

Three Realms 1071

Chapter 1071: Long Lost Brothers Finally Meet Again

A powerful force instantly freed Mu Gaoqi from the shackles of slavery. One by one, the seals within his consciousness were turned to nothing. Moments later, Mu Gaoqi placed both hands on his temples and groaned in agony.

Jiang Chen knew that the unsealing process was incredibly agonizing. It was a great burden on one's consciousness. Fortunately, his technique was flawless. The process could've left permanent damage if it'd been some other person with worse techniques. He'd been incredibly meticulous, so there was no need to worry about such things.

The pain didn't last for long. Within fifteen minutes, Mu Gaoqi's mind and thoughts began to stabilize. His memories were slowly coming back to him, including the repression he felt during his time as a slave. He groaned softly as he opened his eye. He immediately was greeted with an unfamiliar environment and a stranger staring at him with a faint smile on his face. He looked towards the side and noticed his master, Elder Yun Nie, lying right beside him. He'd become so old that he almost seemed like a walking corpse.

"What's going on? Wh-who are you?" Mu Gaoqi instantly fell into a state of panic. His memories stopped at the destruction of his sect. At that time, Elder Yun Nie was still as healthy as a bull, the total opposite of his current state. He was extremely shocked by the elder's current state. When he finally recalled what happened to his sect, he began to worry for his own safety as well. However, he soon regained composure after the initial shock wore off.

"Friend, who are you? Why am I here?" Mu Gaoqi was in a much more stable state when he asked the same questions again.

"Gaoqi, you might no longer remember my face after so many years, but you still remember my voice right?" Jiang Chen smiled gently. He'd restored his voice to his original one.

Mu Gaoqi would never forget that voice even after a thousand years. He quivered from head to toe and the light of disbelief shone from his eyes. "You're... Brother Chen?"

Jiang Chen removed his disguise, showing his true face. "Gaoqi, to think that we'd meet again after so many years."

Mu Gaoqi rejoiced for a moment before he suddenly froze again. "Brother Chen, what happened to senior brother Shen Qinghong after the three of us journeyed to the wood spirit spring?"

Jiang Chen was taken aback. Huh? The journey to the wood spirit spring? Since when did Shen Qinghong come with us?

"Gaoqi you..." Jiang Chen smiled when he suddenly realized what was going on mid sentence. "Gaoqi, you've grown. Your suffering from all these years hasn't gone to waste. There's no need to test me, I'm Jiang Chen. It was just us and a few other sect brothers that journeyed to the wood spirit spring. Since when was Shen Qinghong part of us? While we were there, we also killed an elder from the Walkabout Sect. You were backstabbed by Wei Qing of the Walkabout Sect and Du Lihuang of the Sacred Sword

Palace when we in the restricted area of Mt. Rippling Mirage. I eliminated both of them soon after. I trust that you still remember all of this?"

Mu Gaoqi finally let his guard down. "Brother Chen, is it really you? This isn't just a dream?"

These were secrets shared only between the two of them. Shen Qinghong truly hadn't been present on the trip. Mu Gaoqi was also the only person who knew about the assassination of the Walkabout Sect elder. As for what happened on the Rippling Mirage Mountain. He was in a state of delirium at that time, but he still somewhat aware. He no longer held any doubts after Jiang Chen spoke of all these secrets.

Jiang Chen was pleased to see Mu Gaoqi act so cautiously. The latter had finally grown after suffering through so much hardship. When he revealed his identity, Mu Gaoqi had decided to give him a test instead of blindly believing. Moreover, there was no apparent flaw in the test. If he had been a fake, Mu Gaoqi would definitely have realized it.

"Gaoqi, you're not dreaming. Although, what has happened in the past few years does truly feel like a dream." Jiang Chen sighed. "Alright, have some more rest and try to recall the rest of your memories. I shall free Elder Yun Nie from his seals first. Rest easy and don't make a sound."

At this point, even a fool with half a brain could tell that he had been rescued by Jiang Chen yet again.

An hour later, Elder Yun Nie was also freed from slavery. The two faces he saw after regaining consciousness were also the faces he wanted to see the most.

"Jiang Chen? Gaoqi?" Elder Yun Nie immediately choked up. He was finally able to recall the downfall of the Regal Pill Palace and his enslavement process. The youths before him were irreplaceable to him. As long as they lived, the Regal Pill Palace could one day be rebuilt.

"Master, the heavens took pity on us! I never imagined that we would one day regain our freedom!" Mu Gaoqi's eyes were red throughout. His was a little choked up as well.

The elder turned towards Jiang Chen. "Sage nephew, is it you who saved us from the abyss again?"

Mu Gaoqi quickly quickly answered. "Master, that is indeed the case."

The elder sighed as a gratified yet sorrowful expression flashed across his face. "To think that we will one day reunite after the fall of our sect..."

"Sage nephew, where is this place? How many years has it been since the downfall of our sect?" Elder Yun Nie sounded very dejected. He seemed to be avoiding questions about the sect. He was too afraid to ask anything about it.

"This is Pillfire City. It's a long ways away from where our sect once stood. It's been eight years since the attack." This was only a rough estimation as he didn't really count the years. It might've been ten years, but it was most definitely more than eight.

"Brother Chen, is the Regal Pill Palace... still standing?" Mu Gaoqi asked precariously.

Sorrow flashed across Jiang Chen's face. "The Regal Pill Palace is no longer. In fact, the entire Myriad Domain has been destroyed. The six great sects of yesteryear are also gone. The entire domain has been

annexed by the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Of course, the Ninesuns Sky Sect owns part of it too, but they've been kicked out by the others. The domain is now mostly run by the other two powers."

"Wha-..." Elder Yun Nie couldn't come to terms with this. "Is the Grand Cathedral gone too?"

"Yes." Jiang Chen nodded. There was nothing left to hide as it'd been years. The elder and Mu Gaoqi were completely unaware of what happened during all these years. They had been enslaved almost immediately after their capture, and thus knew nothing about what Jiang Chen did to the Eternal Celestial Capital after the destruction of the sect.

"O-other than the three of us... is there anyone else that's still alive?" Elder Yun Nie asked with an extremely pained look on his face.

"Yes." Jiang Chen nodded. "Most of our brethren have died in battle, but there were some who were held captive. Out of the few dozen captives, I was able to rescue thirty and help them settle down in Veluriyam Capital. Ling Hui'er and Shen Trifire are among them"

"What about senior brother Shen and senior sister Ling? And also Jun Mobai and Nie Chong?" Mu Gaoqi asked agitatedly.

"Other than Ling Bi'er who's currently missing, the rest are no longer with us. Jun Mobai was a spy from Ninesuns Sky Sect, but he's dead now. Shen Qinghong died after being plotted against when he returned to the sect. Senior sister Ling Bi'er and I were there too, but only the two of us were able to make it out alive. Ever since then, I've not heard a single word about her whereabouts." Realizing that they were very concerned about matters related to the Regal Pill Palace, Jiang Chen patiently told them everything he knew.

"What about the palace head and the others? Didn't they escape from the Myriad Grand Ceremony?" Back then, Elder Yun Nie didn't attend the Myriad Grand Ceremony as he'd chosen to remain and guard the palace. Because of that, he didn't know what happened to Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Lian Cheng.

"I was in the Myriad Domain when the Great Scarlet Mid Region attacked. The palace head and the others were the first to receive news about the attack because they were outside of the Myriad Domain, and led a charge to break through the enemy's lines. According to various intelligence, they should've successfully escaped from danger. However, I've yet to hear from them either."

Elder Yun Nie was elated. "Good! With our palace head's abilities, they surely survived the attack!"

Jiang Chen withheld comment on that. Palace Head Dan Chi was merely at earth sage realm at the time. At that cultivation level, it was hard to say if he could survive an encirclement by the Great Scarlet Mid Region and the onslaught from the Eternal Celestial Capital. However, the fact that there was no news of Palace Head Dan Chi's capture meant that there was still hope. Considering how much the Eternal Celestial Capital hated Jiang Chen, if they'd captured the palace head, they would surely make mincemeat out of him and openly gloated about it. Since there was no news of this, it was likely that the palace head hadn't fallen into their hands.

He nodded in agreement. "The palace head should still be alive."

Even though the sect was already destroyed, Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi was able to find some solace within these good news. When they were slaves, all they could feel was despair. There was no room for any fantasy or delusions. But now, they'd escaped from hell and received one good news after the other. They couldn't be more excited to hear this.

"Brother Chen, how did you know that we were here?" Mu Gaoqi asked after a while of catching up.

Elder Yun Nie had the exact same question. Pillfire City was a very long ways away from Myriad Domain. How on earth had he find them?

"It's a long story. After the destruction of the sect, I overheard a conversation between some men from the Great Scarlet Mid Regions. I learned that they've turned a few hostages into slaves. After that, through various methods, I learned that they sold all of you to Veluriyam Capital. I then found our brethren inside the capital's Myriad Puppets Pavilion. Unfortunately, you were the only ones missing. After that, the owner of the pavilion fell into my hands due to a chance encounter. By scouring his soul, I was able to make him spit out your locations. Only then did I realize that both of you were sold to Pillfire City. Eventually, I encountered a few people from Pillfire City that helped confirm that a faction in the city had bought a slave that possessed the innate wood constitution of high order."

Mu Gaoqi was flabbergasted after hearing such a huge series of twists and turns. His journey was filled with so many obstructions, and yet Brother Chen never gave up. His search didn't end until I was finally found. His eyes welled up with such thoughts. How many others could claim to have done the same for him in this lifetime?

Chapter 1072: Old Brother Mo, My Apologies

After hearing the entire story from Jiang Chen, Elder Yun Nie became very wistful. He was an old hand, wise in the ways of the world, and perceived many details that Jiang Chen had refrained from divulging. Listening to the youth's experiences didn't seem particularly exciting now, but the trip from Myriad Domain all the way here to Pillfire City must've been an arduous one. Countless trials had lined the path, and only a steadfast and stoic youth like Jiang Chen could have remained so dogged after enduring them all.

Anyone else from Regal Pill Palace would have given up by now, their top geniuses included. Shen Qinghong was a good example. All those years ago, Palace Head Dan Chi had made an amazingly correct choice. Elder Yun Nie was exceedingly grateful for this. If the palace head hadn't brought this young man to the Palace, absolutely no hope of rebuilding would have remained. It was Jiang Chen who had protected the sect's last embers.

The two youths that Elder Yun Nie'd had the highest hopes for were together again. One was Jiang Chen, the other Mu Gaoqi. With both of these promising stars, re-establishing Regal Pill Palace would be no problem whatsoever.

"Sage nephew, you have done a great thing for us this day. On behalf of Regal Pill Palace, I sincerely kneel in thanks to you." In a fit of passion, Elder Yun Nie motioned to kneel to the youth.

Jiang Chen hastily waved a hand, then extended it to help the elder up. "Don't say that, Elder Yun Nie. We are all family here. Don't you agree?"

Given his current level of cultivation, it was easy for him to keep the elder from touching the floor. Elder Yun Nie was only earth sage realm, but the Jiang Chen now was already a half-step emperor. If he hadn't consciously held back, he would have long broken through into emperor realm already.

An offhanded lifting motion was enough for Elder Yun Nie to feel a wall in front of him. No matter how much he struggled, it wouldn't budge.

"Sage nephew, you..." Elder Yun Nie was astounded. It had only been seven or eight years, so how come Jiang Chen's cultivation was already at such a high level? Even Elder Yun Nie had to look up to him.

Mu Gaoqi saw some clues in the exchange as well. "Brother Chen, your cultivation has improved a lot since last we saw each other!"

Coming out from Mt. Mirage, Jiang Chen had only been at initial sage realm. Just a green human sage realm cultivator back then, he'd borrowed Mu Gaoqi's reputation to participate in the Myriad Grand Ceremony. How had he reached such heights in less than a decade?

Jiang Chen had no reason to be insincere in front of his own. "I was gifted with a few bouts of serendipity." He smiled faintly, "so my martial cultivation has advanced at a pretty brisk pace."

"What realm are you at now, Brother Chen?" Mu Gaoqi's eyes lit up, his tone full of admiration.

"Only a step further to emperor realm." Jiang Chen hid nothing from his good friend.

"What? Half-step emperor realm?" Both Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi gasped at that. They exchanged looks of wonder.

Jiang Chen nodded. If he'd said that he was intentionally holding himself back, the amazement would surely have been much greater still. It was best to not inform them for now. Even so, this surface was more than enough cause for awe.

"Sage nephew, if I remember correctly... wasn't the strongest man in the Myriad Domain—the head of the Sacred Elephant family—only at peak sage realm?" The elder's marvel had not yet receded.

"It is as the idiom says, Elder Yun Nie. No matter how good one is, there's always someone better. In Veluriyam Capital, in Pillfire City, in the entire Upper Eight Regions... peak sage realm is actually quite average." Jiang Chen sighed softly. "Great Scarlet Mid Region, for example, has no shortage of emperor realm cultivators."

Elder Yun Nie did not dispute this fact. "If Myriad Domain hadn't been attacked by Great Scarlet Mid Region a couple centuries ago, we too would have emperors of our own. That disaster crushed our vigor. Myriad Domain lagged forever behind others after that, and our weakness became our crime."

Jiang Chen shook his head. He knew now better than anyone that Great Scarlet Mid Region's invasion wasn't related to a past grudge, nor did it have to do with any supposed rape. These were all poorly thought-up excuses.

The Eternal Celestial Capital was at the root of the problem. They wanted to control Myriad Domain because it was the place of Emperor Featherflight's tomb. The lure of an empyrean cultivator's heritage was irresistible. It was the sect's well-hidden ambition. But nothing would come of it if Jiang Chen told Elder Yun Nie about these things.

“Oh, that’s right. Your rescue today wouldn’t have been possible without a certain someone.” Veluriyam’s young lord remarked, rather suddenly.

“Who?” Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi both looked utterly lost.

“Come on, let’s go meet him. He’s a senior, but also a kind and carefree man.” Jiang Chen smiled. He felt that it was better to tell Emperor Peerless everything now. The longer he kept the truth from the older man, the worse the misunderstanding down the line. The emperor’s wise and righteous personality would understand the white lie that Jiang Chen had been forced to tell.

This was also the reason why Jiang Chen asked after Emperor Peerless’s relationship with Pillfire City. If they were on good terms, then he might’ve reconsidered his decision. Thankfully, that wasn’t the case. In fact, their relationship could be called anything from tenuous to downright awful.

Jiang Chen’s worries were dispelled. His identity, once revealed, was liable to place him in incredible danger. He was confident enough in his own ability to escape, but he could not bring the elder and Mu Gaoqi along. With his two old acquaintances in tow, he knocked on Emperor Peerless’ door.

“Back so soon, kid? Well done. There doesn’t seem to be any problems with the removed seals on these two.” The emperor glanced at Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi for a second each, not thinking much of it at first.

“Old Brother Mo, I have a confession to make.” Jiang Chen laughed shamelessly.

“Hmm?” That gave the emperor some pause, but he beckoned anyway. “Come inside and tell me about it.”

Though he was a little baffled, Emperor Peerless didn’t show his emotions outright. He was most worried about the Pinecrane Pill. As long as everything about that was true, he could accept most anything else changing. It was clear as day that the young man before him had numerous secrets. However, the emperor was not someone who liked to dig up other people’s pasts. The relationship between them was one of mutual cooperation, born out of simple appreciation for each other’s natures. There was no need to investigate every detail.

After Jiang Chen and his buddies came inside, Emperor Peerless created a soundproof barrier. “Alright, tell me what’s going on this time. As long as the Pinecrane Pill is real, shoot for the stars.”

“Hah, if I’d lied about the Pinecrane Pill, then I’d be out of here by now. I wouldn’t have the face to come and talk to you.” Jiang Chen chuckled.

Hearing this, the emperor’s brows opened up. He returned the laughter. “If the Pinecrane Pill is real, nothing else matters.”

“Old Brother Mo, I actually wanted to talk to you about my identity,” Jiang Chen said, rather seriously. “I made a few things up. I have some ties to Myriad Abyss Island for sure, but I personally come from Myriad Domain.”

“Myriad Domain?” The announcement flabbergasted the emperor. “What, can a place like that produce a genius like you? You’re not playing with me, are you, kiddo?”

Jiang Chen sighed. "I am a man of many identities. Maybe you've even heard about some of them. Back in my homeland, I was called Jiang Chen. In Veluriyam City, I live by another title..."

The emperor stood up before the sentence was finished, astonished gaze directed straight at Jiang Chen. "You... are you the new young lord that Emperor Peafowl has appointed? Young lord Zhen, was it?"

It was Jiang Chen's turn to be surprised. "Old Brother Mo, how'd you guess that so quickly?"

Emperor Peerless opened his eyes wide, his expression one of utter disbelief. "You're... not really the new young lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain, are you?"

"Actually, you've hit the nail right on the head." Jiang Chen offered a wry smile. "You see yet another identity in front of you. Shao Yuan, made up to divert unwanted attention. You've been so sincere and forthright with me, Old Brother Mo. My conscience won't allow me to deceive you any longer. I'm sure you know that if I came here as young lord Zhen, I wouldn't possibly be able to rescue these two peers here."

"Peers? Of the same sect? From Myriad Domain, hmm?" Emperor Peerless tossed the peers in question another look.

"Indeed. My closest friends there." Jiang Chen nodded in the affirmative.

Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi were just as amazed as Emperor Peerless. They gleaned many surprising bits of information from the conversation just now. Emperor Peafowl? Young lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain? It was enough to make anyone's jaw drop. Elder Yun Nie was no stranger to Emperor Peafowl or his reputation. That man was the true ruler of the Upper Eight Regions, a member of its most elite echelon. How did Jiang Chen manage to get to know someone like that? How had he even been made young lord? It had only been seven or eight years. How absurdly fast Jiang Chen had grown!

The atmosphere became quite odd for a time.

Emperor Peerless was the first to speak. He let out a long sigh. "So that's the case, hmm. The entire Upper Eight Regions is guessing at who Sacred Peafowl Mountain's new young lord really is. They've settled on a strange consensus: they think you're a game piece that Emperor Peafowl has kept secret for a long time. Young lord Fan was just a smokescreen. I've heard of your accomplishments... you defeated the seemingly invincible Pillfire City, distinguishing yourself among countless others to become Emperor Peafowl's new heir. I've investigated your exploits personally. Why did I guess so quickly, you ask? It is because you don't know how much I've been interested in you in turn. Anyone able to beat Pillfire City is worth my attention. Actually, I was going to come visit you if my journey here disappointed. You've an exceptional reputation."

"Visit me?" Jiang Chen blinked.

"Haha, visit young lord Zhen, yes. After all, Veluriyam Capital has sculpted you into a veritably omnipotent deity. How could I resist?" Emperor Peerless was willing to exhaust any and every avenue for his cultivation partner. If not for the fact that the jewel of the Upper Eight Regions was quite a long way from here, he would've gone a long time ago.

Chapter 1073: The Geng Brothers

Emperor Peerless sighed. "To think that I'd meet you all the way here in Pillfire City. Perhaps this is what they call fate?"

Jiang Chen was also dumbstruck by the sheer coincidence. He didn't expect to hear that the emperor had planned on visiting him next and placed very high hopes on him.

"Old Brother Mo, since fate deems it, I'll definitely cure sister-in-law of her affliction!" Jiang Chen casually addressed Emperor Peerless as his brother during the hotblooded conversation.

"Good lad! I really like this fearless attitude of yours!" The emperor praised. "Do you know why I had my eye on you in the first place?"

"Why?" Jiang Chen was curious.

"Because I've long suspected that you were Jiang Chen, the man whom the Eternal Celestial Capital are after." The emperor revealed a wisdom filled smile.

"Huh?" Jiang Chen was flabbergasted.

"The Longevity Pill first appeared in the Regal Pill Palace, yet somehow, the Sacred Peafowl Mountain managed to get their hands on it in the end. After that, you even defeated Pill King Ji Lang and claimed ownership of the pill. I wasn't completely certain that you were Jiang Chen, but I did have some suspicions. Since you were able to create a pill that extends the life of a sage realm cultivator, I began to wonder, maybe you have the ability to create a pill that extends the life of an emperor cultivator too?"

A person nearing desperation was often very imaginative. They'd come up with all kinds of what-ifs and how-about. Moreover, their speculations were often incredibly accurate. This was especially true for great emperors as they were often very meticulous with their speculation. Emperor Peerless was no exception to this. His powerful instincts and noting of various details led him to this conjecture.

Jiang Chen sighed. "Older brother, your instincts truly scare me. It's fortunate that I chose to make the right choice. Had I deceived you any longer, you might flip on me one day."

"You little brat, that'll never happen unless you deceived me on core matters. Moreover, with the feud between you and Pillfire City, I would've completely understand if you chose not to disclose your identity. Of course, I'm still thankful for your honesty. You've gained even more respect from me over it."

The emperor was actually quite happy with this development as a lot of courage was needed for Jiang Chen to tell the truth. Revealing his identity under such conditions could've been the worst decision in his life. And yet, the lad was still willing to do so. This pleased him greatly.

"Sigh... Brother Mo, there's something even more important that I need to tell you." Jiang Chen smiled wryly.

"What?" The emperor was already used to Jiang Chen's antics, but he still couldn't help but be surprised again and again.

"I actually already have the Pinecrane Pill."

"Wha-?" The emperor's eyes widened into the shape of a bell. "Y-you already have it?"

Jiang Chen nodded. "I refined it some time ago in Veluriyam Capital. I didn't tell you because of the circumstances. I apologize for making you worry during these past few days."

He took the pill out from his sleeves. "Brother Mo, this Pinecrane Pill is of outstanding quality. It will surely extend sister-in-law's lifespan by a millennia after taking it."

The emperor's mouth began to tremble slightly. His eyes gleamed with utter disbelief as he stared at the pill.

"Take it." Jiang Chen shoved the pill into the emperor's palms.

"Little brother, I..." Even someone as imposing as the emperor was finding it difficult to form words. Happiness had come too abruptly. Even though he was hopeful, he couldn't help but take a cautionary stance on this matter. How could he remain calm after the thing he'd been seeking all these years was suddenly shoved into his palm? He could sense the powerful life force within the pill. The power emanating from the pill alone was enough to make his eyes widen.

"An excellent pill! Such an excellent pill!" He was absolutely thrilled.

"The Pinecrane Pill is only a sky rank pill in name. It has a few qualities that is already beyond that of the sky rank." Jiang Chen smiled. "Brother Mo, you'd better seal the jade box lest the pill loses its potency.

Like a child, the emperor frantically sealed the box. He was completely overwhelmed with happiness. Even a great emperor as imposing as him was giggling like a child and could hardly contain his joy. He was only able to regain his composure after some time had passed. "Little brother, a favor as big as this deserves more than words of gratitude. I, Mo Wushuang, owe you a favor in return. I'm willing to repay this favor in any way you please."

"Brother Mo, there's no need for such ceremonious words. I only wish to see sister-in-law as soon as possible so that I may know if there's anything else I can do for her. The Pinecrane Pill may extend one's life, but it only cures the symptoms and not the disease. I only hope to nurse her back to health so that you may remain as dao partners for eternity."

Jiang Chen's words struck Emperor Peerless square in the heart, filling it with light and hope. The emperor was certain that Jiang Chen was the benefactor that he'd been searching for all along.

Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi were equally as elated and surprised to see someone as eminent as Emperor Peerless break into tears before Jiang Chen. They didn't think Jiang Chen would grow so powerful after a mere eight years. He'd actually become brothers with a great emperor and done him a great favor! Also, there was something about Jiang Chen being the young lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain?

The two were almost blinded by the limelight Jiang Chen was under. They began to worry a little. With such a big discrepancy between them, could they remain as close as before? Would he still put effort into rebuilding the Regal Pill Palace now that he was young lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain?

They were excited, yet also worried. They know Jiang Chen wasn't the kind to forget his roots, but upon further thought, they realized that the Regal Pill Palace hadn't actually done much for him. Instead, all they'd done was receive. Their discussion about the Longevity Pill also caused Elder Yun Nie to recall

that he'd been the one who leaked the pill's secrets. There wouldn't have been a battle for the ownership of the pill if it weren't for him.

He felt incredibly ashamed. Back then, he revealed the recipe not because he wanted to save his own neck, but because he wanted to protect the sect's future generations. Regardless, it'd been him all the same. He didn't feel any less guilty just because Jiang Chen chose not to bring it up.

"Jiang Chen, I was the one who leaked the recipe for the Longevity Pill. That caused you a great deal of trouble, didn't it?"

Jiang Chen waved his hands dismissively and refused to dwell on the matter. "Elder Yun Nie, let bygones be bygones. I'm certain that you'd never sell us out just to protect your own neck. It was a wise choice to reveal the pill's recipe out of consideration for the lives of our sect members."

Elder Yun Nie no longer dared to address Jiang Chen as sage nephew as the latter was now brothers with the emperor! It'd be exceedingly disrespectful to the emperor if he did as such. He'd never do such a reckless thing even if he was emboldened after eating a bear's heart and a leopard's gall.

"Gaoqi, Elder Yun Nie, I have to make a trip to the Tilted Moon Region to fulfill a promise I made to Brother Mo. I regret to say that you'll have to return to Veluriyam Capital by yourselves."

"Brother Chen, I want to go with you." Mu Gaoqi volunteered to come with.

"Gaoqi, this trip is no small matter. The more we bring, the more dangerous it'll be." Jiang Chen was actually in a dilemma. If he didn't take them along, he was worried that they might encounter some trouble on the way back to Veluriyam Capital. The journey was simply too long. Even though they were all sage realm experts, their cultivation level didn't guarantee their safety in the Upper Eight Regions.

"I have a disciple named Lin Yanyu. He's from one of the downtrodden clans in Pillfire City. I'll tell him to make the appropriate arrangements. Fortunately, neither the Eternal Celestial Capital nor the Great Scarlet Region know that you were attained by the Star Harvesters. Trouble shouldn't come looking for you as long as you put on a proper disguise."

Emperor Peerless disrupted their conversation with his laughter. "Good lad! It's nice to see such loyalty from you! Very well, I shall lend a hand in this matter as I'm also quite fond of little Gaoqi's innate wood constitution of high order. Why don't I call upon my friends and get them to escort your friends to their destination?"

The emperor had a wide circle of connections. He didn't have his own faction, but he did have many loyal and dependable brothers. A great emperor's friends was naturally capable of holding their own in the world.

"Brother Mo..."

"Alright, that's settled then. This is nothing compared to what you've done for me. It's only right that you let me return a small favor." Emperor Peerless sounded quite adamant.

Jiang Chen smiled. "Then I shall have to thank you on their behalf. Elder Yun Nie, Gaoqi, since Brother Mo is so generous, we have no choice but to thicken our faces a little and accept his offer. I shall tell Lin Yanyu to go along you. He will guide you when you arrive in Veluriyam Capital."

Lin Yanyu was already enlisted in both the young lord's abode and Taiyuan Tower. There shouldn't be any problems.

Emperor Peerless was a man of his word. He rallied his friends on the second day, and by third day evening, two men came to visit. They were both high level emperors. One was a ninth level emperor, while the other was an eighth level emperor.

"Brother Mo, how unbrotherly of you. How could not visit us when you're in the vicinity?" The ninth level emperor was incredibly straightforward. It was the first thing he said when they saw each other.

Emperor Peerless responded with a hearty laugh. "Come, let's get all of you acquainted. These two are my brothers. They share the surname of Geng because they are brothers of the same womb. They are renowned throughout the Upper Eight Regions. The eldest is Geng Qianzhang, while the youngest is Geng Qianchi.

"Qianzhang, Qianchi, both of you surely must have heard about this young man over here. He's the young lord Zhen of Sacred Peafowl Mountain in Veluriyam Capital."

"Young lord Zhen?" Geng Qianzhang was stared at Jiang Chen astonishingly. "Brother Mo, I heard that you were planning to visit Veluriyam Capital, but I didn't realize you'd gone so quickly."

Mo Wushuang burst into laughter. "No, no, you are mistaken. We only met by coincidence. Haha! Truth be told, I've actually found a glimmer of hope for your sister-in-law."

"Oh? Does young lord Zhen have a cure?" The Geng brothers were elated when they heard this.

Chapter 1074: The Suspected Cloud Devouring Tiger

When the Geng brothers verified that Mo Wushuang's dao partner's condition would improved, they were overjoyed. Words of congratulations were offered to the emperor immediately.

"Big Brother Mo, congratulations! You've remained by sister-in-law for so long. After all these years, the heavens have heard your plea at last. Your love for her came through in the end!"

"That's right, Big Brother Mo. Thank heavens that your partner will recover."

The brothers had had an unshakeable friendship with Mo Wushuang. They both bowed respectfully to Jiang Chen. "Young lord Zhen, we two brothers haven't acknowledged anyone our entire lives except our Brother Mo. You've taken a great burden off his heart, and that is a favor we cannot repay. We will remember it well."

Their bold statement was enough for Jiang Chen to see the steel in the trio's relationship. "What, you're allowed to talk about loyalty and brotherhood amongst yourselves, but I'm not included?" He laughed.

The Geng brothers were both honorable men, and were straightforward and candid. They wouldn't be as content as they were otherwise in their freedom as wandering cultivators. Their combined strength was more than sufficient to found a dominant faction. They had simply chosen not to due to their rough and tumble natures. They lacked a certain shrewd resourcefulness necessary for loftier ambitions.

Seeing the Gengs' reaction made Emperor Peerless laugh as well. "My brothers, this young lord Zhen is my brother as well. He calls me old brother, and I call him young brother. So, I hardly think there's a need for further thanks. We're all brothers here: why the politeness?"

The Geng brothers exchanged a look of realization, and the older echoed the laughter. "Good, good! We are all brothers here, quite so. I didn't imagine that I would call Sacred Peafowl Mountain's young lord my brother one day, how marvelous. Young brother Zhen, you sit perfectly well with us."

"My brothers, we are the best of friends. I would come to your aid at any cost. Therefore, I won't hide anything from you. Brother Zhen here has another identity." Emperor Peerless said solemnly.

"What?" The Geng brothers collectively blinked.

"Do you remember the business with Eternal Celestial Capital and the Great Scarlet Mid Region?"

"Sure, we remember. Eternal Celestial Capital is really going downhill these days, huh. Attacking a lower region isn't something we approve of at all." The duo shook their heads vehemently, their words tinted with scorn. "Brother Mo, I thought you disliked them as well?"

"Never mind that. This is what I wanted to tell you. Brother Zhen here is actually Jiang Chen from the Regal Pill Palace in Myriad Domain. He has a bounty over his head from the Eternal Celestial Capital. We're brothers, so I didn't want to keep it from you, but... let's keep this a very good secret, eh?"

The revelation shocked the Geng brothers. They were both thoroughly astonished.

"Brother Zhen, you're the guy that's made Eternal Celestial Capital the continued joke of the world? Haha, that's amazing. I heard rumors you were heading to Veluriyam Capital, and you really did. What's more, you're positively thriving there. Truly legendary!" The elder brother cackled.

"Remarkable. As expected from someone whom Old Brother Mo calls a brother," the younger brother offered his own praise. "Whether you're Jiang Chen or young lord Zhen, we'll always be the best of friends."

The Geng brothers respected Mo Wushuang immensely. They'd always perceived the old man as their own kin. Because of that relationship, they inherently held goodwill towards Jiang Chen.

"I feel blessed. Please accept this salute in your honors, my new brothers." Jiang Chen shrugged off all pretense. It was rare to meet men of such upright character, and he was more than willing to make their acquaintances. The four of them conversed, laughed, and deepened their intimacy.

"I called you here, my brothers, to task you with something important." Emperor Peerless cut to the chase.

"Simply say the word, Big Brother Mo, and we will do all that we can." The elder Geng patted his chest.

"That's right," his brother nodded in agreement.

"It's like this..." The emperor explained the matter to them in detail.

"What, that's it? You want us to chaperone two friends back to Veluriyam Capital? Consider it done! You can leave everything to us."

“Brother Zhen, you’re going to such great lengths for Big Brother Mo. How could we refuse a simple task in comparison?”

“My dear brothers Geng, the task this time is very important.” Emperor Peerless coughed. “I owe you one.”

“Oh, don’t say that, Old Brother Mo,” Jiang Chen hurried to correct. “My two brothers there are doing me the favor, so clearly I’m the one who owes a favor. Here are two Pinecrane Pills as a small token of our meeting and appreciation. I don’t have many special belongings with me, and I hope those are sufficient.”

The two Gengs gasped. “Oh, no, we couldn’t.”

Jiang Chen shook his head, his tone firm. “No, you absolutely can. Consider it a gift of gratitude. I don’t have many of these pills, but I am perfectly happy to give them to you.”

The Geng brothers were lost for words. They didn’t know how to react. Mo Wushuang had spoken to them about the Pinecrane Pill only moments prior. They knew its rarity in the human domain. In fact, it was probably extinct here. No one had even heard of such a pill. The duo were both emperor realm cultivators, but the probability of them breaking through to great emperor realm was uncertain. Having two Pinecrane Pills meant they had at least an extra thousand years to live. It was very attractive. But they hadn’t even begun in their task yet. Was it really okay to accept a present from a brother now? Their candidness made them a little embarrassed.

“Take them.” Surprisingly, Mo Wushuang was the one to speak. “All of us here are brothers. Think of it as a heartfelt present from Brother Zhen. Maybe you’ll even need those pills one day, hmm? Better to take them now and keep them with you. You’ll have plenty of chances to repay him anyway. If Brother Zhen is wronged by someone at Veluriyam Capital, will you stand idly by? What about the Regal Pill Palace’s reconstruction?”

Hearing this, both of the brothers grew enthusiastic. “We’ll listen to Old Brother Mo. Brother Zhen, we’re happy to take your Pinecrane Pills. Maybe they really will be useful to us one day. Since we are brothers, there’s no need for all the pleasantries. If you ever need us, just say the word. Neither we nor Big Brother Mo will turn down your call.”

Mo Wushuang roared in laughter. “That’s the Geng brothers I know. We are wandering cultivators! There’s nowhere in the world that we cannot go. Big factions look down on us. They think we won’t amount to anything in the long run. Well, let’s prove them wrong!”

Jiang Chen’s blood began to boil as well. He hadn’t thought a few Pinecrane Pills would be enough to bring out these experts’ true natures. They were all principled and straightforward men, worthy of undying friendship.

“You’ve done us an incredible kindness, little fellow. If you need us to rebuild Regal Pill Palace, give us a holler anytime. Same goes for anything that makes you upset in Veluriyam Capital. I might not be a man of many talents, but calling up a band of my wandering friends is certainly one of them.” Emperor Peerless gave Jiang Chen’s shoulder a hefty pat.

Though it wasn't Mu Gaoqi and Elder Yun Nie's place to speak, they nevertheless appreciated hearing the sentiment from the sidelines. The words 'rebuilding the Regal Pill Palace' evoked a similar passion in them. They couldn't resist smiling at these strong cultivators' promise of assistance. Any further help aside, the three experts before them alone could fend off Great Scarlet Mid Region during the reconstruction process. Even the Eternal Celestial Capital had to reconsider any plans.

Not every faction was willing to anger a wandering cultivator who was also a great emperor. The Eternal Celestial Capital was strong, and had several great emperors to boot. But they had little to gain and much to lose by openly opposing someone like Emperor Peerless. The serious part of the conversation concluded, the gathered friends began to drink and make merry. The night passed; the next day, Jiang Chen worked on a new disguise for Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi before he called for Lin Yanyu.

The sight of his master gathering so many helpers so quickly amazed and pleased the youth.

"Yanyu, go with them to Veluriyam Capital. Once there, take them to Taiyuan Tower to meet Shen Trifire, then bring them to my residence."

"Yes, master." Lin Yanyu answered instantly.

"Listen to the Geng brothers on the journey," Jiang Chen encouraged him. "They are your seniors, and you can learn much from their experience. The same goes for you, Gaoqi."

The two young men nodded in unison.

The day after that, Mu Gaoqi and company embarked on the road back to Veluriyam Capital. The Geng brothers were true to their word and responsibility, accompanying them with utmost care the entire way. Emperor Peerless saw them off out of Pillfire City personally. He stopped only after they had gone several thousand miles, after making sure they hadn't been tailed.

On the way back, he counseled a reluctant Jiang Chen. "Don't worry, my young friend. The Geng brothers are well-traveled and their wandering cultivator friends are everywhere. There's no need to be concerned for their well-being, wherever they go."

The protection of two high-level emperor realm cultivators did set Jiang Chen's mind at ease. Great emperor cultivators aside, nothing could threaten them.

"So, shall we go to Tilted Moon Region now, or?"

"Let's go back to Pillfire City first. I left a spirit beast in an inn there." Jiang Chen grinned.

"Oh? Is it the one that belonged Nangong Ping?" the emperor asked, curious.

"That's the one," Jiang Chen nodded.

"I thought it was just a Cloud Devouring Tiger? Not a remarkable beast. At their peak, they're only equal to a low-level emperor realm cultivator."

In a small country, a spirit beast of that strength was considered exceptionally ferocious. But for Mo Wushuang, that kind of strength was close to useless.

“You don’t know, old brother? That’s not a Cloud Devouring Tiger at all. There’s more to it than that,” Jiang Chen chuckled.

“More to it...?”

“Indeed. A Cloud Devouring Tiger isn’t worth a return trip, and that’s what most people would take it as. In fact, it is ninety-nine percent similar, and there’s no shame for mistaking it for its more common brethren if you’re not in the know. Even the best spirit beast tamers are prone to making this mistake.” The way Jiang Chen was putting it shrouded the beast in renewed mystery. Emperor Peerless itched to hear what was next.

Chapter 1075: The Celestial Grass Again

When he returned to the inn, he found out that the spirit beast was still being taken care of. The people of the inn obviously knew that their honored guests were no ordinary person, so they took very good care of the spirit beast. The owner of the inn looked to be between joy and tears when Jiang Chen and Emperor Peerless finally returned. “Thank goodness you’re back, Arena Lord Shao. That spirit beast of yours has an extremely bad temper, and we just can’t satisfy its needs no matter what we try. Do you hear that? It’s throwing a tantrum again.”

Jiang Chen wasn’t surprised by this. He smiled. “It would actually be stranger if you could satisfy it.”

He walked to the area where the spirit beast was penned up and whistled. The spirit beast that looked like a Cloud Devouring Tiger cub immediately charged into Jiang Chen’s arms like a black-and-white hurricane. Jiang Chen chuckled. “Did you miss me, little fella?”

The spirit beast nodded repeatedly and obediently at Jiang Chen. It kept scratching his shirt with its front paws as if protesting against Jiang Chen’s temporary departure. When the spirit beast noticed that everyone else was shooting it a strange look, it immediately glared at them and bared its teeth in a demonstration of might.

Even Emperor Peerless couldn’t help but laugh at the spirit beast’s reaction. He had never seen such an interesting creature before.

“Let’s go, Brother Mo.” Jiang Chen ignored the looks of astonishment on the inn owner and attendants’ faces and threw down a bag of spirit stones. “This is the payment for our stay. You can keep the change.”

The inn owner accepted the spirit stones, but still looked dejected. “Is Arena Lord Shao a beast tamer or something? Why did this spirit beast look like it could die when it was with us, but become so lively when it was with Arena Lord Shao? Can it actually tell who’s who?”

“Of course it can. That being said, it’s rare to find such an intelligent cub. Speaking of which, I heard that this Cloud Devouring Tiger cub belonged to young master Nangong.”

“Young master Nangong? Hah! The Nangong clan is totally screwed this time. Did you hear how they presented the spirit beast to Arena Lord Shao like meek servants?”

“That’s only because Emperor Peerless is around! Do you really think that the Nangong clan would be afraid of him if he wasn’t supported by Emperor Peerless?” Someone disagreed with that statement.

Whatever they were discussing, Jiang Chen was out of earshot already. When they left the inn, he exchanged a glance with Emperor Peerless to immediately travel to Tilted Moon Region. But it was at that moment a figure suddenly appeared from a side alley. "Could I have a moment, Arena Lord Shao?"

Jiang Chen was caught off guard. He must have gotten really famous in Pillfire City, for he wasn't expecting to be called in public. When he turned around, he discovered that it was a short man who called out to him.

"Are you looking for me?" Jiang Chen stared at the short man with a bit of astonishment. He had a good memory, but he didn't remember this person at all.

The man cowered a little. It was obvious that he found their auras a little unbearable, but despite the pressure he still forced himself to speak. "Excuse me, but... can you come with me so we may speak in a more private place?"

Jiang Chen stared blankly at him. They didn't know each other, but this short man wanted him to follow him to a private place. Was this another ploy by some faction in Pillfire City?

"If you belong to a faction in Pillfire City, then you can save your breath now." Jiang Chen's tone immediately turned indifferent.

When the short man noticed that Jiang Chen had misunderstood, he hastily explained, "Absolutely not, I am not related to Pillfire City in any way. I... I have need of you, Arena Lord Shao."

"You have need of me?" Jiang Chen laughed involuntarily. "What makes you so sure that I'll lend you my aid?"

Jiang Chen might have helped a lot of people in the past, but he wasn't so magnanimous that he would help every person who crossed paths with him. He wouldn't be able to do anything else if he did. The short man looked a little ashamed, but he ultimately gathered the courage to say, "I won't ask you to work for free. If you will help me, I can gift you another shoot of Radiant Celestial Grass."

"What?" Jiang Chen's face changed slightly. "What did you just say?" Emperor Peerless had been silent all this time, but when he heard this, he trained a harsh gaze onto the short man as if he would see through the very soul. The short man nearly crumbled to the ground under the mighty pressure of a great emperor. He was just an origin realm cultivator.

Emperor Peerless stared at him for a moment. "Brother, he's just origin realm. He's probably the person who entrusted a Radiant Celestial Grass to the Temple back then."

"Yes, yes! That's me. Your eyes are truly keen, Emperor Peerless. I can't believe you realized this in just one glance," the short man hurriedly explained.

Jiang Chen waved his hands. "Let us speak in a more private place."

After they'd arrived at a relatively secluded area, Jiang Chen stared at the short man and threatened, "I hope you aren't lying to me. Our time is very precious."

"Absolutely not. If I haven't seen you winning the Radiant Celestial Grass at the auction, I wouldn't have dared come to you in the first place. I was thinking that you might need more in the future, and it so happens I have more with me, so..."

“So that’s why you sought us out. What do you request of me?” Jiang Chen valued the spirit herb quite a lot. After all, it was practically the most important ingredient in refining the Sage Smile Pill.

“I hope that you can escort me away from Pillfire City and to Frostmoon City of Tilted Moon Region.”

Frostmoon City? Tilted Moon Region? Jiang Chen and Emperor Peerless exchanged a glance with each other. That was their next destination. Could it be that this person knew they were heading to the Tilted Moon Region? But that was impossible. They had conversed in a most secretive manner. Not even a great emperor could’ve listened in on Emperor Peerless’ conversation, much less a mere origin realm cultivator.

Emperor Peerless cast a glance at Jiang Chen before sending a message. “It should just be a coincidence. Why don’t you question him closely and see what he knows?”

“You know, it’s not going to be cheap to employ someone of our caliber. Don’t you think that we’re too expensive for an origin realm cultivator like you?” Jiang Chen joked.

“Yes, I know that I’m humble and weak, and that I don’t deserve to employ either one of you. I doubt I can do that even if I have the wealth of ten lifetimes. However, I do have the Radiant Celestial Grass. If you are willing to escort me safely away from Pillfire City and into Frostmoon City, I will give you one shoot. If you’re willing to help me after we entered Frostmoon City, I’m willing to give you two shoots.”

Earlier, Jiang Chen had to spend four hundred million saint spirit stones to win the bid. Two shoots of Radiant Celestial Grass were obviously worth a lot. It was definitely enough to hire a couple of emperor realm experts at least. However, it was a different story if the person he aimed to hire was a great emperor expert. It depended on the great emperor’s feelings.

Jiang Chen smiled calmly. “From what I learned, the Radiant Celestial Grass is an extremely valuable sky rank spirit herb. It is rare enough to find one shoot, and it’s a fact that you’ve auctioned one of them. But now you’re telling me you have another two with you? Do you think this is a joke?”

A trace of hesitation colored the short man’s countenance, but he made up his mind in the end and produced out a storage bag before their eyes. Although the bag was simple and crude, the short man opened it to reveal two shoots of Radiant Celestial Grass inside. The scene was like a three years old child walking on the streets while carrying a gold brick. Even Jiang Chen was shocked to find so many blades of the spirit herb on a mere origin realm cultivator.

Jiang Chen was a bit caught off guard. He looked at Emperor Peerless.

The great emperor nodded slightly. “Brother, do as you wish. If this spirit herb is that important to you, then it is no trouble to escort him along his journey.”

Jiang Chen stared at the short man and chuckled in a strange tone. “I’m surprised. Aren’t you afraid that we will rob and kill you right now?”

The short man raised his head high and declared. “Of course I’m afraid, but I don’t have a choice. If I walk out of the city alone, I am sure to die a horrible death. In fact, I know I’m being watched by many factions in Pillfire City. It is inconvenient for them to act against me while I’m still inside the city, but the second I get out, I will be a fat target waiting to be picked up.”

“Oh? So you do know that you’re a fat target.” Jiang Chen made fun of him.

“I may be weak, but I’m not an idiot. That’s why I’d rather to trust in you and Emperor Peerless’ reputation. I am a wandering cultivator myself, and I know that Emperor Peerless is a titan in our world. He is very well famed within our community.” Jiang Chen had to admit that the short man was pretty eloquent. After shedding his initial nervousness, he was a lot more eloquent than before.

Emperor Peerless beamed at the praise. “His praises have reached even me, brother. It doesn’t look like you can turn down this business.”

Jiang Chen also smiled. “In that case, why not? Still, if you’re not an idiot then why did you auction this spirit herb off at the Temple of Cleansing Fire? Aren’t you just drawing attention to yourself?”

The short man let out a long sigh. “Arena Lord Shao, you have no idea how difficult the life of a wandering cultivator is. You have no idea the pain of a bottom rank cultivator either. If I wasn’t in need of money, do you really think I would’ve come all the way from Frostmoon City just to auction off a single Radiant Celestial Grass? Do you really think I would risk taking this treasure to the Temple if I didn’t think that they have enough integrity to appraise this spirit herb without scamming me?”

Jiang Chen was stumped for words. The short man’s words rang true when he thought about it carefully. An origin realm cultivator wouldn’t dare to bring the spirit herb to a random store for appraisal even if they knew that it was an extraordinary spirit herb.

After all, only two kinds of outcome could come out of this action: One, the store labels it a true saint rank spirit herb instead and bought it at a pittance even though it was sky rank. Two, the store admitted that it was the Radiant Celestial Grass but keeps an eye on him. He might be killed and robbed the second he stepped out of the spirit herb store.

To a wandering cultivator, the possession of a treasure that surpassed their realm was both a blessing and a curse. In an instant, Jiang Chen understood the short man’s pain and difficulties.

“Alright, I accept your request. We will take you to Frostmoon City first. If you still need us after we reached Frostmoon City, you will tell us what kind of complications you’re facing. If it is too difficult, we will need to think twice before accepting it.” Jiang Chen hadn’t fallen so low that he would rob a person, but this was a business deal. All details of a deal must be clarified before it was settled.

The short man hurriedly replied, “It definitely won’t be too much trouble for you two, but it is a great deal of trouble to us weak wandering cultivators though.”

Chapter 1076: A Competition of Speed

Emperor Peerless suddenly spoke. “Come, let’s leave the city and collect ourselves.”

Scanning the surroundings, he found numerous pairs of eyes looking in this direction. The emperor knew that their owners didn’t have him or Jiang Chen as their target. They were after the short man. Those onlookers might not act within Pillfire City itself, but they were after the short man like snakes drawn to their prey. They laid in ambush, waiting for the right moment to strike.

Jiang Chen noticed the odd tone in the emperor’s voice. His own sweeping glance notified him of the same. “Looks like you came to us with a bunch of people hot on your heels,” he smiled a little.

The short man blanched at this, realizing too late that he had an unwelcome entourage.

“Don’t worry, Old Brother Mo is the strongest deterrent you could ask for. Even if they were ten times as brave as they actually are, they wouldn’t dare do anything.” Jiang Chen wasn’t worried.

The spirit herb was valuable, but not enough to risk a great emperor’s ire. As expected, all the hidden ambushers hated the fact that the short man was walking with Emperor Peerless. They could only watch from afar. The emperor exerted an insurmountable amount of pressure on them. They did not dare act out of turn.

The short man had lived his past few days in abject fear. He breathed a sigh of relief in the knowledge that he was finally safe. In no time at all, the trio left the boundaries of Pillfire City proper. Emperor Peerless summoned into the skies, and a great beast answered his call. It was the emperor’s mount.

“Take a seat on my steed with this man, my friend. I shall fly,” the emperor instructed.

“He can sit,” Jiang Chen smiled. “I’ll fly with you.”

Jiang Chen had his Cicada’s Wings, into which he’d refined Featherflight Wings and then Kunpeng Wings. His wings were entirely suitable to be called great emperor level. The additional speed from Kunpeng Meteoric Escape would allow him to easily race the average great emperor. Thus, he had no desire to sit on a steed.

“Little brother, I know it’s not too far from here to Tilted Moon Region, but there are at least three hundred thousand miles to go before Frostmoon City,” Emperor Peerless reminded.

Jiang Chen smiled. “It’s fine. I can keep up, no problem.”

“Your confidence surprises me. Is a race what you want?” The emperor chuckled.

“Why not?” Jiang Chen was in high spirits.

The short man found it hard to grasp everything he was hearing.

“Oi, you over there. What’s your name?” Jiang Chen suddenly asked.

The target of his question answered instantly. “Ah, my name is Liu Zhen.”

“Well, Liu Zhen. Take Old Brother Mo’s steed and go on without us. We’ll bring up the rear. Don’t worry, no one from Pillfire City will get past us.”

The man was a little fearful still. He didn’t feel it was entirely his place to ride something that belonged to a great emperor. Emperor Peerless exchanged a few words with it under his breath. The beast responded with an unhappy sneeze. It looked a little scornful, but gave a helpless nod anyway. Seemingly, it had agreed to the emperor’s unfair request.

“Up you go.” With a flick of Emperor Peerless’s sleeves, the little man was sent flying into the saddle. With a shrill cry, the beast pierced the heavens like a bolt of lightning, hurtling directly towards the direction of Tilted Moon Region. It looked like a flash of multi-colored lightning through the sky.

“You’ve a very nice steed instead. It’s extremely quick!” Jiang Chen praised.

The emperor chuckled for a moment before turning a serious eye back towards Pillfire City. "Listen, men of Pillfire. Anyone who is still behind us in fifteen minutes won't be able to return home."

It was a warning from a great emperor cultivator. The ones who hadn't yet given up and the opportunists who'd wanted to strike at Liu Zhen later were all shaken when they heard those words. They hardly missed the emperor's anger beneath the surface. If they did disobey the command, they would very likely be smashed to smithereens.

"Come on, little guy. Show me the speed that you have so much confidence in." Emperor Peerless looked back at Jiang Chen in a half-smile.

"Exactly what I wanted. Let's go!" The young man shot back a cocky grin. He turned into a streak of lightning as well, slicing through the sky. His current wings, infused with the strength of the kungpeng bloodline, was in its ultimate stage of development. Once upon a time, their base had been the Featherflight Wings. But after the alterations, few vestiges of those wings' appearance could be found.

Because of this, Jiang Chen didn't need to worry about their relationship to Emperor Featherflight being found out. He had a mind to show off a little before Emperor Peerless. Using his Kungpeng Meteoric Escape ability, he pushed his velocity to its maximum. The ability made him overwhelmingly faster than any emperor realm cultivator. As long as they didn't specialize in speed, even ninth level cultivators could not outpace him. The same was true in general for great emperors as well.

Emperor Peerless had some aptitude in this area. The formidable haste with which Jiang Chen was moving aroused his interest. He accelerated to his own limits to compete. Emperor Peerless's successful pursuit, despite Jiang Chen's head start, ignited the latter's fighting spirit. Drawing more power from his kungpeng bloodline, he stepped up his speed with Kungpeng Meteoric Escape yet again.

It was common knowledge that it was extremely difficult to raise one's speed past a certain point. In general, special methods were essential to doing so. Jiang Chen had no special methods, but he did have a bloodline backing him up. The Kungpeng Meteoric Escape was an ability that borrowed the strength inherent in one's blood to increase one's speed. He was merely exerting himself at the moment. If necessary, he could sacrifice his blood in moments of desperation to raise his velocity yet again. That was why he was so confident in his own speed.

In the first serious challenge within the main Veluriyam Pagoda, his kungpeng bloodline and Kungpeng Meteoric Escape ability had been most valuable prizes. It was a perfect improvement for him in terms of agility. Even that venerable expert, Honored Master P'eng, had lauded his speed without reservation. Jiang Chen was only half-step emperor realm. It was difficult to get an empyrean cultivator like the master to offer such words without exceptional talent and potential being present.

Jiang Chen's instantaneous acceleration amazed Emperor Peerless. He increased his own speed yet again. They chased at each other's tails, momentum continuously increasing. The leading person switched to and fro, always changing hands. Four hours later, the two of them had flown a few dozen thousand miles out.

"Hahaha, what a blast. That was really quite enjoyable!" Emperor Peerless roared in laughter. "I didn't expect someone as young as you to be so fast. I almost lost to you, you know."

In the end, Jiang Chen elected not to fuel further bursts speed using his blood. On the other hand, the emperor hadn't shown all his own tricks either. Thus, no one was nominally the winner.

"Thank you for the concessions, old brother. I know you're holding back on me, heh." Jiang Chen felt himself freed in the presence of the old man.

"Uh huh. I'm sure you didn't use everything you had, either," Emperor Peerless shot back. Another fit of laughter ensued. They had both flown at top speed, and because of this, Liu Zhen and the emperor's steed had actually been left behind.

Thankfully, the steed was a rapid enough creature in its own right, and it caught up before too long. The threat the emperor had issued a few hours prior, plus the beast's own alacrity, meant that Liu Zhen was able to arrive unscathed. However, lingering fears about his erstwhile pursuers and the steed's incredible speed had led to the short man's eyes being closed the entire trip. His heart almost leapt out of his chest. It had been almost more than he could bear.

Jiang Chen found Liu Zhen's bloodless face extremely amusing.

"Sirs, how... how did you get in front of me?" Liu Zhen was agape with shock. Indeed, he had imagined needing to wait at some point along the trip. It was scary being alone. But rather than his waiting for them, they were here waiting for him.

Emperor Peerless and Jiang Chen exchanged a look and smile. The emperor was thinking the same as the youth; the short man's reaction was quite funny.

"Looks like I'm that frog in the bottom of the well, huh." Realizing his own embarrassment, Liu Zhen remarked with some self-deprecation. "I really underestimated just how capable you two sirs are."

They arrived in Tilted Moon Region in two days. But Frostmoon City was another day or two's journey away. The Tilted Moon Region was in the northwest of the Upper Eight Regions, and had a rather broad expanse of territory. It was one of, if not the, largest regions. In the Upper Eight Regions, the northwest territories were the hottest lands. A sweltering heat was present all year round, and there was little differentiation in terms of seasons.

Jiang Chen found it rather odd. "Old Brother Mo, don't you think that the names 'Tilted Moon Region' and 'Frostmoon City' match the actual circumstances very poorly? It's so hot here. Why does the city have 'frost' in its name at all?"

It was absolutely perplexing. Rationally speaking, 'Frostmoon City' gave off the vibe of severe cold that stretched for thousands of miles.

"Haha, I'm afraid I can't answer that question. Probably no one in the entire Tilted Moon Region can, to be honest. However, I do remember hearing that in ancient times, the climate here wasn't like this at all."

"The Divine Abyss Continent is an intriguing place," Jiang Chen exclaimed. He had no impression of the city whatsoever. If not for the information he'd obtained from Niu Wuhua, he wouldn't have come here at all.

No matter whether his father Jiang Feng had received news of his mother, Jiang Chen intended to come take a look all the same. Even the smallest rumor was better than perfect silence. Though he didn't remember his birth mother at all, Jiang Chen needed to thoroughly investigate for the sake of his father. The enduring love that his father had for his mother made Jiang Chen instinctively feel that to deserve such love, his mother had to have been an amazing woman.

Chapter 1077: Frostmoon City

Two days later, the trio officially arrived at Frostmoon City. As agreed, the short man fulfilled his promise and gave Jiang Chen a shoot of Radiant Celestial Grass. After that, both parties made a promise to meet each other at a certain location three days later. They would then discuss Liu Zhen's next request in detail.

Frostmoon City was one of the major cities in the northwest region of the Upper Eight Regions. Although it was inferior to Pillfire City, it was still a place of great value. It represented both the center and the glory of Tilted Moon Region. However, Jiang Chen wasn't in the mood to enjoy its unique local culture despite being in the thick of it. He couldn't help but feel incredibly depressed every time he thought of his father, Jiang Feng.

"Is there something on your mind, brother?" Emperor Peerless' eyes were very keen.

Jiang Chen didn't deny it. "There is, brother, one that relates to the safety of my loved ones. I feel wracked with worry every time I think about it."

Emperor Peerless knew his feelings very well. "We cultivators normally do not fear anything, but the same cannot be said about our loved ones. They are our softest spot and greatest weakness. Do you know why I haven't brought my partner with me to Pillfire City? It's because I was afraid that someone would use her against me."

Jiang Chen felt the same way. It wasn't the first time his friends and family had been used against him in this lifetime, and each time it happened, he learned how best to prevent it from happening again. Now that he thought about it, he'd been a burden to his other father in his previous life. Perhaps a lot of his enemies had used him against his father as well.

Jiang Chen was saddened and depressed. What if his enemies used his current father against him too? He wouldn't be able to do anything no matter how what powers he possessed. After all, the word "father" was too heavy for him. It was a psychological barrier he could never overcome.

"You shouldn't think so much. You are young, so stop shouldering so many responsibilities and learn a little from the youngsters of Tilted Moon Region. You may not notice, but love is everywhere in this place. For starters, the young girls here are especially carefree, vivacious, sexy and open, so I sincerely advise you to seize the opportunity and..." Emperor Peerless said with a chuckle.

Jiang Chen was speechless. "Brother, if your wife hears about this..."

"Haha, I'm absolutely loyal to my wife. Also, this is something you youngsters should do, not old people like us."

Admittedly, the girls of Frostmoon City were different from others. Maybe because of the weather, but here they were dressed relatively lightly compared to other places. The shyness and restrained bearing

that were normally present in girls of other regions were also absent here. Young girls could be seen singing and dancing everywhere. Their eyes and even bellies seemed like they could speak. Every look and movement was ever so tantalizing and seductive.

“Let us make haste, brother. Bring me to your wife now.” Jiang Chen’s original goal was to inquire about his mother, but since Emperor Peerless was with him, he might as well visit the emperor’s partner first.

“Alright, come with me.” Emperor Peerless turned serious the moment his partner was mentioned. Although he was a wandering cultivator, he had friends all across the world. He led Jiang Chen to a relatively secluded place not long after they arrived at Frostmoon City. It was his friend’s domain, and it was also here where he arranged for his wife to stay. A place Emperor Peerless could leave his wife behind was definitely a trustworthy place.

“You’re back, Brother Mo?” Surprisingly, the person he welcomed them was a woman; an extremely beautiful woman. Her voice was as gentle and graceful as she looked.

“Sister Qing, how is Ah Yun?” Emperor Peerless asked anxiously the second he saw her.

“Sister Yun’s condition is the same as before. Brother Mo, if I may ask...?” The woman’s residence was more elegant than others. Although they were at the city center, it almost felt like the woman was living alone in seclusion.

“He can be trusted.” Emperor Peerless introduced the woman to Jiang Chen. “She used to be sect mates with my wife, and is a friend of mine.”

Jiang Chen was caught off guard. Was this the friend Brother Mo had mentioned earlier? He thought his friend would be someone like the Geng brothers, but the possibility that it was a woman who was also his wife’s sect mate never even crossed his mind.

“Hello, Miss Qing.” Jiang Chen addressed the woman more politely hearing Brother Mo address her.

The woman’s bright eyes moved once before she nodded. “Hello.”

Her tone wasn’t warm, but it wasn’t unapproachable either.

“Let us speak inside.” Emperor Peerless obviously thought of this place as his own home because he walked right in without the pretense of a guest.

A hint of disappointment fled across Miss Qing’s fair face. After letting out a quiet sigh, she followed behind him in small, quick steps.

Jiang Chen couldn’t help but feel that the reaction was strange. Why had she let out a soft sigh? He couldn’t tell if she was sighing for Emperor Peerless and Madame Yun’s fate, or her own. For some reason, he felt that there was a complicated story behind her quiet sigh. When he entered the courtyard, he discovered that it was like a completely different world. All sorts of plants were present and the arrangements gave off an otherworldly and serene feeling.

“Miss Qing’s temperament matches this courtyard well.” Jiang Chen was quite impressed with the arrangements. There weren’t many plants in this courtyard, but somehow they exuded grace and elegance. The house was behind the courtyard. Emperor Peerless was obviously very familiar with the place. He was so anxious that he even forgot Jiang Chen was following behind him.

Jiang Chen understood that Emperor Peerless missed his wife a lot, so instead of hurrying, he wisely slowed his footsteps and enjoyed the scenery for a while. Again, he found that both the courtyard's interior and external arrangements were very exquisite and serene.

Miss Qing walked over with small, quick steps. "How should I call you, sir?"

"Hehe, my surname is Shao." Jiang Chen didn't give her his real name.

"Sir Shao." Miss Qing dipped in a small curtsy before asking again in a low tone. "Can you really treat Sister Yun's injuries?"

Jiang Chen smiled. "I'll give it a try. I can't go back without trying after Brother Mo had brought me all the way here, can I?"

Miss Qing let out a quiet sigh. "But what if you fail? Brother Mo has a hot temper. You're so young. Aren't you afraid that he'll kill you in one palm strike?"

Jiang Chen was confused. Miss Qing looked like a gentle and quiet person, but her words were a little incoherent. Suppose he did fail to treat Madame Yun's sickness. Was that really cause for Emperor Peerless to kill him?

"Then I shall do my best to treat her. I hope my skills are sufficient, considering how much he loves her."

"I'm advising you out of good will." Miss Qing frowned slightly.

Jiang Chen smiled. "Thank you for your concern, Miss Qing, but no matter what the outcome may be, I cannot leave without doing my best. I am friends with Brother Mo after all."

"Oh, I see," Miss Qing said remotely. "I wish you good luck then."

Jiang Chen was very puzzled by Miss Qing's actions. For some reason, the tone she used gave him an indescribable feeling. It was obvious that Miss Qing shared a great relationship with Brother Mo and his wife. Miss Qing must mean a lot to Brother Mo considering that he trusted her enough to leave his wife in his care. But it sounded that Miss Qing didn't want him to check out Madame Yun's condition? Was she really worried that Brother Mo would hurt him? But if that was the case, wasn't her fear a little groundless?

Jiang Chen didn't think much into it despite mulling over it for a moment.

Emperor Peerless stayed inside for a long while before he finally came out. "Come in, brother. What are you waiting for outside? My wife wants to know what kind of young genius I've met after hearing about you."

Again, Miss Qing shot Jiang Chen a cool glance. It was indescribably strange. Jiang Chen didn't pay heed to it and entered the house.

A somewhat haggard-looking woman was lying in Emperor Peerless' lap. She looked a little pale, but was dressed in clean clothing. He could see from her countenance and temperament that she was a peerless beauty in the past. However, sickness and age had robbed much of her health and good looks.

“Ah Yun, this is the good brother I mentioned.” Emperor Peerless beckoned Jiang Chen over. “Come quickly, brother. This is my wife.”

“Well met, Madame Yun.” Jiang Chen walked forwards.

Ah Yun smiled slightly. “Good, good. When I look at you, I cannot help but recall young Peerless’ great vigor back then. You know, that was how he won my heart.”

Emperor Peerless laughed loudly. “You hear that brother? You still have a lot to learn from me. Hahaha, back then countless people tried to court Ah Yun, but I was the one who won in the end!”

Ah Yun smiled again and patted Emperor Peerless’ palms. “You shameless fellow! Why are you teaching him your bad habits instead of the good ones?”

Emperor Peerless laughed. “But I am! I’m teaching him how to attract girls and make a partner. How is that a bad thing? This is of lifelong importance!”

“And how do you know he doesn’t have a partner already?” Ah Yun asked impatiently.

“Ah? Brother, do you have a partner already?” Emperor Peerless was caught off guard.

Jiang Chen nodded.

“Ah? You actually have a dao partner? Then it’s my mistake. And here I thought you’re an unromantic person who doesn’t get the beauty of Frostmoon City’s girls. As I thought, your taste is just as good as mine. We both only enjoy the best!” Emperor Peerless exclaimed in a very loud voice.

Outside the door, Miss Qing was just about to walk closer when she heard this. A downcast expression colored her fair countenance once more.

“Don’t worry, Ah Yun. The brother I invited over this time will definitely be able to treat your injuries. It won’t be long before you get healthy again, and we’ll be able to travel the world with me and get back all the happiness that we missed out on for all these years.” Emperor Peerless spoke lovingly like a young man who had just fallen in love.

Chapter 1078: An Unexpected Development, A Toxic Dose Of Love

Jiang Chen gently placed Madame Yun’s hand back down after an hour had passed. Her long struggle with her illness had caused the skin on her palms to shrivel and lack luster.

“Little brother, how is it?” Emperor Peerless immediately asked after Jiang Chen was done taking her pulse. The expressions on his face was not that of a great emperor, but of a young and overly anxious brat.

“Old brother, it’s... a little complicated. It’s going to take some time to cure her. I’d recommend letting your wife take the pill first so that she can regain some lifespan and invigorate her blood and limbs. I’m confident in my ability to cure her after she regains some energy. However... we will have to return to Veluriyam Capital.”

The emperor was elated. “No problem! I’m willing to climb a mountain of swords and plunge into a sea of flames as long as you can cure her! Moreover, I’ve always wanted to go to the Capital! Haha! This is truly pleasant news!”

“Ah Yun! Did you hear what he just said? I told you my brother is a capable man! He’s likely the only person in the entire human domain that can cure you! Ah, I’ve yet to give him a proper introduction. Our brother over here is...” The emperor was interrupted mid-sentence when he noticed that Miss Qing was standing right outside the door. She seemed a little unsure if she should enter the room. “Little sister Qing, why are you standing out there? Come in! It’s not like any of us here are strangers.”

One could easily see hints of embarrassment on Miss Qing’s face. She hesitated a little before entering the room.

“Brother, since there are no strangers among us, I shan’t hide your secrets anymore. Little sister Qing and your sister-in-law are so close that they’re like family.” The emperor was looked incredibly happy. “This is my brother. He’s actually quite renowned around these parts. Most people know him as the young lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain from Veluriyam Capital. You may address him as Brother Zhen.”

The emperor was very excited, but didn’t reveal Jiang Chen’s true identity as there was no need for it just yet.

“Young lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain?” Madame Yun was astounded. “Peerless, is he the same young lord Zhen you so often talk about? The youth who defeated Pill King Ji Lang?”

“Hehe. Yes it is!” The emperor burst into laughter. “Ah Yun, don’t you agree that this is such a huge coincidence? I was contemplating if I should travel to Veluriyam Capital to see him, but unexpectedly, we met right after I arrived in Pillfire City! We even became sworn brothers! Mm! This is fate!”

Miss Qing also seemed incredibly astounded at first, but she quickly regained her composure and put on a faint smile. However, her smile contained hints of melancholy.

“Little sister Qing, us brothers will be in your care for a few more days! Haha! We’ll leave for Veluriyam Capital immediately after my wife’s condition turns for the better! We’ve been disturbing you for too long...”

“Big Brother Mo, why the formalities between family?” Miss Qing sighed gently. “Don’t worry about it. It’s lonely here. In fact, I’d much prefer to have you here with me, forever.”

“Haha! That would be too much!” The emperor laughed.

“Big brother Mo, Sister Yun, rest some. I’ll have to make some preparations. My accommodations are a bit lacking. I hope Brother Zhen will not mind.” Miss Qing curtsied at Jiang Chen, to which the latter responded with a faint smile.

“Miss Qing is too gracious.” Jiang Chen pondered deeply after Miss Qing had left. For some reason, she seemed a little unreadable to him. He couldn’t sense any evil intentions from her, but what she’d said outside seemed a little overboard. One could easily tell that she and Madame Yun were very close, and that Old Brother Mo was also quite fond of her. Moreover, she didn’t seem to bear any resentment for an outsider like him. So why had she said all that?

Jiang Chen didn't understand why, but he decided to keep his thoughts to himself. After all, Madame Yun and Miss Qing were as close as actual sisters. He didn't want to spoil their relationship by saying such things. It would leave a bad impression on them.

"Brother Mo, you should hand over the Pinecrane Pill to sister-in-law now. It isn't a very overpowering pill, so letting her refine it slowly shouldn't cause too big of a problem. Jiang Chen headed outside after giving the instructions.

Miss Qing's residence wasn't very big, but it was extremely elegant and tranquil. It was a pleasant place to be in.

Miss Qing showed a complicated gaze when she saw Jiang Chen exit the room, but she didn't comment on it. "Brother Zhen, please pardon my hospitality for my residence is a little lacking."

"A cultivator like me naturally wouldn't mind such things." Jiang Chen smiled in response.

Miss Qing nodded and said nothing more.

Jiang Chen walked briskly around the courtyard, but was soon bored. Thus, he decided to stroll around Frostmoon City instead. His mind was fully occupied with thoughts of this foreign land. He didn't immediately seek news of the Moon God Sect. He was worried that others might notice if he immediately did so. He didn't want to attract too much trouble, so the investigation could wait for now.

After a brief stroll, he saw for himself how open-minded the citizens of Frostmoon City were. Many cute and charming girls threw seductive gazes at him. Some even brazenly called out to him. They were finding this foreign youth very attractive. No matter how much he tried to disguise himself, his bearing wasn't something that could be disguised.

Jiang Chen returned to the residence four hours later as he felt that Madame Yun must've finished refining the pill by now. Upon arriving at the courtyard, he noticed that gate was half opened. He furrowed his brows suspiciously before entering the premises. His nose twitched as soon as he entered. There was an odd smell in the air. It was almost unnoticeable, but he had very sharp senses.

"Old Brother Mo?" Realizing something was amiss, he immediately rushed towards the inner residence. When Madame Yun's room was within sight, he noticed Miss Qing wearing a snowy-white outfit leaning against the door.

Traces of not having the heart to do something appeared on Miss Qing's face when she saw Jiang Chen. "Didn't you go out on a stroll? Why are you back so soon?"

Jiang Chen frowned. "Miss Qing, where is Old Brother Mo?"

Miss Qing responded with a dreadful laugh. "Brother Mo he... will not be seeing you anymore. He has gone into a deep slumber. Sister Yun too... she has joined him in his sleep."

"What do you mean?" Jiang Chen furrowed his brows and took a step back instinctively.

Miss Qing laughed when she saw how cautious he was being. Her laughter carried hints of insanity.

“Brother Zhen, you shouldn’t have come back. I didn’t want to involve an innocent person in this. You didn’t have to accompany Brother Mo and I. Why do you have to be so insensible?!” Her words sped up. “Leave! Leave while you still have time to! Hurry, before the poison invades your consciousness!”

Color immediately drained from Jiang Chen’s face. “You’ve poisoned Old Brother Mo?”

He sniffed the air and noticed the odd smell again. It was barely noticeable, but he was sensitive to the smell of spirit herbs.

“It has nothing to do with you!” Miss Qing began to sound a little agitated. “Brother Mo and I may not be fortunate enough to be born on the same year, month, and day, but we can ask for death in each other’s arms! After this, we’ll finally be together! Are you leaving or not?!”

Mental! This woman has gone absolutely crazy! Jiang Chen had caught the gist of what was happening. It was obvious that this woman had fallen in love with Old Brother Mo, but she chose to bottle up her feelings because of Madame Yun. However, she had gone to extremes to be with Old Brother Mo, even if it meant death.

Such was the nature of love. It was often the culprit of envy, jealousy, and insanity. Miss Qing’s actions were proof that she’d been deeply poisoned by love. It was why she had resorted to such extreme actions.

“Miss Qing, do you really think that Old Brother Mo’s heart will belong to you if you do this? If you really love him and want to be together with him, why not confess your love to him? Why resort to such extreme measures? Don’t you realize what you’re doing right now is extremely foolish?” Jiang Chen’s heart was torn by anxiety. He hadn’t identified the poison just yet, but a poison that could affect a great emperor unnoticed was definitely no ordinary poison!

Miss Qing was obviously not of a sound mind anymore. She began to laugh sarcastically. “Confess? What’s the point? His heart is already occupied by Sister Yun! I can only hate myself for meeting him too late! Even if I confess, all he can think about is Sister Yun this, Sister Yun that! He’s always finding a cure for her! Time and time again, I’ve tried showing him my charms, but that blockhead never shows me any response! Must I do it like the whores you so often see in the streets? Never!” Her voice was thick with sorrow. “I know that Sister Yun is a very exceptional woman, but I’m not any worse than her. The only reason I’ve lost is because she got to know him first. If he had known me first, he would definitely cherish me like how he cherishes her! I already know that I can no longer outmatch Sister Yun in this life, but in the next one, I’ll definitely get to know him ahead of her! If I fail, I’ll just try again in another life! There will at least be one life where I’ll end up the winner...”

Jiang Chen was so utterly speechless that goosebumps popped into existence all over. Even with his knowledge and experience, he couldn’t help but be stunned by what he just heard. Love was the cause of laughter, sadness, happiness, and sorrow... But to cause such insanity? Only someone extremely deep in the abyss of love was capable of such things.

Was she evil for trying to attain love in her own deranged way?

Obviously not.

Jiang Chen was at a loss for what to do next.

Miss Qing began to laugh ludicrously. "Brother Zhen, aren't you leaving yet? Do you wish to join us in our wretched fate? I heard that the fates of people who die at the same time and at the same place will be entwined even in the next life! Well, it's fine if you choose not to leave. In the next life, you shall seduce Sister Yun so that Brother Mo will be mine..."

Jiang Chen was utterly flabbergasted. This woman was truly too poisoned by love.

Chapter 1079: I Must Save Emperor Peerless

Jiang Chen didn't know whether to hate her, scorn her or be impressed by her. Her love was truly selfish because she tried to push Emperor Peerless and herself into the grave without obtaining his permission. This could only be explained as an expression of jealousy and selfishness. However, she didn't bear any resentment towards her love rival despite loving Emperor Peerless to the point of madness. The fact that she put her heart and soul into taking care of Madame Yun was proof that her nature was good and that she valued her sisterly relationship with Madame Yun. She didn't say a single bad word about Madame Yun at all, and the only fault she admitted to was knowing Brother Mo too late.

A different woman would've hated her love rival and felt that Madame Yun had robbed her of her love, but not only did the thought never cross Miss Qing's mind, she even tried to keep Jiang Chen, an innocent person, out of her scheme. This proved that she was a good-natured woman and not someone with the heart of a snake. A bit of understanding dawned upon Jiang Chen at this point.

Why had Miss Qing tried to convince him to leave and not treat Madame Yun's injuries? It was because Brother Mo would leave with his wife the moment she recovered. If that happened, Miss Qing would be forced to stay alone in this place and watch her beloved departing with his own beloved.

Maybe it was Jiang Chen's fault as well? Maybe his presence had unwittingly added to Miss Qing's madness. He couldn't help but blame himself a little at this point. At the same time, a different thought surfaced to his mind: I cannot allow Old Brother Mo to depart this world in such a manner. I must save Old Brother Mo!

"Miss Qing, actually... there's something I haven't discussed with you all this time..." Jiang Chen suddenly said.

She was completely absorbed in her own world as she waited the arrival of her death with a smile. It was obvious that she had poisoned herself too. The only reason she hadn't fallen into a coma yet was because she poisoned herself a little later than Emperor Peerless.

Miss Qing didn't show too much reaction at Jiang Chen's words. With a tired smile, she asked, "What is it?"

"Why must you wait until the next lifetime or the next if you truly wish to be together with Old Brother Mo?"

Miss Qing shook her head. "Hehe, I know you're trying to change my mind, little guy, but it's useless... Brother Mo can only ever love Sister Yun, not to mention that I refuse to share him with anyone else, not even with someone who's so close to me. Love is selfish after all."

In this world, it wasn't uncommon for a powerful male cultivator to have several partners. However, Miss Qing was obviously not the kind of woman who was willing to share her man with multiple women.

Of course in her case her love could only be counted as a one-sided love. After all, Mo Wushuang wasn't even aware of Miss Qing's affection, much less requite it.

"Miss Qing, you say you love Old Brother Mo, but does he know about this? How will you know that you love him if you never let him know? If he can love Madame Yun for all his life during this lifetime, then surely his love won't change even after he reincarnates into his next life." Jiang Chen advised patiently. "I don't know much, but I do know that you should at least boldly let him know of your love. You shouldn't hide your love the way you did and destroy it like this in the end."

Miss Qing sighed softly. "It's too late, it's all too late to say anything now! The poison I used is the Seven Emotions Poison, and it is something that cuts off the emotions and senses of a person completely. The poison has already reached his heart, so isn't it all too late?"

"The Seven Emotions Poison?" Jiang Chen cried out with shock. "Do you mean that poison that's refined from the fusion of several heartless ingredients?"

Miss Qing smiled with distress. "You seem to know a lot. It is unfortunate that you're going to die here at such a young age. Alas... when I met him on the banks of the pond that year, two hearts became one. My love! After you left, my thoughts, my feelings, I put them all into the guqin. But try as I may to adjust the strings, I can't play a tune of love no matter what..."

Her answer suddenly turned into a song. It was mournful and sad even as a smile fled across her face from time to time...

Jiang Chen had no time to spare for Miss Qing. He strode right past her into the room. Emperor Peerless was seated upright before his bed like a frozen statue. It was obvious that his consciousness had been restrained by the Seven Emotions Poison. Madame Yun was lying sideways on the bed. Although her complexion looked a lot better than before, her consciousness was sealed just the same.

There was no time to mince courtesies, so Jiang Chen slung them both on his shoulders and walked towards outside. When he saw Miss Qing gradually slipping into a coma, he sighed inwardly and couldn't bear to leave her in the end. He grabbed her with one hand and strode out of this quiet courtyard. He arrived at one of the more impressive-looking inns and rented a few rooms of the highest quality immediately.

All kinds of strange things happened in Frostmoon City, so a person slinging a few people over their shoulders wasn't uncommon. Neither the shopkeeper nor the attendants even bothered to ask. Of course, their motivation mainly came from Jiang Chen's striking bearing and generosity. The young man had slapped a couple million saint spirit stones on the table and paid for an entire month's worth of rooms. There was nothing more welcomed by an inn than a non-fussy guest.

After putting them in their respective rooms, Jiang Chen was about to walk out when he thought for a moment and decided to summon Long Xiaoxuan. "Brother Long, please watch over them for me, will you? I'm heading out to a spirit herb store."

Jiang Chen knew about the Seven Emotions Poison, but wasn't satisfied with his current level of knowledge. He took a sample of Emperor Peerless and Madame Yun's blood for analysis. He needed to confirm exactly which seven types of heartless ingredients Miss Qing had used to refine the poison.

The Seven Emotions Poison was an extraordinary poison. Not only was it deadly poisonous, it was nearly undetectable by most people. Of course, Emperor Peerless was a great emperor. He wouldn't have fallen for it had he been on his guard. Unfortunately, he never thought to be on his guard around Miss Qing, much less entertain the idea that she might poison him one day.

Long Xiaoxuan had taken on human form ever since he reached emperor realm a long time ago. However, he wasn't willing to show his face too much because he was naturally shy. He would never admit to this though.

Jiang Chen quickly headed for the most populated spirit herb distribution center in Frostmoon City. Just like Pillfire City's Skyfire Avenue or Veluriyam Capital's Farmer God Market, this district was the place with the heaviest concentration of pill factions in the city. Of course, Jiang Chen was aware that Pillfire City currently had the biggest amount of spirit herbs for sale, but he obviously didn't have the time to make a round trip. He had to gather all the ingredients here.

Since the Seven Emotions Poison was refined with seven types of heartless poison, he had to gather seven types of spirit herbs that countered each ingredient to cure this poison. Every one of these spirit herbs was rare enough, but there were three that were especially rare.

After visiting several stores and splashing out a large sum of money, Jiang Chen quickly gathered the first four types of counteracting spirit herbs he was looking for. Two of the three last spirit herbs were earth rank spirit herbs, and he managed to gather them after four hours by paying an even higher price.

However, the same couldn't be said about the last ingredient. This spirit herb was known as the Smiling Bodhi, and it was also the most important ingredient he needed to refine the antidote. It was an incredibly precious spirit herb that was categorized as a quasi-sky rank spirit herb, and a high quality Smiling Bodhi could even be categorized as a sky rank spirit herb.

Jiang Chen couldn't find a Smiling Bodhi no matter how much he asked around, and he couldn't tell if these people were purposely keeping him on tenterhooks or truly out of stock. The Smiling Bodhi was precious, but it shouldn't be so precious that not a single one could be found in a city as big as Frostmoon City. He visited at least a dozen or so of the best spirit herb stores to find the ingredient. However, the results were disappointing. He couldn't believe that none of them had a Smiling Bodhi.

"My friend, a Smiling Bodhi is a sky rank spirit herb, and sky rank spirit herbs are all precious things you can only chance upon normally. It's only natural that you can't buy one no matter how rich you are." The shopkeeper of the last spirit herb store he visited smiled. He was a very amiable man.

Money can't buy it? Jiang Chen thought carefully for a moment and discovered that it might be as the shopkeeper had said. Sky rank spirit herbs was always in high demand in the human domain, so the chances he could buy one with money was next to zero.

Take the Radiant Celestial Grass for example. If the spirit herb hadn't fallen into the hands of the short origin realm cultivator, Liu Zhen, or if he'd been an emperor realm expert, who in their right minds would put it up for auction?

The news depressed Jiang Chen a little. Emperor Peerless, Madame Yun and Miss Qing's lives were trickling away with every passing second. Even fifteen wasted minutes was enough to put them in greater danger. The best time to cure them of the Seven Emotions Poison was three days. If he couldn't

find the Smiling Bodhi in three days, then the chances to save them was minimal even if he did obtain the spirit herb afterwards.

I must find the Smiling Bodhi no matter what the cost. Jiang Chen thought resolutely.

Seeing the worry leaking out of Jiang Chen's expression, the shopkeeper advised. "My friend, the Smiling Bodhi is an antidote ingredient and there's almost no chance you'll run into one if you rush things like this. If you aren't in a hurry, you can try head over to Pillfire City. Pillfire City's spirit herb stock is ten times our city's, and whatever that's absent in their warehouse is sure to be missing the entire human domain as well."

There obviously wasn't time to rush to Pillfire City, so the suggestion was completely meaningless to Jiang Chen. The young man laughed painfully before asking, "Do you have another way, shopkeeper?"

The shopkeeper thought for a moment. "I believe that there's a Smiling Bodhi somewhere in Frostmoon City, but as I said earlier, a sky rank spirit herb isn't something you can buy with spirit stones."

"Oh?" An idea suddenly passed through Jiang Chen's mind. "What if I trade with a different spirit herb?"

He suddenly recalled that he had a bunch of sky rank spirit herbs in possession. They were from Mt. Rippling Mirage and the desolate wildlands, and although he had given some to Lin Yanyu, they weren't all gone.

"You want to trade a spirit herb for a spirit herb?" The shopkeeper looked surprised. "Do you have a sky rank spirit herb?"

Jiang Chen's eyes lit up. "Shopkeeper, do you think that someone will be willing to trade me a Smiling Bodhi for a sky rank spirit herb?"

The shopkeeper answered frankly, "That depends if the spirit herb you have is what they need. Plus, considering how urgently you need it, the other party is sure to bargain with you and up the price as much as possible. They may even fleece you by a great amount."

"As long as someone is willing to make the trade, then I'm willing to give them a sky rank spirit herb and two earth rank spirit herbs in exchange as well. A Smiling Bodhi is just a quasi-sky rank spirit herb. It's not even a real sky rank spirit herb."

The shopkeeper laughed. "If you have need of it, then it will become more precious than any sky rank spirit herb that exists. It is true that the trade will go smoothly in the norm especially considering your generous offer, but your urgency is plain for all eyes to see, so you better stop deluding yourself thinking that this will be a fair trade."

Chapter 1080: The Overweening Third Master Jing

"Have you heard? Someone is trying to trade two sky rank spirit herbs for one Smiling Bodhi at Three River Street!"

"You must be joking! why is it be worth so much all of a sudden?"

"I know, right? Brother, do you have any? If you do, we'd better sell it to him now! This opportunity isn't going to come around ever again!"

“Aii... the Smiling Bodhi might be a quasi-sky rank herb, but that doesn’t take away the fact that it possesses sky rank qualities. I don’t even have an earth rank herb, let alone a sky rank one!”

“Anyways, anyone who has a Smiling Bodhi is going to get rich! Getting two sky rank herbs for one? It’s a gift from the heavens!”

“Hehe. I suspect that the eminent figures who own a Smiling Bodhi will not be so willing to trade.”

“Huh? Why do you say so?”

“Are you really that clueless? There’s a reason why that man wants to trade two sky rank herbs for one Smiling Bodhi. First of all, do you know what it’s used for?”

“It’s for curing poisons, right?”

“Hehe, if he’s in such urgent need for it, he’s probably going to use it to save someone. The person must mean a lot to him too if he’s willing to trade two sky rank herbs for it. Since he’s already willing to part with two, maybe three or four more might be within the realm of possibilities too?”

“Hmm. Now that you mention, it’s a really good opportunity for extortion.”

“Heh! Let’s head over there and watch the show. It’ll be a good one! Let’s not miss it!”

Jiang Chen occupied the most conspicuous place in Three River Street without a care for territorial disputes. He placed a signboard on either side of him. ‘Trading two sky rank pills for a single Smiling Bodhi!’ was written on one board, while ‘This is a one day offer! All deals are off after the day is over!’ was written on the other. It might not be the smartest idea, but it was the most straightforward one.

Jiang Chen added the second signboard even though he had three more days for a good reason. He wanted to see if there really was a Smiling Bodhi in this city. It would definitely appear today if there was one. As for what the price would be, well, that was an issue for later. He’d never allow others to trample all over him. The time limit served as a warning. Those who wish to trade must hand over the goods today, or all deals were off.

Trading one Smiling Bodhi for two sky rank herbs was an absolute steal. It was in no way a fair deal. It was a wonderful opportunity for anyone who possessed a Smiling Bodhi. However, Jiang Chen understood that greed was human nature. There would be some who tried to extort him in his time of need. This was why he clearly stated that they would only be given one day to make a decision.

He was certain that Smiling Bodhi holders would want to make use of this rare opportunity to get their hands on two sky rank pills. It was a game of nerves. Jiang Chen looked like he was meditating, but he was actually observing with his consciousness. Most of the crowd in the surroundings was only there to watch the show. There wasn’t even a single earth rank herb in sight, let alone a Smiling Bodhi. However, he was certain that there was at least one Smiling Bodhi in the city. In fact, they might’ve already sent their subordinates to scour more information, or they might be hidden amongst the crowds themselves.

“Hey, friend! Do you really have two sky rank herbs?” someone tried probing.

Jiang Chen replied in a flippant manner. “Show me a Smiling Bodhi first and you’ll get to see my spirit herbs.”

He wasn't so stupid that he'd show his own hand first. Even though the deal was destined to be unfair, he didn't want to reveal his trump cards just yet.

"I have a friend with a Smiling Bodhi. I've informed him about your deal, but he's currently in closed door cultivation, and cannot find the time to leave. However, he did say that you may visit him if you wish to trade."

Jiang Chen smiled blandly. "I'll remain here. Some sincerity is still needed if you wish to make this handsome deal. If he isn't willing to come, there will be others who will."

"I wouldn't be so sure about that. The Smiling Bodhi is almost a sky rank herb after all. The inventory we have in this city is already quite limited. It won't be easy to find one!"

Jiang Chen smiled without further response. Many others also tried to probe him, but he remained uncompromising. He would never reveal his sky rank herbs unless somebody showed him their Smiling Bodhi first.

The crowd quickly grew as time went on, but there wasn't even a single person who could hand over a Smiling Bodhi. Jiang Chen was beginning to feel a little anxious, but he understood that this method was the only way he could obtain a Smiling Bodhi, even though it was a bit risky. There was simply no other choice right now.

Despite his anxiety, he grit his teeth and kept on waiting. If there was a Smiling Bodhi in the city, he was certain that someone would eventually cave in. As expected, a man dressed in lavish clothes approached him right before the sun went down the hill. He had many vicious looking guards standing behind him. The crowd immediately opened a path upon noticing him. They all wore respectful smiles on their faces, but one could easily see the fear in their eyes. He was definitely not of a common background.

"Third Master Jing is here!"

"He must possess a Smiling Bodhi!"

"Tsk tsk, if Third Master Jing didn't have one, then no other clan could possibly have it."

"Young lad, your luck is not bad. You've caught the third master's attention!" The owner of the voices were trying to curry favor. They raised their voices for a game of obvious boot-licking.

Jiang Chen swept a glance over the man. He was wearing a purple, formal robe and had a slightly waxy complexion. His face also had a slight moustache and beard. One could easily tell that he was of high status just by looking at his stride.

"Friend, I heard that you have two sky rank herbs?" The man asked nonchalantly after measuring Jiang Chen up a little.

The latter nodded without hesitation. "Third Master?"

There was nothing much he knew about the city or its factions. His knowledge of the Tilted Moon Regions was limited to the Moon God Sect alone. However, he was certain that this man was not from the Moon God Sect because they were the rulers of the Tilted Moon Region. Their sect was built on a land rich in spirit energy, and not a backwater place like Frostmoon City. The city was only a place where commoners live. Of course, the factions here were all governed by the sect.

“My surname is Jing, you may call me Third Master Jing. Friend, how may I address you?”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “My surname is Shao. Shao Yuan.”

Third Master Jing furrowed his brows. The name seemed to ring a bell. Shao Yuan...? Now, where have I heard that name before?

Since he couldn't recall, he quickly tossed the thought aside and opened his palms, revealing a Smiling Bodhi.

“I coincidentally have one Smiling Bodhi in my hands.” He said nonchalantly. “Friend, if you're willing to part with three sky rank spirit herbs, I just might consider trading it with you.”

The crowd gasped upon hearing his words. Some even began to laugh at Jiang Chen's misfortune. They all know just how overbearing Third Master Jing was. His appearance spelled nothing but bad news for the young man. As expected, he immediately raised the price to three sky rank spirit herbs.

Jiang Chen instantly burst into laughter. “Third Master Jing, sky rank spirit herbs aren't common everyday grass. Even though I really need the Smiling Boddhi, I've already given you my most sincerest offer as I only have two sky rank spirit herbs. If you want me to offer you a third one, then I have no choice but to turn down the trade.”

Third Master Jing already figured that Jiang Chen would say as such. “Is that so? That's too bad. Feel free to visit my manor whenever you're ready to accept my offer. Also, you should give up trying to trade with others. Even if someone else possesses a Smiling Boddhi, they will never trade with you.”

Jiang Chen's brows twitched. “Oh? Why is that?”

Third Master Jing laughed but didn't answer. A large brute standing beside him answered instead. “You're such a clueless country bumpkin! Who'd ever try to steal third master's business?”

“Nobody would ever try to steal the meat that the third master already has his eye on!”

His words triggered a huge, roaring laughter among the crowd. They seemed to agree.

Jiang Chen frowned. “Third master, the trade will lose its meaning after today, as I will no longer need the Smiling Boddhi. Surely you can't expect me to find a third sky rank spirit herb within the time we have left now?”

He refused to fall victim to the third master's extortion. The latter was calling it a trade, but it was actually daylight robbery. If he handed over three sky rank herbs, the third master would probably ask for a fourth. People like him were greedy beyond help.

Third Master Jing shrugged. “Friend, a trade can only happen if two parties are willing. I'm not the type of person to force a deal upon others. If you don't hand over a third sky rank spirit herb, don't even think about leaving with a Smiling Boddhi in Frostmoon City. My city, my rules.”

The third master refused to budge. It was obviously not his first time doing this. He was extorting Jiang Chen without fear while waiting for the latter to get on his knees and beg.

Jiang Chen would never fall for such a trick. "Third Master, I've mentioned it before, and I'll mention it again. I only have two sky rank spirit herbs. If you really have to suck my blood dry, then I can offer you two more earth rank spirit herbs. It's all I have."

Jiang Chen might sound like he was trying to come to a compromise on the outside, but he was absolutely smoldering on the inside. Regardless of whether the trade was successful or not, he was going to remember this offense.

Third Master Jing was a little offended when Jiang Chen refused to back down. He was treated like a king in this city. Even outsiders would have to conduct themselves in a respectful manner before him. Nobody had ever talked back to him before, especially not a youth that was still wet behind the ears like him!