill King Rong. Even if you can't win this round, there are still two rounds left to turn things around! You will be the Majestic Clan's sinner if you simply give up like this!"

Pill King Rong shuddered all over and felt cold sweat bead out of every pore on his body. He immediately reined in his thoughts and concentrated fully on refining his pills.

That being said, Pill King Rong really had no chance of victory. Jiang Chen was giving free rein to his skills as he reached a state of flow. Fire control, cauldron heating, pill refinement...

The entire process was as smooth as a stream of water, every movement pared down to flawlessness. His practiced movements and his astounding skills were truly an eye opener to everyone present. He was stunningly brilliant!

Everyone knew that followers of the Deviant Pill Faction were supposedly very skillful, but not many had ever seen a representative of the Deviant Pill Faction with their own eyes. But today, Jiang Chen proved to the world that this school of thought was absolutely deserving of its reputation. There was absolutely a reason behind the Deviant Pill Faction's popularity. It wasn't the heretical pill faction many people criticized them to be!

There were almost no one paying attention to Pill King Rong's work at the moment, regardless of whether or not they were a fan of the Deviant Pill Faction. Almost all attention was focused on Jiang Chen. For diehard fans, Jiang Chen's work was naturally a wonderful and pleasant feast for the eyes. For those maintaining a neutral stance, they were sighing with admiration at the Deviant Pill Faction representative's skill and handiwork. It absolutely deserved to be called a work of the gods, a sight they wouldn't ever forget. Naysayers were at a loss for words after seeing Jiang Chen's skill. They hoped to find some flaws that they could use to attack the Deviant Pill Faction, but were left floundering.

The pill dao was a sea made up of hundreds of large streams. There were plenty of factions pursuing the art of pill dao, but today, those assembled finally learned the reason why there were so many adoring fans of this school of thought. The onlookers were incredibly excited by Jiang Chen's skill, and the Deviant Pill Faction fanatics only wished that they could worship him as a god. These people had always been diehard fans of the Deviant Pill Faction, and they had always diligently researched this subject. But while it was easy to claim that one was a member of the Deviant Pill Faction, it was very difficult to actually possess the appropriate skill.

Although there were many so-called Deviant Pill Faction creations and pill masters on the market, they were mostly false advertising. While they hung the Deviant Pill Faction's shop sign over their store, they knew little to nothing of its methods. There was almost no true master of the Deviant Pill Faction around. For the past several hundred years, there had been many who'd passed themselves off as a member of the Deviant Pill Faction. However, there hadn't been a single representative who could truly win the trust and worship of the people! But today, Jiang Chen had stepped into this void. The fans of the Deviant Pill Faction vaguely sensed that a person who could represent them had finally appeared!

Time slowly passed by.

In reality, the process of a pill battle was pretty dull. Most people looked forward to the end results more than the process. But now, everyone was enjoying the interim to the fullest as well. They only wished that time could pass slower so that they could fully observe and enjoy the refining process of the Deviant Pill Faction.

Indeed, Jiang Chen's skill had won many a heart. It was true these three pills weren't outstanding in terms of rank, nor could they be considered top class. However, the Deviant Pill Faction's methods and skills were there for everyone to see. Just based on this point alone, everyone could determine that Pill King Zhen of House Wei absolutely deserved the title of a master of his craft, even if he wasn't a top class pill king yet.

What was a master ?

A master of the craft was the outstanding representative of a faction. If the faction he represented was acknowledged as a proper faction, then the representative themselves would be acknowledged as a master of the craft too. Back at the stage of battle, it seemed that happiness was always short-lived. The speed Jiang Chen used to refine the three pills was much faster than anyone expected.

In just fifteen minutes before the end of the time limit, Jiang Chen turned in three newly minted pills to the nine judges. Pill King Rong, on the other hand, was still just finishing up his second pill.

Once Pill King Yu and the rest of the judges had accepted the pills, confirmed their authenticity and identity, they showered Jiang Chen's handiwork with praises. They looked at Pill King Rong again. The victor was obvious.

Although Wang Teng had predicted this outcome from the beginning, he still felt like someone had slammed a hammer into his chest. The expressions on his face flickered constantly. At this point, he had no choice but to admit that his Majestic Clan and Taiyuan Lodge had come off worse in this bet, even if he didn't want to. This was because Taiyuan Tower had them at match point already. His opponent only needed to win one more round to be the final victor of the entire bet! If that happened, then all his plans would become a joke. The Taiyuan Lodge that he had invested his time and effort into would become his opponent's property instead! Meanwhile, the Majestic Clan would also become Taiyuan Tower's stepping stone and the butt of a colossal joke.

As the judge, Pill King Yu had no obligation to care for Wang Teng's feelings. He announced loudly, "Taiyuan Tower is the winner of the first round of the third stage!"

It was a completely unbiased announcement, but it still felt like a sharp blade plunged straight into Wang Teng's chest. He really wanted to kill someone.

Pill King Yu smiled a little and asked Jiang Chen tentatively with kind eyes, "Pill King Zhen, this old man has a sudden request to make."

"Please speak, Pill King Yu," Jiang Chen didn't put on airs. There was no reason to show Pill King Yu an ugly face when he had been treating Jiang Chen with courtesy the entire time.

"These pills are truly a work of the gods. I am incredibly impressed by them. I wonder if I may have the fortune to take one of these pills back with me for observation and study?"

Jiang Chen smiled in response, "I wouldn't dare to turn down the request of a senior."

He had refined three cauldrons of pills just now, and every cauldron contained several pills each. He immediately took out nine pills and gave one of each to the judges. His generosity made the rest of the pill kings think much better of Jiang Chen too. Regardless of his intentions, none of these pills were cheap. The fact that he could gift nine of them just like this proved that this young pill master of House Wei was no ordinary person.

Jiang Chen's actions didn't make the onlookers think that he was bribing the judges either. After all, it was just a friendly interaction between pill kings. If this was bribery, it wouldn't involve just one pill, and it definitely wouldn't happen in public. But Wang Teng didn't think so. He sneered with a dark expression, "Honored judges, I don't think it's too appropriate for him to offer you a pill in public, is it?"

Pill King Zhen seemed to have predicted Wang Teng's response, so he tossed out a storage ring to Jiang Chen and smiled faintly. "Pill King Zhen, this is your payment for the nine pills. Let no one say that this is not a fair and proper transaction."

Wang Teng's face immediately took on a greenish hue. He felt resentful, feeling as though the entirety of Veluriyam Capital and Farmer God Market was joining forces against the Majestic Clan today. It had been an incredibly lousy day. These judges were all normally neutral parties, and they had never been hostile towards the Majestic Clan. So why were they all acting like they had a grudge to settle with the Majestic Clan today? He didn't realize that these neutral judges had been angered by his words and actions again and again.

Young master Ji San smiled leisurely at Wang Teng's loss of composure. "Wang Teng, you're the guy who talks the most in every round. As a clan member, you seriously need to learn some grace from House Wei. See how calm they've been all along!"

The crowd laughed uproariously at this. It was true that the Wei father and son hadn't spoken much at all during the battle. In

comparison, Wang Teng had been hopping up and down and making a big deal out of every little thing that had come his way. He had something to say at every round of each stage. His pettiness truly made the Majestic Clan look boorish and ill mannered.

"Young clan lord, please compose yourself," Pill King Han Zhu advised silently.

House Lord Tong Xianwei also sent a message, "Young clan lord, don't fall for the enemy's trap. They're purposely trying to enrage us so we grow impatient and affect Pill King Rong's performance. There are still two rounds left. If Pill King Rong performs at his usual standards, how could a sixth rank pill king possibly lose to a second rank pill king? This kid is just lucky because he has an advantage using the Deviant Pill Faction's methods."

Wang Teng was alarmed; he had never lost his cool like this before. It was a strenuous effort that finally bought him his calm. There was no turning back now that the gamble had progressed to this point.

The judges gathered together and mumbled amongst themselves for a very long time. Finally, they came up with an idea on how to proceed with the next round of the battle. Pill King Yu finally said, "After our discussion, we have decided that the nine of us shall each produce a type of pill, making for a total of nine pills, for the second round of the third stage. We shall give one of each type of pill to the participants, and your task is to analyze these pills and determine the pill ingredients within the allocated time. The participant who manages to analyze the most pills in the allocated time wins the round."

Chapter 779: Jiang Chen's Full Potential

Pill King Rong perked to attention at those words. Back in the first round of the second stage, they'd been given the task of composing recipes with the provided ingredients. Then, he'd considered the round as good as won, since dissecting and composing recipes was his forte, his favorite and most well versed field of study. But fate had dealt them the Ingenious Decan Enigma, which happened to be something his opponent was highly proficient in. Even though he had acquitted himself well, the opponent had bested him that round by sheer luck, comparable to a blind cat who'd chanced upon a dead mouse.

Now they were being asked to analyze the components of the provided pills. This was simply the first test in reverse. Regardless of the direction, this was still the field he was most confident in. Furthermore, this round didn't depend on any single judge because all of them would be involved in the test. This greatly reduced the chances of his opponent encountering a fortunate situation. You might know one of them by chance. But what are the odds of knowing two or three?

There were a total of nine pills. The chances of knowing them all by chance were simply too low. Pill King Rong felt that this was a great opportunity for him! It was his time to shine! Since the beginning of this competition, he'd lost two consecutive rounds in the second stage and now the first round of the third stage. He was in a dangerous situation. One more loss meant his fourth consecutive loss, by that token, the loss of the entire bet.

"Humph, that brat relied on the Deviant Pill Faction's heretical methods and luckily won three tests. Let's see how far dumb luck

can take him!" Pill King Rong was actually still unconvinced at heart. He felt that this mere second rank pill king shouldn't have been his match at all, considering his own skill and talent as a sixth rank pill king. He'd been greatly humiliated by the previous three losses.

Apart from from the round where his Jade Marrow Pill had lost to the opponent's Three Elements Pill, he still didn't quite accept the other two as true defeats. He felt that he'd lost to luck with the Ingenious Decan Enigma. As for the round where they were asked to refine pills previously presented, that loss was purely a result to the rules. "I must take this round by storm! I must let this brat know that a mere second rank pill king is not at the same as a sixth rank pill king!"

Pill King Yu brought out 18 pills and distributed nine to each contestant. "If you would, please take note that the set of nine pills given to you is identical to the other. There is one more rule we've put in place in order to preserve the fairness and brilliance of this competition. Each of you will only have to write down six of the ingredients which make up each pill in order to pass the test. It goes without saying, however, that the six answers must be correct. You'll have failed for that particular pill if any single one is wrong. If the scores are tied, we'll judge based on the total number of ingredients analyzed. The competitor with the highest number of identified materials will triumph."

Most pills were refined from at least seven to eight types of ingredients, and some involved a dozen or more. The fact that only six ingredients from each pill needed to be identified somewhat reduced the difficulty of the contest. The catch however, was the requirement for perfection. Failure could come with a single

mistake, and restricted the contestants from guessing the materials randomly in pursuit of quantity and speed over quality. One could write down fewer components, but wasn't allowed to make mistakes.

"Do you both understand the rules?" Pill King Yu's penetrating gaze enveloped the two contestants. He confirmed once more whether they had clearly understood the rules. Regardless, once the contest began, they would have to play by the rules, whether or not they understood.

"Understood," Pill King Rong confirmed. This was the field he was most proficient in and the perfect match for him to turn things around. He was exuberant as his spirit began to vibrate with enthusiasm.

Jiang Chen only smiled indifferently and nodded. He glanced at the highly spirited Pill King Rong and sneered inwardly. This Pill King Rong seems to be in high spirits. This must be his preferred field of study. But who in the Divine Abyss Continent is qualified to show off their pill knowledge before me! This wasn't Jiang Chen being purposely arrogant. Even in the heavenly realm of his past life, few were qualified to discuss and debate theories of pill dao with him, to say nothing of a mere Divine Abyss Continent.

Pill King Yu waved his hand after receiving confirmation from both parties, "Let the competition begin!"

As a judge, Pill King Yu wasn't biased regarding the rules and regulations despite his admiration for Jiang Chen. The criteria for this round stood testimony to this fact. Analyzing nine pills

together reduced the odds of obtaining victory by chance and increased the demand on one's knowledge and experience. Even Wang Teng found nothing to criticize about this round's format. On the surface, the competition even appeared to be more or less in favor of their Taiyuan Lodge. But Wang Teng loved advantages. Now that things were looking advantageous for him, he'd kept mum, ready to silently reap in the gains. On the other hand, he would be sure to complain loudly if things were even slightly disadvantageous for him, almost as if he'd suffered the greatest of injustices. This type of advantage-seeking mindset vividly reflected the Majestic Clan's principles.

"Pill King Rong, I am greatly optimistic about your chances in this round. The credit belongs to you as long as you perform to your utmost and turn the tables on the other party. You'll be the new chief pill king of Taiyuan Tower once we win this wager and obtain the shop!"

One had to admit, Wang Teng was extremely adept at raising morale and controlling his subordinates. As expected, Pill King Rong immediately became more spirited after hearing this promise. The dejection from the previous losses had all but vanished.

Wang Teng was feeling delighted after realizing the nature of the second round of the third stage. The only thing that made him unhappy was that he couldn't find any sign of distress or displeasure on the faces of House Wei. It seemed that the Wei father and son did indeed possess the superior grace and composure that Sir Ji San had mentioned. This greatly upset Wang Teng. How can this father and son be so confident? This round is already in Pill King Rong's pocket Don't you two feel any anxiety at

all? He refused to believe that to be the case. He felt that the father and son were putting on an act.

Jiang Chen had already entered his zone and was completely oblivious to the reactions of the outside world. There was only one thought in his mind: to thwart Taiyuan Lodge and slap Wang Teng resoundly by obtaining a clean victory this round, effectively ending this competition!

Jiang Chen was determined to go all out in order to achieve this goal. Few occasions had ever warranted his all out effort in the field of pills. There were even fewer people living on the Divine Abyss Continent capable of holding their ground against Jiang Chen's full ability. With the pills in hand, Jiang Chen fully activated his consciousness—analyzing, dissecting...

He was working almost non-stop. He only needed to scan each pill and fiddle with it momentarily to be able to guess its basic composition. After all, he'd done this every day for tens of thousands of years.

Comparatively, Pill King Yu was considered an authoritative figure amongst the pill kings of the Divine Abyss Continent after only a thousand years of life. His experience and age were rather insignificant compared to Jiang Chen. Moreover, it was impossible for these pills from the mundane plane to be more complex than those from the heavenly planes, no matter how intricately designed they might be. In his past life, Jiang Chen had also started out by learning the pills of the mundane plane and then slowly advanced over the course of hundreds of thousands of years. Only then did he reach the level where he could work on

heavenly pills with ease.

Jiang Chen quickly formed rough ideas of the composition of each pill as soon as he rolled them in his palm. To make things even easier, the test only required him to identify six components. This was no better than a beginner's handicap. Jiang Chen immediately identified three out of the first five pills. There was naturally no need to expend great effort to analyze their components since he knew what they were. It took him just a brief moment of recollection to write down all the ingredients.

Jiang Chen was unable to immediately recognize the other two, but it easily came to him after some detailed analysis. He instantly identified the sixth pill. Then the seventh, followed by the eighth... He completed his analysis of all nine pills right before half the allotted time had passed. He was in no hurry to submit his answers and took his time to double check them all in detail. He walked out in a leisurely manner after confirming that there were no mistakes.

His actions stunned the audience. Only half the allotted time had passed. What did he intend to do by walking out at this point? Did he not know that it was against the rules to leave the area during the competition? Leaving would be considered cheating. The competition area was isolated by a restrictive barrier. People outside could see the interior but not vice versa, making it impossible to communicate with the outside world. But once the competitor walked out, he would be able to communicate with the outside world. Cheating would certainly become possible then.

"Can it be that he's already completed it?" Many spectators were

secretly shocked. The Wei father and son glanced at each other. They were also alarmed by Jiang Chen's actions. But they soon thought of the possibility that Jiang Chen had already completed the test.

Jiang Chen completely ignored the many astonished pairs of eyes on him and proceeded to walk towards the judges' seats. The nine judges glanced at each other in puzzlement, but then turned to Jiang Chen with a hint of doubt in their eyes. It would be a miracle if he was able to analyze the nine pills in such a short period. Even these high ranked pill kings might not be able to perform this feat so easily.

Wang Teng's eyes went wide as he stared at Jiang Chen. Astonishment was written all over his darkened face and he was almost crying tears of blood. He was suddenly hit by an extremely bad premonition. It gnawed at his whole body like a poisonous snake and made all his hair stand on end. What if...

Their Majestic Clan would've lost this bet if the other party won this round! Taiyuan Lodge would then become another's property even before the opening ceremony. The most terrifying part was that their clan would lose a fine storefront in Farmer God Market! Wang Teng followed Jiang Chen's every move with a heavy gaze.

"Honored sirs, I've completed my pill analysis. I offer it for your inspection." Jiang Chen respectfully handed over his answer scroll.

Commotion rose from the audience before those words could hit the floor. He's really done? He's already finished dissecting all the

pills in half the allotted time? What kind of inhuman speed is that? It's practically poised to break through the horizon!

Wang Teng felt as if he'd suffered an electric shock. He was petrified. He couldn't even find a voice to speak up with. The other party was able to submit his answer early, and with such confidence! What were the chances of such a person making mistakes? Who in their right mind would turn in their answer scroll at half the allotted time if he wasn't completely confident?

The Wei father and son were ecstatic. They felt that victory was near at hand. Even a well composed person like Ji San felt ineffably shocked. Wild joy surged in his heart as he looked at Jiang Chen with fervent eyes. He had a certain feeling at this moment, a feeling that was born of his intuition. His intuition was telling him that this mysterious pill king from House Wei was the key to changing the fate of the Coiling Dragon Clan!

Chapter 780: Victory Decided

On the other side, Pill King Rong was completely focused and unaware of the changes in the outside world. He was currently overflowing with confidence since he seemed to have reached past his limits in performance.

“With my current speed, I can absolutely analyze seven out of nine pills before this round is over. If I could finish the analysis of seven pills, then not even a high rank pill king can defeat me. Perhaps the greatest ninth rank pill king could beat me in this regard, but that second rank pill king of House Wei is just a poor fellow who relies on tricks to attain victory. His true colors will be revealed this round!” Pill King Rong was full of confidence. Unfortunately, he had no idea that the entire world was being shaken outside.

Fortunately for him, the round hadn’t ended yet so he hadn’t walked out of his own accord. According to the rules, no one was allowed to disturb him until the allotted time had passed or he walked out. Moreover, Jiang Chen’s answer couldn’t be inspected until the judges had accepted Pill King Rong’s answer too. That was why the final result wasn’t announced yet, even though the reactions outside had almost turned riotous.

That being said, everyone could basically confirm that House Wei’s pill king was going to be the dark horse of Veluriyam Capital. Especially after witnessing Jiang Chen’s composure under pressure and his performance at this pill battle.

An overnight celebrity! He was absolutely that after today’s

battle!

“What do we do, young clan lord?” Tong Xianwei himself was feeling a little worried. It was looking more and more like they were going to lose this round. Tong Kun wasn’t a person who was afraid of trouble, but even he had shed his initial arrogance as his white and handsome face became shrouded in a dark haze. Wang Teng had never been in such a passive position in his life. He was completely disconcerted. He could never imagine that the bet he’d worked so hard to engineer so that he could attack Taiyuan Tower and House Wei would backfire on him. Not only did he fail to entrap his enemy, he’d fallen into his own trap instead! The remainder of the time limit had already become pointless. What was supposed to be a very close battle was completely meaningless.

This was even truer when everyone saw Pill King Rong fighting hard from their vantage point outside. From time to time he would beam with joy or clench his teeth in anger, looking like he had everything under control. The more Pill King Rong acted like this, the more laughable the people outside found the whole situation to be. Wang Teng and the others could only feel bleakness creeping up to them as they watched their pill king. Wang Teng very much wanted to push all the responsibility onto Pill King Rong, but could he really do that and accuse the pill king of underperforming? He obviously couldn’t. The result would have been the same even if Pill King Han Zhu, a seventh rank pill king, had been the one to attend the battle himself. In fact, even a eighth rank pill king might have been defeated had they been in the same situation.

Wang Teng’s mind was filled with bitterness. If this was any other occasion, he absolutely would’ve flipped out and even denied making the bet. He would’ve become hostile and used his authority

to suppress any and all dissenting opinions. Unfortunately, he really didn't have the ability to do so today.

Forget that House Wei was supported by the Coiling Dragon Clan for the moment, not even one of these nine judges were easy pickings. If he were to deny the existence of the bet, he would be accused of having contempt for authority and dishonoring the judges. He would definitely become a public target after that. Wang Teng might be domineering, but even he knew when not to deny all responsibilities. Funnily enough, it was the Tong father and son who looked restless.

Meanwhile, young master Ji San's reaction were quicker than anyone's. He had a feeling that Taiyuan Tower was going to win the moment he saw Jiang Chen turning in his answer scroll. Resolutely, he immediately summoned some of his trusted aides, mobilized his men and deployed them at the scene in secret. Now, Wang Teng wouldn't be able to do anything even if he tried to go back on his words. In fact, Ji San was even looking forward to Wang Teng trying to deny! He wasn't afraid in the slightest.

This entire incident would turn serious the moment Wang Teng decided to play stupid and abuse his power. As long as House Wei was in the right, and as long as they were supported by the Coiling Dragon Clan, the Majestic Clan would only lose even greater face if this matter escalated all the way to seven emperors.

Although the seven great emperors didn't interfere with the worldly affairs of Veluriyam Capital, this didn't mean that they ignored everything that happened within it. No one was allowed to publicly flout the law. Not even the Majestic Clan was an

exception. The reason Veluriyam Capital was able to become a hegemon of the Upper Eight Regions was thanks to this set of rules. Although the great clans enjoyed many special privileges, it didn't mean that they could ignore the rules however they wanted to. Wang Teng had obviously noticed young master Ji San's arrangements too. For a short while, he was both anxious and furious.

And finally, the round reached its end. Pill King Rong walked happily out of the battle zone, looking incredibly spirited. His face was full of smiles, and his footsteps incredibly light. However, just when he looked at Wang Teng cheerfully and was about to take credit for his achievements, he suddenly discovered that Wang Teng's face was not riddled with the acknowledgement and praise he had imagined. Instead, an expression more akin to a rumbling storm greeted him.

Pill King Rong's heart skipped a beat as a premonition suddenly struck him. A cold breeze caressed his head and neck. When he looked at the judges' seat, he noticed Jiang Chan already standing at the side, as if he had been waiting there for a quite a while. Pill King Rong's heart sank. What's going on? Why is that kid out already?

"Pill King Rong, we were waiting on you," Pill King Yu smiled. "Please submit your answer scroll."

Pill King Rong's feet suddenly felt as heavy as lead. His wonderful feelings suddenly plummeted like he had fallen off a cliff. He too noticed that the situation wasn't quite right. But he refused to believe in the impossible. Why was young master Wang Teng

looking so dejected even though he had performed so well this round? Does he think that I will definitely lose? Was it because that this kid turned in his answers early? So what? Just because he finished early doesn't mean that he's absolutely going to win.

Fueled by his thoughts, Pill King Rong said loudly, "Please look through my answers, honored pill kings. I am confident that I have performed very well this round."

These words were directed more at Wang Teng than the judges. Pill King Yu smiled faintly and nodded as he accepted the scroll from Pill King Rong. Then, the judges gathered and began reviewing the answers. Although everyone thought that there were almost no doubt as to who would win the round, the final result wasn't announced yet. Therefore, they all wanted to know why the pill king of House Wei had submitted his paper so early. Were all his answers correct? Was he really that confident in himself?

Just as before, Pill King Yu and the rest of the judges looked through Jiang Chen's scroll first. There were nine types of pills in total, and every relevant analysis and every ingredient was written clearly on the paper.

When the judges looked through the answers, their eyes focused sharply in attention. Not long after, amazement appeared in Pill King Yu's eyes, "Genius, what a genius! I never imagined that Veluriyam Capital would be sheltering such an amazing genius!"

Pill King Rong felt as if he'd been plunged into an icy cavern when he heard this unconscious praise. Of course he knew that

there was no way it would be directed at him. His answers were good enough, but they absolutely didn't deserve such praise from Pill King Yu. An answer that could win such praise from Pill King Yu must be an extraordinary level of performance! The rest of the judges were letting out admiring exclamations themselves.

"He really is a genius. He actually managed to analyze all nine pills! Even we may not have been able to do it in such a short period of time." In all truth, this was slightly exaggerated, because everyone knew that there was no way they could achieve the same level of performance had they been in Jiang Chen's position.

"Although it's not perfect, he's still managed to analyze all nine pills correctly."

It wasn't that Jiang Chen couldn't produce a perfect answer. He simply hadn't done so, because he didn't want to shine too brightly. There were some pills that he had fully analyzed but written down only six of their ingredients—just enough to pass. If Jiang Chen hadn't held back, he could've written down every single ingredient used to create these pills. However, he also understood that too far was just as bad as not enough. He didn't want to shock people too much. This level of performance was enough for him to win out over that Pill King Rong.

Pill King Rong was dumbstruck. He was sure that he had analyzed seven pills correctly. He believed that his performance was enough to guarantee him a win in this round. But he never imagined that he would lose so utterly and completely. Correct analysis of all nine pills. There was no way a second rank pill king had this much skill. Even Pill King Yu, a veteran ninth rank pill

king, might not necessarily be able to do the same!

"Impossible! Absolutely impossible!" Tong Xianwei couldn't hold himself back no longer. He understood that the situation wasn't suitable for young clan lord Wang to deny making the bet. However, he didn't need to consider such things. If he didn't take the lead and try to change things now, then when would he ever have another chance? "Honored judges, I am not suspecting your integrity. But don't you think that this kid's performance is much too unbelievable? The successful analysis of all nine pills? If I may ask, how many of you are able to perform this kind of impossible task when only half the allocated time has passed?" At this point, Tong Xianwei couldn't care less about his honor or pride as the house lord of a ninth rank aristocratic family. He only had one thought in mind, to disrupt the situation as much as he could. If he could cancel the bet in the process, then that would be for the best.

Pill King Yu's face darkened, "Tong Xianwei, do remember that you are the house lord of an aristocratic family. Can you bother to think before you speak? By inviting us to become your judges, it means that you've acknowledged the nine of us. If you suspect us, then why had you even bothered to invite us to become judges? Is blaming the judge over the loss of a match the grace shown by an aristocratic family?"

Pill King Yu possessed a relatively high status in Veluriyam Capital, and he didn't always have to submit to higher authority. The rest of the judges also scolded Tong Xianwei as well.

"Tong Xianwei, if you're going to be a sore loser, then don't even call for a bet in the first place."

“Questioning our authority as judges, are you? Are you saying that we’re doing this all for nothing?”

“Ignore him. There’s no need for us to bother with a lackey, is there?”

Pill King Yu stopped the other pill kings from complaining further with a wave of his hand. He stared deeply and calmly at Wang Teng, “Young master Wang, a victor has now been decided. Taiyuan Tower has won the bet. What do you say?”

There was no need for them to waste their breath on Tong Xianwei. After all, the bet hinged on Wang Teng. Wang Teng was absolutely burning with fury, and he himself very much wanted to push the responsibility of his loss on the judges’ head. However, his reason warned him that this was absolutely not the right course of action. Doing so wouldn’t bring the Majestic Clan any benefits. In fact, it would only turn them into a bigger joke. But he really was reluctant to admit defeat just like this!

Chapter 781: A Grand Victory

Wang Teng was indeed able to act according to his status as a young clan head. He didn't lose his temper, even though his fury and indignation were dangerously close to erupting. He was especially upset after noticing Ji San's secret arrangements. He knew that the unexpectedly silent young master was definitely waiting for him to commit an irredeemable act.

Ji San would definitely grasp the opportunity to relentlessly attack Wang Teng as soon as the latter turned hostile. And with that, Wang Teng would've fallen right into the opponent's trap. His dark expression made no secret of his anger, but his voice was still as indifferent as ever. "A gambler must be willing to accept losses, but House Lord Tong's words just now are not without reason. I'm not questioning the judges, but the intentions of this pill king from House Wei. Does no one find it odd that this man of unknown origins suddenly shows up at our Veluriyam Capital and starts stirring up trouble? I'm beginning to suspect him of being a spy dispatched by some other power. Otherwise, how could such a pill dao genius be unknown?"

This slander was executed rather poorly, but implicating Jiang Chen was better than offending the judges. Ji San had been biding his time all this while, and laughed out loud at this point. "That's one of the best jokes I've heard in years! Wang Teng, no matter how eloquent your words, it all boils down to you being a sore loser. I've always known that you won't accept defeat with grace. I guess people didn't misjudge you after all."

The young master also felt it to be somewhat of a shame. He had been expecting Wang Teng to flip out and perhaps even renege on

the deal. Sadly, that wily fellow had avoided that trap after all.

"Ji Ole Third, I don't think this matter concerns you in any way." Wang Teng was visibly trying to suppress his displeasure.

"How can I not be concerned? Pill King Zhen is my friend and House Wei an aristocratic house under our Coiling Dragon Clan. Am I not supposed to speak up for them and let you push them around as you wish?" Ji San held the solid advantage and as such, his tone of voice was quite leisurely.

Wei Tianxiao couldn't keep quiet anymore, "Since the young clan lord Wang admits that a gambler must be willing to accept losses, I hope you'll stop deflecting so ridiculously. Pill King Zhen's origins are completely unrelated to this wager. The Veluriyam Capital has stood tall in the Divine Abyss Continent for tens of thousands of years—agents of various powers have always walked among us—and yet the Capital has remained completely unaffected. None of us are interested in listening to your baseless alarmist theories."

Ji San turned to the judges with a smile. "Honored judges, can we consider the victor to have been determined? Isn't it time Taiyuan Lodge honored their wager?"

Pill King Yu nodded and cast his gaze toward Wang Teng. "Young master Wang, the results are decided. Please proceed with the transaction if you still acknowledge our position here as judges. Otherwise, we'll simply have to act according to the law. A cultivator should always act with a clear conscience and take responsibility for his decisions, be it with delight, gratitude or vengeance. Please avoid wandering from the main subject!"

Pill King Yu's words contained a fair amount of both admonition and threat. He did indeed somewhat despise Wang Teng's actions. Add to that his admiration for Jiang Chen, Pill King Yu was already inwardly inclined to stand on the latter's side.

"Indeed. A gambler must be willing to accept his losses. Why the need for such nonsense?"

"Stop wasting your breath. Why did you bet if you can't afford to lose? If we remember correctly, the whole wager was your Taiyuan Lodge's idea."

"That's right. Here we have a powerful and influential major clan turning hostile after losing a bet. How shameful!" The tens of thousands of spectators broke into an uproar. Admonishing voices could be heard from all directions, and there was no way to discern their origin.

It was true that most of the audience were just here to observe the lively activities. But these neutral cultivators were not without the capacity to differentiate right from wrong. They'd seen how unbridled the Majestic Clan had acted in the beginning. The clan was the one who'd first provoked the other party and cause a scene. They were also the ones to propose the bet. They were obviously the ones who wanted to suppress Taiyuan Tower. They'd gone for wool but come home shorn. Now that House Wei's pill king had turned the tables on them, they want to renege on their debt by distorting the truth. The audience couldn't accept this.

You can be arrogant and tyrannical, but you can't openly trample public opinion. You can't insult the rules approved by the people! A gambler had to be willing to accept his losses. No one would just stand by and watch as the Majestic Clan refuses to abide by such a basic rule. They weren't sympathizing with the weak. They'd uphold the same values even if Taiyuan Tower had lost.

The crowd was getting worked up and their voices of condemnation came down like a monsoon rain. Wang Teng's fury burned even hotter under this shower of recrimination, but he had no place to vent. He turned around with a stormy expression. "Sort out our things and have our men depart. Let them have the store!"

The House Tong lord was now panicking, "Young clan master, what will our House Tong do if we hand over the store..."

Wang Teng's expression was black as he glared at the head of House Tong. However, the house lord was adamant. This was no small matter—this store was House Tong's most prized possession—their losses would be colossal if he simply gave up a core asset like this. It would be greatly detrimental if they were to lose it just like that. Even if Wang Teng incurred divine wrath because he'd reneged on the heavenly oath, it still wouldn't bring profit to House Tong. Therefore, he had to obtain tangible compensation from Wang Teng at all costs. He'd mustered up the courage even in the face of Wang Teng's murderous glare.

"House Lord Teng, are you afraid that I'll renege on the debt?" Wang Teng's composure was eroding like a dam of sand.

"Wang Teng, it seems you're not afraid of being judged by the

heaven and earth. Could it be that you're thinking of reneging on your wager?" Ji San chuckled, "Why are you trying to bully House Lord Teng in front of so many people? Just compensate him immediately for his shop and people may yet consider you a straightforward person."

"Indeed! If you slip away afterwards, how can House Tong knock on your Majestic Clan's doors and demand compensation? You can't bully people that way!"

"Wang Teng, please don't embarrass the great clans so." Those with the courage to speak out were mostly clan members. The Majestic Clan was indeed arrogant, but those other clans were not to be trifled with.

Wang Teng was helplessly adrift in a sea of castigation. He had no choice but to dispatch someone and publicly hand over the shop to House Tong. He was close to weeping blood after arranging everything. The people from Taiyuan Lodge had completely retired. They'd just started opening for business but now, they were being forced to withdraw in misery.

This was the most humiliating moment of his life.

Undisguised killing intent radiated from Wang Teng as he glared at Jiang Chen and House Wei. "Well done, House Wei. I'll remember you lot!" With that, he waved his hand, "Move out!"

Wang Teng's entourage duly followed. Gloomy and dejected, they closely resembled defeated gamecocks.

Jiang Chen suddenly spoke, “Hold it!”

Wang Teng, hoping for a chance to vent his anger, paused his steps with a cold smile. “What now?”

Jiang Chen pointed at the shop sign, “You’ve forgotten something!”

The audience broke out into loud laughter. Wang Teng’s countenance turned frosty as he ordered Tong Xianwei, “Retrieve it!”

Tong Xianwei leapt up and swiftly removed the sign. He glared daggers at Jiang Chen, “Brat, keep your eyes open. Some powers simply have no future. Don’t keep walking down the wrong path, lest it be too late by the time you realize.”

It was unknown whether he was referring to House Wei or the Coiling Dragon Clan. Jiang Chen only smiled indifferently, for he couldn’t be bothered to debate with this person. His conflict with Wang Teng wasn’t to help House Wei, but simply because Wang Teng had crossed his bottom line!

“Haven’t you lot suffered enough humiliation today?” Ji San let out a cold laugh.

Tong Xianwei indeed didn’t dare behave atrociously in front of this young master. He could only shuffle behind Wang Teng and

leave. Pill King Yu approached Jiang Chen after Wang Teng's entourage had departed, "Pill King Zhen, you've truly broadened this old man's horizons today. Please come drop in for a chat when you have the time."

"Indeed, Pill King Zhen has earned great fame in a single battle. Who would've thought that the Deviant Pill Faction would finally produce such a genius. Now we'll see who dares to say the Deviant Pill Faction is a heretical school!" The speaker was a Deviant Pill Faction fanatic.

The other pill kings also came forth with congratulations of their own.

Ji San laughed out loud, "Everyone, Pill King Zhen has won glory and fame in a single battle today. I'd also like to take this opportunity to announce Taiyuan Tower officially open for business! Since everyone is already here, why not come in for a drink?e. How delightful would it be to sit and discuss pill dao at leisure!"

Ji San, an expert at building up the atmosphere, began tending to the guests. It wasn't unreasonable for him to speak on behalf of House Wei. After all, he was their direct superior.

The Wei father and son gave a cupped fist salute in each direction. "Everyone, please take care of our newly established Taiyuan Tower."

"House Lord Wei, please allow us to have a word with Pill King

Zhen.”

“Indeed. House Lord Wei, we’ve always been devout followers of the Deviant Pill Faction. Please have Pill King Zhen give us some pointers.”

“House Lord Wei...” Many fans of the Deviant Pill Faction were present. These people were all incredibly excited as they crowded madly around the house lord. The ambience suddenly became full of passion and enthusiasm. Seeing what was going on, Jiang Chen smiled and held up his hands. With that, the die-hard fans of the Deviant Pill Faction, who viewed Jiang Chen as a god, began to calm down.

“Everyone, it’s somewhat late today and our Taiyuan Tower’s opening ceremony still needs to be completed first. I’ll hold lectures on pill dao at Taiyuan Tower for three consecutive days starting tomorrow. Those of you who are interested are welcome to attend.”

Cheers erupted from the audience. The Wei father and son were also secretly delighted after seeing this passionate and cheery mood. All sorts of feelings welled up in their hearts.

Despite all the twists and turns, Taiyuan Tower’s opening ceremony was truly one of the most successful events they’d seen. With the Majestic Clan acting as a free stepping stone, Taiyuan Tower’s opening ceremony was destined to become one of the Veluriyam Capital’s most popular topics. Nothing made for better advertisement than such an effect. They’d gambled somewhat they first initiated cooperation with Jiang Chen. But as things stood,

this gamble had already paid off handsomely, and then some!

Many of the uninvited guests lingered around the Taiyan Tower's doors, while the invited guests entered the store without the slightest bit of hesitation. They'd previously entered because of obligation. But this time, everyone was curious about this mysterious pill king and were more or less entertaining thoughts of befriending him. Unlike before, they were now far less willing to offend House Wei. Moreover, young master Ji San was present. They'd be asking for trouble if they refused to enter. It was highly unwise to offend the young master.

"Pill King Zhen, allow me to accompany you for a drink this time. It was wonderful to see Wang Teng so upset, hahaha!" Young master Ji San patted Jiang Chen's shoulders with all the familiarity of a friend before dragging him inside.

Chapter 782: Feted on All Sides

For a moment, the Wei father and son played second fiddle while young master Ji San and Jiang Chen bathed in the limelight. Jiang Chen was especially popular. Almost every guest who had shown up wanted to greet him and introduce themselves. Thankfully, Jiang Chen had a good memory. Although there were literally almost two thousand guests present, he was able to memorize all of their names and faces after a brief introduction.

Jiang Chen had seen countless grand spectacles in his past life, so naturally he wasn't subject to stage fright. In fact, one might even say he was handling this situation with ease. His composure had surprised even the Wei father and son duo. They knew that Jiang Chen was from a small place called the Myriad Domain. They'd thought that he would display a bit of apprehension at being met with such a scene. They'd never imagined that he would be able to deal with this situation as perfectly as he did. He didn't act obsequiously nor superciliously, nor did he make himself appear unapproachable or insincere to others. Even the Wei father and son themselves found it very difficult to achieve such perfect balance during socialization. For a time, the atmosphere was incredibly harmonious.

The judges, young master Ji San, Jiang Chen, Wei Tianxiao and a few other clan members sat together at one table. With this kind of lineup, even House Wei could only act as attendants to the real heavyweights. While they were seated, Pill King Yu and Jiang Chen kept up a steady discourse of pill dao between them. Jiang Chen gave both questions and answers, and he showed no pressure at all despite communicating with someone as great as Pill King Yu. This scene made even the great scholars of pill dao present at the scene feel incredibly surprised.

“House Lord Wei, you’ve truly picked up an incredible talent,” Pill King Yu smiled wryly. “Even I’m feeling tempted to bring Pill King Zhen into my fold.”

The Wei father and son smiled politely in response, but gave no answer. It was young master Ji San who borrowed courage from the alcohol strumming through his veins and smiled, “No way, no way! House Wei had been in a slump for so many years when it comes to pills, and it is only now that their luck had finally changed. You can’t do this to House Wei, Pill King Yu!”

Pill King Yu smiled in response, “How would I dare to do so when you’ve spoken, young master Ji San. Speaking of which, why are you still at second rank despite your true strength, Pill King Zhen?”

Jiang Chen smiled, “I’ve never cared too much about such titles. Back then, my teacher taught me not to care too much about worldly fame. That being said, I wasn’t able to shed my attachment entirely. Otherwise, I would’ve stayed away from the mortal world and found myself a quiet place to cultivate and prove my dao.”

Everyone laughed in response to his words.

Pill King Yu sighed, “Your teacher must be a particularly skilled person who lives beyond this world. How else could he have produced a genius like you?”

This so-called teacher was a fictional character that Jiang Chen had always used as an excuse, so he followed Pill King Yu's line of thought after hearing his praise and nodded, sighing, "It is unfortunate that he had only taught me ten years of pill dao. How good would it be if I could study a hundred years of pill dao under him?"

If he could climb this far in just ten years time, then the heights he could attain after a hundred years of study was literally unthinkable.

The Deviant Pill Faction pill king was eighth rank pill king, Lu Fengzi. He was commonly known as Pill King Lu Feng. Currently, he was scratching his cheeks and staring at Jiang Chen, eyes bright with eagerness, "Pill King Zhen, is it possible for you to contact your teacher?"

Jiang Chen smiled, "Why do you wish to meet him, Pill King Lu Feng?"

"I want to learn from him too, even if it's just for three to five years. If three to five years is too long, then three to five months is good enough too!" Lu Fengzi was a diehard fan of the Deviant Pill Faction. Ever since he'd discovered that Jiang Chen was a representative of the faction, he could hardly sit still. Everyone was laughing loudly at his comments, but Lu Fengzi looked utterly serious and hopeful when he said this to Jiang Chen. It was obvious that he wasn't joking.

Jiang Chen replied a bit apologetically, "I'm sorry, Pill King Lu Feng. I haven't seen him in a very long time already. I'm not sure

myself where he is right now."

But young master Ji San suddenly asked, "Didn't he leave behind any methods to contact him?"

Seeing the passion in the young master's eyes, Jiang Chen couldn't help but smile, "Young master Ji San, are you hoping to learn pill dao from my teacher too?"

Young master Ji San chuckled, "Even if I wanted to, he would find my miniscule pill dao talent undesirable! Plus, I highly doubt that I could beat the queue to become your teacher's disciple."

The reason he asked this question was because he was thinking about the Pinecrane Pill. Jiang Chen once told him that his teacher knew how to refine the Pinecrane Pill. The young master had never forgotten about that tidbit. Seeing the brimming curiosity in everyone's eyes, Jiang Chen knew that his fictional teacher had tantalized the crowd. At this point, he had no choice but to continue the lie no matter what.

"I do have one method to contact him, but I've never used it in my life. He warned me not to contact him unless I was in the most critical of dangers. Moreover, he told me that I could only contact him that one time. Once this method is used, I can never go find him again. That is why I've never used this contact method, nor did I dare use it. By preserving it, I am preserving the memory of our time together." Jiang Chen's words sounded incredibly truthful. No one could voice any doubts regarding its authenticity.

Lu Fengzi looked a little dejected when he heard this, “Does this mean I will never have the chance to learn from him?”

Jiang Chen smiled, “The world of martial dao is like the heavenly dao, always leaving a sliver of hope. There will always be a sliver of hope. Come, everyone, let us drink!”

Everyone raised their cups in response. No one could overlook Jiang Chen’s existence nor underestimate him after today’s battle, even without taking his mysterious and powerful teacher into account. After all, it was easy to come to the conclusion that his master was absolutely beyond the level of pill kings. He must be, at minimum, a pill dao emperor, or perhaps someone even greater than a Titled Great Emperor.

Even a veteran pill king who’d lived for over a thousand years like Pill King Yu looked incredibly fascinated by the possibility Jiang Chen’s teacher represented, “The Divine Abyss Continent is as vast as the sea. The human domain may not even stretch over even a tenth of the entirety of Divine Abyss Continent’s map. Pill King Zhen’s teacher may be an extraordinary expert who has shunned all worldly affairs. He should be a Titled Great Emperor at minimum. In fact, he may even be an expert greater than that!”

Titled Great Emperors were the greatest experts in the Upper Eight Regions. The seven most powerful people in Veluriyam Capital were the seven great emperors, and they were all Titled Great Emperors.

Was Jiang Chen’s teacher even more powerful? The crowd couldn’t help but feel this claim to be a little exaggerated. Was

there really such a powerful expert in the Divine Abyss Continent? Every person present was a reputable figure in Veluriyam Capital. All of them looked incredibly wary when this topic was brought up.

"Pill King Yu, aren't Titled Great Emperors the greatest existence in Divine Abyss Continent?" A pill king asked curiously.

Pill King Yu smiled wryly, "I'm not sure about this myself. But I have heard from others that this is not the end for the people of the Divine Abyss Continent."

"What else is above this level? If a cultivator aspires to rise higher, then they must break through the dao of heaven and win its acknowledgement."

"Those who are successful are called empyrean experts! It is said that there were a lot of empyrean experts back in the ancient times, and almost every great force on Divine Abyss Continent back then possessed a great number of empyrean experts." Everyone started discussing the topic fervently.

Pill King Yu smiled at Jiang Chen, "Pill King Zhen, has your teacher ever told you about this?"

In Pill King Yu's opinion, Pill King Zhen's teacher was certainly no ordinary person to have known the solution to the Ingenious Decan Pill Enigma. He might very well be one of those legendary empyrean experts who shied away from worldly affairs. All eyes turned to Jiang Chen. It was obvious that they were very curious

about this topic.

Jiang Chen rubbed his nose and smiled wryly, “Everyone, please don’t forget that I only spent ten years with my teacher. I was quite young back then too, so I wasn’t that interested in those affairs. That being said, he did mention that Divine Abyss Continent is so big that it exceeds my imagination. There are plenty of incredibly mysterious hidden experts in this world. Unfortunately, I didn’t know what level of cultivation he was in at the time.” His explanations were intentionally vague. No one could pick fault from it.

Pill King Yu said, “Setting aside his cultivation level, his attainment in pill dao alone is absolutely an achievement that all pill kings must look up to. In fact, I doubt anyone of us could analyze the pills we’d given you as a test as easily as you did.”

Pill King Lu Feng also nodded, “That’s true. If I was in your place, I dare say that I am a bit better than that Pill King Rong, but the gap between our skills wouldn’t have been nearly as big. How did you do it, Pill King Zhen?”

Jiang Chen smiled wryly on the inside when he saw yet another question being thrown at him. He had already reined in his performance during the earlier bet, but that didn’t stop everyone’s curiosity from shooting through the roof. He had no choice but to keep weaving more lies, “During the ten years I learned pill dao with my teacher, I had to memorize all kinds of pill recipes almost everyday. In ten years time, my teacher had made me memorize at least one hundred thousand types of pill recipes. Therefore, I’d learned of most of the pills you’d shown me before.”

An uproar broke out after those present heard Jiang Chen's explanation. In the world of pill dao, most pill masters possessed their own particular inheritance. However, the passing down of such inheritances between pill masters had always been a delicate topic. They would never allow a pill recipe to disseminate unchecked to the public. Even for the likes of a pill king, the number of pill recipes they'd truly mastered didn't exceed ten thousand, even if they could retain quite a number in their heads. Moreover, most of these pill recipes were common knowledge in the greater world.

However, the number of unique and exclusive pill recipes that they truly possessed absolutely didn't exceed a hundred. However, this Pill King Zhen claimed to remember a hundred thousand pill recipes. It was more than a little shocking.

Seeing everyone's stunned expressions, Jiang Chen immediately understood that the number he reported was too shocking. In reality, the number of pill recipes he remembered, including those from the empyrean plane and the worldly planes beneath the empyrean planes, across millions of years were well beyond a million. He had purposely reported a small fraction of that number already, but it still stunned everyone present into dead silence. It was obvious that everyone was shocked by his claim. What did one hundred thousand pill recipes mean? It meant that Jiang Chen was literally a walking treasure vault of pill recipes. Hell, even actual treasure vaults of pill recipes wouldn't contain so many!

Jiang Chen was already starting to regret his decision a little. He smiled wryly, "Please don't look at me like that. In reality, my teacher told me that most of the pill recipes I memorized are just

run-of-the-mill recipes. The only reason he told me to memorize them is so that I can better master the basics of pill dao. Most of those pill recipes have no real use behind them."

Despite his best efforts to explain things, the others hadn't felt any better. In fact, they were all shaking their heads with wry smiles and feeling extremely conflicted on the inside.

Chapter 783: Will You Be My Master?

Jiang Chen's speech evoked myriad thoughts in his listeners' hearts. Some were envious, others jealous, and yet others harbored malicious designs. Comparison between people was often the source of negativity. Judging from Pill King Zhen's appearance, he likely didn't exceed a hundred years of age. He was incredibly fortunate to have gained the favor of such a great pill expert. A expert capable of passing down a hundred thousand pill recipes at once was no ordinary pill master. What ninth rank pill king? He was likely unqualified to serve even as a student to such a master!

The Wei father and son however, felt enveloped by happiness. They knew that Jiang Chen was capable, but did not expect this kind of serendipity to happen in Jiang Chen's youth. Jiang Chen had told them before about his childhood, and how he had received tutelage in pill dao from an extraordinary man. His story was very credible. If not from an extraordinary pill master's teachings, how else would Jiang Chen have learned such earth-shattering pill techniques with his identity as someone from the Myriad Domain? However, it wasn't until today that they realized the full extent of the amazing fortune Jiang Chen had encountered.

Pill King Yu sighed softly, looking at the Wei father and son. "House Lord Wei, even I cannot resist saying another few words of congratulations to you."

"House Wei has truly found a treasure this time," Ji San laughed.

Pill King Lu Feng incessantly poured wine into his mouth in

excitement. He was more enthusiastic than anyone else present. “Pill King Zhen’s master must have been a legendary forefather of the Deviant Pill Faction!” He exclaimed happily as he drank.

Everyone nodded their heads in approval of the pill king’s conclusion. During the banquet, Jiang Chen told a few more stories about pill dao tradition, which elicited many exclamations from the pill kings. The banquet lasted more than two hours before it began to disperse.

Upon their departure, the pill kings each left Jiang Chen their contact details. Every one of them emphasized the necessity for Jiang Chen to visit when he had time. Politely assuring them that he would certainly take them up on their offer, Jiang Chen escorted them out. Seeing that the pill kings had filtered out, the other guests could not stay for much longer either and separately bid their farewells. As for the pills, the ones that had been rolled out earlier were all sold out.

Many guests who wished to buy some of Taiyuan Tower’s pills after the meal had to leave disappointed. Everyone knew the pills were of the Deviant Pill Faction, and wanted to take them home to study. Moreover, everyone present had seen Jiang Chen refine the pills firsthand. Out of a feeling of felicity, they hoped that they would be able to figure out the method of refining through only one viewing. If that were the case, then the pill would become theirs, an easy way to success.

Jiang Chen more or less knew of their thoughts, but he was keenly aware that it was not possible for even these pill kings to steal his knowledge. If it was as easy as that to steal from the

Deviant Pill Faction, then it would not be called deviant. Not to mention the various countermeasures Jiang Chen had implemented during the refining performance… it wasn't that easy to take what was rightfully his.

After the guests all dispersed, Jiang Chen exited the store, only to find that several hundred people still congregated around Taiyuan Tower's entrance. None of them were willing to leave. They broke into loud shouts upon seeing Jiang Chen.

"Pill King Zhen, are you going to give a lecture now?"

"Yes, Pill King Zhen, there aren't many people around in the store. Why not speak for a while!"

"Pill King Zhen, is Taiyuan Tower still hiring attendants?"

"Pill King Zhen, I wish for you to be my master, please accept my worship!"

"Me as well! Pill King Zhen, I am still young, and I am also quite talented, please do consider me…" These people were evidently the most faithful of faithful in terms of their attitude to the Deviant Pill Faction. None of them wanted to leave; they were unified in the singularity of their thought—they wanted Jiang Chen to be their master.

The Wei father and son didn't know what to say. They felt quite happy, of course, but also a little heartache. House Wei had been

unsuccessful in the pill arena for so many years, so much so that they were almost forgotten. Now, in only a day's work, the situation had totally changed. The throng of people at Taiyuan Tower's door refused to scatter, and all of it had been brought about by Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smiled upon seeing their enthusiasm. "Friends, it is late in the day, and Taiyuan Tower has yet many things to deal with. There is no time to lecture today. Please feel free to come at daybreak tomorrow morning."

"We will not leave. Even if it's until tomorrow, we are happy to wait here!"

"Yes, we must show Pill King Zhen our sincerity. Not just one night—I would stay even if I have to stay three years!"

"Yes, I've made it a goal that no matter what, I must enter Taiyuan Tower. Even as the lowliest of apprentices, I would be satisfied if I could see Pill King Zhen every day!" Thankfully, they'd remained fairly civil, and did not force Jiang Chen to lecture immediately. If they had, Jiang Chen would have been in a pickle. After all, they wanted to listen, and their very presence was in support of Taiyuan Tower.

Glancing across the street, Jiang Chen suddenly had an idea. "I am greatly moved that you've been able to wait until now. The store opposite us is also property of Taiyuan Tower now, and we will set up a branch store there. Anyone interested is free to apply for an interview when the time comes. But, I'm warning you right now—whether you're eligible or not depends on your actual skill.

We have a set of qualifications that you must reach."

Everyone was ecstatic upon Jiang Chen's words. "Amazing news, Pill King Zhen! Please believe in us. We will become great students of the Deviant Pill Faction!"

"Long live the Deviant Pill Faction!"

Jiang Chen could only force a smile at such an animated scene. He had initially chosen the Deviant Pill Faction on a whim. That it would have so many loyal adherents in Veluriyam Capital was wholly unexpected. He waved at the crowd before returning inside Taiyuan Tower. As he did so, however, a person stumbled out from inside. It was Pill King Lu Feng from earlier. He tiptoed as he pulled at Jiang Chen's sleeve, his expression playful. "Pill King Zhen, may I have a moment?"

His eyes darted around, and his actions were suspicious. It didn't seem to Jiang Chen that he meant any harm, however. Not quite able to guess his intentions in the moment, Jiang Chen was also loathe to anger an eighth rank pill king. He could only acquiesce, following the other man to a secluded corner. Pill King Lu Feng scratched his face, and his lips moved, but he seemed a little embarrassed still.

"Pill King Lu, there is no problem in being upfront with what you need," Jiang Chen smiled. "If there is a pill you're interested in, I can give you a few more with no problems."

Pill King Lu Feng hastily shook his head. "That's not what I

want.”

“Then what?” Jiang Chen was somewhat unsure.

Pill King Lu Feng placed a hand to his head suddenly, and a look of great resolve entered his eyes. “Pill King Zhen, will you be my master?”

The words he spoke were utterly shocking. Jiang Chen almost saw stars twinkling around him, as if he’d been struck over the head. Was it possible that he’d misheard? Master? An old man with a white beard, over a thousand years of age, wants me to be his master? Though Pill King Lu Feng was not quite as old or qualified as Pill King Yu, he had lived for at least a millennium. Taking a white-bearded student... Jiang Chen was amused by the thought. However, Pill King Lu Feng didn’t look like he was joking. Though the old man scratched at his ears and chin, his expression was genuine.

“Pill King Zhen, in learning, the one who knows more is always the master. Ole Lu has no other talents except a willingness to learn. I have always been a firm admirer of the Deviant Pill Faction. Please take this old good-for-nothing as your student!”

Jiang Chen hurriedly interrupted, “Please, an elder like you should not say such things. It is fine for us to exchange information on the matter of pills, but I cannot be your master. To not respect one’s elders so is to cut one’s life short.”

“It is hardly disrespectful! Your skills are better than mine, and

you are my better in pill dao. The heavens and earth would agree that I should seek you as my master! Should the relationship between master and student be decided on age alone?" Pill King Lu Feng pressed anxiously.

The old man was certainly adept at persuasion. The reason why Jiang Chen didn't want to take a student was actually not because of age, but because he didn't know Pill King Lu Feng's background. The old man's nature seemed the impish type, filled with simplicity. He was likely the kind of person that submerged himself in pill dao, but was conversely not good with social niceties. Even so, Jiang Chen didn't want to accept someone whom he had no knowledge of as a student. He preferred to know people's backgrounds thoroughly before entering a relationship with them. "Pill King Lu Feng, I haven't yet made my mark here in Veluriyam Capital. Wouldn't I become the laughingstock of the city if I accepted you as my student? With your eminence, taking me as your master is bad for your reputation as well. I beg you to reconsider."

Pill King Lu Feng's beard bristled, "As you just said, empty fame is useless. Ole Lu has never paid that any mind. Pill King Zhen, are you afraid that I will betray you? That I will defraud you, perhaps? Please rest assured. He who teaches even a day may be considered a father for life. If Ole Lu forsakes my master, let me receive the judgment of heaven and earth, and not be reincarnated for a hundred generations!"

The old man seemed dead set on his choice of master, so much so that he'd made such a grave oath. What was more, his first response after making the oath was to chuckle. "I've made up my mind anyway. Even as an attendant, I must stay at Taiyuan Tower.

The guys outside... they're the same as me. They all want you as their master. Heh heh, Ole Lu is a bit cleverer than that! I've made a pre-emptive strike, haha!"

Pill King Lu Feng displayed his satisfaction openly on his face, as if Jiang Chen had already agreed.

Jiang Chen was at a loss for words. This old man was so stubborn, and his skin so thick. From the looks of it, he wasn't planning to leave until Jiang Chen agreed to his demands. Seeing such obstinacy in seeking a teacher was a first for Jiang Chen. In the moment, he was unsure of anything to say. Just as they were at a standstill, the voice of Ji San traveled in from outside. "Pill King Zhen, where are you hiding? I would like to drink some more with you."

Hearing Ji San's voice approach, Jiang Chen gestured helplessly to the old pill king. "Pill King Lu Feng, we can discuss the matter at length later."

Pill King Lu Feng was not at all perturbed by it, chuckling cheerfully. "What is there to be afraid of? Young master Ji San is no stranger. It is good that he's here! He can mediate for me."

The old man's voice was quite loud, and he made no sign of hiding anything. He felt that having Jiang Chen as his future master was a very honorable thing. Following the sound of his voice, Ji San saw the duo of Jiang Chen and Lu Feng sitting in a corner, and asked curiously, "Pill kings, how come you're hiding here?"

“Young Master Ji San, how fortuitous of you to arrive just now. I asked Pill King Zhen to become my master, but he doesn’t seem interested. Can you help me persuade him? If you help me pull this off, then Ole Lu will owe you big time!”

Chapter 784: The Level of Alertness Rises

Ji San was stupefied at Pill King Lu Feng's sudden outburst. "... You want him to be your master?" The suspicion was clear on his face.

"Yes! What kind of expression are you making? Is finding a master for Ole Lu so off-limits?" Lu Feng was a little displeased.

"It's not that it's off-limits, it's just ..." Ji San smiled wryly. He left the rest of his words unsaid, turning to Jiang Chen instead. "Pill King Zhen, as people go, Pill King Lu Feng is fairly genuine. He has always come and gone alone in Veluriyam Capital, and conducted only his business. He is not subservient to another faction."

Though Ji San was not openly pleading with him, it was nevertheless a subtle request on the pill king's behalf. Pill King Lu Feng's eyes brightened at his words, and looked appreciatively at Ji San. "Yes, yes, I mean absolutely no malice. Young master Ji San can vouch on my behalf. Besides, with Taiyuan Tower so recently established, you still need people, right? I am a pill-refining fanatic, and I would be just as happy to help you out as an assistant! If you are still not convinced, feel free to order Ole Lu about as you see fit for a decade or so. It won't be too late for us to hold the master-disciple ceremony until after you are satisfied with your inspection."

The old man was willing to make significant concessions for the pursuit of knowledge. His words would be jaw-dropping to over half of Veluriyam Capital's residents. An eighth rank pill king, in

the top 50 among the pill kings of the capital, was willing to be someone's apprentice for free!

A pill king of his caliber was a truly influential figure in this city! Even ninth ranked houses wouldn't necessarily be able to request his services. The only ones who possessed the size and ability to attract eighth rank pill kings were the great clans, and even then the relationship was more a partnership than employment. Under typical circumstances, it was unheard of for any clan to simply dictate and order an eighth rank pill king about. Moreover, Pill King Lu Feng was a fairly notable pill king among his fellows of the same rank.

"Honored master, Ole Lu has a store here in Farmer God Market as well. Though it is not in such a good location, our business has always been prosperous. If you'd like it, that store will be yours from here on out. You can treat it as a gift of apprenticeship from your future disciple." Lu Feng had put everything on the table in an effort to convince Jiang Chen.

The degree which he was willing to go to surprised even Ji San. Being acquainted with the store in question, Ji San was aware of its booming business. Though it wasn't among the first-rate stores in Veluriyam Capital, it comfortably sat between first-and second-rate stores in terms of size.

Moreover, its ranking wasn't for lack of ability, but because of Lu Feng's unfettered and unruly nature. It left him seldom impressed with other people, indirectly preventing him from joining any factions of note. Without a patron, using wits alone to rise to the top of Veluriyam Capital was a particularly difficult endeavor. This

was the reason that Pill King Lu Feng had no top tier classification despite his fame. In fact, the Coiling Dragon Clan had once tried to recruit Pill King Lu Feng's services, but had been refused.

"Pill King Zhen, in theory I shouldn't be interfering in your affairs. However, I will say that this is the first time I have seen Pill King Lu Feng truly give someone his full respect. His sincerity is obvious. Why not think it over? Well, this is merely my thoughts from the perspective of a friend, haha. Whether you wish to take him as your student... that's still up to you." Ji San spoke once more on the pill king's behalf. He had already subconsciously given Jiang Chen the label of being part of the Coiling Dragon Clan's camp. Given that Pill King Lu Feng wanted to seek a master, he too would naturally be grouped with the Coiling Dragon Clan in the future. It was certainly not a bad thing for his clan.

Jiang Chen sighed lightly. From the pill king's stance, he knew that it would be impossible to refuse. It wasn't that Jiang Chen thought himself unqualified as a master. His point of hesitation was, as Ji San said prior, loyalty and reliability. If Pill King Lu Feng was really reliable, what harm was there in taking him as a student? Taiyuan Tower was newly established. At a time like this, it was definitely good for an expert to join.

Reaching a decision, Jiang Chen nodded slightly to the pill king. "Pill King Lu Feng, that you would seek me as your master is indeed a little bizarre. However, your rare candor has impressed me. Why don't we count you as a student in name first? Let's have a period of observation in which both of us are free to renege at any time. How do you feel about that?"

Jiang Chen didn't speak in absolutes, rather leaving a loophole. That way, there was a way out if they were truly incompatible.

"Yes, that's that then!" Pill King Lu Feng was very pleased. "I will not go back on my word! I have a very good eye for people, and I feel that you are absolutely qualified to teach me. At least in the matters of the Deviant Pill Faction, there is ample room for me to learn from you."

Jiang Chen laughed in exasperation. He knew that Pill King Lu Feng sought him as a master because of the "mysterious master" he'd mentioned. Rather than seeking a master, it was more that he was seeking a "master's master". Unfortunately, the mysterious master had been wholly fictitious on Jiang Chen's part. It was hard to say if Pill King Lu Feng would be as sure about taking Jiang Chen as his master if he knew that the latter's master did not exist. Such things didn't need to be mentioned, of course.

"Young master San, you should serve as the witness. Supervise him to make sure the honored master doesn't go back on his word." Pill King Lu Feng was still a little worried, and wanted to drag Ji San into this as well.

Ji San smiled, "There is no need to worry as long as you don't have a change of heart. Pill King Zhen is a kind man, and will be convinced over time by your goodwill."

Pill King Lu Feng laughed proudly. "Ole Lu is not someone who chops and changes with the wind. From now on, I will only be faithful to the Deviant Pill Faction. It shall not change, not even if a blade lands on my neck!"

Saying so, he turned and knelt to Jiang Chen. “Master, please receive these kowtows from your disciple!”

Jiang Chen hurried to cut him off, “Pill King Lu Feng…”

“No, honored master, please do not call me that. From now on, Ole Lu is enough. Calling me a pill king is putting me on a pedestal. In front of master, I dare not call myself a king.”

“Um…” Jiang Chen was at a loss for words.

And so an absurd master ceremony was completed under Ji San’s watchful eye. Elated, Pill King Lu Feng’s face split in a cheeky grin, “Master, if you have any commands for me, just say the word. Ah yes, that kid Wang Teng. He suffered a big defeat today, and will definitely come to make trouble in the future. Master, you must be on your guard.” With the ceremony concluded, the old man immediately put himself in the shoes of a good disciple, and began to think on Jiang Chen’s behalf.

Ji San nodded in agreement. “Pill King Lu Feng, now that you’ve admitted Pill King Zhen as your teacher, it is right that you should shoulder some of his burdens. Particularly in the matter of Wang Teng, he will try to avenge himself tenfold on you.”

“Let him try!” Pill King Lu Feng was red with enthusiastic anger and cursed loudly. “I didn’t deal with anything before, but from now on, the master’s business is Ole Lu’s business. If he dares challenge the honored master, then I’ll beat him senseless!”

Though Pill King Lu Feng's martial ability could not be said to be the very best in Veluriyam Capital, he was still an emperor realm expert. Compared to members of the younger generation such as Wang Teng, he was markedly stronger. However, to say that the pill king could beat Wang Teng up was an exaggeration. The latter's followers weren't just for show.

"Pill King Zhen, you have done the Coiling Dragon Clan a great service in crushing the Majestic Clan's plot. I will make a request for some emperor realm experts to keep watch here upon my return, to safeguard against any issues Wang Teng may cause." As a wealthy dandy of the capital, Ji San was familiar with all the methods of his peers.

Wang Teng had failed today, but he was unlikely to just slink away and nurse his wounds. A wave of mad vengeance was sure to follow. Perhaps not with pills, but certain darker acts could not be ruled out. To put it in a less palatable way, if a strong assassin took out Pill King Zhen, then the Majestic Clan would easily recoup both their losses and enact some interest as well. Ji San was keenly aware of this, hence his continued reluctance to depart. He knew better than anyone that Pill King Zhen of Taiyuan Tower was of great importance in the Coiling Dragon Clan's future conflict against the Majestic Clan.

Pill King Lu Feng nodded as well. "Young master Ji San has the right of it. The Majestic Clan has always been narrow-minded and intolerant. There is no way they would just take a loss like that. It's better to send in some experts to deal with their inevitable response."

Though Jiang Chen was confident in his own skills, he knew the way that these powerful factions tended to act. The Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect, for example, acted with pure arrogance. Even with the vastness of the Myriad Domain and the numerous sects within, destruction was but a word away. How could a Taiyuan Tower that'd just opened be comparable to them?

Given Wang Teng's overbearing style, Jiang Chen could already imagine the endless acts of revenge. But, he hadn't gotten to where he was today because of unnecessary fear and caution. Back in the Myriad Domain, he couldn't act as he'd desired because he was afraid of affecting his fellow sect members. Now that the sect had fallen, he no longer had anything to chain him down, and there were far fewer worries in his heart.

What about the Majestic Clan? Using my Longevity Pill, stepping on my Taiyuan Tower, am I supposed to smiling at you after that? Regardless of how pleasant his temperament was, Jiang Chen was no pushover.

"Young Master Ji San, I leave this place in your care. I need to make a few preparations. I shall give open lectures over the next three days."

Pill King Lu Feng was positively aglow after hearing this. "Yes, yes, the lectures! What a thing to look forward to. Honored master, what will you talk about? Why not let me know ahead of time, and let me give the lectures in your place? How about it? It's said that the students should undergo the toil when the master has a

troublesome affair."

Ji San nodded before he turned to Jiang Chen. "Pill King Zhen, don't worry about the safety of Taiyuan Tower. Leave it entirely to me."

It wasn't an idle boast. At the very least, a scion of the Coiling Dragon Clan had this much courage and power. Taiyuan Tower had earned preeminent accolades in the conflict against the Majestic Clan this day. This alone was enough reason for Ji San to petition experts from the clan to act as their back up.

True to Ji San's words, the Coiling Dragon Clan's executives sent a team immediately when they learned about the matter at Taiyuan Tower. A clan elder who was eighth rank in the emperor realm personally kept guard on the premises. Due respect was fully shown.

"Young master San, the clan's leadership know of the happenings here. You did well. Many seniors in the clan are praising you." This elder in particular was named Ji Tianya. Though he wasn't at the very top in the clan, he was nevertheless a weighty personage.

With him at Taiyuan Tower, not even the most discreet assassin could succeed. After all, it was still Veluriyam Capital. There was a limit to the amount of plotting one could do. Passing this limit would provoke displeasure and ire from the makers of the law – that is, the seven emperors.

Chapter 785: Becoming Sworn Brothers

Thanks to the Coiling Dragon Clan's powerful protection, several devious plots that the Majestic Clan hatched in secret didn't come to fruition. Jiang Chen took advantage of the security to make sufficient preparation for his upcoming lectures. He organized many Deviant Pill Faction case studies and materials. He lectured for four hours straight every day for three days in a row. On the first day, there were only around two thousand people who came to listen. On the next day, the number swelled to roughly four thousand. As the saying went, news passed quickly from mouth to mouth.

On the third day, he had more than tens of thousands of listeners. Seeing how popular Jiang Chen's lectures were, Taiyuan Tower took the opportunity to promote their creations to the crowd. They sold all the pills they promoted and took advance orders, filling up the books for the next half year.

This popularity made the Wei father and son grin from ear to ear. For a time, they were flooded with emotions as they watched Jiang Chen lecturing eloquently from a speaker's platform. They never imagined that a mere coincidence would bring a completely twist the fate of House Wei.

Thanks to Jiang Chen, House Wei had successfully suppressed their civil strife.

Thanks to Jiang Chen, House Wei had won back the Coiling Dragon Clan's goodwill.

Thanks to Jiang Chen, House Wei was finally rising as a new power in the pill industry in the Farmer God Market. These were things they hadn't even dared to imagine in their heads just a few months ago. They couldn't even dream up these scenes when they slept.

"Everyone, time is unfortunately limited, so this is as far as I will speak today," Jiang Chen announced from the speaker's platform. His three day lecture had finally reached its end. The audience beneath him however, cried out loudly.

"Pill King Zhen, I'm begging you, please continue your lecture for a few more days!"

"Pill King Zhen, Veluriyam Capital has not heard such interesting lectures for many years!"

"Pill King Zhen, I'm your die hard supporter from here on!"

"Pill King Zhen, please accept me. You will need a great amount of manpower since you've just won Taiyuan Lodge for yourself. I'm willing to work as a shop assistant!"

"Pill King Zhen, I don't need any salary. I can work for free!" One had to admit that the Deviant Pill Faction was rather glamorous. After three days of lectures from Jiang Chen, the ancient and mysterious faction that was this school of thought had caused an immediate sensation in Veluriyam Capital. It had attracted countless new diehard supporters.

It was obvious that all of these people thought of Jiang Chen as their idol now. Jiang Chen smiled, “We will of course recruit some new employees. But we have so many in the audience, and we obviously can’t employ everyone present today, can we? We will open for recruitment tomorrow, and everyone will get their chance to prove their worth. Don’t be sad if you’re not chosen, for there are plenty of chances still in the future. As for the lectures, I unfortunately have plenty of work to do. It is obviously not very realistic for me to give a lecture every day. If fate wills it, then I may lecture for a few days again someday.”

It was obvious that Jiang Chen didn’t have the time to speak every day. If it wasn’t for the sake of burnishing the Taiyuan Tower’s new reputation, where would he even find the motivation to give a lecture in the first place? In reality, Jiang Chen wasn’t entirely fond of events that constantly put him in the limelight too much.

As the saying went, a tall tree attracts the wind. On the surface, the Majestic Clan was the only party Taiyuan Tower had offended that day. But Taiyuan Tower had been in the limelight for several days, and there was no telling if the numerous big players at Farmer God Market were jealous about the attention the store had gotten. Therefore, Jiang Chen ultimately decided to keep a low profile for a time after their perfect opening. He planned to properly digest all of the gains they’d gotten for the past few days.

The speed at which Taiyuan Tower had risen had in fact far exceeded his preliminary expectations. There was no need to rise too quickly. A power that rose too quickly would definitely attract the attention and suppression of all existing powers. Jiang Chen didn’t want Taiyuan Tower to come under attack because they’d

stood out too much.

The Wei father and son went forth to welcome him the moment Jiang Chen walked down the stage. Right now, Jiang Chen was their lucky star and the living Bodhisattva they absolutely needed to care for.

“You’ve worked hard for the past few days, Pill King Zhen. It is all thanks to you that Taiyuan Tower can have a future like today!” Wei Tianxiao praised from the bottom of his heart.

“Pill King Zhen, young master Ji San has come again today. He’s waiting for you inside,” Wei Jie said.

For the past few days, young master Ji San had spent almost all his time lazing inside Taiyuan Tower. Natural, Jiang Chen wasn’t unaware of young master Ji San’s intentions. He gave the duo a smile before walking inside. They accompanied him as well. The relationship between House Wei and the Coiling Dragon Clan had been repaired these past few days, with the clan sending some higher ups over to chat with House Wei and reassure them that House Wei had once again became the Coiling Dragon Clan’s trusted ally.

Once the trio had entered the store, young master Ji San spoke to Wei Tianxiao, “House Lord Wei, please arrange a private room for us.”

Wei Tianxiao nodded and went to take care of this request personally. It only took a few moments for the private room to be

readied. Young master Ji San smiled, “May I ask you to join me for a chat, Pill King Zhen?”

Jiang Chen more or less understood what the young master wanted, so instead of giving an excuse and shrinking away, he nodded as he gestured,“After you”. Young master Ji San cast a glance at the Wei father and son, “You are no outsiders to me, so come in as well.”

Wei Tianxiao looked overwhelmed by the favor young master Ji San showed him. He carefully followed behind the duo. After they had all walked into the private room, young master Ji San spoke with a serious expression, “I wasn’t going to act so presumptuously, Pill King Zhen, but my clan lord personally asked to see me yesterday. He asked about Taiyuan Tower, I told him many good things about Taiyuan Tower, and he brought up the matter of the Longevity Pill on his own accord…”

“You didn’t give him the Longevity Pill, have you?” Jiang Chen looked alarmed.

Young master Ji San sighed, “I wanted to, but I ultimately managed to hold myself back. I was afraid that the clan lord may not be able to resist the pull. From what I’ve seen, he is in a very dangerous state. At the end of our discussion, he told me frankly that he had deduced the exact date he would begin losing his cultivation. In the best case, he has a year left before it starts. If not, it may happen in just half a year.”

“That soon?” Wei Tianxiao was stunned. His face turned pale in an instant. Jiang Chen didn’t say anything in return. He only

nodded slightly in response.

"There are no outsiders here, Pill King Zhen, and I wish to be upfront with you. The Pinecrane Pill you mentioned to me last time gave me a sliver of hope. I know that this pill is a vague hope at best, but even vague hope is still hope, isn't it? If I may ask, are you sure your master knows how to refine the Pinecrane Pill?"

Jiang Chen had already mentioned this back at Little Leisurely Clouds. Therefore, he nodded solemnly. "Judging from his tone, my teacher should know how to refine the Pinecrane Pill."

"In that case, can you... try to contact your teacher?" The young master sounded a little tentative. He immediately tried to reassure Jiang Chen, "I know that your master gave you only one chance to contact him, and I know that it will be a grievous pity to use up this chance. But the Coiling Dragon Clan is willing to compensate you in any way. As long as it is within our abilities, we will compensate you no matter what you ask!" Young master Ji San sounded absolutely serious.

Jiang Chen said nothing and pretended that he was absorbed in deep thought. This so-called teacher and so-called chance were all but lies that he had made up earlier. The reason he'd done so was to halt the pestering questions and introduction requests from the pill kings. He wasn't planning to change his story now either.

Observing Jiang Chen's silence, young master Ji San said urgently, "Pill King Zhen, if my clan lord can extend his life for another thousand years, he most definitely will become a Titled Great Emperor and rise as the eighth great emperor of Veluriyam

Capital in the future. When that happens, he can even bestow the position of a ninth rank aristocratic house onto you without any problems whatsoever."

The Wei father and son were both moved by his promises. This reward was extremely generous. A thousand gold taels were easy to find in Veluriyam Capital, but the same couldn't be said of land. There were countless rich people who wanted to buy a piece of land for themselves, but were denied.

Without hundreds or thousands of years of accumulation, it was almost impossible for a person who had no foundation in Veluriyam Capital to mold themselves into a ninth rank aristocratic house. There were almost no one who managed to do so from scratch. Which clan wasn't the result of generations of legacies? Which one of them hadn't slowly climbed up to where they were through painstaking effort? The Wei father and son very much wanted to beg Jiang Chen's favor on behalf of the young master, but they also realized that they had no say in this matter. Three pairs of eyes stared straight at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen sighed softly, "Young master Ji San, can you find the Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine? If you can't find this ingredient, then it is all for naught no matter what I say or do."

"I've already posted the bounty notice. Anyone who brings this fruit to us shall be rewarded with one hundred million saint spirit stones. There is always hope when the rewards are so ample." Young master Ji San's eyes were afire with determination. But Jiang Chen didn't think that the Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine would be found that easily. It might not be found even with the

lure of a hundred million saint spirit stones. After all, sky rank spirit herbs could only be found by chance.

Of course, he possessed a Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine himself. It was just that he wasn't so close to young master Ji San that he would produce the ingredient now. Moreover, his intentions might be misconstrued if he were to bring it up now. It just didn't feel like the right time to do so. Left without a choice, Jiang Chen could only say, "You have done much for Taiyuan Tower as of late, young master Ji San. Although your request troubles me, it is not right for me to turn you down either. I will contact my teacher once you've gathered these two ingredients."

He didn't bring up the matter of a reward. Young master Ji San was overjoyed when he heard this, "Pill King Zhen, the Coiling Dragon Clan will never forget this favor. With heaven and earth as witness, I swear that the Coiling Dragon Clan owes you a great favor regardless of the outcome."

Jiang Chen smiled, "Young master Ji San is a person of great heroism, and I'm doing this because I admire your character. Favors actually come second to this."

Young master Ji San sighed, "No wonder people always say that you can make acquaintances easily, but not true friends. There are some people with whom you can interact with forever, but not come to a true understanding with each other. But there are some people whom you may do everything for them, even if you've only met them briefly. You are one such person, Pill King Zhen. I have another presumptuous request to make, Pill King Zhen."

“Please speak it, young master Ji San.”

The young master smiled. “You and I hit off quite well from the beginning, and I am of the intention to become sworn brothers with you. Is that an honor I may ask of you?”

The Wei father and son were shocked. Although young master Ji San hadn’t yet been chosen as the successor of the Coiling Dragon Clan, he was publicly the most favored candidate. There were very, very few people whom the young master acknowledged in Veluriyam Capital. Even they were just subordinates who didn’t have the qualification to speak with him on equal footing. A person whom the young master was willing to become sworn brothers with hadn’t ever appeared in the entire Veluriyam Capital, until this day.

Jiang Chen hadn’t expected young master Ji San to bring up such a request. When he noted young master Ji San’s absolutely sincere face, he too became overwhelmed by great emotion. He laughed, “No, it is my honor to become sworn brothers with you.”

“Good, very good! Hahaha! I have made countless friends in my entire life, and now I have finally found a brother whom I can show complete devotion too! House Lord Wei, please make some preparations and allow us to borrow your treasured land for a moment. I would like to burn some incense in prayer to heaven and earth and have them as witnesses of the day I become sworn brothers with Pill King Zhen!”

Chapter 786: Imperial Advent Defense Talisman

Wei Tianxiao was secretly delighted with how things had turned out. For him, the fact that Jiang Chen, a guest pill king of House Wei, had become sworn brothers with young master Ji San, would provide nothing but benefits. With this, they'd inadvertently drawn closer to the Coiling Dragon Clan. He hurriedly replied, "I'll make the necessary arrangements immediately. Jie'er, accompany me. As brothers, Pill King Zhen and young master Ji San will undoubtedly have things to discuss."

Wei Jie nodded and followed his father out of the secret chamber. Jiang Chen was inwardly satisfied after seeing how considerate the father and son were. As a person capable of leading the family to its current ninth rank status, Wei Tianxiao had a decent grasp of the atmosphere.

The house lord had understood Jiang Chen no longer needed to hide his identity from the young master now that they were about to become sworn brothers. And so, he'd actively withdrawn to allow them space for such a conversation. Their absence would more or less reduce the potential awkwardness.

Young master Ji San, however, wasn't one to look too deeply into such things and was positively brimming with delight, "Brother Zhen, I, Ji Ole Third, am a free and easy-going person. I'm also known for my love of making friends and have indeed made quite a few acquaintances over the years. But those who have my absolute trust are few and far between, to say nothing of becoming sworn brothers. I don't know why but I feel that I can trust you, an

outsider, with my life. I guess this is fate! Brother, I swear that this has absolutely nothing to do with your master…”

Young master Ji San was obviously worried that Jiang Chen would misunderstand him. Jiang Chen laughed. In truth, he quite admired the young master’s candid personality. At least in comparison to Wang Teng’s sinister and arrogant nature, this young master was frank and upright. Two lives of experience had made Jiang Chen rather adept at judging people. People like Ji San could indeed be treated as a brother.

“Young master San, I’m greatly ashamed after hearing your words. I’ll not hide such things from you any longer since we’re to become sworn brothers,” Jiang Chen sighed.

“What is it?” Young master Ji San stared blankly.

“Actually my surname name isn’t Zhen. It’s Jiang. My name is Jiang Chen. “

Young master Ji San paused, “Jiang Chen? Why does the name sound so familiar? …what?! You’re that Jiang Chen? The Jiang Chen for whom the Eternal Celestial Capital has offered a great bounty?”

Jiang Chen laughed wryly, “I hadn’t expected myself to be so famous that even the scion of a great clan has heard of it.”

Ji San was flabbergasted, “Brother, you… you’re not really Jiang

Chen are you? This isn't a jest, is it?"

Jiang Chen replied firmly, "It's the absolute truth. It's just that I was forced to assume this alternate identity due to my circumstances."

"Who would've thought? Who would've imagined? This wouldn't have occurred to me even if you cracked open my skull. Jiang Chen? Haha... this makes things even more interesting." Young master Ji San continued loudly, "I don't care if you're Zhen Shi or Jiang Chen. You're my sworn brother either way! Hereafter, as long as you're within Veluriyam Capital, you'll be under the protection of the Coiling Dragon Clan. If those from the Eternal Celestial Capital dare act up here, I'll make sure they never leave!"

He wasn't just boasting. As one of the most powerful clans, the Coiling Dragon Clan was still highly capable despite having been rather subdued in the recent years. Jiang Chen was moved after seeing Ji San's attitude towards him. The motive didn't matter anymore because Jiang Chen could see the latter's good faith and sincerity in his behavior. This was something a heartless and cold man like Wang Teng sorely lacked.

"Brother, don't worry—Veluriyam Capital is our domain—the Eternal Celestial Capital definitely can't do whatever they want here!" Young master Ji San repeatedly reassured Jiang Chen, afraid the latter wouldn't believe him.

Jiang Chen nodded, "The Veluriyam Capital's fame is enough to deter any and all open approaches from the Eternal Celestial Capital. But in truth, they've already arrived in the shadows."

“Eh?” Surprise and puzzlement were written all over Ji San’s expression.

“Taiyuan Lodge opening its doors with the Longevity Pill as their main product is definitely related to a secret partnership between the Majestic Clan and the Eternal Celestial Capital. The Longevity Pill was robbed from our Regal Pill Palace and then shamelessly used to suppress its disciples.”

Naturally aware of the incident regarding the Regal Pill Palace, Ji San cursed, “The Eternal Celestial Capital’s invasion of the Myriad Domain did draw quite a bit of criticism in the Upper Eight Regions. Brother, don’t be discouraged. With your aptitude, you may yet rebuild the sect as long as you lay low for a few hundred years!”

“Brother Ji, please rest assured, I won’t lose heart. One day, I’ll definitely exact from the Eternal Celestial Capital the price and interest for the atrocities they committed toward the Regal Pill Palace.” Jiang Chen’s words were unquestionable and resolute.

“That’s the ticket! If one day I inherit the position of clan lord, I’ll definitely lend you a helping hand in honor of our brotherhood. May I die a horrible death if I renege on my words!” Ji San so thus expressed his stance.

“Since that is the case, I’ll thank Brother Ji in advance. But due to the magnitude of this matter, I’m unwilling to drag you into this unless absolutely necessary. Revenge is a dish best served cold. I’ll

bear with the Eternal Celestial Capital's arrogance for the time being. Once the time is right, I'll collect both principal and interest not only from the Eternal Celestial Capital, but also the direct perpetrators, the Great Scarlet Mid Region."

Young master Ji San nodded, "Brother, how did you become affiliated with House Wei after arriving at Veluriyam Capital?"

Jiang Chen laughed wryly before recounting the tale of that fateful encounter. Young Master Ji San sighed, "This is truly the work of fate. Who would've guessed House Wei would stumble into such great fortune. Even our Coiling Dragon clan is being taken along for this profitable ride. This must be divine providence. Oh yes, brother, you're still looking for a few of your peers, correct? I'll also help you look into the matter of the missing sect disciples."

Jiang Chen nodded, "A batch of them were successfully rescued, but two are still missing. No one knows where House Sikou has hidden them."

Ji San spoke angrily, " House Sikou is a devoted follower of the Majestic Clan. They've found recent success in trafficking slaves and various cultivation resources. House Sikou and House Tong are the right and left arms of the Majestic Clan. We need to knock them off their pedestal sooner or later!" He was also apparently quite discontented with House Sikou.

"Brother Ji, there's no rush in this matter. You should focus on locating the Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine. As soon as you find the pinecone, I'll contact my master and beseech him to refine a

Pine Crane Pill.”

Ji San was greatly delighted, “Brother, you’re my lucky star! It was only due to your kind warning back at the Joined Ridges Auction that I was able to avoid being tricked by Wang Teng’s group. It would’ve been quite troublesome otherwise. My judgment was clouded by the allure of the Longevity Pill back then and had lost all reasoning. It was fortunate that you were there to expose them and allow me to extricate myself.”

Ji San had actually started to view Jiang Chen favorably since then. After that, Jiang Chen had astonished the young master time and time again until the latter was thoroughly captivated. However, Ji San had never guessed that such an uncanny pill king was actually a young sect disciple from the Myriad Domain.

Jiang Chen laughed, “I wasn’t specifically trying to help you back during our first encounter. I simply felt indignant that Wang Teng was using my Longevity Pill to throw his weight around and thus stood out to uphold justice. After all, the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

“Haha, what great reasoning! This is certainly a novel way of thinking. That’s why I say that our brotherhood is predestined by the heavens!” Ji San was ecstatic, “Brother, your identity cannot be revealed for the moment. While the Eternal Celestial Capital wouldn’t dare barge into Veluriyam Capital to cause trouble, it’s easier to evade a spear out in the open than guard against a dagger from the back. I feel your safety is not guaranteed at Taiyuan Tower. Why not follow me back to the clan manor?” This was actually an invitation from the young master.

Jiang Chen replied with a smile, “I thank Brother Ji for his thoughtfulness. But if I hide within the clan manor and spend too much time in peace, I fear I’ll lose my vigilance. Such dangerous environments are better able to arouse one’s potential and will also serve as a reminder that I have a vendetta to pursue. Furthermore, I still need to look after my fellow disciples.”

Jiang Chen naturally wouldn’t seek asylum at the clan lord’s manor. This went against his nature and burdened him with additional obligations. After entering the clan manor, there would no doubt be various social conventions he would have to follow. He’d also have to respect the rules of the manor, something Jiang Chen didn’t particularly enjoy.

Ji San deliberated momentarily before guessing Jiang Chen’s concerns. He didn’t insist on the matter and instead took out a certain item, placing it before Jiang Chen. “Brother, this is an ‘Imperial Advent Defense Talisman’. You can activate it in times of need to summon a defense worthy of a great emperor. It can be used three times, but I’ve already used it once so there are two charges remaining. As the elder brother, I’m worried about your safety, be it regarding the Eternal Celestial Capital or the Majestic Clan. Keep this talisman on you for protection.”

Jiang Chen was astonished, “I can’t accept this! How can I rob you of your lifesaving treasure?! Not to mention it was bestowed upon you by the clan lord himself”

“Its fine, its fine. At worst, I’ll just go and ask for another one. I heard the clan lord has five in total. He’s already given out three of

them, so he probably has two left. As long as I perform a meritorious deed, he'll surely give me everything I want, to speak nothing of a mere Imperial Advent Defense Talisman." Ji San wouldn't hear of it and insisted on giving the talisman to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen could only accept it after several failed attempts at refusing the gift. It was definitely a great item, far surpassing escape glyphs. Escape glyphs might sometimes fail to break through emperor level domains. But this Imperial Advent Defense Talisman boasted of emperor level defenses and could save one's life at a critical juncture. It was easily sufficient to deal with an ambush from even an emperor realm cultivator. In conjunction with the various treasures and methods in Jiang Chen's arsenal, this talisman was another great increase to Jiang Chen's strength. It was akin to granting wings to a tiger.

"Brother Ji, I'll definitely remember this favor." Jiang Chen nodded as he put away the talisman.

"We're brothers! Your words are best kept for strangers. In truth, if you hadn't given our Coiling Dragon Clan a flicker of hope, it'd likely have collapsed after a year. Its disciples would then scatter to the four winds and I, Ji Ole Third, will probably end up as a corpse on the streets."

The young master continued, "I assure you, these words are not of an alarmist. The Veluriyam Capital's civil conflicts are much more chaotic than they seem on the surface."

As a clan scion, Ji San naturally had deep feelings regarding these

matters.

Chapter 787: Mutual Love, Huang'er's Background

The news of young master Ji San and House Wei's guest pill king, Pill King Zhen, becoming sworn brothers spread through Veluriyam Capital like wildfire. However, one of the two involved, Jiang Chen, was mysterious beyond belief. He seemed to have vanished from Taiyuan Tower. In reality, Jiang Chen was cultivating in seclusion inside House Wei's secret base.

Ten days of seclusion later, Jiang Chen successfully broke through the shackles of third level sage realm and ascended to fourth level sage realm. He had finally become an authentic earth sage realm cultivator. Although the ascension from mortal sage realm to earth sage realm looked like a minor step on the surface, Jiang Chen could feel that his strength had undergone a major growth. But despite feeling the vigor of an ascension coursing through his veins, Jiang Chen wasn't entirely satisfied with this outcome, "It's still not enough. I may be able to fight against a peak level sage realm cultivator, and I may even have a real chance to win against one, but an emperor realm cultivator would still be beyond my personal ability."

Jiang Chen had keenly felt the lack of his martial strength ever since entering Veluriyam Capital. Even a random bystander at Veluriyam Capital would be considered extraordinary if they were dropped into the Myriad Domain.

"Sir Jiang, you shouldn't push yourself too much in the cultivation of martial dao. Please remember that you've only started cultivating for several years, and that your attainments

today is something most people would never achieve in a lifetime. With your talents, your name would spread throughout the world in just ten to twenty years time. There is no need for worry." Huang'er immediately reassured him with advice when she saw him frowning.

Huang'er's voice was to Jiang Chen's ears as the melodious sound of 'Ethereal Soothing Melody' was to others. She could always calm him down no matter how restless he was feeling. As of late, the duo had noticed that they shared a vague but deeply in tune rapport with each other when it came to any movement, word and glance. They just hadn't said anything about it. It was an incredibly subtle and indiscernible feeling, but it was enough to bathe them in happiness.

"Thank you, Huang'er," Jiang Chen felt his mood improve as he gazed at Huang'er's exquisite countenance.

"There's no need to thank me," Huang'er smiled faintly, "You haven't stopped saying that ever since we met. Or are you trying to tell me that I should thank you everyday for saving my life?" Huang'er's smile seemed capable of enchanting everything that existed in this world. For a brief moment, Jiang Chen was completely infatuated by her smile.

Suddenly, the impulse to hug Huang'er struck him. It wasn't a physiological reaction, but an eruption of emotion that came from the bottom of his heart. Jiang Chen took a step forwards and grasped Huang'er's soft and delicate hand.

Huang'er smiled faintly, but didn't respond to Jiang Chen's

gesture with shyness or embarrassment. Instead, she murmured softly, “Did you know that I’ve been waiting for this for half a year now, Sir Jiang?”

Jiang Chen’s entire body trembled when he heard this. “Huang’er, you…”

Huang’er smiled joyfully and rested her unparalleled face lightly against Jiang Chen’s broad chest. She listened to Jiang Chen’s heartbeat as she breathed in his scent. The world might be large, but at this moment, she feared nothing. Even if she was plagued by a deadly illness, even if her past was dreary and painful, nothing could ruin this moment for her. “You saved my mortal body back then, but I was unmoved. Now that you’ve saved my despairing soul, how can I ever live apart from you, Sir Jiang?”

Huang’er voice was as soft as the mellow cries of a skylark. Gentle but not overly intimate, her confession of love was unlike that of an ordinary girl. It was a confession that belonged to Huang’er alone.

Infinite love abruptly overflowed from the depths of Jiang Chen’s heart. The girl before him had always stayed by his side despite having to brave through a thousand obstacles and hardships on a journey of untold length. He hadn’t feel too many stirrings back when they were still journeying across the land, and had only now noticed how difficult it had been for the two of them to be here together. This journey had also unnoticeably decreased the distance between the two of them time and again. Now that the last curtain that hid the truth was finally unveiled, they discovered with matching hearts that they could no longer bear to be apart

from each other.

For a long moment, infinite happiness wrapped around Jiang Chen. There were no worries in the whole wide world that could deter this one moment of soft and tender love. True love was ever so beautiful that even a solitary encounter was testament to how precious it was.

“I am a fool, Huang’er. My sect’s troubles have blinded me, and you suffered because of it.” The tendrils of regret slipped into Jiang Chen’s heart.

Huang’er smiled softly, “Do you take me for one of those delicate little flowers? I’ve wandered across the lands with Elder Shun since I was eleven years old and spent several years in the Eastern Kingdom. Elder Shun wouldn’t stop saying that there is a sliver of destiny lying somewhere amongst the Eastern Kingdom that would cure my sickness, but little did I know that his words would actually come true. I’ve wondered often since if the heavens had also gifted me a fated marriage? Teehee… I’ll be spending a lifetime with you, Jiang Chen, and you’re not allowed to turn me away, okay?”

There was nothing Jiang Chen loved more in Huang’er than her temperament. Magnamious, perceptive, sometimes with a touch of the haughtiness of a girl, but never losing the elegance of a noble lady. Every one of Huang’er’s qualities were the qualities he appreciated the most in both lives.

“Who in the world could possibly turn you away, Huang’er?” Jiang Chen sighed.

“I don’t care if others turn me away.” Huang’er smiled before she suddenly straightened her expression. “I suppose I cannot call you ‘Sir Jiang’ from now on, so what exactly should I call you? If I remember correctly, you are a few months older than I am. Then I shall call you Brother Chen just like the womenfolk would call their partner.”

Jiang Chen nodded. He was currently wrapped in happiness, and he enjoyed this emotion very much. Honorifics were entirely secondary to him right then.

“Brother Chen, I’ve never told you about my past, have I? It’s not because I wanted to hide it from you, but because I was afraid it would involve you in danger. However, I feel that it’s no longer something that I should keep from you.” Huang’er’s tone grew a little heavy. The slight wrinkle of her eyebrows was a clear indication of her hesitation and worry.

Jiang Chen said, “Huang’er, you can tell me later if you find it uncomfortable to talk about.”

“I want to tell you,” Huang’er’s tone was unexpectedly firm. Rather than taking the easy way Jiang Chen had offered her, she soldiered on. “One day, I might be forced from your side, and if I disappear, you won’t even know where to find me if I don’t tell you now.”

Jiang Chen was shocked, “What do you mean?”

Huang’er put her finger on Jiang Chen’s lips, “Listen to Huang’er first, Brother Chen?”

His heart immediately turned gentle at the touch of her hand, and so Jiang Chen acceded to her request.

“Brother Chen, I am born in a place called the Myriad Abyss Island; specifically, the Eternal Divine Kingdom of the Myriad Abyss Island. You must remember this name. If one day I’ve suddenly vanished from your side, then this is the place you must go to find me.”

“The Myriad Abyss Island, and the Eternal Divine Kingdom?” Jiang Chen muttered, “What is this place? Is it part of the Upper Eight Regions? Or is it somewhere else?”

“It is neither part of the Upper Eight Regions, nor a part of any human or foreign races’ domain. The Eternal Divine Kingdom is the true heart of the Divine Abyss Continent, and there aren’t many in the entire Upper Eight Regions that know of this place. This is because most people aren’t qualified to enter the Myriad Abyss Island even within the Upper Eight Regions!”

“Is it a place that’s beyond this plane?” Jiang Chen was surprised. Huang’er’s explanations had given him some inspiration. He couldn’t help but recall his Celestial Emperor father from his past life.

“”No, it is still on the Divine Abyss Continent, but there are very few people who are aware just how large the Divine Abyss

Continent truly is. The Upper Eight Regions and the middle and lower regions combined may not even amount to a thousandth of the landmass that is the Divine Abyss Continent."

"What?!" Jiang Chen was completely stunned.

"This domain of the Upper Eight Regions, treated as the heart of the land, is but the territory of mankind. Humans are used to calling all other territories that are not theirs as the desolate wilderness, but in reality there were at least tens to hundreds of domains out there that are just as big as the humans' domain. There are hundreds of small and large races that live in those domains, and some of them are even stronger than humans!"

"I guess I really am a frog at the bottom of a well," Jiang Chen mocked himself. It had been many years since he'd arrived in this world. But he had never known much about Divine Abyss Continent to begin with. It wasn't that he didn't want to learn more about Divine Abyss Continent, but that information about it was a little scarce. His ability to look deep into this continent was extremely limited, and he wasn't able to learn more even with the unparalleled knowledge he possessed from his past life.

Now that he was being enlightened by Huang'er, Jiang Chen finally realized just how small the place he was living in truly was. What Eastern Kingdom? They were practically as small as a single leaf floating atop a vast sea. Even the Myriad Domain was but an insignificant, tiny place. Even the so-called heart of the land, the Upper Eight Regions was but only a piece of land that belonged to humans. According to Huang'er, there were at least hundreds of such lands belonging to countless foreign races across the Divine

Abyss Continent.

"Brother Chen, you are absolutely not a frog at the bottom of a well considering your level of knowledge and bearing. I'm guessing that the stranger who taught you y is no ordinary person, but he simply didn't have the time to teach you everything..."

Jiang Chen blushed with shame. For the longest time, he had been using this excuse to cover up his identity from his past life. He had used the same excuse back when he faced Elder Shun too. Now, he found it a little difficult to continue that lie. That being said, now that he and Huang'er had fallen in love with each other, he could no longer lie to her with the same excuse. "Huang'er, actually, that stranger thing is just an excuse that I use. He doesn't actually exist."

"Ah?" Huang'er let out a soft exclamation, "Then..."

Seeing the puzzlement in Huang'er's eyes, Jiang Chen smiled wryly, "I said that because the truth is too unbelievable. After I was beaten severely by the monarch of the Eastern Kingdom, my soul had experienced a sudden awakening as it drifted along in a foggy haze. Many strange memories that far exceeded the level of Divine Abyss Continent suddenly popped up inside my head."

Although Jiang Chen still couldn't tell her about his past life, his tactful explanation wasn't really a lie either. After all, from the standpoint of those minor overlords of the Eastern Kingdom, that was what had exactly happened.

A long while later, Huang'er finally revealed an intelligent smile, "To think that such a strange thing could happen in this world! You can say that something good indeed came out of your misfortune, Brother Chen. Perhaps in the past you were an expert from a higher plane that exceeded the level of Divine Abyss Continent. Perhaps you have awakened your past memories thanks to the power of reincarnation."

A woman's intuition was quite ridiculously accurate. Huang'er's careless analysis had struck the bullseye. That was exactly what had happened, wasn't it? Jiang Chen nodded, "That is my guess as well. It's just that this experience is so unbelievable that I've been using a mysterious teacher as my excuse all this time."

Huang'er could understand his feelings very well, and she replied in an understanding tone. "As you should, or you would've been hounded by countless evil people who would wish to rob you of your memories." Huang'er's eyes were brimming with happiness as she said this. She could feel Jiang Chen's trust in her when he shared his secret with her. It made her feel both proud and happy at the same time.

Chapter 788: Myriad Abyss Island, Eternal Divine Kingdom

"Huang'er, just what kind of place is the Myriad Abyss Island and Eternal Divine Kingdom?" Jiang Chen continued to ask.

"The Myriad Abyss Island is the true core of the Divine Abyss Continent. It's said that invaders from another continent attacked the Divine Abyss Continent long ago, causing a great battle to take place. After that great battle, the status quo of the Divine Abyss Continent was forever shattered. The powerful factions were decimated, and the strong hid away in various forgotten corners of the continent. Some left their legacies behind, but others, not even that. But the place that most of those people retreated to was the Myriad Abyss Island."

"The ancient masters all went to the Myriad Abyss Island? What for?" Jiang Chen was startled, suddenly remembering the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect back at Mount Rippling Mirage.

"The Myriad Abyss Island is within an endless ocean, without border or boundary. The great power of the Divine Abyss Continent binds it, essentially preventing any outsiders from discovering its existence. According to legend, the interdimensional invaders weren't able to find the whereabouts of any who entered the Myriad Abyss Island. As long as the island stayed hidden, the Divine Abyss Continent was no longer particularly attractive, not enough to draw the attention of very strong dimensions, anyways."

Jiang Chen frowned. "Did the ancient experts of the Divine Abyss

Continent lose all their courage and hot-bloodedness after a single battle? An invasion of a primordial threat... surely, even hiding wouldn't have been the best method for self-preservation?"

"I've only heard Elder Shun speak of these myths in passing. Whether there were any other motives behind their actions, well, I'm not sure either." Huang'er sighed softly.

Jiang Chen paused, not saying anything more. He had spoken so quickly just now due to indignation. In his past life, worlds had crumbled apart before the cataclysm. However, his father, the Celestial Emperor, had not shrunk from the challenge despite its vastness and difficulty. Thus, Jiang Chen was both surprised and speechless at the ancient cultivators' choice to hide themselves within the Myriad Abyss Island and never again make an appearance, simply because of an interdimensional invasion. However, he remembered soon after that Huang'er was also from the Myriad Abyss Island. He may have unintentionally troubled her with his words. "Huang'er, I spoke too emotionally. Please don't take it to heart," Jiang Chen said apologetically.

Huang'er smiled sweetly at him in response. "You spoke only the truth. Why would I take that the wrong way? I don't have much worth remembering from my life there, anyway. The past few years away from that place have been much more comfortable. It's helped distance me from those troubles, and forget my illness."

"Since you don't like it there, we'll never go back." Jiang Chen consoled her.

Huang'er's bright eyes dimmed a touch, as if in recollection of

something unpleasant. Her delicate face was marred by a faint shadow.

"Huang'er?"

Huang'er sighed quietly once more. "Brother Chen, I don't want to go back at all. But in the Eternal Divine Kingdom, on the Myriad Abyss Island... my destiny lies there. I wonder if I can ever shake off its chains."

"Destiny?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly. As the son of the Celestial Emperor in his previous life, his horizons had been as broad as the heavenly planes themselves. Though he knew of a certain inertia in the heavenly dao, there was no such thing as a fixed, unshakable destiny. The heavenly dao always left the slightest of possibilities so that those constrained by it may cast off its yoke.

The strong practiced martial dao in order to break free from the bonds of fate. The weak were bound by fate, left to struggle eternally in a sea of bitterness. The fate he had been doomed to bear in his previous life was an inability to cultivate. However, it had been forcibly overturned by his father. He had been able to live a million years with the body of a mere mortal. This was a classic example of breaking free of destiny. Thus, Jiang Chen did not believe at all that a place like the Divine Abyss Continent had a destiny that could not be changed.

"Huang'er, destiny is but a trial from fate. There is no destiny that remains endless and unbroken. What of the Myriad Abyss Island? What of the Eternal Divine Kingdom? Even the Eternal Divine Kingdom may not be so everlasting before the heavenly

dao. So tell me, what destiny could it impose on you?”

A hint of sadness crept into Huang’er’s beautiful eyes. “Brother Chen, do you remember when you diagnosed me with the Generation Binding Curse, and guessed the things that happened in my parents’ generation?”

Jiang Chen nodded. The Generation Binding Curse was a curse born out of obsession. Another woman besides Huang’er’s mother had loved her father deeply, but was unrequited, and burned her soul away to cast the curse. Huang’er had been afflicted with the curse as an unborn fetus, and carried the curse with her from the day of her birth.

“All those years ago, my father was once betrothed to the woman who cast the curse. Alas, he was rebellious in his youth, unwilling to be held to the engagement. He met my mother after he’d travelled away from the Myriad Abyss Island, and they’d eloped together. They returned when my mother was pregnant, and faced the combined fury of both factions. Because of it, my parents were imprisoned within a prison called the Boundless Prison on the island, doomed to suffer for the rest of their days. As for me, I was seen as living proof of their crime and was promised to a certain genius of that woman’s family as a vessel for dual cultivation, in order to compensate them. I was ceaselessly bullied and despised at home. The only one who cared for me was Elder Shun...” Huang’er’s eyes reddened despite her usually calm demeanor. It was difficult for her to speak so plainly regarding the injustices in her life.

All these years, she and Elder Shun had only each other to

depend on. Of course, she had used her disease as a reason for their escape from the island, but wasn't the root of that flight her desire to escape from destiny's shackles? The years she'd spent drifting around... though much of it was filled with moving here and there, her disposition now was much brighter than it had been back at Myriad Abyss Island.

But Huang'er knew in her heart that this life of escapism had an end, someday. Her ordinary days would be over when the Myriad Abyss Island sent people to investigate her whereabouts. All her happiness, all her longing for a better future... they were as transient as clouds. This was because the might of the Myriad Abyss Island was unimaginable to those residing in the human domain. The experts of the Upper Eight Regions were completely impotent before those of the Myriad Abyss Island.

Jiang Chen was silent for a long while. He had guessed Huang'er to be a distinguished lady because of the way she spoke and the way she carried herself. It was impossible for her mannerisms to have been developed with a commoner's family. But he had never imagined that this gentle, graceful girl, who had always seemed to possess poise and dignity, had such a troubled past. The entrapments that fate had laid for her rivalled those of his past life.

Though he had been cursed with a yin constitution, it had merely prevented him from cultivation. He still had a father who'd spoiled him without limit, who'd extended his lifespan and allowed him to enjoy an existence far above that of many others. He had countless resources from the heavenly planes, countless tomes and experts at his perusal and disposal. Besides his inability to cultivate, he had all of the treatment due the son of the Celestial Emperor.

But, besides the curse itself, Huang'er had such a miserable destiny as well. From birth, she had been designated as a mere vessel for cultivation. But the unfairness in her life had not caused the clever girl to wallow in self-degradation, instead nurturing a pure and noble personality. Much like the lotus, she was someone who'd risen out of the mud, but remained unstained.

Jiang Chen took a deep breath. "Huang'er, how strong is your family? What about the family whose daughter your father was engaged to? Are they strong enough for your family to offer a girl of its direct line as a cultivation vessel?"

The thought highly perplexed Jiang Chen. Regardless of what family Huang'er had come from, it was a family that was willing to place their own son into Boundless Prison, and give away their granddaughter as a mere tool. How hard-hearted did one have to be to go through with those actions? What use was a family like that, even if it grew in might?

Huang'er clearly didn't want to hide any more secrets from Jiang Chen. Hazy teardrops dotted her eyelashes. "In the Myriad Abyss Island, my family is roughly equivalent to House Wei in Veluriyam Capital. The other family, a great clan. There are several top-level rulers within the Myriad Abyss Island above them, and they are reputed to be the true masters of the Divine Abyss Continent."

"True masters? How strong are they; possibly empyrean cultivators?"

"I've heard that they are great empyrean experts, but rumors have spoken of them being divine experts instead."

Jiang Chen was a little shocked. “I thought the Divine Abyss Continent was an ordinary dimension, limited to just mortals? How come divine experts also exist here?”

From his previous life, the worlds of the heavenly planes were the divine experts’ stage, hence Jiang Chen’s surprise. There were nine ranks of divinity, and beyond them was mastery of the heavenly planes. Lordship over a set of heavens meant commanding a realm. The lord of a group of worlds was an emperor within the heavenly planes. Jiang Chen’s father in his previous life was the master of the Taiyuan Realm, or the Taiyuan Celestial Emperor.

Within the Taiyuan Realm were innumerable mundane dimensions, but their strongest experts held great empyrean as their highest rank. Empyrean experts were experts that had received affirmation from the heavenly dao. They lived extremely long lives, held empyrean decrees, and were accepted by the heavens. But the empyrean rank was only preparation for the divine realm. It was also called demi-divine.

Nevertheless, there was a world of difference between empyrean experts and divine experts. One within the divine realm was someone who had truly passed the heavenly dao’s trials, and they lived as long as the heavens and the earth, shining with the brilliance of the celestial bodies. Only in the divine realm could one be said to have broken the bonds of mundanity. Empyrean experts, on the other hand, had only just received their qualification to try for the test. To put it another way, they were apprentices and reservists for the divine realm.

Typically, for a large mundane dimension, empyrean experts were not lacking, but divine experts could not exist.

If one did appear, the walls of the dimension would destabilize. The existence would interfere in the normal operation of the dimension, and the cultivator would be forced to ascend to the world of the heavenly planes. Of course, the worlds of the heavenly planes had many minor heavenly planes as well, different from ordinary dimensions. The dimensional rules for a minor heavenly plane could accommodate divine experts, but even so, the heavenly plane was only a small world within the heavenly planes, and had no right to compete with a set of worlds. One set of worlds in the heavenly planes could only have a single master. The ruler of a minor heavenly plane had to take orders from that master.

Many experts from ordinary dimensions chose to take a gap period within a minor heavenly plane, and only tried to make their way in the greater world of the heavenly planes after their strength had stabilized. A place like the Divine Abyss Continent, however... Jiang Chen had always thought it to be an ordinary dimension, and thus couldn’t hold any divine experts. This was the basic knowledge he’d gained from his previous life.

Chapter 789: News of Elder Shun

The conversation with Huang'er astounded Jiang Chen greatly, but his curiosity about the Divine Abyss Continent grew as well. He'd traveled step by step, beginning from the Eastern Kingdom to the four great sects of the sixteen kingdom alliance, until he'd found out about the Myriad Domain. After entering the Regal Pill Palace, he'd discovered that the Myriad Domain was only a small area on the fringes of the human domain. The Upper Eight Regions was the core of the human' domain, where the race reigned supreme. But now, Huang'er's words had toppled his conception of the Divine Abyss Continent yet again. The human domain amounted a drop in the ocean compared to the entirety of the landmass. Though it wasn't exactly insignificant, it could never again be seen as the core in Jiang Chen's mind, at least not compared to Myriad Abyss Island.

Noting Jiang Chen's odd behaviour, Huang'er was worried that she had damaged his proclivity for optimism. "Brother Chen, your talent is exceptional. The Divine Abyss Continent will not be able to limit you. I've no doubt that you can contend with even the master of Myriad Abyss Island one day," she encouraged.

She didn't speak solely to console him. As someone who'd been born on Myriad Abyss Island, Huang'er was quite knowledgeable and had seen many things, including countless geniuses. However, none impressed her as deeply as Jiang Chen did. The things that happened to him were almost mythical in the telling, shaking the girl's heart time and time again. Jiang Chen's occasional strokes of divine inspiration only served to enhance the impact he had, even on someone from Myriad Abyss Island like Huang'er. Understandably so, since even a place like Myriad Abyss Island was incomparable to Jiang Chen's previous life.

Jiang Chen gave her a candid smile when he heard her words. “Huang’er, you don’t need to worry about me. No one will take you from my side – not Myriad Abyss Island or the Eternal Divine Kingdom, nor anyone else.”

If another had used the same confidence while speaking, Huang’er would perhaps have simply laughed. But they held a different weight when coming from Jiang Chen. She trusted him unconditionally.

Huang’er’s beautiful eyes lit up with joy, but she became more serious after it passed. “Brother Chen, please promise me something.”

“Go ahead.”

“If I disappear suddenly one day and am taken away back to Myriad Abyss Island, you must promise me that you won’t follow until you’ve become stronger than a Titled Great Emperor!”

“Titled Great Emperor?” Jiang Chen was startled.

“Yes. There are many powerful experts on Myriad Abyss Island. For the younger generation, reaching the emperor realm is rudimentary in terms of showing one’s strength. On the Island, emperor realm is just another realm. One is not qualified to be called a great emperor simply for having achieved it. Great emperor is a title of honor is unique to the human domain.”

Huang'er's removal of the veil of mystique surrounding Myriad Abyss Island caused Jiang Chen to feel a kind of anticipation.

When I become a Titled Great Emperor one day, where do I go then? The worry was always on his mind. Jiang Chen's vision was not limited to the human domain. His eyes were focused on the heavenly planes. Now that he'd heard of a place like Myriad Abyss Island, he did not feel defeat and helplessness, but rather the satisfaction of a fulfilled expectation.

"Brother Chen, Huang'er has never asked anything else of you. You must agree to this." It was rare for Huang'er to be this stubborn about something. Her bright eyes gazed at Jiang Chen with a kind of earnest determination.

"Huang'er..." Jiang Chen was about to go on, but Huang'er's slender, pearlescent hands clasped over his mouth. She shook her head slightly. "Promise me."

Seeing her persistence, Jiang Chen knew he couldn't persevere with sheer obstinence. "I promise," he sighed softly.

Huang'er let out a breath of relief. "Brother Chen, this is a promise you must hold fast to."

"Huang'er, don't worry. Rather than looking for you when the time comes, it's better to not let them take you away. After I cure you of the Curse, we'll brave Myriad Abyss Island together, and turn that place upside down! What do you say?" Jiang Chen's high

spirits were infectious. Huang'er broke into a smile as well.

As the two of them were speaking, a message glyph came from outside the secret room. It was Shen Trifire. "Senior brother, Pill King Lu Feng has come to visit."

Jiang Chen nodded, and walked outside, Huang'er close behind him.

Pill King Lu Feng was in a good mood as of late. He spoke exultantly when he saw Jiang Chen, "Master, I have attempted to absorb the reflections of pill dao you've given me over the past half-month, and have learned much from them. I'm eager to try out my newfound knowledge! Please give me some opportunities for field work."

Translated, that was a request for a pill recipe from Jiang Chen. The Deviant Pill Faction's recipes didn't circulate very often in the outside world. Recipes of higher quality were even more pitiably rare. The pills featured by Taiyuan Tower—whether it was the Half-step Immortal Elixir Pill, the Heptarune True Dragon Pill, the Tiger Eruption Pill, or the Aeons Evergreen Pill—were all classics of the faction. Pill King Lu Feng had an itch in his heart that could now only be satisfied by hands on work.

"I can give you the recipe for a pill, and if you do well, we can list it as one of our featured pills as well." Jiang Chen laughed.

"What? Master, please get to the point. I don't like to be tantalized so." Pill King Lu Feng's impatience was plain to see.

“The Skyheart Nirvana Pill,” Jiang Chen announced smoothly. He’d seen the pill at the Mt. Mirage Pill Battles. Though it wasn’t a high-rank pill, it enjoyed widespread distribution.

“That’s great, master. Ole Lu will refine it with care—I won’t let the Deviant Pill Faction down!” Pill King Lu Feng was as excited as a child who’d just received a piece of candy.

“Before you rush off with happiness, there’s something I’d like you to pay attention to.”

“What is it?” Pill King Lu Feng blinked.

“Keep an eye out for something called the Requiem Wood. If you receive any news through your channels, I will teach you two more pill recipes which are better than the Skyheart Nirvana Pill in every way.”

“Requiem Wood?” Pill King Lu Feng was amazed. “That’s not something that’s easy to find.”

“You know what it is?” Jiang Chen was similarly astounded. The Wood was an esoteric item, so he was just trying his luck. He didn’t expect Pill King Lu Feng to have actually heard of it.

“Four or five years ago, a bounty appeared in the Upper Eight Regions, also seeking the Requiem Wood. The person who found it would be rewarded with an emperor relic! The news shook the

Upper Eight Regions at the time, and searching for the Requiem Wood became one of the most popular tasks in the Upper Eight Regions."

Jiang Chen's insides churned at Pill King Lu Feng's words. Four or five years ago was the time Elder Shun had departed from the Myriad Domain. Back then, Jiang Chen had still been with the sixteen kingdom alliance, and it was at Eternal Spirit Mountain that he'd first met with Huang'er and the elder. After that, Elder Shun had entrusted Huang'er to him before traveling the world in search of the Requiem Wood. Alongside him was the former Purple Sun Sect disciple, Chu Xinghan. Based on the timeframe, the reward for the Requiem Wood must have been set up by Elder Shun.

Standing beside Jiang Chen, Huang'er briefly froze as well. They exchanged a glance, and discovered implicitly that their line of thought led to the same place. Pill King Lu Feng only then noticed a stunningly beautiful girl by Jiang Chen's side. He was overwhelmed by her remarkable appearance and manner. Staring dumbly at Huang'er, he stuttered, "Master, is this … your wife?"

"… Not at all, don't be rude," Jiang Chen scolded.

Pill King Lu Feng chuckled for a while, scratching at his head. "Master-wife, please forgive Ole Lu's impudence. I'm a rough man, don't take my words too seriously." He saluted to Huang'er.

The latter smiled faintly back. "Pill King Lu Feng, did you see the one who listed the Requiem Wood's bounty in person?"

The pill king's expression blanked momentarily before he sighed, "No, I haven't. What right do I have to request a visit of someone so much my senior? An emperor relic... even the seven emperors of our Veluriyam Capital may not, well..." Pill King Lu Feng trailed off. Something like that was beyond his realm of comprehension.

"Ole Lu, you should secretly try to keep track of any information about the Requiem Wood. Remember, if you have any news, notify me at the first opportunity."

"Master, you can rest easy. I'm not much interested in that emperor relic. As pill kings, the dao of pills is the only truth for us," Pill King Lu Feng laughed.

"Don't worry, if you really do get the Requiem Wood, you'll receive appropriate rewards as well." Jiang Chen casually waved a hand, throwing a jade token towards Pill King Lu Feng. "This is the Skyheart Nirvana Pill's recipe. Feel free to study it as much as you want. Remember, once you accept this legacy, you cannot betray it your entire life. If you do, even if the heavenly dao does not strike you down, I shall!"

"Master, you look too lowly on Ole Lu's morals. We pill kings are always loyal to pill dao and our traditions. How could I betray it? If Ole Lu forsakes my master and my tradition, then let me be crushed into pieces, and perish under heavenly lightning!" Pill King Lu Feng loudly proclaimed.

"Good, if you maintain your loyalty, there will be far more

surprises than you've ever dreamed of." Jiang Chen didn't forget to make a promise alongside his warning. Sure enough, Pill King Lu Feng scuttled away joyfully. His expression was sweeter than if he had drunk honey.

"Was that Elder Shun?" Jiang Chen looked at Huang'er.

She nodded, "It must be him, but I wonder where he's gone now?"

"For someone capable of giving away an emperor relic, Elder Shun's surely not just a great emperor realm cultivator, is he?" Jiang Chen laughed.

Huang'er inclined her head in confirmation. "Elder Shun is the foster father of my father, and the teacher who'd initiated my father into martial dao as well. He broke the fetters of the emperor realm over a thousand years ago, and received an empyrean decree."

"So he's an empyrean expert, then?" Jiang Chen was moved.

"Mm. Empyrean experts are common on Myriad Abyss Island, but they hardly ever leave. For them, any place outside the Eternal Divine Kingdom is too mundane. They are almost never willing to come out, because they are fearful of being tainted by the karma of the lower realms, and thereby have their cultivation progress affected."

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “Assigning truth where there is none.”

He was quite disdainful of that so called phenomenon. Smiling softly back, Huang’er nodded as well. She shared similar thoughts. Elder Shun had wandered the human domain for ten years, bringing her with him, but she hadn’t seen any such ‘karma of the lower realms’ affecting him. His cultivation was as robust as it had always been. To put it more plainly, it was just a type of estrangement between castes. Those within Myriad Abyss Island looked down on the entire world outside.

“Huang’er, do you think Elder Shun has secretly gone back to Myriad Abyss Island?” A sudden thought flashed across Jiang Chen’s mind. It was difficult to find the Requiem Wood in the human domain, but Myriad Abyss Island was so much superior. Perhaps it was possible to find the Wood there!

Chapter 790: Mu Gaoqi's Whereabouts

Jiang Chen's words reminded Huang'er of just such a possibility. Concern flashed across her face. Huang'er knew that Elder Shun would almost certainly visit the domains of various races or even go back to Myriad Abyss Island if he couldn't find the Requiem Wood in human territory.

"Let's hope the elder didn't go back to Myriad Abyss Island," Huang'er spoke worriedly.

"What's wrong with returning there?"

"He'll definitely be viewed as a traitor for taking me from the Island. His fate will be even worse than my parents' if he is captured. My father and mother were only imprisoned within Boundless Prison but Elder Shun... he'll be executed." Huang'er's voice began to tremble as her exquisite countenance turned somewhat pale.

She'd been dependent on Elder Shun through many life and death situations, so it came as no surprise that she couldn't accept even the thought of such a conclusion. Jiang Chen lightly grasped Huang'er's hands and consoled her with a gentle tone. "Don't worry, Elder Shun is a man of great wisdom. He has a clear idea of what he should and should not do."

Huang'er tried visibly to calm down and nodded lightly. She was worried that Jiang Chen would be overly concerned about her. "Brother Chen, I'd always believed that my ailment would never

be cured, until that fateful day when you told me about the Generation Binding Curse and that it could be cured with the Requiem Wood. Please rest assured that Huang'er will strive to live on. When I'm cured of the Generation Binding Curse, I must go to Boundless Prison to rescue my parents from their agony." Huang'er's tone was serious and her eyes resolute.

Jiang Chen nodded, "Indeed. How can one watch as their parents fall into the depths of misery? Fret not, Huang'er, I'll definitely accompany you to rescue your parents one day."

At this point, Jiang Chen felt his chest tighten. The fate of his father, whether from his past life or current, was still a mystery to him. It still was a sore spot. But he still had a long ways to go before reaching the Celestial Emperor's level. Before then, it would be futile to worry excessively. But he also shared familiar sentiments with his current father, Jiang Feng. After all, it was said that blood runs thicker than water. With the latter's blood coursing through Jiang Chen's current physical body, how could he sever such a filial relationship? What's more, Jiang Feng had taken care of him in many ways back in the Eastern Kingdom. The fatherly love that Jiang Chen had experienced in his life had not been missed one whit in this life. It was difficult to imagine Jiang Chen surviving the initial hurdles from his present life without a father like Jiang Feng. He recalled how his father had departed for the upper regions in search of his mother, leaving only a letter to explain the situation.

Many a year had passed with neither news nor contact now. He himself had arrived at the Upper Eight Regions after much hardship, constantly on the run. He then had to devote all his efforts on gaining a foothold in Veluriyam Capital. He simply

hadn't found the time to inquire about Jiang Feng's whereabouts. Now that Taiyuan Tower was on the right track, it was high time to focus on finding his father. Too many years had passed already. Concern clenched Jiang Chen's heart whenever he thought about it; especially just how much he had sacrificed on his fateful journey from the Myriad Domain to the Veluriyam Capital.

He recalled how his father had charged into the Upper Eight Regions with merely a spirit realm cultivation level. His journey, even from a distance, looked fraught with danger, like a three year old child seeking to enter a dragon's pond or tiger's lair. Heavens only knew how many people of the origin realm or even the sage realm died everyday in the Upper Eight Regions, to say nothing of a mere spirit realm cultivator. Seeing Jiang Chen in a daze, Huang'er hurriedly inquired as to what was weighing on his mind.

Jiang Chen sighed, "Huang'er, you likely know of my father, the Duke of Jiang Han, back when you were in the Eastern Kingdom. He left after accompanying me to the Skylaurel Kingdom with only a letter to explain that he was going to the Upper Eight Regions to search for my mother. Most importantly, he didn't leave a keepsake. Looking for him now is like searching for a needle in a haystack."

At that moment, Jiang Chen told Huang'er about the contents of his father's letter. Huang'er naturally knew about Jiang Chen's backgrounds, but she'd always thought his father was still in Skylaurel Kingdom. She never expected his father to have already left. "Brother Chen, you and your father are truly affectionate people. As the saying goes, the heavens provide for the fortunate. His love for your mother will surely move the heavens. Since we already know that your mother is from the Upper Eight Regions,

it’s only a matter of time before we find them,” Huang’er consoled.

The two suddenly realized the many similarities between their lives. Their parents’ marriages had both been sabotaged by other parties. The comparable fates and the similar obstacles they’d faced created a strong resonance between Jiang Chen and Huang’er.

At this moment, one of Jiang Chen’s followers approached. “Pill King Zhen, young master Ji San has dispatched some people to Taiyuan Tower. They claim to be here on urgent business.”

Jiang Chen had previously chosen ten from among the batch of slaves and contracted them to serve Taiyuan Tower for twenty years. They had now become his reliable aides. Jiang Chen dared not be negligent after hearing that young master Ji San had an urgent matter to discuss. He couldn’t ignore the young master’s matters since they were, after all, sworn brothers.

“Brother Chen, the state of affairs within Veluriyam Capital is rather complicated. You must be careful,” reminded Huang’er.

Jiang Chen promised to be so and walked out into Taiyuan Tower’s main hall. He then proceeded to follow young master Ji San’s aides towards the Coiling Dragon Clan manor. This was his first time calling upon the manor of a great clan. But Jiang Chen wasn’t nervous at all. Truth be told, he didn’t have a reason to be. He’d already experienced many grand spectacles during his past life. A mere clan manor was rather insignificant by the standards of the heavenly realm.

The clan manor of the Coiling Dragon Clan was located in one of the most preeminent districts of Veluriyam Capital. The large palaces and wide courtyards were constructed in the shape of a coiling dragon. It was an overwhelming sight to behold. Although the world viewed the Coiling Dragon Clan as a waning power, it still looked very well organized on the surface. The security was strict, looking impenetrable from the exterior or within its walls. One couldn't even hope to draw a comparison between such a clan manor and that of a ninth rank aristocratic house.

"Pill King Zhen, young master Ji San has arranged for you to freely enter or exit the clan manor with this token. You'll have unimpeded access everywhere except for certain restricted areas." The leader among young master Ji San's followers was a sixth rank emperor realm cultivator. He naturally knew Jiang Chen as young master Ji San's sworn brother and treated him with due courtesy.

Jiang Chen smiled, "I'm grateful for this great favor, Captain Mo."

"Haha, I'm merely passing on young master Ji San's generosity. Moreover, with Pill King Zhen's current status, I feel you're absolutely worthy of this honor." Captain Mo was quite polite to Jiang Chen. He obviously viewed Jiang Chen with a certain degree of admiration and wanted to become friends. As expected, nothing obstructed them as they chatted on the way to young master Ji San's residence.

Young master Ji San's position in the clan was indeed extraordinary. Amidst the vast and maze-like Coiling Dragon Clan

Manor, his residence was located in a peaceful location surrounded by a bustling neighbourhood. It was like a completely different world within.

“Brother Ji, you seem to be living quite a comfortable life.” Jiang Chen saw that young master Ji San’s residence was ten times bigger than his own back at the Regal Pill Palace. They’d obviously made meticulous plans for efficient space utilization to be able to build such a residence.

“Haha, you can move in and live with me if you like it. I was bored to death during your closed door cultivation. Come, come, come… take a look at what I’ve prepared for you.” Young master Ji San dismissed his followers with a wave of his hand. He then dragged Jiang Chen by the hand to a secret chamber. Once inside, Jiang Chen noticed a person restrained inside. He was kneeling, half conscious, on the floor like a dead dog, not able to offer so much as a thread of resistance.

“Brother, guess who this is!”

Jiang Chen was startled after seeing his face. How could it be him?! This was obviously Boss Li from the Myriad Puppets Pavilion. Back when Jiang Chen had gone to the Myriad Puppets Pavilion to investigate the fate of the Regal Pill Palace disciples, he’d wanted to buy the disciples back. But the Myriad Puppets Pavilion had so many rules and regulations in place that Jiang Chen had been forced to utilize a more violent approach.

Jiang Chen still had no idea what he could do with those slaves still hidden within House Wei’s secret area. He wasn’t willing to

return them to the Myriad Puppets Pavilion but was also worried that, after failing to find them, the Pavilion might activate the seals and kill them off. Then, he'd have inadvertently harmed these people. "Isn't this Boss Li from the Myriad Puppets Pavilion?"

"Haha, your memory is quite good. It is indeed that old bastard. This loyal dog of House Sikou has been managing the Myriad Puppets Pavilion for many years now. It's normally quite difficult to make a move on him because he lives in seclusion. Taking advantage of this rare and coincidental opportunity, I dispatched my men to abduct him from a brothel in secret. Brother, didn't you want to inquire about the fate of your two fellow disciples? Ask him all you want. He's been afflicted by one of our Coiling Dragon Clan's abilities which not only compels him to answer questions in all honesty, but also ensures that he'll remember nothing afterwards."

Although Jiang Chen was no stranger to such arts, he felt a rush of excitement within his heart. He approached and nudged the captive's chin with his foot. "Boss Li, how's business at the Myriad Puppets Pavilion recently?"

Boss Li replied in an apathetic tone, without a shred of trickery. "Business has been terrible. The recent robbery lost us several old customers and has massively affected trade." Young master Ji San laughed as he clapped Jiang Chen's shoulder. "Take your time with him. He'll remain in this state forever unless we release him."

Jiang Chen nodded before continuing, "Do you remember the batch of slaves you acquired from the Myriad Domain?"

“I do. Those slaves from the Regal Pill Palace were purchased from the Great Scarlet Empire. Unfortunately we failed to realize their potential value and missed the opportunity to obtain the recipe for the Longevity Pill!”

“How so?” Jiang Chen asked.

“We only later came to know that an elder named Yun Nie and a youth named Mu Gaoqi amongst them possessed the recipe to the Longevity Pill. But it turns out that these two people had already been sold to Pillfire City. Thus we missed a golden opportunity to obtain the recipe for the Longevity Pill!”

Jiang Chen frowned, “What kind of place is Pillfire City?”

Young master Ji San spoke from the side, “Pillfire City is a major power in the Upper Eight Regions. Though not as powerful as Veluriyam Capital, it’s not too far off—one occupies the north and the other is located in the south—both are superior powers within the Upper Eight Regions. The Pillfire City is one of the most authoritative powers in the dao of pills and dominates at least seventy percent of the human race’s pill dao market!”

“It’s that powerful?!” Jiang Chen was dazed, but he felt slightly relieved after knowing that Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi had been sold to the Pillfire City. At least now he knew of their whereabouts.

Chapter 791: The Coiling Dragon Clan Lord

Young master Ji San sighed, “It is just that ridiculous. Veluriyam Capital is situated in the southern part of the Upper Eight Regions, and its influence envelopes the entire region. However, Pillfire City is situated in the northern part of the Upper Eight Regions, and their influence spreads through the northern, northeast and northwest parts of the Upper Eight Regions. Their pill business can only be described as astounding. They’re just as wealthy as some countries.”

Pillfire City? Jiang Chen remembered the description that went with the name in the book Huang’er had given him. However, the introduction of the place within was merely a shallow overview. He continued to stare at Boss Li, “Who did you sell those two people to?”

Boss Li said, “I’m not sure. I only know that they belong to Pillfire City.”

Young master Ji San spoke angrily, “How dare you do business with them even with the knowledge that they are from Pillfire City? Don’t you know that Veluriyam Capital and Pillfire City are sworn enemies in the pill industry?!”

“This is the decision made by my family’s superiors. My status is low, and I have no say in this matter.”

Jiang Chen and young master Ji San were both dumbfounded by his answer. They kept interrogating him, but ultimately failed to

glean any more clues.

"This matter is much easier to deal with now that we know where they've gone, brother. Should I send someone to Pillfire City to take a look around?"

Jiang Chen nodded, "Please. There is also one more thing I'd like to ask your help with, Brother Ji."

Young master Ji San nodded, "Then let us speak outside."

Jiang Chen had no interest in Boss Li. The accomplice of a crime was more than deserving of death, so naturally he didn't bother to inquire into Boss Li's fate. The Coiling Dragon Clan would deal with him. Soon, they were both within a private room. Young master Ji San turned to him, "You can tell me anything, brother. There is nothing the Coiling Dragon Clan can't do in Veluriyam Capital."

Jiang Chen didn't try to hide his intentions. He told young master Ji San everything about his father, Jiang Feng.

Young master Ji San pondered, "Do you have any clues or keepsakes that are tied to your mother's background?"

Jiang Chen shook his head. "None. I've also searched inside my old home, the Jiang Han manor, but there were no clues there either."

“If there are no clues, then we can only inquire about him slowly through various channels. The search won’t be very efficient though.”

Jiang Chen also understood that searching for someone like this was akin to trying to find a needle in a haystack. But still, delegating the task to the Coiling Dragon Clan was far more efficient than having him searching around blindly. After all, he still had next to no foundation in the Upper Eight Regions. Most importantly, he couldn’t reveal his true identity yet. Otherwise, there were plenty of ways that he could spread his name through the Upper Eight Regions. If that happened, his father would naturally seek him out on his own.

But sadly, it wasn’t an option he could take. The Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect were still eyeing him covetously. He would only bring trouble to those around him if he spread his name.

“Brother Ji, how is the clan lord doing as of late?” Jiang Chen thought that he should repay young master Ji San a little, seeing that he had helped so much.

“The same as ever. The clan lord is afraid to cultivate because it would only quicken the rate of his cultivation dissipating. Therefore, he’s basically focusing on recuperating and maintaining his physical condition.” Young master Ji San’s tone was extremely heavy. This matter had become a constant worry in the mind of every Coiling Dragon Clan member.

An idea entered Jiang Chen’s mind. “Can you take me to the clan

lord?”

Young master Ji San looked surprised. “Do you wish to meet the clan lord, brother?”

“Mm. I’d like to meet the clan lord and get some details on his condition. This way, if I meet my master again in the future, I’d be able to tell him any pertinent information. That way, he would be able to take the most appropriate steps.”

Young master Ji San nodded repeatedly, “You’re right, you’re absolutely right. I’ll apply for your entry right now. Please sit here for a moment while I go and facilitate this. I’ll be back right away. I’ll ask Captain Mo to accompany you while I’m gone.”

The moment he finished his words , young master Ji San strode away with hurried footsteps and an incredibly urgent look on his face. Jiang Chen understood that the Coiling Dragon Clan’s clan lord must be faring extremely badly from how anxious young master Ji San looked. Otherwise, someone of his bearing would never reveal such a look on his face.

After young master Ji San had gone out, Captain Mo came in and smiled, “The young master had requested that I keep you company for a bit, Pill King Zhen. I haven’t interrupted you, have I?”

“Don’t stand on ceremony, Captain Mo. Young master Ji San and I are as close as brothers, and you’re actually our senior, aren’t you? If you are going to continue speaking this courteously, then I’ll really have to leave.”

Captain Mo broke out in laughter, “Pill King Zhen, young master Ji San has had countless friends in his life, and I have come to know them all in one way or another. However, I’ve never been impressed by anyone until you showed up. That gamble you fought on the day of Taiyuan Tower’s opening was truly astounding.”

“You praise me too highly, Captain Mo. I was just lucky to have met my teacher in my youth, not to mention that I pulled a fast one during that bet.”

“Haha, the Majestic Clan’s the one who tried pulling a fast one. They came prepared, whilst you and Taiyuan Tower were given no choice but to accept their challenge. It was no simple feat to take on a battle you were unprepared for and then win the whole thing. House Wei is lucky to have met you, Pill King Zhen.” Captain Mo obviously enjoyed a high position under young master Ji San. He talked and laughed freely. The two had a wonderful chat while they waited.

A while later, young master Ji San came in with a beaming smile on his face. “The clan lord is very happy to hear your wish to visit him, brother. He’s asked me to bring you to him right away.”

Upon hearing this, Captain Mo hastily said, “Then go quickly, Pill King Zhen. Let us talk again later.”

Jiang Chen nodded and followed young master Ji San. Without bringing a single subordinate with them, the pair walked into the most important area in the entire Coiling Dragon Clan residence.

There were numerous road blocks along the path to the clan lord's residence. Even young master Ji San was not exempted from the checkpoints. Many inspections and stops later, they finally arrived at the entrance of a garden.

"Brother, my clan lord is a powerful person who's only a single step away from becoming a great emperor. His consciousness is powerful and capable of divining many truths. In my opinion, you should not hide your identity from him. If he acknowledges you, then it may help you further in your attempt to establish yourself in Veluriyam Capital. Would you be alright with that?" Young master Ji San sent a message to Jiang Chen right before they went through the door.

Jiang Chen smiled. "Someone like the clan lord would never lower themselves to betray the likes of someone like me, so why would I hide it from him? Plus, you are my sworn brother. How can I possibly trouble you with such a thing?"

Young master Ji San was overjoyed, and he patted Jiang Chen's shoulder. "You are a true brother! Now let's go! We shouldn't let the clan lord wait."

The two entered the garden as they chatted with each other. The garden was extremely large, holding a stable tiny world inside. Following young master Ji San's footsteps, the two arrived at an artificial mountain where the sounds of water burbled happily in their ears. There was a man standing beside the fake mountain, his hands behind his back. As he stood there, he almost seemed to meld with the landscape itself to form an ink painting that was full of extraordinary meaning.

“Pill King Zhen has come to visit you, clan lord.” Young master Ji San withdrew his usual flippant demeanor and spoke respectfully to the clan lord. It was obvious that he greatly admired the clan lord.

The person with his back facing towards them was neither tall nor sturdy, but the way he stood there gave off the impression that the world itself moved to a melody he controlled. When he turned slowly, the visage of a calm old man entered Jiang Chen’s eyes. However, the senile appearance that usually accompanied someone of his age wasn’t present at all.

“Well met, clan lord,” Jiang Chen moved forward and bowed to the old man.

“What were you saying just now at the entrance, Ji San? Pill King Zhen’s identity? Is there something else that you’re still hiding from me?” The old man’s tone was a third interrogative and two thirds teasing.

Both Jiang Chen and young master Ji San were shocked. Their communication had been through their consciousness earlier, so how on earth had the clan lord heard it?

“You little monkey. Don’t you know how many restrictions exist in this area? One of those is particularly tricky one that transmits consciousness messages straight to my ears. Didn’t you know of it?”

Young master Ji San clicked his tongue and couldn't say anything for a very long time. Finally, he let out a wry laugh, "I guess not even consciousness messaging is reliable anymore!"

The clan lord smiled leisurely, "It's not impossible. If you recognize this restriction for what it is and avoid their grasp on purpose, then you can continue to communicate by consciousness as usual. Most importantly, you let down your guard in the residence."

Young master Ji San let out a small sigh of relief when he noticed that the Coiling Dragon Clan clan lord didn't seem to be scolding him. The clan lord beckoned them over, "Come over and speak plainly, you two little rascals. Pill King Zhen eh? Hehe, from what I can see, you're just twenty years old or so. That's good. The saying that heroes can come from the youth isn't wrong, considering that you were able to strike such a massive blow to the Majestic Clan. You're also a successor of the Deviant Pill Faction. You'll definitely go far!"

"Junior Jiang Chen has been forced to conceal his identity due to certain circumstances, clan lord. Please forgive my transgressions." Jiang Chen could only sigh as he said this.

"Jiang Chen? You mean Jiang Chen of the Regal Pill Palace, of Myriad Domain? The youngster who killed an Eternal Celestial Capital holy king? Are you him?" The clan lord was obviously slightly surprised by the revelation.

"That would be this junior." Jiang Chen was only twenty or so years old during this lifetime, so there was no shame in calling an

old man who was over several thousand years old his senior.

“Well, isn’t that interesting. This is beyond my expectations. I’d known of Regal Pill Palace’s Dan Chi, and I’d always assumed he was the greatest genius in the Regal Pill Palace. But I never realized that you would be the true genius instead, Jiang Chen! I have heard quite some stories about your achievements. I hadn’t imagined that you would also be the one who’d thwarted the Majestic Clan’s scheme. Heroes truly do come from the young. How precious, how very precious!” The clan lord’s tone was full of praise.

“I am truly honored by your praise, clan lord,” Naturally, Jiang Chen couldn’t act as noble as he usually did before the Coiling Dragon Clan lord.

The Coiling Dragon Clan lord nodded slightly, a trace of appreciation appearing within his eyes. After a long moment spent examining Jiang Chen, he smiled. “It’d be strange if I gifted you another Imperial Advent Defense Talisman since Ji San has already given you his, but as the senior, it is also inappropriate for me not to give you a gift during our first meeting. How about this. I have two Sage Smile Pills here. It can increase a sage realm cultivator’s power unconditionally by a level without any side effects whatsoever. This is my gift to you. But you must remember that you can only take one pill. They cannot be used in succession.”

The Sage Smile Pill? Jiang Chen was rather moved. This Sage Smile Pill existed in his past life too. It possessed the same effects as the Origin Doubling Pill, which increased the power of an origin

realm cultivator unconditionally by a level. However, the spirit ingredients of the Origin Doubling Pill—the Firstcloud Dew—was already incredibly rare. It was a treasure that one could only stumble across by chance. The spirit ingredients of the Sage Smile Pill were even rarer than Firstcloud Dew, and the pill itself even more so. He didn’t think that the Coiling Dragon Clan clan lord would give out two of such precious pills just like that!

Chapter 792: Diagnosing the Coiling Dragon Clan Lord

The Coiling Dragon clan lord laughed when he saw Jiang Cheng's and young master Ji San's surprise. "Don't think too much on it. I accidentally obtained some of its ingredients when travelling the world in my youth, so I invited a ninth-level pill king to refine a cauldron of Sage Smile Pills. That cauldron produced seven pills. Two pills went to that pill king as his pay, while I kept the other five. I've already bestowed three on geniuses in the clan. These two pills are the last ones I have left."

Young master Ji San smiled. "I took one of those previous three. Brother, there's no need to hesitate when the clan lord is gifting them to you. Take them. The clan lord has many other good things anyways!"

Without any fawning, Jiang Chen bowed at once to express his thanks. "In that case, Senior, it would be impolite for me to refuse. Many thanks to the clan lord for his precious gift!"

A burst of curiosity possessed young master Ji San, causing him to inquire, "Clan Lord, how are you even aware of me gifting my Imperial Advent Defense Talisman to my brother Jiang Chen?"

"What's so strange about that? I was the one who gave you that talisman, so it has my unique aura on it. I knew as soon as he came in. You crafty fox, just tell me if you want another one. Beating around the bush so slyly, hmm!" The clan lord seemed to be scolding him with his words, yet a smile hung on his face. He was obviously planning on giving another one to Ji San.

A mischievous smile split Ji San's face, "Hehe, I know that the clan lord dotes on me."

The clan lord withdrew his smile as he put on a stern tone, "Stop buttering me up. The reason why I bestow gifts upon both of you is because of your candid words at the gates. If you were of two minds, or if you were merely paying lip service, then you wouldn't have received anything."

Young master Ji San scratched his head and sent a sidelong smile at Jiang Chen, both of them secretly thinking, how lucky. Who would have thought that careless words exchanged before coming inside would have benefited them so much?

After indicating for Jiang Chen and young master Ji San to sit down, the clan lord asked some more questions about the Regal Pill Palace. Jiang Chen didn't disseminate and roughly explained the current situation. With a sigh, the clan lord said, "The Eternal Celestial Capital's power is rather formidable. Although it doesn't match that of Veluriyam Capital, I can't help you reverse this situation with only my power. At least not for a matter of this level. However, it's still possible for me to offer you some convenient protection here inside the Capital."

The clan lord wasn't distancing himself on purpose. No matter what, the Eternal Celestial Capital was still a first-rate sect. It might not be as powerful as Veluriyam Capital, but it was certainly a level above the Coiling Dragon Clan. No matter how powerful Veluriyam Capital, it was still just equivalent to two or three first-rate sects at most. Most of the Veluriyam Capital's power lay in the

seven great emperors. The Coiling Dragon Clan might be the foremost clan in Veluriyam Capital, but it was still a second-level faction. It wasn't powerful enough to contend with a first-rate sect over a long period of time.

Of course, the clan lord's words definitely carried great authority inside Veluriyam Capital's domain. It wasn't any issue for him to protect Jiang Chen inside the Capital. Moreover, neither the Eternal Celestial Capital nor the Ninesuns Sect would dream about running wild in public inside Veluriyam Capital. The consequences would be too dire to contemplate if they were to provoke the ire of the seven great emperors. So what of a first-rate sect? If one offended Veluriyam Capital and aroused the thunderous wrath of the seven great emperors, it wasn't out of the question for them to completely eradicate a first-rate sect!

Jiang Chen hadn't been counting on the Coiling Dragon Clan to help him contend with the Eternal Celestial Capital. It wouldn't have been a realistic idea. Although he did need to borrow borrow outside power to enact his revenge and rebuild the sect, he had to have the strength to request it in the first place. If he was too far lacking in strength himself, then it was impossible for others to pay the great price of lending him their strength. At present, the thing Jiang Chen lacked the most was personal strength. That being said, strength wasn't the only thing that added to his value. His pill dao greatly enhanced his current value.

Young master Ji San spoke from off to the side, "Clan Lord, Brother Jiang Chen is the one who told me about the Pinecrane Pill. Back then, he exerted his all to prevent me from gifting the clan lord with the Longevity Pill. He also stopped me from wasting quite a lot of money."

Hope dawned in the clan lord's eyes. He was different from young master Ji San. As a powerhouse who'd lived for millennia, he was still more composed and more self-possessed than young master Ji San even as he stood at this juncture between life and death. He didn't forget himself, though a faint hope shone in his eyes. "Little friend Jiang Chen, to be entirely frank, this Pinecrane Pill is of prime importance for this old man. I wonder, what did your honored master say back then? I am eager for guidance."

Jiang Chen hurried to say, "I dare not offer guidance, but when my venerated master spoke of the Pinecrane Pill and the Longevity Pill, I didn't believe him. As such, he refined a cauldron of Longevity Pills on the spot so that I could broaden my horizons. As for the Pinecrane Pill, because he had none of the ingredients on hand back then, I wasn't blessed with the good fortune of seeing the venerable elder refine the pill. However, my master isn't someone fond of deceit. If he says it can be refined, then it can be refined. And judging from his tone, refining this pill didn't seem particularly difficult either."

"Oh? The refining isn't difficult?" A brief flash of joy glinted across the clan lord's eyes.

"My master's skills are divine when it comes to the dao of pills. Even though it's not difficult for him, it might be something another pill master wouldn't achieve even for an entire lifetime." A strong sense of worship emanated from Jiang Chen's tone. He knew that since he'd already fabricated the mysterious character of his "master," he had to maintain this facade no matter what.

The clan lord's thoughts seemed to wander. "This honored master must be a great expert in pill dao. Little friend, your fortune is truly great."

Jiang Chen nodded. "Yes. It was entirely unfortunate that I could only learn from him for a mere ten years. Now that it's been so many years since I last saw him, I miss him deeply."

Young master Ji San said, "Brother, I know that you only have one opportunity to contact your teacher. I also mentioned this to the clan lord."

The clan lord nodded. "I am someone about to die, so there is no need for me to talk in a roundabout way. If I can obtain the Pinecrane Pill and rise from the ashes, then you would be the benefactor giving me a new lease on life, and also the benefactor giving our clan a bright path forward. When the day comes, I will certainly bestow an even better fortune upon you! If I break my promise, may the heavens and the earth strike me dead!"

An even greater fortune? Jiang Chen was slightly surprised, but he merely offered a faint smile and didn't probe any further. "I felt close to young master San at first sight. I treat him as a brother, sharing joys and woes with each other. Leave the Pinecrane Pill to me. As long as you can find the cone of an Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine, I can guarantee I will have a Pinecrane Pill for the clan lord!"

This was the first time Jiang Chen had made such a firm promise. Both the clan lord and Ji San lit up with delight. Ji San was the most moved. "Wonderful, wonderful! No matter the cost

we have to bear, our clan will definitely find an Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine."

As for the clan lord, he asked instead, "Is the Pinecrane Pill truly so miraculous?"

Jiang Chen smiled. "The Longevity Pill can prolong the life of cultivator in the sage realm for five to eight hundred years. Even the shoddiest Longevity Pill can prolong life for five hundred years. For a upper-rank Longevity Pill, prolonging life for a thousand years isn't a difficult task. On the other hand, the Pinecrane Pill can help an emperor realm cultivator live for a thousand years more at the very least."

"Are these your honored master's words from back then?" The clan lord couldn't hold back his surprise and joy.

"The master's words back then were even more exaggerated than this. I've already softened them a little," Jiang Chen said, smiling.

"Fate in his world is truly a wondrous thing." The clan lord sighed with emotion.

Ji San spoke up, "Clan Lord, Brother Jiang said he wanted to check your condition and understand your situation, so that he may make a clear report to his master in the future."

The clan lord's smile was free and unrestrained. "As someone not long for this world, I'm not much a stickler for propriety. Little

friend, do as you wish."

Jiang Chen nodded. "Then I will be so bold as to try." With a blink of his eyes, Jiang Chen's God's Eye shone bright, releasing golden light that swept deep into the clan lord's body.

"Hm? Is that an eye art?" The clan lord was slightly taken aback. As the lord of a great clan, he'd naturally seen many who cultivated eye techniques. However, it was his first time seeing such an incisive eye technique. It was domineering and penetrating, a momentum that no obstacle seemed able to stop.

"Clan lord, please restrain your consciousness and allow this junior to check the condition of your body. I will be done in a few breaths." Combining God's Eye with the Evil Golden Eye, Jiang Chen's gaze started roaming over the clan lord. At Jiang Chen's level, an eye technique was enough to replace some of the more mundane methods of diagnosis.

The clan lord felt Jiang Chen's gaze wander over his body in circular ripples. Under normal circumstances, he would have smacked someone else dead already for the audacity of sweeping over him like this. However, he was as obedient as a lamb right now, allowing Jiang Chen to do as the latter wished without offering any resistance. Jiang Chen secretly admired his tolerance. Those sitting in a leader's seat were usually mistrustful, while this clan lord had obviously risen above such paranoia already. It was clearly an insight born from this critical juncture where his life hung in balance.

Jiang Chen retracted his shining gaze after a few breaths. With a

nod, he said, “Apologies for the offense.”

With a slight nod, the clan lord indicated there was no harm, while young master Ji San, unable to wait any further, asked, “Brother, how is my clan lord’s situation?”

After a moment of hesitation, Jiang Chen muttered, “In his current state, the very latest that cultivation dissipation will begin is twelve months. In the worst case, it’s more than possible for it to start in nine months.”

“So soon?” Ji San was astounded.

The clan lord seemed to have anticipated such a result. With a calm face, he sighed and said, “I still thought I could struggle and endure until the opening of the Veluriyam Pagoda. It seems that it was a vain hope in the end.”

“The opening of the Veluriyam Pagoda?” Jiang Cheng was taken aback.

“Do you not know of it?” The clan lord shot a glance at Ji San. He thought Ji San had already told Jiang Chen about this matter.

Ji San immediately slapped his forehead. “My poor memory! I was only thinking about the clan lord’s matter these past few days and completely forgot about that. Brother, it’s like this. The Veluriyam Pagoda is our Capital’s titular piece of architecture. It houses the ancient Veluriyam King’s empyrean decree. It opens

once in the first year of every cycle, that is, once every sixty years. There are altogether three towers in the Veluriyam Pagoda, divided as one main tower and two auxiliary towers…”

Ji San started to talk at length about the various matters pertaining to the Veluriyam Pagoda. “The competition for the Pagoda isn’t only a struggle for fame. There are tangible benefits to placing highly. The competition for the main tower in particular, it’s the stage for geniuses to soar to new heights. Countless geniuses appear at every Pagoda competition that the seven great emperors take a fancy to. They then go on to become influential figures in the Capital. From the seven great emperors high above all the way down to the common folk, the opening of the Pagoda is widely seen as the greatest festival in sixty years.”

Ji San’s face glowed radiant when he spoke of the Veluriyam Pagoda. A fierce longing shone in his eyes.

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Chapter 793: A Way to Delay Cultivation Dissipation

Thanks to young master Ji San's introduction, Jiang Chen finally understood what the opening of the Pagoda meant to the Capital. The Skylaurel Kingdom also had a wishing tower that was celebrated like a national holiday every time it was opened to the public. The Veluriyam Pagoda was Veluriyam Capital's ancient building of inheritance and totem. In every citizen's heart, it was worshipped as their holy ground. The fact that it was opened only once per sixty years showed just how important it was to the Capital.

"Brother, I'm sure that the Pill Pagoda's competition will be nothing to you with your pill dao talents. Moreover, there is an iron rule that states that all Veluriyam Pagoda competitors must not be older than sixty years. This also means that every person has one, and only one chance, to participate."

"Even I can?" Jiang Chen looked surprised.

"Of course you can. You're qualified as long as you have a legitimate identity. Even a foreigner can participate in the event as long as they acquire a legitimate identity in Veluriyam Capital first." Ji San smiled.

"Doesn't that make it very easy for enemy forces to infiltrate your ranks?" Jiang Chen looked curious.

"Hehe. First, there's no point in sending an ordinary cultivator

because they'd eventually be flushed out by true talent. The results wouldn't change even if they were to send thousands of such cultivators. But if the enemy went so far as to send real geniuses into the Veluriyam Pagoda competition, they would possess certain special characteristics that would eventually be found out sooner or later. Moreover, all those who wish to be chosen by the seven great emperors must be of clean background and survive a rigid selection process. It is not at all easy to infiltrate our ranks."

Jiang Chen nodded. He recalled that the Veluriyam Pagoda had been passed down since ancient times, so they must have a way to filter out the plants. If Veluriyam Capital was this easy to infiltrate, then it would've fallen a long time ago.

"You are House Wei's guest pill king, brother. Even if you aren't, the Coiling Dragon Clan still can provide you with an illustrious qualification to participate." Ji San encouraged him, "We are all born to strive towards the top. Although you are closely knitted with House Wei now, I am sure that you won't stay there forever! Ah, I'm not trying to drive a wedge between you and House Wei, it's just that anyone can see that you're fated for something bigger. You simply must participate in the Veluriyam Pagoda competition. This is also an excellent opportunity for you to rise swiftly to the top. If you are chosen by any one of the seven great emperors, your status would definitely rise by leaps and bounds. When that happens, you wouldn't need to worry about the likes of the Eternal Celestial Capital even if you were to publicize your identity right then and there."

Although House Wei was one of the Coiling Dragon Clan's forces, Ji San's words were indeed completely selfless. He really was thinking for Jiang Chen's sake.

The clan lord also nodded, “You can consider Ji San’s suggestion, young friend. In fact, I believe that you may participate not just in the Pill Pagoda, but in the Martial Pagoda as well. With your talents, I am sure that you can achieve great things, and perhaps even the main pagoda is not out of your reach. This is a great opportunity for you to improve your status. The human domain is particularly vast. Working solo is ultimately a path that leads nowhere.”

Jiang Chen had to admit that he was tempted. Considering his current situation and the rate of his growth, it was highly unlikely that he could emerge as a prominent force without at least eight to ten years of investment and work, and even that was optimistic. After all, pill dao talents could at best only attract other people’s attention. It was extremely unlikely that he could attract the undying loyalty of true experts with just pill dao.

“This is a rare opportunity, brother, you won’t find a better chance than this. Moreover, you’re currently carrying a lot of heavy responsibilities on your back, aren’t you? If you can win the favor of a great emperor in the Veluriyam Pagoda competition, then a lot of troubles will disappear from your path.” Ji San advised him earnestly and patiently.

“The Eternal Celestial Capital wouldn’t dare to harm you, and you would have more channels to use in your search for your father. Even your plans to revitalize your sect and rebuilt the Regal Pill Palace would be much easier with Veluriyam Capital’s support.”

Jiang Chen nodded, “Thank you for the advice, Brother Ji. I will consider this seriously and bring forth my full efforts to bear if I do participate.”

“Now that’s how it should be!” Ji San smiled, “When the time comes, the two of us brothers shall join hands and stun the Veluriyam Pagoda event with our might!”

Jiang Chen gave him a smile and asked another question, “How much longer until the Pagoda opens?”

“Next year on the 15th of March. It will last an entire year, until March 15th of the next year. The Pill Pagoda’s competition will be held during the first three months, then the Martial Pagoda’s competition for the following three months, and finally, the main pagoda competition will be held during the final six months of the event!

“The Pill Pagoda and Martial Pagoda’s competitions are just warm up events. Only those who shine above the rest in those competitions will qualify to compete in the main pagoda’s competition. Moreover, the seven emperors’ forces will also participate in the main pagoda’s competition in search of promising new talent. Anyone chosen by the seven great emperors will become a member of an emperor level faction on the spot. It’s the moment of their making!

“The 15th of March next year… that’s less than a year’s time. Your health, my lord…”

The clan lord sighed softly, “News of my failing health have long since spread in private. It’s just that none of them could confirm it outright. Since it wasn’t confirmed, there aren’t many who’ve dared to act recklessly. However, if they confirm that I’m about to lose my cultivation very soon, then the Coiling Dragon Clan may immediately sink into a quagmire. That’s why the Veluriyam Pagoda event next year is a major obstacle to me. It is an event that even the seven great emperors are required to personally participate, much less clan lords like us. When that happens, everything and everyone within the clan will be put under a magnifying glass and displayed for the world to see.”

A cultivator with dissipating cultivation looked completely different from a normal expert. If an expert started losing their cultivation, the symptoms were impossible to hide. The symptoms of power loss were even more obvious than symptoms of illness, as the cultivator’s physique itself would shrivel and wither. Anyone who wasn’t blind would recognize the symptoms of cultivation loss. The clan lord had already cut back on his public appearances.

However, the Veluriyam Pagoda event wasn’t an event that he could skip out on. It was an obstacle that he had to somehow overcome, for it was around the time he would start losing his cultivation. When that happened, the truth would be revealed. It would be an absolute disaster for the Coiling Dragon Clan.

Jiang Chen nodded and closed his eyes in thought. After considering many potential gains and losses in his mind, he finally spoke, “Clan Lord, I may not be capable of refining the Pinecrane Pill, but my master once told me about a way to delay the loss of one’s power. If the method’s results are outstanding, then the symptoms can be delayed by five to ten years; if the results are

average, then it can still delay the symptoms by one to two years. I've never tried it though, if you don't mind..."

"What?" A light of hope suddenly lit up inside the clan lord's eyes. It was like a man who'd been floundering in darkness suddenly finding a single ray of light. After studying Jiang Chen for a very long time, the clan lord finally said solemnly, "How confident are you at succeeding?"

"I've never tried it before, so I dare not give you a number to consider. However, this method has no side effects. Even if it fails, it will not cause your condition to worsen. I can guarantee this with my life!" In reality, Jiang Chen was about seventy to eighty percent sure that he would succeed, but considering that his patient was a clan lord, boasting was inadvisable, and safe was better than sorry.

"No side effects, is it?" The clan lord murmured, "Is this fate? The last time a House Wei guest pill king offered his services to me, he caused my condition to instantly worsen. But now, the same offer has been made by another guest pill king of House Wei. It seems as though this is a test of my faith."

Jiang Chen didn't answer, but his eyes were honest and clear. He was simply giving a suggestion. Whether the clan lord accepted it or not was his own choice. After all, the Coiling Dragon Clan clan lord had had his trust betrayed before. Jiang Chen could understand his choice if he were to turn down the offer. The reason he brought up this suggestion was because he didn't want to refine the Pinecrane Pill just yet. He felt that the time wasn't right yet.

If he were to refine the pill now, there was no telling if he could maintain a harmonious relationship with the clan lord like today. After all, the ruler of a great clan was no different from an emperor. These people could change their minds in an instant, and there was no telling if they could be entirely trusted. Jiang Chen had no intentions of revealing his trump card this early.

As long as the clan lord's life remained threatened, and as long as the hope of treatment continued to lie in Jiang Chen's hands, the latter had sufficient room to advance or retreat. With this thread of hope in hand, the clan lord would do everything in his power to protect Jiang Chen at all costs. Although this wasn't the most honest way, it was the wisest choice.

The clan lord wasn't Ji San after all. Ji San was an impulsive but loyal young man. Jiang Chen could trust the young master with his life. However, the clan lord was the lord of an entire clan. Once he had truly regained his vigor, the first thing he would consider was the overall interest of the clan. Jiang Chen's weight in his heart would also be downgraded from the one hope that could save his life to a mere benefactor.

Although a benefactor was very important to a clan lord, it was definitely incomparable to the only hope that could save his life. Even though Jiang Chen didn't think that the clan lord was an ungrateful person, there was nothing wrong with preparing for the worst.

The clan lord pondered for a long time. Finally, a hint of determination appeared in his eyes, "Alright. If this really is my

fate, then what do I have to fear? Do your best, young friend. If you can extend my life for a couple of years, I will reward you greatly for this favor!”

Ji San was overjoyed to hear the clan lord’s agreement, “Don’t worry, my lord. Jiang Chen is my brother. I can guarantee that his character is impeccable with my head.”

“Hehe, I’m the one who made the choice. Why would I need your head as a guarantee? Young friend, what materials do you need? I’ll send someone to prepare them straight away.”

Jiang Chen nodded, “This method isn’t complicated, but it does need a lot of materials. I’ll prepare a list of items right now.”

Ji San hastily went away to personally make preparations. The list of items was quickly written down.

“Take my token and bring these materials from the warehouse. Everything must be prepared within two hours,” The clan lord instructed Ji San.

“Will do!” Ji San took off as soon as he accepted the token.

Jiang Chen said to the clan lord, “Clan lord, if you’ll excuse me, I will run through some simulations in my mind for a moment. Just to ensure that I won’t make a mistake and fail you later.”

Jiang Chen sat down right where he was, meditating. He hadn’t

fabricated this delaying tactic out of nowhere. In fact, he remembered at least ten ways from his past life that could delay the loss of one's cultivation. Therefore, he didn't need to simulate anything at all. The reason he used such an excuse was to avoid talking too much with the clan lord. He wanted to prevent the clan lord from making any indirect inquiries that might put him in a difficult position. Meanwhile, the unsuspecting clan lord actually grew more trustful of Jiang Chen after witnessing such an attitude.

Chapter 794: The Five Elements Augmentation Art, Success

Ji San was quite competent. In less than half an hour, he had gathered and prepared all the materials on the list.

“Clan Lord, please prepare a private room. Although the process of the treatment isn’t difficult, it requires absolute silence and zero interference.”

The clan lord nodded, “No one will dare interrupt this space without my orders.”

The method Jiang Chen had selected was called the ‘Five Elements Augmentation Art’. In his prior life, Jiang Chen had been born with a yin constitution and thus possessed an extremely short lifespan. His father had used heavenly power and utilized the Five Elements Augmentation Art to prolong his life. However, there was a difference: the art his father used was called the ‘Heavenly Five Great Elements Augmentation Art’. To put it bluntly, it was an art that literally created life force out of nothing by using the energy of the five elements within the body. This unnatural method had come at great cost.

Even someone as powerful as his father would employ it only once in a while. It wasn’t until the Sun Moon Divine Pill was refined later that Jiang Chen managed to become a mortal with a lifespan that stretched over millions of years. This Sun Moon Divine Pill had almost exhausted all of his father’s fortune and was one of the direct factors that triggered the cataclysm later. Although the father from his past life had never brought it up,

Jiang Chen had finally understood this to be true after he'd analyzed the matter and the details of his previous life.

But by the time he finally realized just how much his father had sacrificed for his sake, they were already a lifetime away from each other. Of course, Jiang Chen was absolutely incapable of performing the Heavenly Five Great Elements Augmentation Art. This art could extend a person's life by several thousand years every time it was performed. It was also impossible to execute unless one had a degree of strength comparable to his father. However, a rough and basic version of the Five Elements Augmentation Art was not beyond Jiang Chen's capabilities. Moreover, it wouldn't use up too much of his strength.

Of course, this rough version didn't possess even a thousandth of the original's power. At best, it could extend a person's life by three to five years. However, this would be enough. It was exactly the amount Jiang Chen wanted. First, he would sell the clan lord a favor. It was also a reciprocation for the gift he had received. The successful execution of this art would also win the clan lord's undying loyalty because the clan lord could now be sure that Jiang Chen's words were real. There was only good to be had to winning the clan lord's trust and admiration. As long as the clan lord wasn't suicidal, he would support Jiang Chen with all his might in the future.

Even though Jiang Chen was about to execute a simple version of the Five Elements Augmentation Art, it was still extremely complicated and not a technique that just anyone could control. There were a lot of internal knowledge involved, and was thus impossible for an outsider to understand just from observation. After he'd gone through a few simulations, the Art appeared

immeasurably profound. Jiang Chen wasn't afraid that the clan lord would steal the technique from him. Just like pill refining, it was impossible for anyone to pick up how to execute this technique at first glance. At best, they would be able to learn the superficial details. Moreover, Jiang Che was certain that the clan lord wouldn't dare attempt the technique carelessly. His life was at stake, and reckless experimentation could result in his death.

As he started, the power of the five elements were being gathered and pressed into the clan lord's main acupoints through various seals. These acupoints were all places that controlled the clan lord's life force. When the power of the elements entered his body, these main acupoints temporarily regained their vitality and exuded a vibrant lifeforce. Jiang Chen continued to seal in five elements power until he'd made forty nine main seals. This covered all of the main acupoints in the body and formed a large cycle of life force. A few beads of sweat appeared on his forehead when he was finished.

The process had been a lot harder than he'd initially imagined, but thankfully, things had gone relatively smoothly. However, the amount of energy he'd exhausted was greater than he'd imagined. Thankfully, Jiang Chen had already ascended to earth sage realm. His sea of qi and circulation of inner energy was much improved. Regardless, he felt a lot more comfortable after he consumed a couple of energy restoration pills. He opened his eyes, "You can move now, clan lord."

The clan lord was currently in a completely relaxed state. He didn't dare put up any resistance, use the slightest bit of consciousness or circulate his own life force. One could say that he was an insensanate doll that Jiang Chen could manipulate however

he liked. It was only when Jiang Chen said that he could move that the clan lord finally came back to himself. He began circulating his consciousness and life force once more. The moment he did so, he was immediately stunned by the results.

"Eh?" A look of wild joy appeared on the clan lord's face, "My body! It's so alive! I haven't felt such a vigorous life force in such a long time!"

Jiang Chen smiled and nodded, "The treatment has gone relatively smoothly. It was a lot more exhausting than I initially imagined, however."

Gratitude appeared in the clan lord's eyes. "I can't believe you have the ability to reverse death itself! What an eye-opener this experience was! You're truly brilliant, young friend! Most impressive, most impressive!"

Ji San had also heard the commotion from outside. When he impatiently burst into the room and looked at the clan lord, he was immediately stunned. "Clan lord, your... your body seems to have improved a lot!"

"Haha, you're right, you're very right! Ji San, this brother of yours is truly amazing! There aren't many people who impress me in this day and age, but today that count just went up by one more. And such a young cultivator no less! The heavens truly haven't forsaken me. It is the entire clan's fortune to be blessed with such an amazing genius!" The clan lord was blooming with happiness and excitement. After all, he had been plagued by death's steps for many years. Naturally, the feeling of having put off this final

deadline and his burgeoning lifeforce was unimaginably wonderful. Even a person who had lived for a couple thousand years couldn't help but lose his composure a little after being relieved of that burden.

Ji San hastily asked, "Brother, how long can the clan lord's current state be maintained?"

Jiang Chen said honestly, "Anywhere between three to five years. Such is the extent of my abilities. If this technique were to be executed again, its effect would be largely mitigated. It is truly a technique that kills the goose that lays golden eggs, and a solution that isn't really a solution because it disturbs the harmony of the heavens. I'm afraid that my teacher will scold me in the future for this bold attempt."

Although he had used his fictional teacher to compose his explanation, his words weren't false. This technique took life from the very heavens themselves, and there would absolutely be some side effects if used too many times.

The clan lord said gratefully, "I won't forget your efforts, young friend. I will remember this enormous favor well."

Jiang Chen sighed, "It is unfortunate that I can't extend the clan lord's life longer than this."

The clan lord waved his hands, "This is enough already. Three to five years time is enough for me to get through the Veluriyam Pagoda Meeting confidently. Plus, the chances that we can find the

Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine before the end of my lifespan are now far greater."

"That's true. Now we have three to five years of additional time. Things are looking much brighter." Ji San was all smiles.

His joy at the clan lord's recovery was only natural. After all, the clan lord's fate was connected to the Coiling Dragon Clan's fate. Moreover, his brother had been the greatest contributor in improving the clan lord's condition. Naturally, it meant that his own contribution was quite considerable too. There was no doubt that his status had just greatly risen in the clan lord's heart.

The clan lord flipped his hand over and showed them a glittering token, "This is a Silver Dragon Medallion, young friend, a token that commands authority second only to my clan's highest Golden Dragon Token. With this token, you may freely enter or exit the clan lord residence and see me. You will also be able to pass through all blockades freely without having to report to anyone. Moreover, even great clans would have to show you some face with this token in hand."

Ji San was overjoyed when he saw this, "Good luck has come to you, brother. Even I haven't been able to get a Silver Dragon Medallion myself!"

Jiang Chen was surprised for a second, but immediately noted that this token might actually be very useful to him. He accepted it with a nod and said, "Thank you for the great gift, clan lord."

“It is nothing compared to the favor I owe you for saving my life,” The clan lord was obviously in good spirits. “I’m in a very good mood today, so I insist that you drink some wine with me, young friend. Also, don’t complain, Ji San, you are one of the successor candidates of the Coiling Dragon Clan, so I absolutely cannot grant you this Silver Dragon Medallion. If I gave the candidates something like this, you young’uns would only use it to strut around Veluriyam Capital and show off your might. It would sow the seeds of arrogance and be detrimental to you. Plus, how on earth will you temper yourself if everyone is forced to give way to you because of this object? Jiang Chen here is different. He has no foundation in Veluriyam Capital, so this token may be of use to him at a critical time.”

Ji San chuckled, “I’m not asking for the token, am I? On the other hand, an Imperial Advent Defense Talisman… Hehe, the clan lord understands, right?”

The clan lord flicked an Imperial Advent Defense Talisman straight at Ji San with a loud bark of laughter. “You little slyboots. Take it as a reward for your great contribution. You’ll probably come back and nag me if I don’t anyway.”

That was what he said, but the clan lord’s appreciation of Ji San was as clear as day. It was obvious that Ji San’s recent performance had satisfied him greatly. There were plenty of people who’d actively made contributions to the Coiling Dragon Clan, but the only one who succeeded in contributing to the clan lord himself was Ji San.

The trio began drinking inside the garden.

When the wine was quaffed, the clan lord instructed, “Ji San, young friend Jiang Chen is the Coiling Dragon Clan’s honored guest. Therefore, your first duty is to ensure his safety and assist Taiyuan Tower’s development, starting from today. No matter what happens, you must remember to protect our young friend. During times of need, you may mobilize the Coiling Dragon personal guards directly.”

“Understood.” Ji San was overjoyed to hear that he could mobilize the Coiling Dragon personal guards directly. This was an extremely special level of treatment. After all, only those who had been selected to become the clan’s next lord had the qualification to mobilize the Coiling Dragon personal guards. Moreover, they normally had to obtain the clan lord’s permission as well.

“Work hard. If you perform well during the Veluriyam Pagoda competition, you’ll have a great chance to win the position of young clan lord of the clan.” The clan lord was giving Ji San a rare firm hint.

Ji San felt even more delighted after hearing this. He chuckled, “I’ll definitely do my best.”

After they departed the clan lord’s residence, Ji San couldn’t help but thank Jiang Chen again and again. Jiang Chen merely smiled at his thanks, “You and I are brothers. Thanks are unnecessary between us.”

“You’re right, you’re right. My good brother, we shall brave

hardships and enjoy blessings together! Oh right, you should think some more about the Veluriyam Pagoda when you go back. I'll have someone prepare a set of detailed information for you once I return home. It'll have all the interesting stories and classics in Veluriyam Pagoda."

Jiang Chen nodded, but changed the topic to something else, "Brother Ji, I need a quiet and spacious place. Can you arrange that for me?"

"What kind of place?"

"As spacious and as secluded as possible. It would be best if there is no one around at all," Jiang Chen responded.

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Chapter 795: Preparing for Long Xiaoxuan's Breakthrough

Ji San mused for a moment. "If you want a sparsely populated place, you'll have to go outside the city. It's hard to find somewhere like that within the walls. The Coiling Dragon Clan has countless estates in the surrounding lands, so you'll have dozens of spots to pick from."

There were several million miles of land under the jurisdiction of Veluriyam Capital. As the foremost clan of the city, the Coiling Dragon Clan naturally had properties all over the countryside. There were many options for a secluded place. "Brother, what do you need it for?" Ji San was curious.

"Cultivation for a breakthrough," Jiang Chen laughed.

Deciding not to probe him further, Ji San simply nodded. "Then, leave it to me. When do you need it by?"

"As soon as possible. It would be best if there was a body of water nearby. A lake, maybe." Jiang Chen added another requirement.

"Easy enough. I'll go make the appropriate preparations now and take you there tomorrow. How about it?" Ji San readily agreed. To him, details like that were merely a trifle. Compared to the things that Jiang Chen had done for the clan lord, this request was negligible.

“That’d be wonderful. Thank you for your help.” Jiang Chen was just as straightforward. He wasn’t making preparations for himself this time, but for Long Xiaoxuan. It had been almost half a month since the dragon said he was going break through. If Jiang Chen still didn’t tend to the preparations, the dragon would be furious.

Jiang Chen returned to Taiyuan Tower to rest for the night, notifying Huang’er of his plans for the next few days. “Huang’er, Long Xiaoxuan is going to break through to the emperor realm. Things are quite urgent. I must leave the city to find a spacious area so that I can help him.”

Huang’er had seen Long Xiaoxuan once before, and was no stranger to the dragon. “Would you like me to accompany you?” Huang’er asked, ever so thoughtfully.

“You’ve been in the Capital for so long, and it can get quite oppressive here. If you’re not busy, let’s take the chance to get some fresh air together.”

Huang’er nodded in response, her heart joyful.

Ji San arrived at Taiyuan Tower early next morning to seek Jiang Chen out. “Brother, I’ve found a few good places. Here’s a map of them, feel free to choose any of these.”

Taking the map in his hand, Jiang Chen saw that the places available to choose from had all been carefully selected and was immensely satisfied. “Let’s go here then.”

Ji San grinned, “Shall I guard you while you cultivate?”

The clan leader had instructed him to keep Jiang Chen safe, but from a personal perspective, Ji San also didn’t want Jiang Chen to come to harm either. Jiang Chen shook his head. “There’s no need. It would be good if you could keep watch for us here in the Capital. I don’t want to be followed, and this isn’t a matter suitable for crowds.”

As a private matter, cultivation was made worse by over-participation. Ji San knew that as well as anyone else. “No need to worry. There’s no one able to tail us here in the Capital. Well, not on my watch anyways.”

Ji San made a few arrangements, then took Jiang Chen and Huang’er around Veluriyam Capital in a way that made sure to throw off any tails. Before long, the duo were sent out of the capital in secret. “Brother, I’ve made sure that no one is following you, but security is a lot worse outside the city. Adventurers and outlaws abound in these regions. You should be careful, and worst comes to worst, remember the Silver Dragon Medallion you have.”

Ordinary wandering cultivators did not dare offend someone with the Medallion. Jiang Chen merely smiled. “I’ve already cut through entire armies to get here. We’re only going for a walk outside the city today. There’s no need to be overly concerned.” In terms of methods of self-preservation, Jiang Chen was likely far more well-equipped than even Ji San.

“Mm. This is my personal letter. Take it to the place you wish to go, and tell the person in charge there that you’re taking over

temporarily. They'll hand over control when they see it, and you can stay as long as you like. It's all Coiling Dragon Clan land, after all."

Stashing the letter away, Jiang Chen gave Ji San a cupped fist salute. "Brother Ji, see you around."

Ji San waved back, and watched as Jiang Chen and Huang'er disappeared into the distance. "It's not often that I make the acquaintance of a good friend. Suddenly separating like this... ah, I feel a little reluctant."

But after saying so, he shrugged it off with a smile. "Ole Mo, let's stick around for a while, and make absolutely sure no one is watching or following them. We can go back after."

"Precisely," Captain Mo nodded.

Following the map, Jiang Chen and Huang'er arrived at their destination in half a day. The steward here was surnamed Zhang and was a retainer in charge of the nearby lands. He had received a message much earlier, which was only reinforced by Jiang Chen's letter. "Honored Pill King, the surrounding three hundred miles have been marked as off limits to all and available only to you. Rest assured, the peace of your cultivation will not be disturbed. Anyone insensible enough to disobey will be considered an enemy of the Coiling Dragon Clan. We will kill them on sight!"

"Very good. Thanks so much, Captain Zhang. If I may, I shall express further gratitude after my business here is complete."

Despite their differences in station, Jiang Chen didn't put on any airs. Quite the opposite, he was the picture of civility.

The retainer was flattered. "Not at all, not at all. Pill King Zhen, you are someone important to the clan lord. I am only doing my duty as a subordinate."

"Captain Zhang, there's no need to be so distant. We are both on the Coiling Dragon Clan's side. We should be as close as family, and all is shared between friends," Jiang Chen smiled.

Captain Zhang's heart filled with emotion at Jiang Chen's words. Having been a retainer of these lands for many years, he was no stranger to aristocrats from the capital who came out to the countryside to hunt. However, those people were the very image of ostentation. When they were in a good mood, they called him 'Captain Zhang'. Otherwise, they ignored him. Even worse, they would often do as they wished. Though he was nominally the master of the land, his feelings were entirely disregarded. It was quite a depressing time for the captain in hunting season.

When he'd heard the news earlier about a pill king who was coming to cultivate, he'd expected a difficult man with a mercurial temper. Upon contact, however, he found his expectations rather overturned.

This Pill King Zhen was easier to talk to than anyone else he knew. He was perfectly polite, and his words soothed people's hearts. Captain Zhang didn't take it as license to ramble, though. Excusing himself continuously, he and his men retreated from the premises.

“Brother Chen, your down-to-earth personality is really likable. This Captain Zhang, for example... he probably suffers a lot under normal circumstances. When we first came here, he was respectful but a little adversarial. Now, it seems like he’d take his heart out for you.” Huang’er cracked a smile.

Jiang Chen easily returned the gesture. “I was just putting myself in his shoes. If I were him, I would want to be respected as well.”

Huang’er was deeply moved, her heart in secret applause. She was pleased with the degree of his magnanimity. After all, many young scions, especially from noble houses, found it easy to lord it over those that they felt superior to. They were long since accustomed to their positions of superiority. It was difficult for them to maintain an ordinary heart. Yet Jiang Chen had pulled it off. Moreover, it wasn’t simply a charade.

Though Captain Zhang had already cleared the grounds once, Jiang Chen wasn’t entirely at ease. Activating his Cicada Wings, he circled the skies a few times to make sure the place was completely clear of outside interference before descending again. Taking out the Ancient Crimson formation flags, Jiang Chen planted one in each of the eight cardinal directions in order to prepare a formation.

He didn’t want an outsider to intrude on Long Xiaoxuan’s breakthrough. Once the formation was complete, the only thing visible from the outside would be a black mass. After finishing his arrangements, Jiang Chen went to the lakeshore to summon Long Xiaoxuan.

“Brother Long, please move the lake’s water elsewhere. I will put the wood spirit spring here instead. I haven’t found a place yet to keep it since recovering it from Gong Wuji. Let’s house it here for a time, just for your breakthrough.”

With a single shake of his body, Long Xiaoxuan opened his mouth to take in the lake’s water. It didn’t take long for the lake to be sucked completely dry. Jiang Chen took out what appeared to be a wine flask, but was actually a treasure for holding liquids. Within it was the wood spirit spring that Gong Wuji had taken, its full volume held by the vessel. Removing the seal, Jiang Chen poured the spring out from the container. Green-blue waves rushed out of the flask, jumping over each other. Before long, the majority of the lake was filled again.

Seeing the wood spirit spring again was quite endearing for Long Xiaoxuan. With a flip of his body, he dove into its waters, immersing himself completely. Jiang Chen watched him for a moment before turning to Huang’er. “Let’s back off a little to the outer part of the formation. We can keep watch from there. Best to avoid troublemakers from just barging in here.”

Though the formation cut off the outside world and provided a capable defense, there was no guarantee that every expert would be denied entry. Jiang Chen had no desire to see Long Xiaoxuan’s breakthrough interrupted. Exiting the formation, Jiang Chen and Huang’er found a peaceful place to rest their feet.

Since they’d bared their hearts to each other, the two had gotten a lot closer. Huang’er no longer avoided certain topics about

herself, and was happy to tell Jiang Chen about many things about her past. She was especially eager to speak about the time she'd spent with Elder Shun after they'd escaped the Myriad Abyss Island. Like a bird who'd escaped its cage, she felt pleasure in freedom. That she had to adopt a wandering lifestyle was no issue at all to her. "Brother Chen, I'd like to apologize for something."

"What is it?"

"When Elder Shun paid attention to you all those years ago, Huang'er didn't take him too seriously. I thought you were just some duke's foppish son from an insignificant kingdom, and that maybe Elder Shun had made a mistake, but... mm, now I'm quite embarrassed." Huang'er's smile was full of innocence, without a trace of duplicity. She was graceful and sincere, even in her admission of guilt.

In that moment, the sweetness of her smile sent Jiang Chen into a daze. "That people as amazing as you and Elder Shun lived in the Eastern Kingdom... that was also a thought beyond my wildest imaginations back then." Jiang Chen shared a similar emotion in his reminiscence.

At the end of the day, he had the Heavenly Karma Pill to be thankful to. If it wasn't for that pill's recipe, he never would've made the acquaintance of the Hall of Healing. And if not for that, he never would've been noticed by Elder Shun and Huang'er.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen's consciousness was struck by a disturbance, and his expression froze. Standing up with a steely gaze, he shook both wings, propelling himself into the air. His

God's Eye was entirely opened in an effort to sweep the surroundings.

"Brother Chen, is there an intruder?" Huang'er was a little surprised by Jiang Chen's unusual reaction, and shot up into the sky as well, staying close behind him.

Jiang Chen paused for a moment, his eyes in close scrutiny of the landscape, before he locked on to the south. "Over there. Let's go."

Dozens of miles out, Captain Zhang and his men had set up a line of defense on a mountain trail. On the other side was a group of ruffians, their demeanors vicious and sullen. From their stance, it was clear they were planning on barging into the area.

Chapter 796: Invaders

“I’m warning you again, this is private property owned by the Coiling Dragon Clan, and completely off-limits. Anyone who forcibly enters will be treated as an invader! We will not be responsible for any consequences that may ensue!” Captain Zhang was resolute. Although the other side had considerable numbers and seemed stronger than his men, this territory was still his responsibility. He couldn’t tolerate any trespassers. Moreover, he had a mission now. This area was temporarily under the jurisdiction of Pill King Zhen, an honored guest of the clan lord. More importantly, Pill King Zhen was an easygoing man who had been quite amiable towards him. Captain Zhang was flattered by the treatment, and it made the resolution to fulfill his responsibilities all the stronger.

The men opposite him were dressed in hunting gear. The one leading them was an one-eyed man with a burly figure and an intimidatingly arrogant demeanor. “Oh shut your mouth! We were hunting a true saint rank spirit beast and almost killed it, but it disappeared into the surroundings of this area. We suspect foul play. You must be the ones hiding our prey!”

“Yes, hand it over straight away. You should pay attention to your own abilities before trying to rob us of our prize!”

Captain Zhang was upset by their fabrications. “I’ve been here for a very long while, and I’ve seen no spirit beast at all! Enough idle talk, leave or die!”

“Die? Be careful when you brag, you might hurt your tongue!

Threatening us when you're just a band of measly pushovers? What a joke!" The one-eyed man snickered and waved a hand. The dozen or so people around him swiftly scattered, a brutish grin on each face. Evidently, they considered Captain Zhang and his men to be beneath them.

Captain Zhang was furious, raising a hand in counter to their movements. "Men, form up!"

His troops had drilled together for a long time and thus were well-coordinated. Though their individual strengths could not compare to those of the opposing side, their synchronicity in combat made them formidable. The one-eyed man laughed, a sound between a cackle and a snarl. He grasped the air, and an enormous mountain-splitting axe appeared. With a single shake of his arms, he transformed as he flared his aura and qi. The act burst the seams on his clothes, sprinkling the rags into the winds. His rippling musculature had the texture of steel, and gave off the impression of boundless strength. Arm outstretched to the sky, the one-eyed man bellowed to his subordinates, "Brothers, hold the line! I'm heading in!"

With a thunderous shout, the man slammed his mountain splitter into the ground. The ground cracked instantaneously, growing into long fissures that snaked outwards with maddening speed. A black blast of qi burst out of the axe, hurtling towards his opponent like a herd of oxen.

"Out of my way!" The one-eyed man stomped upon the earth and sped forward with impossible haste, cutting into Captain Zhang's formation with a single swing. The splendid dark arc that the axe

traced through the air was accompanied by the cracking of necks. Captain Zhang's warriors were cut down like wooden stakes, unable to react. Eight heads were swept up by the axe, forever parting with their owners and flying towards the firmament. The one-eyed man savagely chortled, "Break, break, break! I'll destroy you all!"

His axe pounded the air like a pestle. The airborne heads were smashed to smithereens like melons and onlookers were showered with flesh and bone. The goriness of the scene ignited the one-eyed man's bestial side. He threw his head back in laughter, and the bloodthirst in his eyes intensified. The people behind him barked in support. "Boss Hong's Universe Axe isn't just for show! That was a slaughter!"

"Tsk tsk, I'm itching for a fight too now!"

"Leave some for us, boss!"

Captain Zhang was secretly surprised by the one-eyed man's viciousness. He was a fourth rank sage realm expert, but this Boss Hong carried himself like a seventh level sage realm expert. The captain's heart dripped with blood upon seeing his troops' lives being reaped like wheat. With a flourish of his silver blade, he cried out, "Everyone back off, I'll handle him!"

Drawing a half-moon of glistening white steel, Captain Zhang swept his sword towards the one-eyed man, creating room for his soldiers to back off. However, his men didn't quite share the same idea. His troops were loyal to the death, and their wills iron. The ferocity of their enemy only steeled their resolve. Upon seeing

their peers decapitated, they were willing to fight to the last man. “Captain, please retreat! We will keep him occupied!”

The guards didn’t retreat beneath the one-eyed man’s blows as they yelled, rather frantically advancing, rushing towards their enemy. Like enraged beasts, they had nothing in sight but blood. They were willing to lay down their very lives.

“Useless ants!” The one-eyed man sneered. He swept the axe in his hand towards the warriors that came towards him in a wide, horizontal swing. It whipped up a whirlwind that caught eight men within. “Die!”

The axe was outlined in muted brilliance, shimmering like innumerable black carp scales in water. But at this very moment—

An unexpected ray of light slammed into the blade of the axe. The sudden interruption seemed to bind the axe with an unseen force as its momentum stalled. When experts traded blows, victory or defeat was decided in an instant. In that instant, the eight men who previously were sentenced to certain death saw an opportunity to attack. All kinds of weapons flew towards the one-eyed man in a flurry.

Greatly shocked by this turn of events, the man pushed both arms forward, intercepting the attacks with his axe. At the same time, his body bent as he hurtled backwards. His reaction was fairly quick, but even so, two swords managed to breach his defenses.

Pfft! Pfft! One swish had cut his arm, and the other, his leg. However, his defenses were formidable. The power behind the two swords wasn't weak by any means, but they had only managed to slice skin and flesh, and wasn't a serious injury.

"Boss!" His henchman were astonished by the turn of events, dashing to his side. The one-eyed man held up a hand to stop them, scanning his surroundings before locking onto the northern skies.

Jiang Chen and Huang'er glided side by side towards the gathered men. Captain Zhang's eyes lit up with a mixture of pleasant surprise and mild shame. He had been unable to perform his duties to the fullest, and the pill king had been disturbed.

"Pill King Zhen, my incompetence has caused your inconvenience."

Jiang Chen's expression was contrite. "Captain Zhang, it is I who should apologize. You lost several brothers for nothing because of me."

Hearing his words alleviated some of Captain Zhang's sadness and brought warmth to his heart. On the other side, the one-eyed man and his underlings examined Jiang Chen with odd looks. More accurately, they were examining the girl at his side. Their eyes were shifty and deranged, the light of madness slowly shining out of their eyes, highlighting the men's wretched and brusque manners. Though Huang'er had made some alterations to her original appearance, the radiance of her exquisite beauty couldn't be masked.

“Boss, this is the girl.”

“Heh heh, so she came out on her own. Saves us the time of searching inside. This is the time for us to shine in front of the young clan lord, boss!”

“A girl as pretty as this is hard to find in Veluriyam Capital, tsk. Where did this beauty come from?”

“Truly. Her composure, countenance, and physique are unrivaled! The other women at the young clan lord’s side just cannot compare.”

“Let’s do it, boss!” Hong’s followers all had brazen looks on their faces as they openly leered at Huang’er, almost as if they thought that Jiang Chen, Captain Zhang, and his men were already dead. The latter group was completely ignored.

Having lived on Myriad Abyss Island since her childhood, Huang’er was brought up as a lady in her family. Though she was designated as a cultivation vessel for another since birth, her highborn status meant that ordinary commoners had no place before her.

In the few years off the island spent in travel with Elder Shun, she’d lived reclusively, without seeing many people. Certainly, she hadn’t been exposed this kind of coarseness on her travels. Hearing the complete lack of respect and utter rudeness from these scoundrels, even someone as serene as her felt a little upset. Before

now, her good-naturedness had stopped her from stooping to the level of any brutes that'd crossed her path. But now that her and Jiang Chen's hearts were aligned, and their emotions known to each other, she was upset at the things said of her in front of the man she loved.

"Don't get angry. I'll deal with it." Holding Huang'er's slender hands lightly, Jiang Chen gave her a consoling look.

Like a streak of sunlight, his gesture brightened Huang'er's mood considerably. "Alright." She nodded gently in acquiescence. Huang'er wasn't someone naturally delicate, nor did she like to purely rely on others. However, she was perfectly happy to act both ways in front of the person she liked. She knew that Jiang Chen was afraid of her harming her consciousness if she grew angry and triggered the Hundred Generations Curse again.

"Brat, you better let go of that girl. If you know what's good for you, scram!"

"Girl, this brat doesn't look impressive at all. He probably has no status either, huh? Being with him doesn't seem worthwhile. Why not come with us to our young clan lord instead? He has enough riches to last more than ten lifetimes!"

"Hey, boss, isn't she a flower stuck on a heap of cow dung?" Another guy smacked his lips, smirking at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen already considered them dead men in his heart. Unprovoked by the man, he asked quietly, "So you're saying, you

made up your words about hunting, and your true quarry is us?”

Boss Hong had recovered by now, and snickered in response. He locked eyes with Jiang Chen, his gaze vicious and harsh. “Kid, were you responsible for that trick earlier?”

“Answer my question first,” Jiang Chen said coldly.

Boss Hong looked unimpressed by his tone and burst out in raucous laughter. “Ah, you’re smarter than you look! Why don’t you look yourself in the mirror first, kid. What makes you think you’re worthy of a girl as pretty as her, hmm? How’s that saying go?”

“A man’s wealth is his own ruin when it causes greed in others.” An underling stepped up, affecting a foppish air as he quoted.

“Aha, yes, that’s the right of it. Kid, you have no ability, and you don’t look like the heir to a noble house either, but you’re bringing a beauty everywhere you go. That’s your crime!” Boss Hong gazed at Huang’eropenly, making no attempt to hide the perverseness in his gaze. The occasional smacking of his lips only added fuel to the fire.

Chapter 797: Leave None Alive

The obscenity of the one-eyed man drove Captain Zhang to the point of fury. “Show some manners! Pill King Zhen here is an honored guest of the lord of the Coiling Dragon Clan. Are all of you as blind as old dogs? You dare to trespass on our property and then trifle with our womenfolk!”

“Tsk tsk, you are one who’s a dog here, Zhang! Just a loyal watchdog, you don’t scare me! But hey, if you want, look, I’m sooo afraid.” The one-eyed man feigned fear, but his behaviour disgusted anyone who had the misfortune to see him. He abruptly burst into wanton laughter. “The Coiling Dragon Clan? I heard that it’s the foremost clan of the Veluriyam Capital! Haha, how prestigious and grand! It’s a shame that it’s a tower that’s about to collapse. Trying to scare Ole Hong when all the inhabitants are trying to scatter, pfft!”

“So what if you’re from the Coiling Dragon Clan? What, are you gonna bite me? Who knows if that clan will even exist after this year. Who’re you trying to scare, ah!?”

“A fallen phoenix is no better than a chicken. A clan that’ll be ashes soon, that’s what you’re trying to scare us with?”

These people were clearly on bad terms with the Coiling Dragon Clan, of that their opinion was clear. In their mouths, the Coiling Dragon Clan received not a shred of respect, and in fact quite the opposite.

Captain Zhang was about to explode with fury. He didn't live in the central part of Veluriyam Capital, only on the outskirts, and so wasn't privy to the goings-on of the ruling class. But even he knew that the Coiling Dragon Clan was the foremost clan of Veluriyam Capital. It was a symbol of the power and authority of the city, and could not be challenged willy nilly. As a subordinate to the Coiling Dragon Clan, Captain Zhang had always carried out his responsibilities loyally in service to the clan. Given his devotion, it was natural he would be furious at the sight of these people's insolence towards the Coiling Dragon Clan.

Pulling Captain Zhang behind him, Jiang Chen brushed his eyes across each man in the one-eyed man's group. There were nine in total.

"Hey, what're you looking at, kid? Are you just going to to take this lying down?"

"That's right, we're gonna steal your girl and slap your face today, whaddya gonna do about it?"

"Boss Hong, I don't like the look in this guy's eyes. Shall I gouge them out for you?"

Jiang Chen paid no heed to their words, instead he patted Captain Zhang on the shoulder, "Captain, take your men and retreat for now."

"Pill King Zhen, Ole Zhang isn't someone who's scared of death. My higher-ups gave me orders to protect you. I will fall in battle

before I let you come to harm!” Captain Zhang anxiously replied.

Though they didn’t know each other well, and while the captain could even be said to be a little foolish, Jiang Chen rather liked his forthrightness. “Captain Zhang, I don’t like others watching when I kill people. Please, consider you and these fine brothers excused. You can come out again in a bit.“

“That, er…”

“Go on.” Jiang Chen would not be refused.

Seeing Jiang Chen’s persistence and lack of worry in this situation made Captain Zhang worry even more, but he couldn’t do much about it, especially when even the girl beside the pill king didn’t seem to be anxious. “Pill King Zhen, if you need help, just give us a shout. We won’t be far.”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, nodding to the captain before looking back at the one-eyed man. He affixed his gaze upon the gang. “Which one of you said they wanted to gouge out my eyes just now, hmm?”

Jiang Chen’s voice was cool. His Evil Golden Eye began to faintly shimmer with their trademark colour, their light barely perceptible as he looked at the man who had made the remark. The man was a fourth level sage realm expert. He was confident in the idea of strength in numbers, and personally thought that Jiang Chen looked fairly weak. What did he have to be scared of? Sniggering, he stood out from his peers, thumping his chest.

“That’s right, I said it. Are you gonna bite me for it?”

Jiang Chen nodded lightly. “Very good, you’re quite brave.”

Activating his Evil Golden Eyes as he spoke, he gathered the limitless power of the heavens and the earth. In a single instant, his eyes became as brilliant as a beam of sunlight. In the void, the drums of war and the hoofbeats of horses began to sound and the din of combat roiled. The next moment, the power he’d gathered transformed into a laser-like golden light, pouring itself into the wretched man’s eyes.

“Aaah!” Having been injected with the potent glare, the man’s eyes became unmoving. With a feral scream, he clutched at his face, twitching with every breath. His struggles didn’t last long. With a sudden tremor that ran through his body like an electric shock, he grew still and fell over like a stone statue. Both of his hands were still over his eyes, and his posture was of one writhing in agony.

“Ole Sixth, what happened?”

“Ole Sixth?” His peers were caught by surprise at this sudden turn of events, the one-eyed man included.

On the other hand, a smile curled Jiang Chen’s lips. His demeanor was just as unassuming as before, almost like it wasn’t him that had shot a beam just now. The one-eyed man was the quickest to react, his gaze hardening as he turned to bark at Jiang Chen. “What are you playing at, kid?”

“What do you think?” Jiang Chen replied quietly.

The man met Jiang Chen’s eyes for a moment before his instincts sounded a warning in his heart. He quickly looked away, with a shout to his comrades, “This kid has a creepy set of eyes, don’t look him in the eye!”

“Boss, Ole Six is dead, and his body is as rigid as rock!”

“No, he’s hard as metal!”

The one-eyed man was horrified as all the hairs on his body stood on end. A hint of dread crept into his eyes, and he backed off two more steps. “Take out your weapons, let’s take him out together!” He shouted.

Snickering, Jiang Chen activated the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven. The scenery before their eyes changed into an endless forest. An endless wall of vines coiled towards the remaining eight, like thousands of threatening tentacles. The strangeness of the transformation awed the eight men. They had not expected this unusual shift in landscapes.

A formation? They scarcely had time to react to this before they heard four screams of pain. Four men had been caught by the vines of the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice. Combined with the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven, it was quite the deft tool for murder. In particular, cultivators on the same level were as easy to reap as wheat.

The cultivators here were all uneven in terms of level. The strongest among them, the one-eyed man, was seventh level sage realm. The others were mostly earth sage realm experts, and two or three were even third level – placing them in the mortal sage realm. Even a Jiang Chen that had just entered sage realm would easily be able to cut several of them down, never mind the current him at earth sage realm!

Seeing his comrades fall one by one, the one-eyed man was both angry and fearful, and rallied them together. “Everyone, gather up! We need to watch each other’s backs.”

Under the man’s ranting, the four who remained took up a position facing each of the cardinal directions. Each occupied a corner in an attempt to fend off the vines that flooded the skies. Hands behind his back, Jiang Chen was expressionless. Since they’d taken precautions against it, there was no longer a need to use the Evil Golden Eye. With a flourish of his hand, he produced a mirror.

He hadn’t refined the mirror for very long, and so was only able to use twenty to thirty percent of its power. This was the Featherflight Mirror, one of the treasures that had belonged to Emperor Featherflight himself. It was thanks to this mirror that Jiang Chen had been able to block the one-eyed man’s axe swing, and slow its sweeping impetus. Its reflected rays had the effect of a space locking technique even from a distance. It was very useful for hampering the opponent. A wandering cultivator like Emperor Featherflight was very reliant on his various treasures to navigate the human domain, and this mirror was one of his most prized possessions. Though Jiang Chen could not yet bring the full

potential of the mirror to bear, even the small fraction he was able to muster was enough. Moreover, he had used it in this battle in an effort to impede rather than harm. As long as the men were slowed down, they were like lambs led to the slaughter in the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven. There was no chance they would survive.

"Huang'er, these brutes must pay for speaking ill of you. They didn't come here because of some spirit beast, they were pursuing us all along. If we were regular cultivators, we would surely be dead upon falling into their hands. Which one do you think should die first?" There was no pity in Jiang Chen's tone. They deserved worse than death.

Huang'er clearly shared his sentiments. "Mm, I agree. They should not be forgiven."

Jiang Chen nodded in response, waving the Featherflight Mirror towards his first chosen victim. The man instantly slowed down, and was quickly ensnared by the wraith-like vines of the Bewitching Lotus.

Swish, swish, swish! A fire lotus plant carried him away, its petals swallowing the man like a giant maw. His screams echoed long after he disappeared, chilling his companions to the bone.

"You should stop here, kid! We are followers of the young lord of the Murong Clan. A small-fry pill king like you killing us like this... can you handle the consequences?!"

“If you kill us, then you will become the enemy of Murong Clan’s young lord! That’s as good as being an enemy of the entire clan!”

“If you stop now, we can still pretend nothing happened!” Though these three had been arrogant before, they still flinched when faced with the very real prospect of death. However, they weren’t aware how close and impending that reality was. They still thought that bringing up their master would be enough to solve their problem. Sadly, they’d already made a fatal mistake. They’d picked a fight with the wrong person this time.

For other pill kings, even those in the Coiling Dragon Clan, the consequences of antagonizing the Murong Clan were worthy of making one pause. But, Jiang Chen had a personal bottom line when it came to how he acted. Anyone who went past it was past negotiation. Even if they were direct subordinates of the seven emperors themselves, Jiang Chen would still not bat a brow at their demise. So what if they were from the Murong Clan?

With two swipes of the Featherflight Mirror, two more were dragged away by the Lotus. There was no room for resistance. How were they supposed to combat the vines of the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice when they were slowed by the Featherflight Mirror? They could barely defend themselves as it was.

Now, there was no one left save the one-eyed man. He was a general without soldiers. Even someone as proud and unrestrained like him had panicked. “Kid, are you really killing us all?”

“What, you think I was joking?” Jiang Chen sneered.

The one-eyed man's eyes were filled with unbridled terror for a few moments when he realized that Jiang Chen was intent on cutting him down. Finally, the man went beyond fear and began to laugh viciously. "Kid, even if you kill me, then what? We've already sent a message to the young clan lord! He's hunting nearby, and will come over very soon. The pretty girl you have right now will be the young lord's. Wash your neck, and prepare to die a brutal death!"

Chapter 798: The Loyal Captain Zhang

A young clan lord? Jiang Chen sneered. This one-eyed burly fellow was a ruthless killer from head to toe. He'd slaughtered Captain Zhang's subordinates without even blinking, the way one would kill chickens. Jiang Chen naturally wouldn't spare a cruel and brutal man like this just because of a few words of deterrence.

"It's best if he doesn't come. If he dares come, then I can also kill him just like how I'll kill you today," Jiang Chen said while flashing the Featherflight Mirror. This one-eyed fellow wanted to dodge, but the Featherflight Mirror's speed was far beyond his ability to avoid. The continuous flashes didn't leave him anywhere to hide, and soon, the Mirror's glare landed on him. A lotus opened wide and, with a squish, directly swallowed him whole.

The evolution of the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice required constantly devouring food, and powerful cultivators like him were the best type of nutrients. Every time the Lotus swallowed a cultivator, it would absorb the life essence born from their cultivation, furthering its own evolution. The Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice was a sky rank species to begin with. Its shape the first time Jiang Chen had obtained it was much inferior to now. Back in the spirit realm, the Lotus had been Jiang Chen's trump card. Now that he'd stepped into the sage realm, the Lotus was still an effective killing tool.

After dispatching the one-eyed man, Jiang Chen tidied up the scene and removed all traces of fighting, not leaving a single clue behind. Only after that did Jiang Chen transmit with his consciousness, "Captain Zhang, you can come out now."

Captain Zhang highly respected Jiang Chen. As such, he hadn't dared stay and observe the scene of the fight after Jiang Chen had ordered him to leave, but he'd stayed on alert. It didn't take long for him to stride to Jiang Chen's location.

"Hm? Where are they?" Captain Zhang was bewildered when he saw the scene restored to its former state, not a trace of fighting to be found.

"I killed them all, and I also tidied up the surroundings. I've stored your brothers' remains inside this storage ring. Take it back and give them a proper burial. I'm the one who dragged all of you in this matter. I'll make sure to give you due compensation later." Jiang Chen wasn't one to be unreasonable, and even less one to shirk his responsibilities. He knew full well that he shouldered a large part of the blame in this matter.

From the very beginning, the one-eyed man and his band hadn't been after some spirit beast. They'd been after Huang'er. While the two of them traveled here, they must have been inadvertently spotted from afar. People had come and gone along the way, Jiang Chen hadn't paid much attention to them. Who would have imagined that Huang'er's outstanding temperament would attract this group of evil dogs?

Captain Zhang was feeling very ashamed. "It's due to our insufficient skills that we couldn't accomplish the mission entrusted to us. How would I dare ask compensation from the honored pill king?"

Jiang Cheng said, “Let’s talk about it later. First, take your people and retreat, as to avoid any further mishaps.”

“Mishaps?” Captain Zhang blinked.

“Those people were rabid dogs in the service of the Murong Clan. Their master isn’t far away and he’ll be here very soon. You should hurry up and leave, or you’ll be implicated too.”

However, Captain Zhang was a stubborn man. He raised his eyebrows. “How could we do that? Wouldn’t we be shirking our duties again if we were to leave now? How would we be worthy of the Coiling Dragon Clan’s care then?”

Jiang Chen was caught between laughter and tears. “This matter doesn’t involve the Coiling Dragon Clan, it’s merely a private feud of mine. I wouldn’t rest easy if I were to drag all of you into it.” His face turned stern when he saw Captain Zhang still of a mind to argue. “Captain Zhang, if you care about the brothers under your command, then take them and leave right this second. This matter is already beyond the scope of your duties. If the clan lord raises the issue, I’ll put a word in for you.”

Captain Zhang let out a helpless sigh when he saw Jiang’s Chen’s resolve. He glanced at Jiang Chen and clenched his teeth. “Brothers, we’re leaving!”

Jiang Chen sighed in relief when he saw Captain Zhang lead his men away. Jiang Chen wasn’t afraid of this young clan lord of some Murong Clan or another. He’d met Wang Teng, the young

lord of the Majestic Clan, already. Why would he be afraid of this particular young lord?

Jiang Chen might not know how the Murong Clan ranked among the twenty eight great clans, but the thing he could be certain of was that it paled in comparison to the Majestic Clan. The Majestic Clan was strong enough to contend with the Coiling Dragon Clan for the position of number one, so its status was certainly a cut above the other great clans. Even if this Murong Clan had some foundations, it still couldn't possibly be as strong as the Majestic Clan. Since he'd already offended the Majestic Clan, why would he fear a Murong Clan?

As they said, familiarity breeds contempt. Jiang Chen wasn't one to stir up waves, but when trouble befell him, he didn't have any reason to be afraid. In the end, he wasn't the one who'd provoked them. They were the one who'd provoked him, and for no rhyme or reason to boot.

"Huang'er, these crude pigs spoke groundless nonsense and wronged you." Though he'd destroyed the one-eyed man and his band, the anger in his chest still hadn't entirely abated.

As for Huang'er, she responded with a faint smile, "A trifle like this isn't much of a wronging. Rather, Huang'er is the one who's dragged Brother Chen down."

With that, she let out a soft sigh. Although she didn't agree with what they'd said about whatever femme fatale, she was still aware that her looks attracted some unwanted troubles sometimes. That was also a reason why she'd previously concealed her appearance.

Neither fearful nor guilty, she just wasn't willing to cause unwarranted trouble when traveling.

In fact, she'd already somewhat hidden her true features in this appearance. Since she and Jiang Chen had confessed their feelings for each other, she naturally wasn't willing to wear her previous ugly facade. Nevertheless, even with that, she'd attract unwanted trouble even. This made Huang'er slightly apologetic.

However, Jiang Chen's smile was free and easy. "Huang'er, your innate beauty is ingrained in you. You can't hide your charms even when you try to. How laughable, I even felt pity for you back then."

"Pity?" Huang'er giggled. "Did you pity Huang'er for being an ugly duck?"

Jiang Chen let out a gentle chuckle. This scene, these feelings; they made him feel warm and happy like never before. He'd never met a woman like this in his previous life, one who could give rise to such emotions, such urges— At that very moment, Jiang Chen very much desired to possess this woman in front of him, to possess her for a lifetime, and never leave her even after they grew old and their hair white.

"I wonder how Brother Long's breakthrough is going?" Jiang Chen suddenly realized with a start that if the Murong Clan's young clan lord came to this place, it would probably be difficult to avoid disturbing Long Xiaoxuan's cultivation.

Hence, Jiang Chen actually said, “Huang’er, it seems there’s no choice but to wrong you again. Please wear your mask for a moment.”

With a soft giggle, the obedient Huang swept her sleeves over her face, a mask settling gently on it. Even Jiang Chen had to gasp in admiration at her peculiar sleight of hand.

“Let’s get out of here first.” In Jiang Chen’s estimation, if this one-eyed fellow had really sent news back to the young clan lord, the latter would find his way to them in a short time. From the one-eyed man’s tone, this young clan lord was bound to be a despicable playboy. The reason Jiang Chen told Huang’er to wear a mask wasn’t out of fear of the young clan lord, but because he knew they would certainly disturb Long Xiaoxuan’s cultivation if they started a fight here.

For that reason, even if they had to fight, they couldn’t fight here and now. They had to delay things for as long as they could. Long Xiaoxuan’s breakthrough would definitely not happen immediately. Maybe three to five days, or perhaps ten days to half a month. Jiang Chen wouldn’t allow anyone to cause a disturbance during this time.

Long Xiaoxuan had put his trust in him and tied his fate to Jiang Chen as an ally. Jiang Chen was a man of his word. Since they were allies, he had to scrupulously abide by his duties at a time like this. Not to mention that Long Xiaoxuan had become something of a hired muscle during their travels, sharing difficulties and tribulations together. This was something Jiang Chen firmly kept in mind. He couldn’t leave Long Xiaoxuan, while the dragon also

needed him.

Just as Jiang Chen was about to leave, a figure quickly strode in from a mountain path on the side. Jiang Chen looked over and saw Captain Zhang coming back. “Captain Zhang, didn’t I tell you to leave?” Jiang Chen frowned. He didn’t actually dislike this man. In fact, he rather admired the captain. The captain might be a little blindly loyal, but he was certainly a man who took his duties to heart.

Captain Zhang stayed silent a long time before finally saying, “I’m going to stay here and protect Pill King Zhen.”

“Captain Zhang, do you know the consequences of intruding on this matter?” Jiang Chen couldn’t become angry when he saw this fellow’s serious eyes. He meant well, after all.

“I’m aware,” Captain Zhang said with a clear, concise nod. “Even so, I must stay here. I don’t want to send my brothers to death, but that doesn’t mean this ol’ Zhang is afraid of dying. If not for the Coiling Dragon Clan promoting me, I never would’ve gotten so far in this life. A cultivator isa always ready to die for one who puts his trust in him! I’ve never married throughout my life nor any descendants precisely because I’d planned on selling my life to the Coiling Dragon Clan! Those people insulted the clan, so they’re my enemies. When their comrades come here, they’ll certainly be the clan’s enemies as well. Even if I’m going to die, I will die on this piece of land. This is my domain!” Old Zhang had clearly been holding these words for a long time. The eloquent speech had not a shred of hesitation, only his strong resolve.

Jiang Chen and Huang'er exchanged a glance. Neither of them had foreseen that this Captain Zhang would be so devoted that he was ready to die. Since he'd said so much already, it seemed inappropriate to chase him away.

Jiang Chen immediately nodded. "Ol' Zhang, the Coiling Dragon Clan won't fall with people with you at its core. Believe me, the clan will stay the number one clan. No other clan in the Capital will overtake its position."

Captain Zhang's eyes shone. "Pill King Zhen, do you think so as well?"

Looking at this hot-blooded fellow, Jiang Chen nodded in all seriousness. "I don't simply think so. I'm stating a fact!" With such loyal and devoted subjects, the Coiling Dragon Clan was worthy being of the number one clan. Such foundations, such faith and loyalty; this was a core that only the number one clan had. In contrast, the Majestic Clan lagged far behind. Jiang Chen only saw fawning and flattery from the Majestic Clan's underlings, and only fairweather friends. He'd never seen such unyielding loyalty!

Captain Zhang was delighted when he saw Jiang Chen's certainty. He was about to ask something, but Jiang Chen suddenly cut him short with a wave of the hand. "Someone is coming. Captain Zhang, take cover first."

Captain Zhang quietly swore, "Must be those guys' companions. Don't worry, Pill King Zhen, I've already contacted the clan. I'm certain reinforcements will be here very soon as well."

“You already notified them?” Jiang Chen was a little taken aback.

“Yeah. Those guys seemed like trouble to me when they came, so I’d already made a report to my superiors. Considering the amount of time that’s gone by, they should be here soon.” Captain Zhang gave a firm, decisive nod.

Chapter 799: The Murong Clan

The new group of trespassers was larger than the previous. A young man dressed in luxurious clothes strutted at the front while accompanied by a bustling group of experts. They raised quite a clamor as they moved. The young man leading the group didn't look more than twenty years old. He looked rather handsome, but the movement of his thin lips added some malice and frivolity to his appearance.

"Young clan lord, I believe that this is the place," A hunchbacked old man with a round forehead and eagle-like eyes next to the youngster scanned their surroundings. It was obvious that he was an emperor realm expert who carried himself with natural dignity and power.

"Where's Old Hong and the others, Uncle Tuo?" The youngster frowned.

The hunchbacked old man looked a little surprised too. He couldn't find any clues about them despite his search. "This should be the place they mentioned in their message, but I can't seem to sense their presences. How strange. Young clan lord, there's someone over there. Let's head over and ask them!"

"I'm too lazy to walk, Uncle Tuo. Just capture them and interrogate the information out of them," The young clan lord's tone was careless, but his words were that of a hedonistic person who cared nothing for human life.

Obviously, this Uncle Tuo obeyed the young clan lord's every word. He cackled strangely and nodded before ordering the bodyguards around them, "Protect the young clan lord properly. I'm heading over for a moment." The hunchbacked old man's figure vanished like a wisp of clear wind, and he instantly arrived in front of the hill. He stopped three hundred meters away from Jiang Chen and his men.

"Come here, kid," The hunchbacked old man sounded like a broken bell. His voice was so shrill that it scratched at the heart uncomfortably.

Jiang Chen simply sneered and ignored him. However, Captain Zhang couldn't endure this transgression and abruptly shot to his feet, "Who are you? This is the Coiling Dragon Clan's forbidden area. How dare you intrude here without permission?"

The hunchbacked old man was caught off guard. The Coiling Dragon Clan's forbidden area? This place didn't look like a forbidden area no matter how he looked at it. But this hunchbacked old man was not a coarse idiot like the one-eyed man. He was an old and cunning bastard, and despite his initial surprise at the announcement, he smiled faintly, "Who are you, and why are you using the Coiling Dragon Clan's name to intimidate me? Which part of this place looks like a forbidden area?"

Captain Zhang yelled, "If the Coiling Dragon Clan orders it, then any land in the Coiling Dragon Clan's territory is taboo. Your people have already crossed the boundary. Leave immediately!"

The more the hunchbacked old man heard, the more irritated he became. Who the hell is this guy? How dare an earth sage realm expert put on airs before me? His young clan lord had told him to come and capture someone, not listen to nonsense. Therefore, the old man snarled, vanished, and pounced on Captain Zhang wildly an eagle diving its prey.

Jiang Chen saw his movements clearly and threw out the Featherflight Mirror. Whoosh! An invisible light was fired from the Featherflight Mirror, and it struck the hunchbacked old man head on, greatly slowing down his movements.

This hunchbacked old man was no ordinary person. He was fifth level emperor realm and a top class expert even among the rest of the young clan lord's followers. He was also the head of young clan lord's bodyguards. He had also fought in innumerable wars in his life. Therefore, the sudden decrease in his movement speed that happened without warning caused warning bells to ring loudly inside his head. He didn't dare to continue further. He landed back onto the ground once more.

"Who's there?" The older someone was, the more alert they were.

Jiang Chen slowly rose to his feet, "Sir, how many times do we have to tell you that this is Coiling Dragon Clan's domain, and that you are not to intrude without permission?"

Despite facing a fifth level emperor realm cultivator, Jiang Chen was no longer who he was before. He couldn't deny that he was feeling a bit of pressure, but it wasn't so heavy that he was

intimidated.

"And you are?" The hunchbacked old man narrowed his eyes and examined Jiang Chen.

Captain Zhang exclaimed, "This man here is Pill King Zhen and the honored guest of our clan lord. Who are you people, and how dare you behave atrociously in Coiling Dragon territory?!"

General Zhang was honest, but he wasn't stupid. Although he knew who these people were, he pretended that he hadn't recognized them. However, the hunchbacked old man raised his eyebrows as a light of recognition flashed across his eyes, "You are Pill King Zhen of Taiyuan Tower?"

An indifferent smile appeared on Jiang Chen's lips. Although he noticed some undercurrents to the old man's words, he thought it beneath him to deny the admission. He hadn't wanted to bring up his name, but Captain Zhang had blurted it out before he could stop him. Since it'd already happened, he had no reason to deny his own identity.

"You're not denying it, so I'll assume that you are Pill King Zhen." The hunchbacked old man chuckled evilly.

"So what if I am?" Jiang Chen's tone was indifferent, "Are you one of the Majestic Clan's dogs? You sure don't look it though."

Jiang Chen noticed that this hunchbacked old man's smile was

very unfriendly. Naturally, he didn't care to be polite any longer. He was hoping to avoid a fight, but it would appear that the circumstances were not as kind.

The hunchbacked old man laughed loudly, "I am not a member of the Majestic Clan, but the Majestic Clan is related to my young clan lord." With that, the hunchbacked old man turned around to inform the youngster, "Young clan lord, something interesting has just happened. Do you know who that guy is?"

"I have zero interest, Uncle Tuo. Have you found where Old Hong has gone to? Also, where's that pretty girl he said he saw earlier? That old guy claimed that she was so beautiful that even I've never seen such beauty before... I'd like to see with my own eyes exactly who that lady was to deserve such exaggerated praise from Old Hong!" It was apparent that this youngster was the young clan lord.

But instead of answering the question, Uncle Tuo laughed with his broken voice, "If you can capture this person, young clan lord, your uncle and your cousin Wang Teng will be most pleased!"

At first, young clan lord Murong wore an impatient look on his face. But when he heard Uncle Tuo's words, he raised his eyebrow and floated to Uncle Tuo's side in an instant. "What did you say, Uncle Tuo? What does he have to do with my uncle?"

His uncle was none other than the lord of the Majestic Clan himself. This also meant that young clan lord Murong's mother was the younger sister of the Majestic Clan lord. That was why the young clan lord had called the latter his uncle, and Wang Teng his

cousin. The two great clans were extremely close with each other. The Murong Clan was pretty much the Majestic Clan's most solid and loyal ally.

"Young clan lord, you haven't forgotten what happened at Taiyuan Tower, have you?"

A ruthless gleam appeared in young clan lord Murong's eyes, "I was travelling in another region and didn't make it to that pill battle in time. I heard that Taiyuan Tower is the sworn enemy of my uncle's family."

Uncle Tuo chuckled and cast a glance at Jiang Chen, "The main culprit of Taiyuan Tower is someone called Pill King Zhen, and it would appear that this brat in front of us is that same person."

Fierce light appeared in young clan lord Murong's eyes. A wolfish gleam seemed to shine from his pupils as he stared closely at Jiang Chen. "Are you that pill king surnamed Zhen of Taiyuan Tower?"

Jiang Chen smiled coldly, "And who the hell are you to ask me that?" Now that he knew what kind of relationship this young clan lord Murong shared with the Majestic Clan, he knew that this grudge had been long set in stone. So what was the use of courtesy in this situation?

However, Captain Zhang looked extremely displeased with himself. His momentary lapse of judgment had caused him to forget about Taiyuan Tower and blurt out Pill King Zhen's identity. Moreover, he didn't know exactly what had happened

inside the capital while he was outside. He never realized that Pill King Zhen was the Majestic Clan's sworn enemy. When he realized that he had revealed Pill King Zhen's location, Captain Zhang practically felt like committing suicide. He felt like a cat on a hot tin roof.

Young clan lord Murong's handsome face abruptly darkened as a killing aura erupted from his body. "Take down this kid and pull out his venomous tongue first, Uncle Tuo. Let's see if he can keep up that cheek of his after that."

The hunchbacked old man chuckled, "Understood."

Jiang Chen squared his shoulders and got ready for a fight. He secretly slipped his formation disk into his hand, and was ready to activate it at any moment. Be it the Minor Artifice Formation or the Ancient Slaughter Formation of Seven, neither was enough to deal with a fifth level emperor realm cultivator. However, they were enough to harass and delay his enemies for a short period of time.

"If I were you, kid, I would save myself some pain and just surrender." Uncle Tuo laughed maliciously and pounced towards Jiang Chen like a ghost.

It was at this moment a loud voice crashed through the air like thunder, "I'll kill every last one of your group, old hunchback, if you dare make even a single move!" The sound truly sounded like a clap of summer thunder as it came down from the sky.

Uncle Tuo felt his expression changed a little, as if he'd heard the devil's voice himself. He hastily protected young clan lord Murong behind his back and looked ahead with a severe expression on his face, as if he was about to face his mortal enemy. A rift was torn open through space itself, and a man walked out. This man was stocky, spirited, and exuded immense presence. He was none other than the captain serving under young master Ji San, Captain Mo.

"Please forgive Ol' Mo's tardiness, Pill King Zhen. My young clan lord is currently leading a large group of elites upon hearing that someone is causing trouble here. He will be arriving immediately. Since he was afraid that you might come off worse in the exchange, he told me to come first." Captain Mo possessed an immense amount of presence. His mere entrance was enough to force looks of worry and unease on the faces of everyone on young clan lord Murong's side. "You're quite bold, old hunchback. How dare you behave so atrociously in Coiling Dragon territory? Do you want to take a gamble and see if I can end your house's lifeblood right here?"

Captain Murong chuckled strangely before sweeping his gaze across young clan lord Murong's body several times. Although young clan lord Murong was also an outstanding genius, he was slightly inferior to Wang Teng. He was ultimately just a young man about twenty years old of age, and at the seventh level sage realm. He was considered good enough among all other great clan descendants, but he hadn't made it to the very top because of his age. There was no doubt that a sixth level emperor realm cultivator like Captain Mo could crush him as easily as killing an ant.

Uncle Tuo had a dark expression on his face as he said, "Captain

Mo, aren't you afraid that your tongue will catch a stroke with such boastful words? Your realm may be slightly higher than mine, but I'm not afraid to take you on!"

"Oh? What if we joined the fray then?" Young master Ji San's voice rang through the air as an enormous group of troops descended from the sky. Man after man, until a large troop of elites took position around the two sides, completely surrounding Jiang Chen and young clan lord Murong.

Young master Ji San's eyes were dark and cold as he stared at the other side. "Color me curious, Murong Qiu, since when did the Murong Clan grow so bold? You dare harm a member of the Coiling Dragon Clan in our territory? It would appear that your father and your uncle haven't taught you the most basic of manners. Perhaps I should teach you a lesson of manners today!"

Young master Ji San sounded as furious as a volcano that was about to explode!

Chapter 800: The Coiling Dragon Clan Turning of the Tables

Young master Murong had brought a large group of people with him and thus had held the advantage in numbers at first, since Jiang Chen's group only had three people. However, young master Ji San and his men's appearance suddenly turned them into the losing side with an absolute disadvantage. Furthermore, young master Ji San had a high cultivation, a genius just half a step away from reaching emperor realm. Every time he took a step towards Murong Qiu, a few beads of sweat would surface on the latter's forehead. Uncle Tuo stared closely at young master Ji San with bloodshot eyes. He looked like an animal desperately protecting its young.

"Don't act rashly, old hunchback. If you want a fight, you've got one right here!" Captain Mo chuckled oddly before he sprang off the ground on the balls of his feet. He drew a circle in the air with a hand, drawing it back and slamming it through the circle to send a palm strike flying towards Uncle Tuo. Even the simplest technique possessed tremendous power when executed by an emperor realm expert. It was a power that could shake mountains and move the world itself.

Uncle Tuo didn't dare look lightly on Captain Mo's attack as he yelled, "Protect the young clan lord!"

As he said this, he crossed his arms in front of his body, receiving the palm blow as he strove to dissipate it. He pushed forward like he was turning a millstone, eventually dispelling Captain Mo's palm strike. An exchange of experts was an extraordinary

occurrence. Although it looked like they were fighting in close combat, in reality the two clashed many times with their domains as well. They were both emperor realm experts, and they both had a rough understanding of the other's strength. As such, there was no need to deploy their emperor domains in full from the start. An emperor's domain could cause a lot of destruction. The people around them might be hurt because of it.

But although they hadn't fully deployed their emperor domains in full, the resulting impact of a tentative exchange was still shocking. The surrounding folks faltered on their feet a little every time. In fact, Captain Zhang literally staggered backwards. Jiang Chen remained unaffected. He gently stepped in front of Huang'er to protect her from the shockwave.

Huang'er giggled, "I'm fine, Brother Chen. This tiny bit of aura can't hurt me."

Although she couldn't use her consciousness, Huang'er was born of Myriad Abyss Island and possessed immeasurable strength. How could she possibly be blown off her feet by these little aftershocks? The Murong Clan was a second rate clan among all 28 clans in Veluriyam Capital, and so on a completely different level compared to the number one clan, the Coiling Dragon Clan. Moreover, they hadn't brought their most elite troops with them this time. However, young master Ji San had brought only elites to Jiang Chen's rescue when he heard that Jiang Chen was in trouble. Therefore, this battle already heavily favored one side before it had even truly begun.

Young master Murong Qiu looked pale as he watched his

bodyguards being taken down one after another by the fearsome Coiling Dragon guards. “You go too far, Ji San!” Murong Qiu yelled loudly, “We are both members of great clans. What can you possibly do to me? If you kill me, even the seven great emperors will not tolerate the Coiling Dragon Clan!”

Although Murong Qiu was afraid, he was an unyielding person. Instead of begging for his life, he tried to verbally attack young master Ji San instead.

Young master Ji San smirked. “I can kill you as easily as I kill a dog, but I only plan to teach you a lesson on manners today.”

With that said, he took a step forwards and arrived in front of Murong Qiu. Ji San swung his arm back and punched straight at Murong Qiu. Murong Qiu was a seventh level sage realm expert, and hadn’t gotten to that level with external help. He clenched his teeth, patted the silver ring in his hands once, and conjured many sharp, silver rings of slaughter into existence. With a growl, they cut towards young master Ji San.

This Silver Ring of Slaughter was a retractable killing weapon. However, young master Ji San was a genius just half step away from reaching emperor realm. He was stronger than even Cao Jin back then, so not only was he fearless in face of the Silver Ring of Slaughter, he actually brandished his sleeves and yanked all of the silver rings from mid-air, as if he was turning a trick.

Murong Qiu was shocked to find his weapon so easily taken down by his enemy. He immediately leaped towards Uncle Tuo. Young master Ji San chuckled and sent a kick straight at Murong Qiu’s

butt, landing it with unerring accuracy.

Murong Qiu cried out and flew high up into the air. Then, he crashed heavily on the ground like a splatter of mud. Young master Ji San took two steps forward and stepped right on Murong Qiu's face, "I heard that you want to pull out my brother's tongue? So should I return the favor and pull out your tongue now?"

Young master Ji San exerted some internal strength and stepped fiercely on Murong Qiu's face a couple of times. Crack! Half of Murong Qiu's teeth were instantly destroyed. Blood, fluid and saliva leaked from the corner of his mouth in an ugly fashion. Murong Qi snarled, "Kill me if you dare, Ji San!"

Jiang Chen was prepared to fight to the death, but since young master Ji San and Captain Mo had shown up in time, he decided to shelve the thought for some other time. He walked over after seeing that Murong Qiu had been put under control. "Murong Qiu, is it? I thought you were impressive, but I guess you're all bark and no bite." Jiang Chen crouched down and patted Murong Qiu's face. He sneered, "Don't you forget, this doesn't end today."

Since the Coiling Dragon Clan had taken action, Jiang Chen had no interest in beating a downed dog. However, Huang'er was Jiang Chen's bottom line. Jiang Chen wouldn't tolerate even someone ten times stronger acting this way, much less Murong Qi. He had offended the Majestic Clan itself, so why would he fear a mere vassal force of the Majestic Clan?

Since they were all great clans, young master Ji San couldn't possibly slaughter them to the last. After teaching all of them a

stern lesson, he noticed that Captain Mo and the old hunchback were about done fighting.

The old hunchback had been at a disadvantage throughout the battle, but ultimately Captain Mo hadn't defeated him. The captain ended his fight after seeing that the battle at young master Ji San's side had come to an end. Seeing that young master Ji San was done teaching their master a 'lesson', Murong Qiu's subordinates stumbled their way to his side and lifted him to his feet. Murong Qiu had never suffered such a terrible loss until today. He glared hatefully at young master Ji San and held up one side of his face. Without half his teeth, he couldn't help but speak with a lisp. "Ji Ole Third, the Murong Clan won't stand for this blatant abuse of power. We will sue you all the way to the seven great emperors if we have to!"

Uncle Tuo was also furious after seeing his young master beaten blue and black and partially toothless, "Mo, my clan lord will absolutely hear of this!"

Captain Mo shrugged. He was just a subordinate. Whatever happened after this would be the clan's business and none of his concern. He was a fighter and a bodyguard. All he needed to do was his job.

Young master Ji San smiled faintly, "What a joke! The Coiling Dragon Clan hasn't been the foremost clan in Veluriyam Capital for only a year or two. Where on earth did you find the courage to fight us, ah? I guess my punishment just now was too kind. You are the ones who intruded in our territory. What can the seven great emperors say even if we did kill you?"

Although there were forces of varying strengths throughout Veluriyam Capital, there was a set of rules that they all had to obey. There was definitely a rule that stated that a faction shouldn't intrude another force's territory. This was especially true when the intruders had attempted to force their way in and even turned hostile after receiving a warning. This was a great taboo. If the defenders were to take out all the intruders during the clash, then the trespassers would have literally died for nothing. Young master Ji San was absolutely justified in killing all of them. However, he didn't wish to make a complete enemy out of the Murong Clan without the clan lord's orders.

The old hunchback said angrily, "This isn't a core or important location. Even if we did accidentally intrude into this place, it's still just a misunderstanding."

"A misunderstanding? If so, then why did you still attack the Coiling Dragon Clan's honored guest? Are you going to tell me that this was a misunderstanding too?" Young master Ji San sneered. He completely rejected the old man's cunning excuse.

However, the old hunchback continued to speak firmly, "There are so many random people these days. Who knew if he's just an imposter? He hasn't shown us any proof that he is who he is, and his tone is arrogant and disrespectful to his seniors. How could it be wrong for me to teach him a lesson?" The old man had a way to put himself and his side entirely in the clear.

Jiang Chen sneered and said nothing. He knew that there was no point in trying to talk reason with an unreasonable person.

However, Captain Zhang grew furious upon hearing this, “That’s not the case at all, young master. This old hunchback said that he wanted to capture Pill King Zhen and turn him over to the Majestic Clan after hearing his name. He said that young clan lord Murong’s uncle and cousin would be very happy if Pill King Zhen was captured. They are the ones who started things first, and they were really disrespectful to the Coiling Dragon Clan earlier.”

The captain was an honest person. How could he possibly stand to see the old hunchback distorting the truth however he liked and endure it in silence? Ridicule gleamed in young master Ji San’s eyes as he stared at the old hunchback, “Go on, just keep making up more of those lies! No matter what you say, you can’t change the fact that you’re the one who provoked us first. I was going to leave things at this, but if you want to point fingers at us, the Coiling Dragon Clan can play with you to the end. Did you really think that we’ve lost our fangs just because we’ve been silent for so many years?”

Young master Ji San obviously sounded more confident than he was before. The Coiling Dragon Clan had kept a low profile for many years because of their clan lord’s lifespan. Their forces had also withdrawn themselves and avoided making too much contact with the outside world. This low key display was naturally interpreted by the outside world as a sign that the Coiling Dragon Clan was in its twilight years.

But after Jiang Chen had used the ‘Five Elements Augmentation Art’, the Coiling Dragon Clan’s clan lord had regained his former strength, and would be able to hold on for another three to five years. This extension of the clan lord’s lifespan would at least ensure that the Coiling Dragon Clan would survive the current

dangerous period. Moreover, this period was also sufficient for them to prepare the Pinecrane Pill. With the Pinecrane Pill in hand, the Coiling Dragon Clan clan lord would add a thousand years to his lifespan. He would definitely be able to return to his peak or climb to even greater heights!

With these convictions in mind, it was only natural that young master Ji San's confidence had soared. Considering how many years the Coiling Dragon Clan had kept a low profile despite being the number one clan in Veluriyam Capital, and considering how many grievances they suffered to the point where even a second rated clan like the Murong Clan would dare climb onto their heads, young master Ji San couldn't help but grow angrier and angrier.

Just because the tiger hadn't bared its fangs didn't mean that it was now a sick cat! Therefore, the Coiling Dragon Clan had to set an example and display its might and strength to the world, and the Murong Clan had graciously offered themselves on a platter right now. An attack on the Murong Clan would be an indirect one on the Majestic Clan. It would be a show of strength to the entire Veluriyam Capital and the world that the Coiling Dragon Clan was still the foremost clan in Veluriyam Capital!

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