

## **Sovereign of the Three Realms**

### **#Chapter 21: The Pride of the Long Family - Read Sovereign of the Three Realms Chapter 21: 30**

#### **The Pride of the Long Family**

##### Chapter 21: The Pride of the Long Family

Jiang Chen had not anticipated that a few careless sentences from him would have such a sobering effect. The spirited conversations that had been taking place in twos and threes suddenly all quieted down.

Countless pairs of eyes looked towards Jiang Chen in synchronized movement.

Those present were all heavyweights in the Eastern Kingdom, and all of them knew that the duke of Soaring Dragon had always wanted the piece of land with the spirit vein running through it. He had been scheming and plotting to seize it from the duke of Jiang Han.

Judging from his posture, was Jiang Chen planning on declaring war? Was he going to engage in a public dispute with the duke of Soaring Dragon?

Jiang Chen, the subject of their speculation, was completely insensitive to it all. He pulled a chair towards himself, and sat down with an air of generosity, sneaking a glance at Eastern Zhiruo's body. He muttered, "Looks like you've been busy these past couple of days. At this rate, you'll have no issues getting past sixteen."

Clink, kalunk...

At least three or four people fumbled their wine glasses after hearing these words. They were so shocked by Jiang Chen that even their wine glasses fell to the ground.

The minority that had not known Jiang Chen already could not contain themselves and started surreptitiously quizzing their neighbors. Which family did this young duke hail from? This was simply too brave.

This was the king's most beloved daughter, after all.

And beside the princess sat elder Princess Gouyu, one whose face was already starting to sink down in disapproval.

Seeing that Princess Gouyu's face had sunken low enough to draw water, those who wanted to watch the show did not dare to brazenly cast their gazes over here.

Everyone knew that Princess Gouyu was the martial dao genius of the Eastern Kingdom. She was an exceedingly influential person in the Eastern Kingdom who held true power.

And not to mention, just by her status as the main organizer of the Hidden Dragon Trials, which duke at the banquet would dare to insult her?

Yet Jiang Chen seemed to be completely oblivious and had no idea that he was sitting in the most prominent area, and gave no indication that he realized he had become the center of attention.

Jiang Chen had basically observed everyone with side vision after he sat down. What surprised him was that there were a few familiar faces.

The third hallmaster of the Hall of Healing for instance; the duke of Tianshui who had slapped himself for another.

It was apparent that the duke of Tianshui was behaving today. He kept to himself. If he had been as before, he would have surely led the offense to make life difficult for the Jiang family.

However, whether it was the duke of Tianshui or his heir, they were both oddly quiet today.

The duke of Tianshui was obviously still haunted by what had happened at the Jiang Han manor. Although he did not take any action himself, it still gladdened his heart to see others picking on the Jiang family.

These fellows did not know anything of the agreement between Jiang Chen and Eastern Lu, and thus did not have any reservations in bullying the Jiang father son duo.

Indeed, a few duchy heirs walked over in tandem just as Jiang Chen wanted to ask Eastern Zhiruo how she had been lately.

The leader of the band was the heir to the White Tiger dukedom, Bai Zhanyun.

“Jiang Chen, do you know what day it is?” Bai Zhanyun’s face was a study in indignation. “Today is miss Long Juxue’s sixteenth birthday. How dare you say it’s a filthy place! I command you to apologize!”

“And I, Hong Tiantong, order you to apologize to the host and other guests in the name of the Vermillion Bird dukedom!” Hong Tiantong had departed from his usual modus of inciting others to pick the fight, and actually took the initiative today.

It was apparent that Hong Tiantong had no desire to let Bai Zhanyun claim all the glory for fawning on Long Juxue in a setting like this.

These two came from an impressive background.

The strength of the 108 dukes in the Eastern Kingdom varied accordingly, but the top four dukes had always been firmly ranked in the top four. No matter what changed in the kingdom, their position had never changed.

Soaring Dragon duchy ranked first, White Tiger second, Vermillion Bird third, and Black Tortoise fourth!

Two heirs of the four major dukedoms had stepped forward, and had brought some of the heirs of other high ranking dukedoms with them. They encircled Jiang Chen with an aggressive air.

Jiang Chen kept his cool and flicked a noncommittal glance at Hong Tiantong. He then asked lightly, “Are you commanding me?”

“You can take it that way.” Hong Tiantong responded arrogantly.

“Oh... “ Jiang Chen smacked his forehead lightly, smiling without seeming to at princess Gouyu. “Princess Gouyu, is this fellow part of the royal family? Or have I remembered incorrectly? Do dukes have the power to command each other? I seem to remember that only the royal family has the power to issue commands to dukes!”

He looked at Hong Tiantong lazily, laughing, "The heir to Vermillion Bird is it? When did you change your surname to Eastern? Why didn't you make a big proclamation out of such a big event? You should've notified us earlier so we could be mentally prepared!"

Hong Tiantong, who had occupied the aggressive high ground a moment ago, was suddenly at a loss for words by this simple question. He became as transfixed as a statue.

"As for you, Bai Zhanyun is it? If I remember correctly, this is the third time that you've provoked me. I didn't want to lower myself to your level before, but today, what do you mean by standing here and hollering your head off if you claim that this isn't a filthy place? Are you blind? Do you not see Her Highness sitting there? Do you know anything about noble etiquette? Yelling and jumping up and down in front of the princess, do you have any notion of decorum?"

"And the others, what do you want? Accompanying these two idiots in making a spectacle of yourself, are you trying to tell everyone present that there is no longer a need to conceal your mutinous hearts?"

Jiang Chen's torrent of words caused the crowd of youths to be tongue-tied, red in the face, and minds to go completely blank. They wanted to find the words to retort, but had absolutely no idea what to say.

Bai Zhanyun was trembling in his rage, "You... Jiang Chen... your mother... you're spitting blood from your mouth!(1)"

"Does your mother not spit blood from her mouth? If your mother didn't spit blood, where did you crawl out of? Or are you some runt that your father picked up from the streets?" When it came down to verbal sparring, Jiang Chen had had a career in cursing others for millions of years in his past life. His spiteful tongue had once cursed everything under the heavens.

These jokers were absolutely no match.

But Eastern Zhiruo did not understand the last part of his words. She tugged on his sleeve with a face full of naive innocence. "Brother Jiang Chen, what does his mother spitting blood have to do with him being picked up from the streets?"

“Eh....” It was Jiang Chen’s turn to be halted in his tracks as he stammered, “This question isn’t suitable for children. You’ll understand when you go and get married.”

Princess Gouyu on the sidelines was also perplexed. She thought that Jiang Chen was cursing a bit randomly and had no idea what he meant. But after his explanation, she suddenly thought of the scenes of childbirth...

Was that not literally spitting blood?

Gouyu’s gaze sharpened with killing intent as her thoughts wandered down this path. This damnable Jiang Chen! He was sure to pollute Ruo’er if she spent more time with him!

She decided to vent her rage on Bai Zhanyun and Hong Tiantong. Those two were still dumbly standing there like blockheads. She slammed her hand down on the table, “You two, what do you have to say for yourself? Do you still retain any of your noble decency?”

The atmosphere abruptly worsened as Princess Gouyu lost her temper.

This was no ordinary individual. Many times, Princess Gouyu’s attitude had represented the king’s attitude!

The representative hearty laugh of the duke of Soaring Dragon traveled in from the main hall at this awkward moment. “Ladies and gentlemen, please calm down. It’s a rare occasion that we have so many present, and it happens to be my youngest daughter’s sixteenth birthday. I’ve invited everyone here to, one, celebrate my daughter’s birthday and, two, share the news of a great event of joyous tidings with everyone.”

“Oh? Your Grace, what happy event is this? You have kept a tight seal on the news.”

“Yes, Your Grace, out with it! We can’t wait.”

“Haha, let’s not be in such a rush everyone. It appears that I’ve hidden the news too well. I shall do that no longer. To be honest, this matter is also an issue of great joy for the Eastern Kingdom, and is a momentous occasion for the kingdom. My daughter Juxue, due to her Azure Phoenix Constitution from birth, has attracted the attention of a hidden master and been picked as his

direct disciple. The master will personally come to welcome my daughter to the Purple Sun Sect after the Hidden Dragon Trials!”

“What! Purple Sun Sect? That’s the head sect of the four great sects of the sixteen countries!”

“All hidden masters are the equivalent of a prominent heavyweight within a sect. Who would’ve thought that Long Juxue would have such good fortune. Congratulations indeed!”

“An azure phoenix constitution even sounds extraordinary!”

“This kind of joyous occasion should be celebrated through all the lands! Felicitations to Your Grace, the future of Soaring Dragon duchy is indeed one of unlimited wealth and endless potential!”

“Congratulations!”

In that moment, all sorts of greasy remarks poured in like the unending river waters.

Long Zhaofeng was in fine fettle. He had long since planned for today. He was completely unsurprised by the situation.

“To be honest, the heavyweight of the Purple Sun Sect had decided upon this master and disciple relationship the moment my daughter was born. But, I’m a low-key person and thought of Juxue’s growth and childhood. I didn’t want to overly draw attention to her. But now that my daughter is sixteen years old, this news naturally doesn’t need to be concealed anymore.”

Long Zhaofeng’s words were the epitome of pride.

In actuality, how could this be called low-key. If this was called low-key, then nothing under the heavens could be labeled high profile.

And, it was not that Long Zhaofeng had avoided speaking the truth, it was that he did not dare speak of it.

When Long Juxue had been born, a strange phenomenon struck the sky. A great rainbow appeared in the vast sky, with vague impressions of the legendary phoenix dancing in its rays. All the birds on earth paid their respects and lingered long thereafter.

It was true that an elder in the Purple Sun Sect had heard of this phenomenon and surmised that the Soaring Dragon dukedom in the Eastern Kingdom had given birth to an Azure Phoenix Constitution. He had not set foot outside sect territory in several hundred years, yet he rushed to the Soaring Dragon dukedom at first light and established the master disciple relationship.

Except, absolute perfection didn't exist in the world. What it meant to have an Azure Phoenix Constitution was that an evil humour of extreme yin existed within the body. If this evil humour was not resolved, then that person would not live past 30 years old, and any and all talk of genius potential would be as tangible as the clouds.

Long Zhaofeng had been wracking his brains and trying all possible methods over the past couple of days and had finally dispelled the evil humour within Long Juxue. This way, there was no longer any restrictions on the Azure Phoenix Constitution.

At the same time, the Purple Sun Sect elder had sent word that Long Juxue would be officially initiated into the Purple Sun Sect after half a year.

Long Zhaofeng's first thought after receiving such confirmation was to proclaim it far and wide!

There was no way that Long Zhaofeng would pass up such a prime opportunity to flaunt his family. To that regard, almost all the dukes of importance, ministers, and royal officials, had received an invitation from the Long household.

Even the high and mighty Princess Gouyu had been no exception.

At that moment, Long Juxue was standing next to her father like a proud phoenix. She sparkled such that no one dared look at her directly. Modesty and pride suffused her eyes.

Even to a hidden power like the Purple Sun Sect, an Azure Phoenix Constitution was still an exceedingly rare talent. She had sufficient reason to be proud.

Bai Zhanyun and Hong Tiantong's gazes on Long Juxue were full of desire and adoration.

Jiang Chen finally understood what the duke of Soaring Dragon had meant by an event of joyous tidings in his invitation.

“Azure Phoenix Constitution?” Jiang Chen searched his memories, remembering that all sorts of body constitutions existed in the common world of martial dao.

But on the path of martial dao, no matter how great the potential, the practitioner would still not make it far if an appropriate disposition did not go hand in hand with the potential. There were many examples of that, too.

But at the end of the day, even something like the Azure Phoenix Constitution did not amount to much in Jiang Chen’s eyes.

His past self had seen too many top talents. How many of those had actually successfully developed and matured?

1. Chinese saying that this is a malicious attack, slander/slur

Chapter 22: You Think You’re Awesome? Destroyed with One Poke

The atmosphere at the banquet was quite fervorous. Even Princess Gouyu wore an extremely solemn expression on her face. Although she seemed indifferent on the surface, she was still quite shocked at heart.

After all, it was not a good thing for the royal family if the duke of Soaring Dragon became increasingly powerful.

Especially this Long Juxue. If she truly entered the Purple Sun Sect, then her future development would be unlimited. Although Princess Gouyu had been hailed as a martial dao genius in the kingdom, she had never attracted the attention of any of the hidden sects and secluded masters.

Jiang Chen was exceedingly observant, and with just a careless glance, he had deduced most of Princess Gouyu’s internal struggles.

“Heh heh, she’s just a person with a bit more talent, that’s all. The path of martial dao is like scaling an abyss. Those with better potential just happen to climb a bit faster than others. If the slightest mistake is made and a hand slips, they too fall and land in pieces. All is still in vain if one has talent alone and not the right disposition.”



His voice was not loud. It seemed like he was both murmuring to himself, and explaining something to Eastern Zhiruo.

But a listener who listened with their hearts would understand this sentiment. A strange light shot out from Princess Gouyu's eyes when she heard those words. Her gaze raked across Jiang Chen's face, and she suddenly thought that this venom-tongued youth was not so distasteful after all.

"No, how could I just forgive this kid just like that?" Princess Gouyu immediately suppressed that little bit of goodwill.

Jiang Chen stretched lazily and pouted, "So, the boasts have been boasted and the awesomeness has been demonstrated, this should be enough right? When will the food be served? I'm so damn hungry that my chest is touching my back!"

He had not suppressed his voice when saying these words. They sounded like the disgruntled rumblings of a young fop.

But, when voiced at such an occasion, they were quite irritating.

Long Zhaofeng had originally wanted to wax eloquent, but felt hard pressed to proceed, when he was interrupted by an ear piercing and unexpected voice.

But, what could he do? He couldn't very well haul Jiang Chen out for a beating.

This Jiang Chen had never known how to pick the right timing. For someone who had even dared to fart at the Heavenly Rites of Worship, proclaiming those few idiotic statements seemed to be in line with his style.

The duke of Soaring Dragon was a bit relieved when he thought of this. "This kid was born with brain damage. It's actually a good thing, since the duke of Jiang Han will find it even more difficult to build upon his foundations with such a useless son. It should be easier to convince him to surrender the land with the spirit vein later."

Zhao Longfeng's internal discontent was swept away after a round of self comfort. He laughed, "Yes, yes. My apologies for keeping everyone waiting, let's start the banquet! Everyone be at ease. Please, eat. Drink!"

However, Long Juxue's gaze raked Jiang Chen. A hidden trace of a conspiratorial smile appeared on that beautiful profile when she thought of the events that had transpired in the Hall of Healing.

"Hold! The house is rarely so full, particularly with the attendance of the main organizers of the Hidden Dragon Trials. There are so many dukedom heirs present today, why not join in the fun? Let us have everyone display what they have learned thus far in life as entertainment for the banquet!"

It was apparent from Long Juxue's tone that she had already assumed the identity of a direct disciple of the Purple Sun Sect, and had already put herself on equal footing with the main organizers of the Hidden Dragon Trials.

"What a wonderful suggestion!"

"Haha, very good. If we exhibit our talent in front of the future direct disciple of the Purple Sun Sect, perhaps miss Juxue will write an introduction for us to the Sect if she so fancies."

"That makes a lot of sense! Haha, it looks like we must fully display our talents in front of miss Juxue today."

"It would justify the efforts of a lifetime if we were graced with a smile from a beautiful woman."

Armed with the memories of his past life, Jiang Chen had a keen intuition. When he felt Long Juxue's gaze pass over his face, he knew that the woman was targeting him.

Princess Gouyu was just as sensitive as Jiang Chen. Although she was unaware of why Jiang Chen and Long Juxue were at odds with each other, with her wit and astuteness, how could she not figure out the situation? Long Juxue had not really bothered to conceal her intentions.

She kicked Jiang Chen underneath the table, muttering under her breath, "Brat, be careful! Long Juxue is setting you up."

Jiang Chen was a bit taken aback. Since when did Princess Gouyu concern herself with his affairs? Did she not yearn to give him a thorough beating?

He popped a fruit into his mouth uncaringly, laughing indifferently. “Why aim for me? How could good-for-nothings like me, who wouldn’t even hurt a fly, threaten someone born with a superior constitution?”

Gouyu felt extremely frazzled upon seeing Jiang Chen’s laziness. You’ll know Long Juxue’s power when she makes a fool out of you later.

Indeed, Long Juxue chuckled and spoke to Bai Zhanyun’s table, “Family friends Brother Bai and Brother Hong seemed to have conflicted earlier with the heir to Jiang Han, Brother Jiang. Why not take advantage of this opportunity to learn something about each other? Us practitioners of martial dao obliterate enmities with a smile. All relationships are built upon our fists. Wouldn’t everyone agree?”

Bai Zhanyun was overjoyed by these words and immediately jumped up. “Yes, Miss Juxue makes the most ample amount of sense. You only form true friendship after a fight. Jiang Chen, what do you say to gaining a better understanding of each other today?”

“Brother Bai, I of the Hong family would also like to get to know Jiang Chen. Why don’t I go first?”

“You two elder brothers, you’re the heirs to the four great dukedoms; you wouldn’t take our duties away from us would you? I, Yan Yiming, have long been fascinated by brother Jiang Chen.”

These fellows were giddy with silliness when they heard Long Juxue say that all friendships were formed on a foundation of sparring. They finally had a perfectly justifiable excuse to beat Jiang Chen and severely humiliate him. This was a chance that would not come around again.

At this moment, the other prominent dukes had received their cues from the duke of Soaring Dragon and joined in the jeering.

“Yes yes, the time will pass for us old fogies one day and it will be the younger generation’s turn to take their places. What a rare opportunity for our heirs to learn from each other and strengthen their friendships! This also enhances the atmosphere of martial dao in the Eastern Kingdom. What a great, great thing!”

“Indeed, indeed. The young are the future hope of the kingdom. If they are strong, then the kingdom is strong!”

Around ten dukes had joined the crowd in the span of a moment. They all expressed affirmative opinions, with even more hangers on fawning in agreement.

Yan Yiming was extraordinarily proud and cupped his hands in a phony gesture. “Jiang Chen, we had a misunderstanding before. Why not spar a bit and get to know each other. Perhaps we can even become good friends after a fight?”

He had finally brought his provocation straight to Jiang Chen’s face.

Jiang Chen sighed in resignation and threw down the nuts he held in his hand. He responded in a carefree manner, “Yan Yiming is it? If I were you, I wouldn’t stick my neck out like this. With your position and potential, you are not meant to be the star of tonight. Why bother paving the road for others? If you misstep, you subject yourself to embarrassment.”

“Embarrassment?” Yan Yiming laughed cockily. “Jiang Chen, speak frankly if you’re scared. If you’re willing to bow your head in apology and beg on the ground for forgiveness, I’ll consider forgiving you.”

“Apology?” Jiang Chen stood up lazily. “I, Jiang Chen, don’t even know how to write the word ‘apology’. But you will soon find out how wrong you were. What did you just say? Go for a round of sparring? Then let’s do it.”

Jiang Chen picked a random spot in the empty area next to the main hall.

“Heh heh, keep pretending Jiang Chen! A weakling of three meridians true qi who dares put himself forward, I’m impressed by your courage.” Yan Yiming grinned sardonically and stepped forward. His six meridians true qi surged as he built up an impressive aura, attempting to crush his opponent through aura alone.

“Stop blustering! If you want to attack then do so, I want to eat after the fight. Do you think it’s been easy staying hungry for so long?” Jiang Chen paid no heed to Yan Yiming’s posturing.

“Jiang Chen, you pretend to have an ace up your sleeve when you only have a mere three meridians true qi. You’re asking for death. Eat my fist!”

Since it was a friendly spar and Princess Gouyu was present, Yan Yiming did not call upon his family's traditional martial arts, but rather deployed the Amethyst Cloud Palm technique of the Eastern Amethyst Qi method.

Six meridians true qi was the highest plane of existence within the intermediate realm. When he activated his six meridians true qi in combination with a magnificent wave of his palm, his aura was thus that it even stirred stirred up loose dust and small rocks.

Yan Yiming leapt upwards, his body light as a feather. Purple light emanated between the movement of his palms and multiple afterimages of his palms appeared. They were like blossoming plum flowers, fluttering to the ground in grand celebration. The sight overwhelmed the onlookers.

"The shadows of the palm fills the sky as birds fly through long grass. The plum flowers fall in flight. Who would've thought that Yan Yiming would've practiced the Amethyst Cloud Palm to the peak of perfection! How incredibly rare."

"The heir of Yanmen lives up to his reputation. No wonder he is listed within the ranks of the top ten!"

Plaudits sounded from all over in that moment. Even Bai Zhanyun and Hong Tiantong looked at Yan Yiming with a serious gaze, deep in thought.

The level of their training was mostly likely all on par with each other, simply judging from this display of the Amethyst Cloud Palm. This Yan Yimin was actually something!

"Huh. How dare that Jiang Chen step up just with a mere three meridians true qi." Bai Zhanyun burned with a need to immediately see Jiang Chen beaten until he spat up blood.

Surrounded by palm shadows that filled the air, Jiang Chen was like a lonely canoe drifting on the current. There did not seem to be a way in which he would be able to avoid being swallowed by the palm shadows.

The smile of a victor's became increasingly concentrated on Yan Yiming's face.

And at this moment, Jiang Chen made his move.

To put it simply, Jiang Chen simply stepped forward lightly. Princess Gouyu had been observing the fight with solemn eyes, and this one step caused a strange look to flash through her eyes.

Because, Jiang Chen had stepped out with unerring accuracy and landed in the singular spot in which Yan Yiming's aura was the weakest, the area in which his attacks were most hard pressed to cover.

This was the tiniest opening, and yet it was as if Jiang Chen had foreseen it and took that marvelous step when Yan Yiming came hurtling towards him.

At the same time, Jiang Chen's arm raised slightly, and a finger pointed with the movement of his hand.

An ear piercing sound cut through the air like a meteor racing across the heavens.

People did not know from where it came, and where it was traveling to.

An agonizing yell sounded out in the next moment, and the numerous palm shadows suddenly dispersed like damaged branches and wilted leaves. Yan Yiming's dashing and light body suddenly rushed towards the ground in a severe fall, like dead weight.

A solid thwack!

It was such a hard fall that even the ground vibrated subtly!

This impact caused even bystanders to feel an itch in their bones. The subject of their stares had most likely fallen even harder.

The other protagonist, Jiang Chen, lightly dusted off his hands and sighed. "For someone who looked down upon us three meridians true qi, I actually thought you were something. But who knew that you would be destroyed by a single poke! Bah, so bad. Disappointing, quite disappointing."

Silence. A desolate silence reigned.

At this moment, being quiet was far better than making a sound!

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Chapter 23: Princess Gouyu's Recommendation

Yes, a strange stillness had fallen over the proceedings in the blink of an eye.

There were plenty of strong practitioners present. Amongst the dukes, who was not a heavyweight? But now, even they were not sure of what they had seen in that split second.

It was Yan Yiming who had held the upper hand, and he was a finishing move away from beating Jiang Chen into the ground. Jiang Chen had only moved twice in all of this.

He had taken one step forward, and had raised his arm once to stab his finger forward.

It was two simple motions, but it was as if lightning had struck Yan Yiming, and he had fallen like dead weight.

It was an exceedingly comical scene. If it was not for the fact that they had been rattling their sabers and bawling into each other's faces earlier, those assembled would have almost suspected Yan Yiming of playacting with Jiang Chen. Was he pretending to be a great antagonist to further heighten Jiang Chen's awesomeness?

But it did not seem like this.

Yan Yiming obviously wanted to make Jiang Chen look like a fool, but he had somehow ended up making himself the fool.

In that moment, different thoughts ran through the minds of all the guests at the banquet.

Those who were friendly with the duke of Jiang Han were naturally happy for him. They had indeed been worried for the son of their old friend earlier, and they would have never dreamed of such a result.

Those who were on less than friendly terms with the duke of Jiang Han, or friendly with the duke of Soaring Dragon were extremely baffled. Some began to suspect that the heir to Jiang Han was a wolf in sheep's clothing. Had he always been pretending to be a ne'er-do-well?

But the majority were neutral, and they held the attitude of waiting to watch a good show. Of course, they were also incredibly mystified by the strange scene that had developed in front of them.

These neutral parties were the most at ease. As people just watching the show, they were naturally unafraid of things getting out of hand.

Princess Gouyu was the most surprised.

When Yan Yiming had started to execute the hit that was at the peak of perfection, she almost wanted to speak up and stop the sparring.

She did not have the chance to do so before the situation took a 180 degree turn!

At this moment, Princess Gouyu did not give a damn whether Yan Yiming had been actually beaten to death, and had completely forgotten the Amethyst Cloud Palm at the peak of perfection.

There was only one picture in her mind, and that was Jiang Chen's unfathomable, untraceable point.

Princess Gouyu was quite familiar with the origins of the Eastern King Point. It was another martial arts technique found within the Eastern Amethyst Qi method.

However, Princess Gouyu was unable to fully comprehend the mysteries contained within Jiang Chen's poke. The point had contained endless enigmas, and it condensed the intricacies of life's riddles and essence of martial dao on a singular, concentrated point.

What silly meridians true qi and superiority of different realms.

None of that mattered at this moment.

To Gouyu, that poke had spoken of the true meaning of martial dao.

It gave her an incomprehensible feeling. How could this point have been so otherworldly?

"This brat, was it all happenstance?" Gouyu suddenly realized that she did not understand Jiang Chen as well as she thought she did.

She did not think that a coincidental poke could have such remarkable power.

But, if it wasn't a coincidence, could a dandy, who had not even passed the foundational exams, be able to deploy such an amazing point?



Someone finally broke the frozen atmosphere.

Bai Zhanyun leapt up, “Jiang Chen, did you cheat just now? Yan Yiming is a lofty six meridians true qi and you a mere three meridians. How could you defeat him with one move?”

Jiang Chen’s tone was extremely innocent. “You should ask these sorts of idiotic questions to him. He was beaten by a lowly three meridians true qi, I don’t even know how to comfort him.”

“Huh. You must have cheated. I, Bai Zhanyun, will play with you.”

Bai Zhanyun, the heir to White Tiger, eight meridians true qi, the advanced realm of true qi!

This was a genius character that completely outclassed Yan Yiming.

Jiang Chen did not even blink and was about to speak when Princess Gouyu stood up. “Hold! The heirs who are participating in the Hidden Dragon Trials are free to spar here, but it is a loss to the Trials no matter who is injured. Since you desire to vie for rankings of strength, I have a suggestion to make in my capacity as the main organizer of the Hidden Dragon Trials. This way, we can determine the talent within your meridians without wounding each other.”

“Oh? What grand strategy does Princess Gouyu have?”

“Princess Gouyu is the main organizer of the Hidden Dragon Trials and she expends so much effort and will on it. The princess has our admiration and respect.”

Sycophantic comments poured in like the tide in the blink of an eye. After all, no matter how important the duke of Soaring Dragon was, he was still a duke. Princess Gouyu was the representative of the royal family.

In the current situation, the number of people willing to fawn on the royal family far outnumbered those dancing attendance on the Soaring Dragon dukedom.

Princess Gouyu said lightly. “The royal family had originally intended to advocate the practice of martial dao in holding the Hidden Dragon Trials. The heirs present here have all practiced the founding method of the Eastern

Kingdom - Eastern Amethyst Qi. I propose to have each heir present take their turn on stage in demonstrating the accompanying techniques of the Amethyst Cloud Palm and Eastern King Point. As the main organizer of the Hidden Dragon Trials, I can also double as a judge to determine whose comprehension of martial dao is the greatest, and whose realm of training is the highest.”

“Haha, princess Gouyu is truly worthy of the title of royal princess. Such a recommendation is inordinately good. No blood will be shed, and we will be able to determine who is superior.”

“Mm. This suggestion is indeed good. This old duke supports it.”

It was impossible for these dukes to publicly oppose this suggestion now that princess Gouyu has voiced it. Disagreeing with princess Gouyu meant disagreeing with the royal family.

They would then most likely die a humiliating death in the Hidden Dragon Trials.

Jiang Chen shrugged his shoulders, directing his words at Bai Zhanyun. “Looks like you’re much luckier than Yan Yiming.”

Bai Zhanyun’s face darkened, “What do you mean?”

“How can I not call you an idiot? Do I have to spell everything out for you? You don’t understand? Ponder on it if you don’t understand.”

Jiang Chen could not be bothered with Bai Zhanyun after those words and walked back to his seat.

Eastern Zhiruo giggled. “Brother Jiang Chen, you looked so good just now.”

“Is that so? I think so too, haha.” Jiang Chen was in a great mood as he flicked a meaningful side glance to Gouyu.

Princess Gouyu snorted. “I merely didn’t wish to see anyone hurt before the Trials, and I wasn’t protecting you. Don’t think too much of it.”

“I think you’re thinking too much.” Jiang Chen laughed. “Can’t you see that I’m really annoyed at you? This Bai Zhanyun has ticked me off several times, and

I finally had the chance to beat him up. Was your proposal meant to protect him?"

Gouyu was completely speechless. This... this BRAT is ridiculous. Does he not know that being part of the advanced realm of true qi, Bai Zhanyun could beat someone in the initial realm into a meal pie with one punch?

She cursed inwardly, "This princess was obviously protecting you from being beaten to death by one fist from Bai Zhanyun. You damned ungrateful brat!"

With Princess Gouyu's proposition and the supportive efforts of those in power, it looked like the start of the banquet would be delayed yet again.

All the respective heirs of their dukedoms were high spirited and they were itching for action on the demonstration stage in the Soaring Dragon manor. They all wanted to use such a gathering to make a name for themselves.

Princess Gouyu's voice sounded and it was as clear and cold as jade. "Everyone, many heirs of their respective dukedoms have been gathered here today. As the main organizer of the Hidden Dragon Trials, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to review their progress in practicing the Eastern Amethyst Qi. Do not feel the need to hold back and display your full potential, understanding and talents!"

To be honest, all the heirs were chomping at the bit even without princess Gouyu's encouragement. Who would want to miss the opportunity to leave a good impression on the main organizer of the Trials, and demonstrate their talents as well?

All martial dao methods were divided into the achievement levels of "minor achievement", 'skillful', 'perfection', 'flawless' and 'great perfection'.

Under the personal observation of Princess Gouyu, several heirs quickly presented themselves for a demonstration. Some chose the Amethyst Cloud Palm, and others chose the the Eastern King Point.

One had to say, no mediocrity existed amongst the heirs to the 108 dukedoms.

Those who dared step onto the stage all possessed decent potential and were quite confident in the level that they had trained to.

Jiang Chen squinted his eyes as he sat below the stage, there was an absent-minded look on his face. He would occasionally nibble at some nuts, or make fun of Eastern Zhiruo every now and then.

A trace of an amused smile clung to his face as he sometimes flicked a glance at the busy hustle on the stage. It was obvious that he did not think much of the demonstrations by the heirs.

However, a fellow then stepped onto the stage that perked Jiang Chen's interest.

This youth was well built and took solid steps. He was the heir to the Hubing dukedom, Hubing Yue, and one of the few best friends that Jiang Chen had in the capital.

Jiang Chen was inwardly resigned as he watched Hubing Yue walk onto the stage. With his temperament and characteristics, neither the ethereal Amethyst Cloud Palm nor the unpredictability of the Eastern King Point were suited for him.

Therefore, Jiang Chen was a bit surprised that Hubing Yue had put himself forward.

But, what surprised those below the stage was that the heir to the unassuming Hubing dukedom, ranked middle out of the 108 dukedoms, possessed a strong martial dao foundation. Seven meridians true qi roared like dragons within his meridians. He was in the advanced realm of true qi with seven meridians true qi!

This astonished even Jiang Chen.

One had to know, even Yan Yiming, the heir to a top ten dukedom, possessed merely six meridians true qi.

But the Hubing dukedom was ranked towards the bottom of the 108 dukedoms. Was its heir going to vault to new heights through the Hidden Dragon Trials?

Seven meridians true qi were indeed extraordinary. They were great dragons accompanied by the sound of thunder when deployed.

However, the Amethyst Cloud Palm seemed to lack a bit of true meaning, a bit of elegance, when demonstrated by Hubing Yue.

“Hahaha, Hubing Yue, is that the Amethyst Cloud Palm? This is chopping wood!”

“Amethyst Cloud Palm is elegance personified. This Hubing Yue looks like a farmer plowing his fields when he demonstrates it. I can watch no longer.”

Some audience members mocked him immediately. Although their words were jeering, they were not without some truth.

This also fit in with Jiang Chen’s earlier conclusion. The Amethyst Cloud Palm was not a good match for Hubing Yue’s style.

However, it was not as if there was nothing that could be gleaned from Hubing Yue’s version of the Amethyst Cloud Palm. At least his foundations were solid, and it was much more practical than some of the other flowery versions that were demonstrated earlier.

Princess Gouyu recognized his steadiness and stability, and pronounced a judgement of “peak of skillful”.

The identity of the heirs who followed him were even more outstanding.

#### Chapter 24: Jiang Chen Shocks All Those Present

The heir of Tianshui dukedom, Shui Qingshu, demonstrated the Eastern King Point. Fluttering and ethereal, it was a bizarre flow. It appeared that he had actually trained it to a pretty good level.

Princess Gouyu inclined her head slightly upon seeing this, and rated it at “Peak Perfection”.

The heir of Black Tortoise, Yi Taichu, exhibited a flowery version of the Amethyst Cloud Palm. It was extremely elegant, like mercury spilt on the ground. This cooled the ardor of several youths who had been chomping at the bit to hop onto the stage and have a go.

They felt the distance yawning between them and Yi Taichu in comparison.

As for Princess Gouyu, she also looked on in admiration and gave a rating of “Initial Flawless”.

This was also the first heir of the day who had received a “Flawless” realm evaluation.

One had to know that it was incredibly uncommon to practice a martial dao method to even “Peak Perfection”.

Achieving the flawless realm basically meant that there were no vulnerabilities or flaws. The practitioner had reached a level in which not even a drop of water would find an opening.

The next level was the “Great Perfection” realm.

Only a true genius was able to train a martial dao method to the level of “Great Perfection”. This meant that, at least for this particular martial technique, this particular practitioner’s understanding and talent were at the apex.

Bai Zhanyun, the heir to White Tiger, became a bit fidgety when Yi Taichu received such a high commendation.

“I shall demonstrate a set of Eastern King Point.”

Bai Zhanyun was practically on the same level as Yan Yiming when it came to the Amethyst Cloud Palm. He was also at “Peak Perfection”, and had not yet reached the “Flawless” realm.

But he had steeped himself in the practice of Eastern King Point for many years, and had naturally formed his own interpretation.

Although Bai Zhanyun might be arrogant, there was a certain flow in the way he deployed the Eastern King Point. It was as if swallows hid amongst the clouds, or birds speeding towards the woods. An unexpected twist would always take place whenever it came to a bend in the road. It illustrated the saying of “Where hills bend, streams wind and the pathway seems to end, past dark willows and flowers in bloom lies another village.”.

Under Bai Zhanyun’s guidance, “unique” and “change” could be the additional adjectives used in describing his set of Eastern King Point. Although he had yet to reach the perfection realm, his innovation and expansion of the method was already worthy of a judgement of “Flawless Realm”.

Indeed, after Princess Gouyu's contemplation, she gave a "Peak Flawless" commendation.

Bai Zhanyun was incredibly proud that he had received "Peak Flawless", firmly outclassing Yi Tai Chu. His chest puffed out quite a bit, and a few more traces of fervor were apparent in his sneaky side glances to Long Juxue.

Bai Zhanyun stood on top of the stage in high spirits, as if he were the champion of the boxing ring. He surveyed the four corners proudly, "Who else wishes to come up and give a demonstration?"

Hong Tiantong felt that his level of Amethyst Cloud Palm was, at most, on par with Yi Taichu, roughly at the "Initial Flawless" level. He gave up decisively after some thought.

Bai Zhanyun became even more insufferably arrogant and laughed loudly upon seeing Hong Tiantong concede. His gaze settled on Jiang Chen's face.

"Jiang Chen, if I remember correctly, you said I was very lucky just now. Surely you've practiced these two martial arts techniques to an impressive level?"

Bai Zhanyun was exceedingly self satisfied. He had long since taken a dislike to Jiang Chen. It would feel damn good to severely humiliate him, particularly on such an occasion.

Plus, Bai Zhanyun vaguely knew that the duke of Soaring Dragon coveted the Jiang Han plot of land with the spirit vein. Therefore, maybe he would be able to curry extra favor with Miss Juxue if he suppressed Jiang Chen at this gathering?

Bai Zhanyun's call out made Jiang Chen the center of attention again.

Jiang Chen had bafflingly won over Yan Yiming earlier. The process had been supremely fast and many had not been able to see what had happened. They all thought it was a coincidence.

Jiang Chen counted; this was the fourth time that Bai Zhanyun had provoked him. He spat out a piece of chicken bone in his mouth back onto the table, sighing in resignation, "Why do so many lack brains in this world? You, Bai Zhanyun, have had your limelight, and your performance ranks first in this stage. Why must you seek to slap yourself in this face?"

“Slap myself?” Bai Zhanyun gave voice to unbridled laughter. “Jiang Chen, if you can slap my face, then I, Bai Zhanyun, will stand here and let you.”

Jiang Chen stood up slowly and said no more. He cast a look at Princess Gouyu, and walked onto the stage with a hint of a faint smile.

“Bai Zhanyun, you must be proud to have received a “Peak Flawless” commendation and to have beaten down the pack of contenders. Wouldn’t it be the icing on the cake if you found an unlucky fellow able to stomp on while you’re at the prime of your life? Isn’t that so? In this case, a so-called beauty would definitely look at you with different eyes, right? I have to say, you’re so naive, and an utter failure.”

“Naive? Failure?” Bai Zhanyun snorted lightly. “You’re an inferior good-for-nothing, a worthless loser who wouldn’t even pass the three foundational exams. What gives you the right to call me a failure?”

“It’s not that I’m calling you a failure, it’s that you really are one. You view the beauty as a heavenly phoenix, but she views you as a random dog on the street. You’ve repeatedly pretended that you’re all that in front of me, but don’t even know the reason for proclaiming that you’re so awesome. How can you say that you’re not a failure if you don’t even understand the reason for why you live, and waste your years in an attempt to realize an unrealistic dream?

Your set of Eastern King Point has won a standing ovation, and a commendation of “Peak Flawless”, but do you really think that your practice of Eastern King Point is truly flawless and invincible?

Since you’re so hopped up on your own triumph, and think that your Eastern King Point is so infallible, I shall give you a chance. Use the Eastern King Point on me with all your might, and I’ll let you understand what it means to be truly invulnerable!”

Jiang Chen’s eloquence knew no bounds. It was like the unceasing spring thunder, as it built up to a posture of dark clouds descending on a city in the blink of an eye.

A subconscious shift occurred in those present as the bystanders were slightly moved after Jiang Chen’s words.



“Jiang Chen? Are you challenging me? Are you sure you wish to use an egg to attack a rock?” Bai Zhanyun was completely unaffected and his face grimaced in a laugh, displaying a wild, ferocious smile.

“Cut the chatter and display your vaunted Eastern King Point. Let me see just how much an heir of the four great dukes is worth!”

In the eyes of the audience, one was a publicly recognized dandy in the initial realm of true qi with three meridians true qi.

The other was an heir to one of the four great dukes, recognized by the kingdom and in the advanced realm of true qi with eight meridians true qi.

These two people were not on the same level of existence. One could even say that under normal circumstances, a superior practitioner of eight meridians true qi would not even have interest in tormenting someone at three meridians true qi.

This distance between the two was simply too big.

But now, the one who had issued the challenge was the one in the initial realm of true qi!

“This Jiang Chen, was he caned into idiocy?”

“Challenging an advanced realm of true qi. This Jiang Chen is impatient for his own death!”

Even Jiang Feng, the duke of Jiang Han who had always allowed Jiang Chen to do as he wished, called out. “Chen’er, you...”

Jiang Chen raised his arm slightly with an air of ease, a faint sense of persuasiveness about him. This stopped Jiang Feng’s words in their tracks.

Princess Gouyu’s beautiful body shook slightly. In that moment, she had seen a type of confident demeanor that called for others to blindly follow!

“Has this kid truly gained divine patronage?” Princess Gouyu almost couldn’t prevent her thoughts from traveling down this path.

Bai Zhanyun laughed uproariously. “Alright, Jiang Chen, I’ve always disliked you. But I have to admit, you’re a man with balls.”

His footsteps moved slightly when he finished, and eight currents of true qi wound around his body. They circulated speedily, seeming to evaporate off his body like a divine purple halo.

“Eastern Amethyst Qi! He is truly a superior with eight meridians true qi, a genius!”

Jiang Chen stood stock still, his eyes squinted into a fine line, as if he was a meditating old monk.

“Empty posturing! It’s about time to end this!” Bai Zhanyun roared lowly as he lifted both feet off the ground. The purple qi circulating around his body turned into two currents of air as the divine purple halo seemed to materialize as two wings on his back, shooting him into the air.

Circulating purple qi, employing true qi. Fire and lightning seemed to wind around the tip of Bai Zhanyun’s finger, as a vague hint of purple qi formed within them, giving others a surprising sense of oppression.

“Sword from the West!”

Bai Zhanyun concentrated his qi into a blinding light. Woosh! Woosh! Woosh!

The strong qi almost seemed to ignore the laws of space, as it formed bizarrely shaped currents shooting towards Jiang Chen.

“Volant Fire Meteors!”

Blinding purple qi flew according to Bai Zhanyun’s motions. Qi covered the stage in the blink of an eye like a shower of meteors, locking onto the space within a radius of 100 meters and fully covering the entire battlefield.

“Too slow!”

Jiang Chen started to move his feet as Bai Zhanyun started activate his techniques. A few traces of mockery could be found on his lips. “Watch my poke as it stabs your right arm!”

Woosh!

Bai Zhanyun discerned the direction of the attack from the sound of the wind, but the piercing sound had already shot to his right arm when he heard Jiang Chen’s voice.

“Stabbing your left knee!”

Another point that was synchronized with the sound of the voice. Bai Zhanyun did not even have time to react before a numbing paralysis engulfed his left knee. It was obvious that he had been hit.

“Damn it!” Bai Zhanyun could not figure out why he was unable to dodge the hit when he could hear his opponent’s voice, and could anticipate what direction the point was coming from.

And, his opponent’s force was so gentle, almost weak!

“Third rib on the left!”

“Right shoulder!”

“Left ankle!”

It was as if Jiang Chen was smoothly reciting a book. His poke reached Bai Zhanyun whenever he named a body part. Each poke was unearthly, ethereal, and completely untraceable.

Bai Zhanyun scrambled around in panic whenever Jiang Chen announced his next move, but he could never successfully dodge a single hit.

How maddening! Bai Zhanyun almost wanted to spit blood in his frustration.

In terms of force, he felt that he was more than ten times his opponent’s superior. In terms of body, he far outclassed the other. Even Princess Gouyu had highly praised his level of training.

But, he had a feeling of being constantly countered, an inability to utilize his strength; and could only passively take the hits when faced with someone from the initial realm of true qi.

It was as if the other anticipated his every move and was able to stay one step ahead of him despite not moving that quickly.

Bai Zhanyun became even more frustrated as he fought, but had to admit at the same time that if the other used just a bit more force, he would have probably been thumped into the ground many times over already.

Jiang Chen suddenly yelled, "Pause" in the middle of the fight, and dashinglly retreated backwards to the side. He circulated his qi and poked a stone lock next to him.

The stone lock broke upon impact. It had been completely perforated.

"Bai Zhanyun, what would have happened if I used this level of force in my pokes just now?"

Bai Zhanyun was dumbfounded. He had felt frustrated beyond belief just now on the stage because he had been unable to fully deploy his strength.

But now, he felt a cold draft on his back as cold sweat poured out. After all that fighting, it wasn't that his opponent lacked true qi, but that he had not used his full strength, and had pulled his punches.

Otherwise, he probably would have been flat on the ground after the first poke!

The onlookers watching the fight immediately deduced some of that conclusion, and complicated looks crept into their gazes as they looked at Jiang Chen.

## Chapter 25: Legendary Realm of Training

"Hahaha, brother Jiang, who would've thought your son would be so accomplished! You've kept him a secret from the entire Eastern Kingdom!"

"Indeed, indeed! Brother Jiang, I think you father and son must have purposely hid your true strength, and wanted to vault to fame in the Hidden Dragon Trials!"

"This must be it. Even the duke of White Tiger's genius heir has suffered such an ignoble defeat at Jiang Chen's hands. How could such an enigma be unable to pass even the three foundational exams?"

"Duke of Jiang Han, congratulations, congratulations. Who would've thought that the entire kingdom would've been kept in the dark by you two. You must be punished, heh!"

Jiang Feng was also flabbergasted in that moment. He wouldn't have been surprised at all if Jiang Chen had been defeated within a few hits.

He wouldn't have even been surprised if Jiang Chen immediately conceded.

But, this fight's outcome surprised him beyond his capability to be shocked.

Hiding his true strength? A wolf in sheep's clothing? Jiang Feng didn't know whether to laugh or cry. If this was the case, then his brat's acting skills were truly unparalleled. Even his old man had been kept in the dark.

Even in his dreams, Jiang Feng had never dreamed of such a situation!

This was the perfection depiction of one man's joy being another man's sorrow.

The dukes who were at odds with the duke of Jiang Han - some who even had a feud against him - now had gravely serious faces after wanting to see the duke of Jiang Han become a laughing stock.

They too had realized that they had been taken for a ride by the Jiang father and son duo.

Even the duke of Soaring Dragon, Long Zhaofeng, watched Jiang Chen with a few more traces of wariness in his gaze. It seemed that they had always underestimated the schemes of the Jiang family!

As for Long Juxue, she disliked Jiang Chen even more now. The words that Jiang Chen had spoken to Bai Zhanyun just now appeared to mock the latter on the surface, but in reality had just knocked him on the head and actually jeered at her, Long Juxue!

"What use is it if a pathetic and poor dukedom schemes a little? Small schemes and little tricks are all as real as floating clouds in front of absolute power." Long Juxue was still contemptuous of Jiang Chen. With her azure phoenix constitution, she was sure to soar high once she entered the Purple Sun Sect.

So what if these commoners inherited their dukedoms. They were still mere ants!

Whether it was Jiang Chen or Bai Zhanyun, they were all ants in Long Juxue's eyes.

However, even if they were ants, she still wished to see them frolic in front of her, creating some entertainment for her and allowing her to enjoy the spotlight of the stars dancing in attendance on the moon.

But this Jiang Chen, this damnable ant, kept messing up her plans!

The only one completely devoid of any reaction was Princess Gouyu, because her entire being was in a reverie. She was still caught up in the mentality of the fight that had occurred, even up to now.

Jiang Chen's magical poke - that undefinable mental landscape - was like a person up and about at night who had lured away Princess Gouyu's consciousness and brought her to that wondrous mental state.

She repeatedly pictured the fight scene, but no matter how she simulated it, with her knowledge of martial dao and her study of Eastern King Point, she still couldn't fully reconstruct the previous fight!

That was to say, Princess Gouyu couldn't mimic Jiang Chen's actions and win so easily, so handily, even in a theoretical fight!

The key wasn't in winning or losing, but that Princess Gouyu was wholly unable to match the mental state, the level of Jiang Chen's Eastern King Point.

Princess Gouyu continued to simulate the fight, and finally discovered, tragically, that it was impossible to even picture that martial dao realm with her level of strength, not to mention actually training to that level.

This meant that even after Jiang Chen's demonstration, she was unable to replicate his actions even if she were given the chance to.

This realm... a phrase floated into Princess Gouyu's mind. A certain kind of realm...

It was at this moment that Du Ruhai used a pompous, self righteous tone and hectored, "Jiang Chen, this is a sparring match in front of Princess Gouyu. It's already been decided that combatants shall use the Eastern Amethyst Qi method and it's accompanying martial arts techniques. How dare you use other techniques; do you still possess any integrity? Do you still want any dignity as a member of the nobility?"

Jiang Chen flicked a careless glance at him, lacking the desire to even insult such a witless person. It would be an insult to himself if he wasted even spittle on those who kissed up to those in power.

Upon seeing Jiang Chen's arrogant attitude and silent response, Du Ruhai thought Jiang Chen was afraid of him. His attitude became even more haughty. "Jiang Chen, let me tell you something. This is an affront and disrespect to royal dignity. I will most definitely report this matter to His Majesty..."

"Main Organizer Du, please say no more." Bai Zhanyun's face was ghastly white, but he still chuckled bitterly. "He used the Eastern King Point. I lost, and fully admit my defeat."

Du Ruhai thought that Bai Zhanyun was searching for a way out that saved some face. He comforted, "Bai Zhanyun, don't feel dejected. This Jiang Chen has employed some kind of sinister trick. Think about it, this person couldn't even pass the three foundational exams. How could he use the Eastern King Point to defeat you? According to me..."

"Du Ruhai, this princess commands you to shut up!"

Princess Gouyu had finally come back to herself and was immediately faced with Du Ruhai jumping up and down and creating a scene, accusing Jiang Chen of using a sinister trick.

The revered method used in founding the kingdom had become a sinister trick in the mouth of this ignorant fool. How could Princess Gouyu not be enraged?

"Princess, this Jiang Chen..." Du Ruhai even wanted to add insult to injury and frame Jiang Chen.

"I've already said, shut your mouth!" Princess Gouyu's tone became even harsher. "As an organizer of the Hidden Dragon Trials, how could your vision be so shallow to not even recognize the founding martial dao method! I am seriously considering petitioning my royal brother to revoke your position as the organizer of the Trials."

"What? Princess, I'm innocent!" Du Ruhai's facial expression changed greatly.

“Leave me!” Princess Gouyu also didn’t know why she had suddenly become so infuriated with Du Ruhai. Perhaps it was because of Du Ruhai disturbing her mental contemplation with his ruckus?

At this moment, Eastern Zhiruo had a carefree, innocent face and asked with a giggle, “Auntie, brother Jiang Chen is very strong. You say he’s defeated Bai Zhanyun who’s at “Peak Flawless”, what realm is his Eastern King Point? “Peak of Great Perfection?”

Peak of Great Perfection?

The faces of all the practitioners shifted as these four words were spoken. Everyone knew that only top notch geniuses were able to practice any technique to the “Great Perfection” realm. And the “Peak of Great Perfection” indicated the highest realm possible for a martial arts technique, and was unsurpassable.

To be able to practice a method to this realm meant one was a martial dao genius born only once every hundred years.

But, Princess Gouyu’s sexy thin lips were quivering slightly, and an extremely animated light filled her eyes in this moment, as if the words “Peak of Great Perfection” were inadequate to describe the mental state she had been lost in just now.

“Peak of Great Perfection?” Gouyu’s jade lips squirmed marginally as she breathed out the scent of orchids. She sighed lightly, “I happened to meet a master when I was sixteen. I learned from the master that an even higher realm exists above “Peak of Great Perfection” in the ranking of martial dao practice!”

The crowd gave an outcry upon hearing her words.

Of those present, who wasn’t a martial dao master? There were several here who were true qi masters who had trained for multiple decades!

However, they had never heard of a higher realm, one above “Peak of Great Perfection”.

What else could a martial arts technique do above “Peak of Great Perfection”? Was it not enough to be at “Great Perfection”? This was inconceivable.



Princess Gouyu seemed to be deeply moved as she thought of the wondrous encounter of yesterday, murmuring lowly. "I know, this seems to be hearsay. But that master told me, the world of martial dao is as the scintillating galaxy - unending and without borders. And martial dao geniuses are stars within the galaxy, too many to be counted. Our Eastern Kingdom, and the surrounding sixteen countries are but a drop in the ocean on this grand continent!"

The true martial dao geniuses of this world are one in a billion, whether in terms of potential or enlightenment. These geniuses are able to easily train to "Great Perfection" in a martial arts technique, and the scariest thing is, they can innovate numerous changes to the foundation of "Great Perfection". They can derive many mysteries that did not previously exist, elevating the technique's quality, realm, and true meaning!"

Princess Gouyu's tone was suffused with piety, and concentrated traces of yearning filled her beautiful eyes.

This is why Princess Gouyu had never limited her mindset to just one country. What she hungered for was the more expansive world of martial dao.

She had been filled with longing for the outside world when she heard that master's words that year, and was insatiably curious about those legendary geniuses.

Princess Gouyu had actually had the faint feeling that Jiang Chen's mastery of Eastern King Point in his earlier poke had reached the level of the so-called true martial dao geniuses in the master's words.

"More realms above 'Peak of Great Perfection', what should we call them?" The martial dao masters present all felt a bit at a loss at the presentation of a concept beyond their comprehension.

"All realms above 'Peak of Great Perfection' are labeled as the "Legendary Realm"!"

Princess Gouyu didn't hold back and spoke candidly. "Of course, to these true geniuses, there's no point in practicing some of the more superficial techniques to the "Legendary Realm". The true geniuses take a few superior techniques and train those to the "Legendary Realm", and then create their own style, adding in their own philosophies and personal mysteries to elevate these techniques to become their hidden ace card. That, is the hallmark of a true genius!"

The crowd finally understood after this round of explanations.

So this was what the “Legendary Realm” was all about.

“Auntie, does this mean that brother Jiang Chen’s Eastern King Point has already reached the Legendary Realm?” Eastern Zhiruo was eager to confirm this point.

“I’ve practice the Eastern King Point for thirteen years and my own ranking is that of “Initial Great Perfection”. I feel that I can theorize the status of “Peak of Great Perfection” in my mind, but I was unable to see through Jiang Chen’s Eastern King Point. It was like a dragon revealing itself, with only the head being visible, and not the tail. I couldn’t even simulate his actions in my mind. Everyone, please think about this. What level could his Eastern King Point be if even I was unable to theorize it?”

Princess Gouyu stopped here, but threw a meaningful glance at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen however, laughed lazily. “Legendary Realm? Does such an amazing realm exist? Anyways, I won purely because Bai Zhanyun was too idiotic. He’d already showed off his Eastern King Point in front of me, and I merely saw through his mysteries. How could so many bloody deep mystery things exist?”

Bai Zhanyun was shamefaced. No matter how proud he was, he couldn’t bring himself to hate Jiang Chen. Putting aside the fact that Jiang Chen had pulled his punches just now, Bai Zhanyun realized that Jiang Chen had spoken truthfully when the former had calmed down and reflected.

He had gone to incredible lengths to please Long Juxue, but when had this woman ever responded sincerely to Bai Zhanyun?

## Chapter 26: Jiang Feng Erupts

A sparring match between the heirs of the dukedoms had ended with this outcome. With her identity, Princess Gouyu was naturally safe from suspicion that she was on Jiang Chen’s side.

After all, whether in terms of identity or position, Jiang Chen did not merit such favoritism from Princess Gouyu.

Besides, who didn't know that Princess Gouyu was renowned for being cold and impartial? If that wasn't the case, how would His Majesty the King have been willing to let Princess Gouyu govern over an event as important as the Hidden Dragon Trials?

At the same time, although it was miraculous that Jiang Chen had defeated Bai Zhanyun, it had happened right in front of the audience's very eyes. Even if they wanted to suspect foul play, they were unable to find an excuse to do so.

Back to the banquet, in which wine and food flowed in copious amounts. The atmosphere hadn't fully recovered yet thanks to the events of the day.

For better or worse, everyone had their own internal worries.

Particularly those dukes whom had been at odds with the duke of Jiang Han - they still couldn't quite place a finger on it, had Jiang Chen's win been a fluke?

Or was he a wolf in sheep's clothing, and the father son duo had finally started to reveal their hideous fangs in the last segment of the Hidden Dragon Trials?

To say that someone in the initial realm of true qi could hone in on the weaknesses of someone with eight meridians true qi after one demonstration from the latter; even martial dao masters would be hard pressed to believe it.

How was it possible to find flaws after one viewing, and then defeat one's opponent in actual battle?

If it was so easy for the weak to triumph over the strong, then what was everyone training so hard for?

But, to say that Jiang Chen had been pretending to be a wolf in sheep's clothing - wasn't his act just a bit too real?

The key thing was, farting during the Rites of Heavenly Worship wasn't in the playbook of being a wolf in sheep's clothing! This was a mortal sin, and extreme punishment was a given.

Unless... had King Eastern Lu played along with Jiang Chen?

This was even more ridiculous! Surely the king wasn't so bored as to do something like this? Plus, surely the Jiang family did not command so much face as to have the king wholeheartedly act along with their playbook?

Only the duke of Tianshui and several other officials could faintly guess at what was truly going on, because they had been eyewitnesses to the happenings that night in the Jiang Han manor.

"Perhaps the divine patron has not yet left Jiang Chen, allowing this kid to benefit from sheer, dumb luck?" The duke of Tianshui explained things this way to himself.

This kind of speculation was the most logical. The duke of Tianshui had concluded something after observing Jiang Feng's expressions and actions. Jiang Feng, at least, had no prior knowledge of this matter.

With Jiang Feng's level of shrewdness, his acting skills wouldn't be up to par if he was pretending to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. He would quickly reveal his flaws.

Fatty Xuan and the others walked around socializing when the banquet started, and were quite friendly with Jiang Chen. They hung out with Jiang Chen before because he was generous, had a sense of justice, and was willing to speak up for a friend.

Now, with Jiang Chen's strength, they had an even greater mutual sense of pride.

"Damn straight! Brother Chen, I, fatty Xuan, have hung out with you for two or three years but never knew that brother Chen was the true genius! World class acting skills, world class potential, and definitely world class strength. Little brother is in awe, awe!"

Fatty Xuan wore a look of extreme excitement and spittle flew as he gesticulated. He was more excited than a kid at Christmas - as if Jiang Chen being awesome was the same as him being awesome.

Bai Zhanyun was white faced at the other table, and he kept his head down as he found solace in the bottom of his wine cup.

Yan Yiming, who had been one hit ko'ed by Jiang Chen earlier, had finally regained his senses and muttered fiercely. "That Jiang Chen must have used

a sinister trick! He's merely got three meridians true qi, how could he have beaten me!"

Hong Tiantong, on the other hand, was secretly relieved. Good thing he was smart enough to avoid seeking the spotlight after Bai Zhanyun had demonstrated the Eastern King Point.

Think about it! If he'd been the one to spar with Jiang Chen, then the person shamed in front of everyone today would not be those two, but him, Hong Tiantong.

Hong Tiantong's thoughts churned as he saw Bai Zhanyun drown his sorrows in alcohol, he wanted to continue to provoke the latter. "Brother Bai, don't be despondent. In terms of strength, he's in the initial realm of true qi. How could he possibly be your opponent? Eastern King Point is but a basic technique. This kid was lucky and has practiced it more, that's all. If we were to compete in terms of family history, how could that duke of Jiang Han even think to vie with your family of White Tiger's heritage?"

Bai Zhanyun only ducked his head and smiled wryly, altering from his usual style of domineering pride. He shook his head lightly, but didn't say anything. He wasn't a stupid man.

The previous times in which he'd picked on Jiang Chen were purely to gain Long Juxue's favor.

Except, he had suddenly seen the light after Jiang Chen's enlightening words, and his thoughts had been cleared up.

Indeed, he was in the prime of his life. Was it worth it to go to such lengths for a woman who would never seriously consider him? And, though Hong Tiantong had picked on Jiang Chen several times with Bai Zhanyun, the former had never suffered any loss, whereas Bai Zhanyun had always been the one to deal with the consequences.

What did that mean?

This meant that Hong Tiantong was a devious sort who always used Bai Zhanyun as cannon fodder!

“Do you really think I’m that dumb?” Bai Zhanyun flicked a glance at Hong Tiantong as his heart grew more than a few traces of wariness and disgust for this calculating character.

At the head table, and as the host of today’s proceedings, although Long Zhaofeng was rather surprised at what had just happened, he thought no more of it.

Even if this Jiang Chen had some plots in mind and possessed some potential, there was an insurmountable gap between him and his daughter’s innate constitution.

Therefore, Long Zhaofeng’s machinations on the Jiang Han land with the spirit vein did not abate, but rather, he decided to step things up.

After several rounds of drinks had been poured, Long Zhaofeng raised his glass towards Jiang Feng. “Old brother Jiang Feng, I’m truly astounded by your son’s performance today. He has broadened my worldview. I have long since wished to become friends with old brother Jiang. Why don’t we make use of this opportunity today? I stick by my words, what are your thoughts regarding my proposal?

Why not go with the flow today and happily put a seal of approval on it? Old brother, you’ve seen my sincerity. As long as you nod your head, you won’t have to do anything anymore and will receive three hundred thousand silver from me every year. Our two families will be united as brothers forever, how does that sound?”

Long Zhaofeng’s tone was magnanimous, as if he was actually giving great face to the duke of Jiang Han when forcefully seizing the Jiang property at a rock bottom price.

Jiang Feng knew that this seat would be tough to sit in when Long Zhaofeng led him to this table. The gloves were off, and Long Zhaofeng had come straight to the point.

He could only put a bold face on it and say, “Duke Long, my Jiang Han territory is situated in the south and is a destitute place with not many sources of income. The entire household budget stems mostly from the revenue from that piece of land with the spirit vein. Duke Long’s proposal is to cut off the main avenue of money for my Jiang Han territory. Little brother here truly finds it hard to agree.”

One had to say, with Jiang Feng's temper, it was already an uncommon sight to see him speak with such a low posture. If it was any other occasion, Jiang Feng would've likely long since pounded the table and left with a wave of his sleeves.

"Jiang old brother, you're making things difficult for me." The duke of Soaring Dragon's tone hardened.

"Heh heh, duke Jiang, receiving three hundred thousand per annum without doing anything is pure profit with no skin in the game. Why do you resist?" Another duke pretended to persuade Jiang Feng.

"Indeed! If it was me, I wouldn't even frown at the thought of sitting on land and taking in money for doing nothing."

"Duke Jiang, Duke Long is the most preeminent duke and wishes to become friends with you. How many people would give their heads for such an opportunity? And you don't even know how to cherish this?"

"Right? The duke of Soaring Dragon is the first duke of the kingdom, and a hidden sect has claimed Miss Juxue. The Long family is destined for a life of unlimited riches. You've rebuffed Duke Long's good intentions and brushed away his face, aren't you making your future road more narrow?"

These people were all dependant on the duke of Soaring Dragon. It sounded like they had Jiang Feng's best interests at heart, but in reality they were threatening him, persecuting him, and being an accessory to a tyrant's crimes.

There were many things that the duke of Soaring Dragon couldn't voice frankly, and they were here to be the villain.

One had to give it to him - if it was any other duke, they would've probably capitulated by now. But Jiang Feng was a tough old bird and shook his head decisively. "Speak no further. Anyone can mouth pretty words, but you wouldn't be so generous if you were the ones asked to cut off a piece of yourself."

The representative of the Pill King Garden was also in attendance and had not spoken yet. He was the Grand Courtmaster of the Pill King Garden, and chuckled at this time. "Duke Jiang, throughout the course of the multiple deals my Pill King Garden has conducted with Jiang Han, we've discovered that your skill in cultivating spirit ingredients is not up to our Garden's standards.

Therefore, after the unanimous decision of the Garden's internal officials, we've decided that we will no longer accept any spirit ingredients from the Jiang Han territory. Let this conclude our partnership from henceforth on."

Jiang Feng's expression changed radically after these words.

He had refused to crack and had been unwilling to rent out the land with the spirit vein because of this business relationship with the Pill King Garden.

Through this partnership, the Jiang Han territory could receive five million silver a year.

But, the head of the Pill King Garden had spoken and had terminated their partnership, banning all Jiang Han spirit ingredients in the future!

This was cutting the ground in which someone stood on.

Jiang Feng asked raspily, "Grand Court Master, must you be so heartless?"

The Grand Court Master replied lightly, "He who observes the greater picture and takes action accordingly is the clever one. Duke Jiang, you have erred in not realizing how the currents of power have shifted."

What kind of persuasion was this? This was another attempt to rip off Jiang Feng.

Jiang Feng had held back the anger in his belly for quite a while, and the Grand Courtmaster's words were the spark that lit the flame.

His long repressed rage erupted in a second as Jiang Feng shot to his feet, laughing loudly. "Good. Good! Each of you pretend to be the good guy, but all of you are savage robbers!

Let me tell you something, I, Jiang Feng, am not a Buddha formed from clay! I can earn less money, and even not earn any at all, but I will not give away the slightest ounce of the backbone of being a man!

Pill King Garden is it? Ban my Jiang Han territory will you? Doesn't matter! I'd rather raise pigs on that land than allow you highwaymen to profit off of it!"

Jiang Feng had erupted. He had erupted suddenly, and very thoroughly.



So it felt this damn good to explode. Jiang Feng felt that the enraged emotions in his belly had been completely vented in this moment.

As for the banquet, all became silent again following Jiang Feng's eruption.

All the gazes settled on Jiang Feng, looking at him strangely. They were all thinking, this Jiang father and son duo have made a scene one after another, and become the center of attention. What was their purpose? Did they seriously want to create trouble for the Soaring Dragon duchy and be at odds with them?

## Chapter 27: Scolding the Elite

Utter silence! A deathly silence descended!

No one had anticipated that Jiang Feng would suddenly erupt so thoroughly. This was thoroughly destroying all their relations with Soaring Dragon, and starting a feud with the first duke in the kingdom!

In just that single moment, even those friendly with the duke of Jiang Han broke out in a cold sweat on his behalf.

As for the neutral parties, they didn't even dare to look at Jiang Feng. To do so might cause the duke of Soaring Dragon to misunderstand and think that they too supported Jiang Feng.

The banquet's atmosphere was bizarrely still.

It was at this moment that an ear piercing round of applause started sounding.

Jiang Chen stood up lazily, "Good scolding, aptly done! You're my old man alright. I'm curious about one thing though. Isn't there a single backbone to be found amongst you so-called dukes - so-called elite nobles?

Do we need to rely on you weak-willed, sycophant, mediocre layabouts to defend the frontiers of our Eastern Kingdom?

Do your only remaining capabilities lie in suppressing your peers, seizing land from your peers and robbing your peers of their profits?

As for you, Pill King Garden is it? For a mere businessman, do you have any achievements to your name? Have you rendered any services to the

kingdom? Where do you get the courage to lecture a duke of the second rank with that sort of tone?

Who gave you that courage? Does the king know how cocky you are? He who observes the greater picture and takes action accordingly is the clever one, is it? See the bigger picture, is it? Alright, I'd like to see what kind of bigger picture is the picture that you, Pill King Garden, are referring to. Partnership termination? I spit upon that. This young duke tells you clearly now, the Pill King Garden has been banned by my Jiang family!"

The grand courtmaster snickered coldly. "Banned? Who do you think you're fooling? Your Jiang family is but a dispirited duchy. Ban my Pill King Garden? Your family's land with the spirit vein can only be used to raise pigs without my Garden's support, to say nothing of anything else."

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "Is that so? Third hallmaster of the Hall of Healing, this Grand Courtmaster says my family's land can be only used to raise swine. What say you?"

The third hallmaster chuckled and rubbed his nose. "It would be a pity to raise livestock on a piece of land with a spirit vein. Our Hall of Healing is willing to offer ten million silver and sign a five year contract with the Jiang family. No, ten years, twenty years... you determine the length of the contract!"

What? Everyone present, including the duke of Soaring Dragon, all thought that they had heard incorrectly. The third hallmaster from the Hall of Healing had offered ten million silver to sign a contract with the Jiang family under these circumstances?

If it was any other time, and they were signing a contract for purely business dealings, then it wouldn't be such a big deal.

But with these happenings, the Hall of Healing's actions were publicly supporting the Jiang family, and ran the risk of antagonizing the duke of Soaring Dragon.

This was odd.

Who didn't know how dominant the Hall of Healing was?

Who didn't know how crafty the Hall of Healing was?

It wouldn't be a surprise for the Hall of Healing to not have an opinion in these circumstances. But, it was truly odd thing for a hallmaster from the Hall to step forth and express their opinion.

When had the Jiang family connected with the Hall of Healing, and formed such strong ties?

No one felt that the Jiang family commanded so much face as to cause the Hall of Healing to publicly declare its support for them.

The grand courtmaster's expression changed, "Hallmaster Qiao, this isn't the thing to do?"

Out of the three market incumbents in the capital for spirit ingredients, the Hall of Healing was the leader of the market, and held fifty percent of the market share.

The Temple of the Farmer God and Pill King Garden shared the remaining half of the market.

Although the three parties engaged in fierce competition, they also respected a hidden rule of avoiding stealing each other's business maliciously.

This was a principle that no one voiced, but a line that everyone toed.

The third hallmaster smiled faintly. "Courtmaster Wang, I clearly heard you declare the end of your business relationship with the Jiang family just now. If this wasn't the case, how would my Hall possibly intervene? We all understand the rules of business. You no longer wish to pursue this deal, and thus we picked it up. There's nothing untoward here, is there?"

The Hall of Healing wasn't in the wrong whether it came to the defined rules or hidden rules.

The grand courtmaster wore an ugly expression on his face. He had put himself forward so publicly and destroyed his relationship with the Jiang family because he wished to curry favor with the duke of Soaring Dragon.

Conducting business was all the same, regardless of who they did it with. If the Long family controlled the land with the spirit vein, then they would do business with the duke of Soaring Dragon. There wasn't a single bit of downside for the Pill King Garden, and they could in fact use this opportunity

to pave the way for a relationship with Soaring Dragon. There was only good to be gained, and no bad.

Plus, he had calculated that even if he said that the Garden had banned the Jiang family, the Hall and Temple wouldn't step forward to take the business.

After all, a business deal worth five million silver a year wasn't worth the risk of offending the duke of Soaring Dragon.

The grand courtmaster hadn't counted on things spiraling beyond his control.

Not only had the Hall of Healing stepped forward, but they had upped the ante and doubled the partnership rate. Their attitude was clear, they would support the Jiang family!

The grand courtmaster didn't understand, he really didn't understand. The Hall of Healing was so shrewd... was it worth that little bit of profit to offend the duke of Soaring Dragon at this time?

Could the Hall of Healing be unable to understand even the tiniest hint of the bigger picture?

It was obviously difficult for the banquet to continue now that things had progressed to this point.

Many guests knowingly took their leave, upon seeing the duke of Soaring Dragon's face darken in anger. The duke had intended to use this banquet to flaunt his wealth and power.

But now, thanks to the Jiang father son duo and additional participation from the Hall of Healing, it had turned into the Jiang family striking down the face of Soaring Dragon.

The situation was exceedingly odd.

No matter what, the peace of Eastern Kingdom was likely to be broken.

Because, the duke of Soaring Dragon was quite enraged!

The consequences from the anger of the first duke of the kingdom would be quite severe.

As the representative of the royal family, Princess Gouyu was feeling complicated emotions. She had been biased against Jiang Chen, but had suddenly realized that this insufferably cocky, venom tongued fellow really did have a few traces of a dominant aura and a hint of a backbone!

Jiang Chen's aggressive lecture, his ease in facing off with all sorts of noble elites, the mysteriousness of the Hall of Healing's intervention -- all of this forced Princess Gouyu to privately admit --

Even she had been wrong about this Jiang Chen kid before!

When the banquet was over, the grand courtmaster stood outside the door and smiled coldly at Jiang Feng. "Jiang Feng, it's over for you and your son. Offending the duke of Soaring Dragon means the future for the Jiang family will be so arduous that it will be difficult to even take a single step forward."

"Courtmaster Wang, I'm actually curious. As a business person, is it so fascinating to be a dog for others and eagerly make the way for others?"

Jiang Chen chuckled as he swept past the Grand Courtmaster with a disdainful look.

"Jiang Chen, you brat, keep strutting. Time is running out." Courtmaster Wang grit his teeth.

"You're correct, time is running out. Pill King Garden, heh heh... the kingdom may be vast, but there doesn't seem to be a need for three market participants in the field of spirit medicine."

Jiang Chen dug in with his heels after delivering his words and galloped away.

To suffer such impudence from Jiang Chen's arrogant attitude, Courtmaster Wang was so incensed that he wanted to spit blood. It was a depressing day.

His business deal with the Jiang family was over for nothing, and he'd played the role of a villain for free. No benefits had been forthcoming at the end of the day, just a thorough lecture.

Except, even if Courtmaster Wang was the slightest bit displeased, he dared not take it out on the duke of Soaring Dragon. Even if Duke Long had been the main culprit in the Pill King Garden losing this partnership.

“Ah, forget it. A business deal is a small matter. Losing it doesn’t harm the foundations of my Pill King Garden. As for this Hall of Healing, some good can still be salvaged from the situation if the Garden takes advantage of them offending Duke Long. We can make use of this opportunity to oppress them.”

Courtmaster Wang’s thoughts were exceedingly flexible as he thought of Duke Long’s great reach, and some barely voiced rumors within several circles.

The greater Soaring Dragon’s influence grew, the bigger of a threat they would become to the Eastern Kingdom. And now, Miss Juxue had garnered the attentions of a hidden sect.

In time, the possibility of the Long family replacing the Eastern family and becoming king was not inconceivable.

“Duke Long has grand aspirations. I hope this day can soon be materialized. At that moment, the Garden can take advantage of the change in fortunes to strongly beat down on the Hall of Healing and seize the premier position for spirit medicine within the kingdom. This is inevitable...” Courtmaster Wang’s mood abruptly lightened as he thought of this.

Jiang Feng’s emotions had slowly calmed down after they’d returned to the Jiang Han manor. Although it had felt good to erupt like that today, there were still bound to be serious consequences.

If they were just speaking of their respective territories, the lands of Jiang Han and Soaring Dragon were spaced far apart and thus there was no need to fear Soaring Dragon.

After all, without royal order, war could not be declared casually between dukes.

But now that everyone was gathered in the capital, everyone knew that Duke Long’s eyes and men were placed everywhere. He also had dealings with all the various powers in the capital.

Many of the officials at court also hailed the duke of Soaring Dragon as their brother.

Jiang Feng smiled upon seeing Jiang Chen’s serious expression. “Kid, you’ve got guts. You’ve brought great face to your old man today.”

“They say that a tiger father doesn’t give birth to a dog son. Old man, your performance today was pretty strong too.”

Jiang Feng stared at Jiang Chen with a meaningful smile. “Kid, stop pretending and speak truthfully. Why did the Hall of Healing step out and prop us up under those circumstances?”

“All underneath the heavens congregate for profit. All underneath the heavens disperse for profit. The Hall of Healing naturally has their reasons for doing so.” Jiang Chen smiled. “Father, I only have one line. The days of our Jiang family being jeered and mocked by others, strung up like sheep led to slaughter are gone, forever!”

Jiang Feng’s eyes lit up as he heard those words. “Chen’er, many dukes have said today that we’ve hidden our true strength and were wolves in sheep’s clothing. Have you truly been hiding your strength, and even conned your old man?”

“Wolf in sheep’s clothing?” Jiang Chen smirked. “I think they’re thinking too much. Our Jiang family doesn’t need sheep’s clothing, and they’re no wolves themselves!”

A sense of unquestionable pride could be gleaned from Jiang Chen’s words. His confident smile made Jiang Feng suddenly feel that he suddenly couldn’t see through his son.

## Chapter 28: Turmoil in the Capital

What Jiang Chen hadn’t thought of was that the ruckus raised at the Soaring Dragon manor would create currents and eddies beneath the calm surface of the capital.

The Duke of Soaring Dragon, Long Zhaofeng, was naturally feeling the most out of sorts. He might have been able to contain himself because of the greater picture, if Jiang Feng had only turned him down.

But to be declined in such a haughty manner, he felt that he had lost face.

Although Duke Long hadn’t immediately erupted or flown into a rage during the banquet, that wasn’t because he had a forgiving nature, but that he understood that as one in a position of power, he had to control his temper at such a gathering.

When all the guests had left and only his confidantes remained, his first sentence was, "Those who adhere to me prosper, those who defy me die. I don't care what you do, the Jiang family must fail out of the Hidden Dragon Trials!"

Let's see how presumptuous this father and son duo can be when they lose their dukedom, including that land with the spirit vein!

And someone run an investigation into what's going on with the Hall of Healing!" He was incredibly infuriated that the Hall of Healing had openly stood out at such an occasion to bolster the Jiang family. No one had anticipated that scene.

Those confidantes and buddies who yet remained all nodded their heads.

"That Jiang father and son duo are truly ridiculous! Duke Long's prestige is bound to be damaged if we don't suppress them and beat them down this time!"

There must be something going on between the Hall of Healing and this Jiang Chen. When I was at the Hall of Healing the other day..." Long Juxue described the events that had happened at the Hall that day; how the third hallmaster had declined to do business with all the heirs of the preeminent dukedoms, and had sold the Dragonbone Sun Grass to Jiang Chen. He'd even honored Jiang Chen as an esteemed guest.

Even Long Juxue felt that these happenings were rather odd when she recalled them.

Long Zhaofeng didn't know whether to laugh or cry when he heard about them. "Xue'er, why didn't you mention such an important matter when it happened?"

Long Juxue was similarly regretful. "Xue'er only felt then that a mere dandy wasn't worth bothering father about. Who would have known that the Hall of Healing..."

To be honest, Long Juxue's words made sense. At the end of the day, the day that they'd all fought for the Dragonbone Sun Grass was merely a small matter - an interlude in the lives of all the heirs. Although Long Juxue intensely disliked Jiang Chen because of it, she felt there was no need to bring such a small issue to her father's attention.



But, within the capital, many subtleties could be gleaned from a small matter, and each small ripple encompassed great meaning.

If Duke Long had known of this beforehand, he would've been prepared when he invited the Hall of the Healing to the banquet, and would've avoided such a loss.

The unexpected showing from the Hall of Healing immediately removed the power that Soaring Dragon had gained from taking the initiative.

"Right! Duke Long, have you discovered that another thing is rather odd?" The person speaking was the duke of Yanmen, Yan Jiuzhuang.

Apart from the duke of Yanmen, there were tens of other dukes still present. Everyone who was left were the trusted confidantes of Duke Long.

That was to say, out of the 108 dukes in the Eastern Kingdom, more than ten of them had secretly thrown in their lot with Duke Long.

This was already an incredibly frightening power.

The duke of Yanmen was ranked in the top ten out of the 108 dukes. He therefore spoke with more authority out any of the other dukes who had sided with Duke Long.

"Duke Yan, what have you discovered?" Long Zhaofeng asked.

"There were two points of strangeness in tonight's banquet. One, why were Princess Gouyu and Princess Eastern Zhiruo so familiar with Jiang Chen? Two, why was the duke of Tianshui's performance so abnormal? Everyone please remember that the duke of Tianshui and Jiang Feng are hated rivals. He would been the first to strike out against the duke of Jiang Han normally, but did he even speak up today?

Not only him, but his son Shui Qingshu would bully Jiang Chen whenever the two met in the capital. Did he express any opinion at all tonight?"

His words reminded everyone of the obvious.

This was true, the Tianshui father and son duo had behaved rather oddly tonight.

The duke of Soaring Dragon oppressed Jiang Feng because of the land with the spirit vein, the former actually had no prior enmity with Jiang Feng.

But the duke of Tianshui were hated enemies with the duke of Jiang Han. The two territories were neighbors and fought openly and under the table over land, resources, ranking, and achievements. They were enemies-unto-we-die.

But, the duke of Tianshui hadn't indicated anything tonight, and didn't make use of this opportunity to suppress Jiang Feng!

Something was amiss here!

"I remember that the duke of Tianshui accompanied the king to pay their respects when Jiang Chen was caned to death for what happened at the Rites. Why did Jiang Chen come back from the dead? What on earth happened that night? This matter has never been able to be investigated fully. The old farts that went that day are keeping an extremely tight seal on their lips."

All sorts of bizarre points were being unearthed.

Long Zhaofeng sank into deep thought. He too felt it was odd. King Eastern Lu had greatly capable and outstanding men; there was no reason for them to be unable to cane a good-for-nothing to death.

But Jiang Chen had survived the ordeal, and from the looks of things, not only had Jiang family's relations with the royal family not soured, they had actually grown closer.

"Everyone's information is quite useful. It seems the conclusion here is that I have underestimated Jiang Feng. Has this person latched himself onto the King Eastern Lu's coattails?"

Although the duke of Soaring Dragon said Eastern Lu's title, there was a certain lack of respect in his tone.

"Slot the duke of Tianshui into my schedule; it looks like clues of this matter must be gleaned from this person." Long Zhaofeng ordered.

"In addition, tell Du Ruhai to use all necessary methods possible, in order to block Jiang Chen in the Trials. No matter how much backing they have, the Jiang family will be nothing as soon as they lose their dukedom!"

This was tackling a problem at its foundation. No matter how strong someone's backing was, or how many crafty schemes they had, losing the dukedom meant they had lost the right to control their territory.

On what basis could the Jiang family talk, once they lost control?

This method was simple and crude, but direct and effective!

Schemes and seizure, schemes and seizure. Since scheming hadn't worked, then seizure would have to do.

The duke of Soaring Dragon wasn't a kind soul. His methods towards achieving his desires were diabolical and without a bottom line.

In his eyes, treating someone courteously before resorting to force wasn't because he feared the Jiang family power. But rather, he wished to build a reputation of overcoming others through morals and ethics. But since the Jiang family was ignorant and dense, rendering these hypocritical methods ineffective, then all bets were off and violence was the only way!

Just as the duke of Soaring Dragon was holding a meeting late into the night, so were the senior executives in the Hall of Healing.

The four hallmasters and ten elders. The highest levels of the Hall's power, were all in attendance.

The third hallmaster, Qiao Baishi, fully conveyed all the happenings that had occurred in the banquet.

In the Hall of Healing, the lord hallmaster Song Tianxing held the absolute right to speak. It wouldn't be a hyperbole to say that he was the main pillar of the Hall.

When the third hallmaster had finished describing the situation, all eyes swivelled smoothly to Lord hallmaster Song. It was apparent that no one dared rashly venture forth an opinion before understanding the lord hallmaster's thoughts.

Song Tianxing chuckled, "I'll refrain from speaking first. Everyone share your thoughts!"

“Even elder Shun has vouched for the Heavenly Karma Pill with 90% surety, it must be reliable. I think the third hallmaster has made the correct decision.” One of the elders spoke first.

“I too support the third hallmaster. The Hall of Healing has been established in the capital for hundreds of years; it would be impossible to please all and offend none. Offending a few for the profits of the Hall is unavoidable.”

“Indeed, and since the Heavenly Karma Pill has such a bright future and such market potential, we have no choice if we have to offend even more dukes, not just the duke of Soaring Dragon.”

It was apparent that there were more senior executives who supported Qiao Baishi. Everyone weighed in on the issue from the perspective of future profit to the Hall, and all felt that there was no problem with Qiao Baishi’s decision.

“Number two, say something as well.” Song Tianxing looked at second hallmaster with a congenial smile.

“I agree with everyone’s opinions. Anything that benefits the Hall is commendable.” These words were quite slippery and didn’t say much.

Elder Blue spoke up suddenly, “Lord hallmaster, I have a few words.”

“Alright, everyone is welcome to speak their mind. Elder Blue, go ahead.” Song Tianxing encouraged her.

“I feel that the Jiang father and son are not too dependable. Has everyone thought about the consequences if Elder Shun is in the wrong? Wouldn’t the Hall become a great laughingstock? If rumors of this travels, what of our credibility? If the Heavenly Karma Pill is pure bluster, then haven’t we offended Soaring Dragon for nothing? I’ve heard that Long Juxue, the beloved daughter of Duke Long, possesses an azure phoenix constitution and has attracted the attentions of one of the hidden sects. Her future in martial dao is incredibly promising. This way, wouldn’t Soaring Dragon rise in her wake as well? Could a change in the landscape of kingdom ownership occur in the future?”

The Hall of Healing wasn’t a governmental agency, and thus was less reserved, more bold about discussing matters of power. People’s expressions didn’t even flicker when discussing potential changes in rulers.

“Elder Blue, you worry too much. Firstly, it’s impossible for elder Shun to be wrong. And another thing, changes in ruling families follow the laws of nature, and will not be suddenly upended by the emergence of one or two people. The duke of Soaring Dragon is filling out his wings, sure, but the Eastern royal family will not idly sit by.”

Qiao Baishi immediately refuted elder Blue’s words. “Besides, even if the duke of Soaring Dragon was able to, he would not openly declare war against our Hall over one business deal. Our Hall has been established for hundreds of years, and will not be easily trifled with. Ignoring profits at hand to consider details that will not happen, has never been the way our Hall has conducted business.”

No one could deny that the future profits they could gain from the Heavenly Karma Pill were simply too tempting. If the pill was supplied in large quantities to the market, then none of the other medicines currently in the market for bodily injuries would be the slightest bit competitive.

They said that inferior goods would be discarded after comparison. The Heavenly Karma Pill was a superior good that would sweep away its peers.

This market was practically a treasure bowl. If leveraged appropriately, the profits from this single pill medicine would be enough to support the operations of the entire Hall of Healing.

After rounds of debating, everyone’s gazes finally landed on Lord hallmaster Song Tianxing again.

“It seems that most still agree with number three’s decision. I’m sure you can deduce my attitude as well. I confidently left things in number three’s hands when I ventured out. This also meant that I trusted his judgement and abilities.”

Song Tianxing’s attitude was quite apparent by this point.

“I also must remind everyone that our Hall of Healing pursues the greatest profits. Although we avoid the battles of politics, we need not fear involvement. It’s impossible to keep one foot on both sides of the fence forever. When a side needs to be picked, there’s only one side for us, and that’s profit. The Heavenly Karma Pill will bring us profit, so we choose it! As for who wins or loses, our Hall has survived for so long, do we lack even this little bit of adaptability?”

## Chapter 29: Changes in Attitudes from All Sides

Qiao Baishi heaved a sigh of relief at Song Tianxing's clear-cut attitude. To be honest, he had been rather stressed out by the decisions he'd made lately, and had pushed through purely on the basis of his own daring and resolution.

He could tell that his choices had been correct based on the lord hallmaster's attitude.

"Number three, you've been the one to strike up the relationships with Jiang Chen from the Jiang household. You'll be in charge of maintaining the relationship. It would seem from various bits and pieces of info, that this young man's shadow has been cast over all of the large happenings in the capital lately. This young man is one to keep an eye on."

Song Tianxing had never seen Jiang Chen before, but had been able to deduce such an astounding conclusion from the details of the numerous reports he'd received.

Even the normally steady second hallmaster, Yue Qun, exclaimed involuntarily, "Lord hallmaster, isn't this evaluation of Jiang Chen a bit of an overstatement?"

Song Tianxing smiled faintly, "I have yet to meet Jiang Chen, but I have met Jiang Feng of the Jiang Han dukedom. If the source of all the unexpected is from the Jiang father and son, my money would be on Jiang Chen and not Jiang Feng."

Qiao Baishi was moved. He knew that the lord hallmaster's position was lofty, and his worldview cynical. His standards were high, and he basically never made an error when judging people and matters.

For the lord hallmaster to give such high praise to a teenager he had never met before - Qiao Baishi rejoiced more than a little that he had made the right choice.

"Heh heh, I, old Yue, have always admired the lord hallmaster's eye for assessing things. This time however, I'm curious as to the possibility of the lord hallmaster being mistaken?" Yue Qun chuckled. With his status and position, it wouldn't be an overreach if he cracked a few lines of a tame joke.

The convention of the senior executives ended with the lord hallmaster's conclusion.

Song Tianxing pulled Qiao Baishi aside for a private meeting afterwards and patted Qiao Baishi's shoulder. "Baishi, you have handled this matter with quite a bit of boldness. I am proud of you."

Although their relationship was one of the lord hallmaster and the third hallmaster, Song Tianxing far outstripped Qiao Baishi in both age and experience, as well as status and standards.

One could say that Song Tianxing had intended to groom Qiao Baishi as his successor.

Qiao Baishi was gobsmacked and flattered, and he hastened to offer a few humble words.

"Baishi, you must not slight Jiang Chen. Have you tallied up the number of amazing things that have happened around Jiang Chen?"

"Your subordinate is dense, and awaits the lord hallmaster's enlightenment." Qiao Baishi was exceedingly humble.

"For one, this youth was caned to death at the Rites of Heavenly Worship, but why was he caned and still alive?

For two, the king has caned this youth, but why has the king personally bestowed the engraved dragon medallion to the latter's keeping?

For three, this youth is a mere son of a duke - from whence did he obtain this ancient pill recipe for the Heavenly Karma pill?

Four, this youth's martial dao level is insufficient to pass even the three foundational exams, but why was he able to first defeat Yan Yiming with one stroke, and then effortlessly toy with Bai Zhanyun afterwards?

Five, why are the royal princesses of two generations so familiar with this youth?

Six, this youth is wholly unafraid in front of the duke of Soaring Dragon, and denounced a room of elites. His performance was wholly not in agreement with the character of a young man. Where is his surety coming from?"

Qiao Baishi's expression became more serious with every point that Song Tianxing listed. He had more or less also considered these points.

But, his considerations were not as well thought out or as comprehensive as the lord hallmaster's.

Suddenly, Qiao Baishi connected the dots between the hints dropped by Song Tianxing. He exclaimed in astonishment. "Is this to say that the Jiang family is backed by the king? And that dispirited, dejected demeanor before was an act to confound opponents? This father and son could be pawns set into motion by the king? Even possibly pawns with the ability to enact change in the greater picture?"

Song Tianxing remarked lightly, "If not this, what other reasons do you think could explain all that has happened thus far?"

Being caned, but not to death, was revealing enough, to speak of none of the others. If it wasn't for secret instructions from His Majesty, would the king's men really not have the ability to beat a mere youth to death?

"No wonder, no wonder." Qiao Baishi suddenly recalled the events surrounding the purchase of the Dragonbone Sun Grass. Hadn't Jiang Chen told him then that he'd made the correct decision?

Hadn't Jiang Chen told him then that the Dragonbone Sun Grass had been purchased for the royal family?

Qiao Baishi had felt the Dragonbone Sun Grass' familiar spirit aura from Princess Zhiruo that night at Duke Long's banquet.

Then, the Dragonbone Sun Grass had indeed been purchased by the royal family. Jiang Chen had not been blustering about this matter.

Qiao Baishi reaffirmed the lord hallmaster's judgement even more firmly when his thoughts traveled to this point.

It was no wonder that Song Tianxing would conclude this. From all aspects, none of this would be explainable if it wasn't for the fact that the Jiang family had long since reached an agreement with the royal family.

And with Princess Gouyu's identity, how would she so unabashedly laud a youth's martial dao performance?



It was obviously to use Jiang Chen's performance as an excuse to offset the impact of Long Juxue's azure phoenix constitution.

"Baishi, if the Jiang family is a pawn that the royal family laid down a long time ago, what does this indicate? This means that the royal family started their preparations a long time ago.

The duke of Soaring Dragon is hotly ambitious, but more of his power shines day by day.

One side with early preparations, one side with unconcealed ambition. If these two sides really were to become embroiled in conflict, to be honest, I would not bet on Duke Long. Unless --" Song Tianxing stopped at this point. It was obvious that the possibilities behind this "unless" caused even him to fear speaking it, as if it was taboo.

"Unless what?" Qiao Baishi couldn't resist asking.

"Unless the heavyweight of that hidden sect makes a personal appearance and intervenes in the fight for power between kings. However, with said heavyweight's status, it would be much too demeaning for them to involve themselves with the power struggle in a common kingdom. Besides, the Eastern family has controlled the kingdom for at least a thousand years, and hold many aces up their sleeves, as well as a rich and unknown heritage. Other than the wildcard Long Juxue, I simply cannot think of what other advantages Duke Long may hold in a fight between a subject and king?

Therefore, no matter if it's from the perspective of profits or from politics, your decision today was an extraordinarily wise decision!"

Song Tianxing complimented Qiao Baishi once again.

A similarly sleepless night passed by in the inner courtyard of the palace.

Princess Gouyu's news also caused Eastern Lu to sink deep in thought.

"Royal brother, the duke of Soaring Dragon is no longer bothering to completely conceal his ambitions." Princess Gouyu was the only one who dared to speak thusly to Eastern Lu.

"It's understandable that he would become tired of his position as first duke in the lands after being in it for so long. It's only natural progression that he

would seek to advance another step forward.” Eastern Lu’s tone seemed calm, but it was suffused with a heart pounding sense of killing intent.

“Thankfully, he tried to dictate terms to the tough old bird Jiang Feng today. If it was any other, somewhat weaker willed duke, they would have likely capitulated by now.”

Princess Gouyu was also exceedingly displeased with the duke of Soaring Dragon when she recalled how it all had unfolded in that moment. He had schemed against another duke’s territory in front of a royal representative. This looked like a clash between dukes, but was an affront to royal face in reality.

Eastern Lu sighed lightly. “All things change. Even just a few days ago, who would’ve thought that the Jiang family would be my generals of good luck?”

Eastern Lu didn’t know whether to laugh or cry when thinking of the current situation in the capital. “Perhaps many powers will now think that the Jiang family is one of my Eastern clan’s men, and a pawn that I had long since set in motion?”

Princess Gouyu also laughed with a smile. “Gouyu might have thought the same if I hadn’t known the internal proceedings.”

“Have you discovered that every change, every twist in the situation in the capital, has been closely tied with a shadow?”

“Jiang Chen?” Princess Gouyu’s beautiful eyes shifted slightly as she spoke involuntarily.

“Have you also discovered it, royal sister?” Eastern Lu smiled meaningfully.

Come to think of it, the current situation in the capital had indeed evolved from Jiang Chen’s fart during the Rites.

Ever since that moment, each event that had occurred in the capital had seemed to be tied to that person’s shadow.

“I had originally believed without a doubt that he had had a divine visitation in his dreams. But after tonight, I can’t help but suspect that perhaps this youth has falsely borrowed the name of the gods from the very beginning?”

To be honest, Eastern Lu felt that it was quite headache inducing when he thought of this matter.

Logically speaking, a son of a duke shouldn't be so uncanny. Caned, but not dead, identifying the root source of Zhiruo's illness, handling the Hall of Healing, defeating an opponent of the advanced realm of true qi with the strength of the initial realm...

Multiple abnormal circumstances had happened to the same person. To say that there were no secrets about this youth -- there was no way that Eastern Lu would believe this.

Of course, as the ruler of a nation, he wouldn't pursue these matters - at least not yet.

After all, Eastern Lu would not only avoid thoroughly investigating the valued assistance of the Jiang family unintentionally clouting Duke Long's influence, but he would reward them instead!

"Gouyu, visit the Jiang Han manor on my behalf tomorrow."

A visit to the Jiang Han manor was naturally to reward the Jiang father and son. She could also declare their intentions at the same time, and as a matter of course, bring the Jiang family into the royal camp.

It was absolutely effortless for Eastern Lu when it came to means of power.

"In addition, you must guarantee that Jiang Chen can pass the Hidden Dragon Trials." Eastern Lu's attitude had subtly shifted from what it had been before.

Previously, his thoughts regarding Jiang Chen had merely stopped at the idea that this youth could heal Eastern Zhiruo's illness. Therefore, Eastern Lu thought nothing much of the possibility that the Jiang family could lose their dukedom. Staying in the capital as a wealthy official with no power would actually benefit Zhiruo's illness.

But now, after tonight's events, the strategic importance of the Jiang father and son had instantaneously risen a hundredfold. Now, the matter of whether or not the Jiang family kept their dukedom was a small issue that could greatly impact the greater picture.

If the Jiang family lost their dukedom, then it was possible that Soaring Dragon could encroach on the Jiang Han land with the spirit vein, to speak nothing of anything else.

This was what Eastern Lu truly didn't wish to see.

The fact that a duke could seize another duke's lands without abandon meant that a problem had developed within the royal family's control of power.

And the Jiang family's vow of contending with Soaring Dragon unto the death was in actuality an indirect way of protecting Eastern Lu's grasp over the kingdom!

Therefore, the Jiang family's dukedom must be kept!

### Chapter 30: Having Fun with Yan Yiming, Again

The next day, Princess Gouyu personally visited the Jiang Han manor with an imperial summons and a large amount of rewards to commend the Jiang father and son.

The reason given: the Jiang father and son had accomplished an achievement in helping fight Princess Zhiruo's illness.

This reason was a still bit unclear. Apart from the few witnesses in the know, no one could figure out how the Jiang father and son could've helped Princess Zhiruo's illness.

But those who had attended the banquet at the Soaring Dragon had discovered that Princess Zhiruo had talked and laughed gently and her appearance was more healthy looking. It was a far cry from her previous sickly state.

Could it be that the Jiang father and son really had accomplished something on the subject of Princess Zhiruo's illness?

Rumors flew wildly as the outside world speculated.

One thing was certain, the Jiang father and son were destined to become famous figures in the capital spotlight in the near future.

As for the protagonist of the matter, Jiang Chen, he had never been concerned about the reactions from the outside world. What he cared more about was improving his own strength.

As time went on, the deadline for the month end examination approached.

Jiang Chen had no reason to panic. The contents of the three foundational exams were a piece of a cake for him now.

Three days passed very quickly.

In these three days, Jiang Chen committed himself to strengthening his fifth meridian. After three days of forging, the toughness of his fifth meridian was basically the same as the previous four.

This way, the five meridians would advance side by side and were on the same level.

On that day in the Soaring Dragon manor, Jiang Chen had only used the strength of three meridians true qi and he hadn't even touched the true strength of five meridians true qi.

Of course, he was well aware that there were many elements of luck behind his complete restriction of Bai Zhan Yun at eight meridians true qi.

One, his level of martial dao knowledge was eons ahead of a practitioner in the true qi realm.

Two, the two had agreed to spar to using Eastern King Point. With regards to a common technique like the Eastern King Point, Jiang Chen had indeed reached the legendary realm and thus, he could naturally suppress Bai Zhan Yun of the flawless realm.

Third, and the most important point, was that Bai Zhan Yun had already demonstrated the Eastern King Point previously. Jiang Chen had completely seen through his version of Eastern King Point.

At the end of it all, Bai Zhan Yun had actually lost all initiative before the battle had even begun. It was normal for him to be countered at every turn.

Of course, Bai Zhan Yun was also extremely unlucky. How could he have known that his opponent would be a deviant, whose knowledge of martial dao far surpassed this world?

If both sides had brought their strongest techniques and given it their all in an actual match, it would have been difficult to determine who would've won if Jiang Chen had matched up against Bai Zhan Yun's strongest firepower.

After all, Jiang Chen's true strength was at five meridians true qi, and Bai Zhan Yun was at eight meridians. The three levels of difference between the two encompassed an entire realm.

But, Jiang Chen also believed that if he was able to take or avoid thirty of Bai Zhan Yun's hits, then he, Jiang Chen, would be the final victor

After simulating the battle, Jiang Chen had a further understanding of the real fighting strength of a practitioner in the realm of true qi.

"Speaking a thousand lines and theorizing ten thousand lines, that is all fake. A martial dao battle is constantly shifting and changing. I can sit here and run simulations, but the many unexpected twists of battle can't be simulated. At the heart of it all, I need to continue to improve myself. Thankfully, my fifth meridian has gone through the initial steps of strengthening. The next step is to use the True Acupoint Resonance and locate the sixth acupoint."

He had come to this world and he only used half a month to train from three meridians true qi to five meridians. Even top notch geniuses would have needed three to five months.

But Jiang Chen had only used half a month.

However, this was far from enough. Five meridians true qi were still a bit too weak. Jiang Chen would likely fall victim to many small defeats in skirmishes against other heirs, not to mention fighting against the truly powerful cultivators in the kingdom.

"The final examinations of the Hidden Dragon Trials are fast approaching. Judging from the atmosphere in the capital, it seems that winds are whipping the clouds into a funnel. It would seem that even in a small kingdom, a large vortex would still be formed when the winds and clouds are turbulent. My current strength is still vastly insufficient to navigate the vortex with ease."

The end of the month had arrived quickly.

On the last day of the month, Jiang Chen arrived at the testing site with Jiang Zheng in tow, he felt completely at ease.

If it wasn't for those who knew otherwise, who would've thought that such a carefree person had yet to pass even the three foundational exams?

Because of his performance at the Soaring Dragon manor that night, Jiang Chen's appearance attracted quite a bit of a attention. The only difference was that in comparison to that day in the Hall of Healing, those who had pointed and stared without abandon then were more reserved and wary today.

Jiang Chen naturally didn't give a fig about what the outside world thought about him and he made a beeline straight for the building of the testing site.

Someone was walking out just as he walked in. It was the Yanmen heir, Yan Yiming

"Jiang Chen!" Yan Yiming's eyes spat fire upon seeing Jiang Chen.

His defeat at the hands of Jiang Chen's singular poke in the Soaring Dragon manor last time was the shame of his life for Yan Yiming. Not only did he lose all face in front of his peers, but more importantly, he had been made a fool in front of Long Juxue. Even now, Long Juxue was rather stand-offish towards him.

Yan Yiming felt that it was all Jiang Chen's fault. If it wasn't for that bastard, Jiang Chen, how could he, Yan Yiming, be relegated as a joke for the entire capital?

"You're that Yan monkey who stole my seat?" Jiang Chen first drew a blank, but then recognized the person in front of him.

Except, his sudden epiphany was even more of an insult in Yan Yiming's eyes.

"Jiang Chen, how dare you treat me this way! If it wasn't for your evil trick, do you think you could've beaten me with a mere three meridians true qi?!" Yan Yiming yelled hoarsely as he paid no heed to what sort of occasion it was.

"This means that you don't accept your defeat?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

“Accept? Who do you think you are for me to concede to you? Is your Jiang Han duchy ranked higher than my Yanmen duchy? Or is your level of training higher than mine?”

“Then, what do you want to do?” Jiang Chen remained cool and collected.

“I... I want to fight you!” Yan Yiming roared. He did not accept his defeat, he had not conceded! He was going to gain back his lost prestige and more!

And the most direct way was to defeat the culprit, Jiang Chen, humiliate him severely, tyrannize him and stomp him firmly into the ground!

“Fight? I have no time and no interest for you!” Jiang Chen smiled carelessly as he shook his head and walked past Yan Yiming like he was air.

“Jiang Chen, you coward! You won by a fluke and no longer have the guts to fight me? Alright! I’ve long since known that your Jiang family is a clan of cowards. You don’t fight? Fine! I will let you go as long as you admit in front of everyone that you’re a coward!”

Jiang Chen ignoring him was, in Yan Yimin’s eyes, a guilty act. This bolstered Yan Yiming’s confidence even more and made him firmly believe that Jiang Chen had won through luck.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen’s steps froze.

Whether it was the label of coward or the insult to his father, they were both acts that crossed his bottom line.

Those who cross my bottom line cannot be forgiven!

“Three moves!” Jiang Chen glared at Yan Yiming coldly. “You have no qualification to fight with me! I will concede if you aren’t flat on your back in three moves!”

“Hahaha! You are very cocky indeed! I don’t want your three moves! I am the exalted heir of Yanmen...” Yan Yiming was about to continue his boasts and bluster when the words abruptly died in his throat.

He dared not speak further and he could not speak further because in front of him, Jiang Chen had become like a cocked arrow, emitting a strange kind of aura and locking onto Yan Yiming.



“First move, watch carefully!”

Jiang Chen had no flowery moves and merely took one step forward. His arm lifted slightly as he took one step.

Except that when he raised his arm, it gave others a heart pounding feeling.

“Thunder!”

An aura as sharp as a sword spread out, from his fingertip, and lanced through the air. It had an incredible path, it was as if it would cleave the heavens as it shot towards Yan Yiming!

Yan Yiming only felt that his eardrums were going numb as thunder roiled. This astonishing point was speeding towards his weaknesses like a loosed arrow.

“Huh. Same old tricks. Trying to harm me with this Eastern King Point?”

Although Yan Yiming had been surprised by the suddenness of this point, he was still confident that he could evade it.

His body dashed away like the waving movements of willow tree branches.

“Willow Step, waves without wind!”

Yan Yiming’s body moved like dandelions soaring through the air. The rhythm of the movement was like water ripples caused by the wind, it had an indescribable elegance.

This was Yanmen’s exclusive heritage -- “Willow Step”.

Yan Yiming was very confident. He firmly believed that that day’s defeat was a result of method restriction. He was going to fully demonstrate his family’s heritage today and beat the shit out of Jiang Chen!

However, his moment of pride didn’t last long. Jiang Chen took another step forward, but the movement of his arm had somewhat increased in speed.

“Second point, Starburst!”

Jiang Chen’s moves were simple, fast and without embellishment. It may have seemed to be overly simple and crude to outsiders.

But, only Jiang Chen himself could understand the true meaning of his seemingly clumsy moves.

It was easy for all techniques under heaven to become more complex, but it was difficult for the complicated to become simple.

Jiang Chen's two points had actually already reached the level of simplifying the complex. All complications were concentrated into the move.

Seeking change in the midst of constancy.

Of course, a trace of a proud smile found its way to Yan Yiming's face. "Jiang Chen, although your Eastern King Point is not bad, but you've run out of tricks haven't you? You want to hurt me? Keep dreaming!"

But, it was as if he hadn't spoken.

Jiang Chen's entire posture sudden changed drastically. His finger moved slightly and the rhythm changed again.

"Third point, Nameless!"

This point caused flowers to not be flowers and fog to not be fog. It was indescribable and unexplainable. It obviously hailed from the Eastern King Point, but it far surpassed the meaning that the Point should have.

An incredible line, an incredible curve, an incredible point.

A shocking hit.

Yan Yiming only felt a sharp pain under his rib cage in the same position as last time, but he felt more than ten times that power. It ripped apart all his moves and defenses mercilessly like it was paper. Another hit!

Yan Yiming's body fell heavily to the ground again, his status unknown!