

Three Realms 1091

Chapter 1091: How to Taunt With Greater Skill

Roughly fifteen minutes had passed, but the runner who announced that he would go to the prisons and bring their prisoner back still hadn't returned. Long Xiaoxuan was the first to grow impatient. "Hey Ke, I'm not as patient as my brother is. If you can't bring our guy over in another seven and a half minutes, we'll teach you a lesson."

Still, Elder Ke maintained an inscrutable expression as he chuckled. "Relax, someone will show up eventually. That, I'm sure of."

Long Xiaoxuan snorted, but ultimately decided to shut his mouth. However, his expression spoke volumes, he was hoping very much that the guy wouldn't show up so that a fight could break out.

Fifteen minutes later, the guy who went to pick up the prisoner finally returned. They muttered a few code words beside Elder Ke's ears. Jiang Chen heard them clearly, but couldn't understand their meaning at all.

"Where is our guy?" Jiang Chen asked in a low tone.

Elder Ke laughed. "I'm sorry, but the guy you're looking for is no longer in our custody. You better go ask the Moon God Sect if you want him."

"Are you toying with me?" Jiang Chen asked again in a surprisingly calm tone.

Elder Ke brayed with laughter. "That's right, I'm toying with you! You beat up my men in front of our doorstep and dare ask to make a deal with me like nothing happened? Just who do you think you are?"

Liu Zhen's face turned green with realization. No wonder Elder Ke had suddenly changed his attitude even though he'd about to erupt just now! It was because he wanted to gain the five hundred million saint spirit stones first!

Jiang Chen nodded slightly before shooting a glance at Liu Zhen. "Liu Zhen, we'll deal with this. Back off a little and don't get caught in the crossfire."

Liu Zhen stared at Jiang Chen in shock and hesitation. He was obviously still reeling from the loss of five hundred million saint spirit stones.

"Don't worry, I promise you that he'll spit out every stone he took in a moment. If your friend is still here, I promise you that they'll return him to you as well!" Jiang Chen wasn't boasting in the slightest. To Elder Ke though, it was of course the joke of the century.

"Boy, I think you've lost your mind. The Heavensfall Society has never had the habit of returning what they took, not to mention his accomplice here completely deserves his punishment for breaking our rules. Forget five hundred saint spirit stones, one billion or even two billion saint spirit stones are still insufficient to cleanse his sin!" Elder Ke declared righteously.

"Elder Ke, I'm not sure where you're getting your confidence from, but I can tell you one thing: I knew from the start you won't return our guy. I purposely gave you the five hundred million saint spirit stones." Jiang Chen smiled calmly.

Elder Ke stared blankly at him for an instant before laughing out loud. "Boy, do you think I'll really believe such nonsense? Or are you trying to make yourself feel better? Hahaha..."

Jiang Chen stared at Elder Ke like he was staring at an idiot. "If you hadn't stolen our money, we wouldn't have the right to destroy you, would we now?"

This time, Elder Ke wasn't the only one who was stunned. Emperor Peerless looked blank for a moment and Long Xiaoxuan was also staring at Jiang Chen in surprise. They'd all noticed that Jiang Chen wasn't actually joking.

Long Xiaoxuan started laughing. "No wonder! I was surprised when you suddenly turned so easy-going, but it was all just a trick! You're even more treacherous than I am."

Long Xiaoxuan's provocation tended to be too stiff. In comparison, Jiang Chen's were more skillful. A logical excuse was critical when picking a quarrel because the party in the right would always have the upper hand, regardless of the scale of the disagreement.

Elder Ke's proud expression froze. He realized that Jiang Chen might really have been playing a trick from the start. Although he didn't think that Heavensfall Society would mind a petty trick like this at all, he minded because his intellect had been challenged and beaten by the other party. The flustered elder ordered angrily. "Destroy them!"

Jiang Chen let out a chuckle. "Brother Mo, as you can see they're the ones who's bullying us. It's not the other way around."

Emperor Peerless wasn't a good-tempered person to begin with, and his disgust towards the Heavensfall Society only deepened when he saw how shameless the gang was. They'd detained Liu Zhen's friend for no reason and refused to release their prisoner even after receiving the ransom. Most importantly, Emperor Peerless was inclined to fulfill Jiang Chen's wishes right now, so he wasn't going to show the Heavensfall Society any mercy.

Jiang Chen's words implied that the bigger the commotion, the better. But on the other hand, Jiang Chen and Long Xiaoxuan wouldn't get to have any fun if he were to go all out from the beginning. That was why he courteously decided to train his gaze on Elder Ke and Elder Ke alone. He didn't bother looking at anyone else.

The enemy had the advantage in numbers over Long Xiaoxuan and Jiang Chen, but Emperor Peerless wasn't worried because both were monstrous geniuses who could challenge cultivators beyond their realm. Elder Ke was certain of his victory at first. But when he suddenly shuddered and realized that a single glance from Emperor Peerless was all it took to freeze him in place, he panicked completely. The gaze wasn't an immobilizing technique, but the power behind it was so great that Elder Ke's consciousness nearly crumbled on the spot. That was how he knew that any movement he made might be fatal for him.

Emperor Peerless smiled calmly. "Be a good boy and stay there. I don't want to lower myself by fighting you, but if you force my hand, I will end you quickly."

Elder Ke felt numb all over. Every word his opponent uttered felt like heavy weights pressing down on his entire body.

“You...” Elder Ke’s teeth chattered. “Who on earth... are you?”

Emperor Peerless smiled leisurely. “Don’t you think your question is a bit too late?”

Ping ping ping ping! By now the fight had broken out in full force. Jiang Chen wasn’t too vested in the fight because it was just a simple warm up to him, but Long Xiaoxuan was the opposite. He might not be in his true form right now, but his dragon bloodline still gave him incredible combat power even though he was only using hand-to-hand combat techniques.

When he activated the power of his bloodline, his body became as tough as metal. It allowed him to crush any initial level emperor realm expert, be it in both offensive power and defensive power. He could also fight any mid level emperor realm on equal footing. He could even gain the upper hand if he was performing well. In short, almost no one beneath mid level emperor realm could beat him. He was currently crushing the senior executives of the Heavensfall Society to his heart’s content.

The senior executives were actually quite strong, not to mention that there were a lot of mid level cultivators in the area as well. However, those inferior cultivators couldn’t even get close to the battlefield. Whenever they tried, Long Xiaoxuan’s terrifyingly strong dragon battle aura forced them away. Some on the weaker side spat blood the second the dragon aura washed over them.

So then, Jiang Chen actually looked like a third wheel in this battle. He didn’t have a chance to show off his skills at all. He didn’t mind the breathing space, however. It wasn’t like he was weak, he just thought that he didn’t need to expose his skills unless necessary. Long Xiaoxuan could show off all he wanted since he was more than capable of handling the situation, not to mention that the dragon had been holding back his thirst for battle for a long time.

Cold sweat poured out of every inch of Elder Ke’s body as he heard the blood curdling screams. He had very good hearing, so he could tell who was screaming. The screams undoubtedly came from his men, and it wasn’t hard to imagine those two youngsters slaughtering them like wolves among lambs. The reversal terrified him. He’d never imagined that the sure-prey in the palm of his hand would be so troublesome, and that they’d been planning to screw the Society over from the start!

Elder Ke was engulfed with regret and terror. He prayed that the Society lords would show up as soon as possible. If this situation were to continue, it wouldn’t be long before they were all slaughtered. If their opponents were in a bad mood, they might even escalate their killing to the entire Society.

At first, Long Xiaoxuan’s bloodthirst wasn’t completely ignited. But as the battle went on, his cruel side began to show more and more. The number of casualties began to climb rapidly. At first, the sage realm cultivators were the only ones who were killed by his dragon aura. Then, some peak sage realm experts and even half-step emperor realm experts began to follow in their footsteps as well. Even the initial level emperor realm experts were pushed into dire straits by Long Xiaoxuan’s perverse attacks. They repeatedly cried out for help.

“Elder Ke, if you keep doing nothing the rest of us are going to die!”

“What are still you waiting for, Elder Ke?”

“Elder Ke, the Society lords will punish you if you do nothing about this!”

The elder's expression flickered again and again. This situation was torture to him to say the least. The two youngsters might be extraordinarily skillful, but he was still confident he could deal with them. The problem was the mysterious expert who stood not far away from him. If the mysterious expert could almost shatter his consciousness with a single glance and a couple of words, then he was someone completely beyond the elder's level. A cultivator like this had to be at peak ninth level emperor realm or even a half-step great emperor at minimum. That was the limit of Elder Ke's imagination. He dared not imagine Emperor Peerless as a great emperor. It wasn't his fault for thinking the way, however. A great emperor wouldn't show themselves in the world, and very few great emperors would cause havoc in a bustling city like this. A cultivator at this level had to consider many things before they could act. As a result, they actually didn't fight as often as weaker cultivators. After all, the destructive power of a great emperor was too great, and the consequences of their appearance too severe to say the least. Any great emperor had to deliberate carefully before they engaged any opponent in battle. That was why Elder Ke thought of Emperor Peerless as a peak emperor realm cultivator.

Chapter 1092: Not Surrendering? Beat Them Again!

Elder Ke was stuck between a rock and a hard place as the number of casualties kept climbing due to Long Xiaoxuan and Jiang Chen rampaging through his men. The initial level emperor realm experts felt that death was a heartbeat away due to Long Xiaoxuan's pressure.

Jiang Chen was a lot stronger than conventional initial level emperor realm, even though he hadn't yet deployed his full strength. His enemies couldn't afford to be careless for even an instant, because he had the absolute advantage in speed thanks to the Kunpeng Meteoric Escape. His tactics were very simple. Cooperation with the dragon was in order because this wasn't the kind of limelight he wanted.

An emperor realm cultivator, whose weapon of choice was a long spear, suddenly roared and thrust his weapon towards Jiang Chen. "Die!"

The fellow was furious because he had been harassed by Jiang Chen since the beginning of the battle. They had to split their attention towards this shit stirrer because he kept ambushing them randomly. If they eliminated him first, they could focus all their attention on that ruthless youngster. Even if they still couldn't beat the youngster, they could at least preserve their lives. Right now however, the situation was out of their control and their lives at stake.

The most irritating thing about this fight was that Jiang Chen and Long Xiaoxuan were incredibly fast. The two were so fast that the Society members felt like mentally breaking down at any second. Where the hell did these abnormal cultivators come from? How are they so powerful at such a young age? In terms of speed, the two youngsters were faster than all of them.

Although the sudden thrust of the long spear was a little sudden, Jiang Chen possessed unrivaled martial dao knowledge and experience. Naturally, he identified the essence of this attack with a single glance. He sped up and moved forwards instead of retreating. A shift sideways was enough to perfectly avoid his opponent's fierce attack. He clamped onto the spear shaft with all his strength.

His enemy sneered at the gesture and attempted to pull back his spear. However, he quickly discovered that he wasn't able to move his weapon at all. Shock colored his expression. He never imagined that the youngster who'd been relying on speed would possess such depths to his cultivation!

Jiang Chen had been using only speed and guerrilla tactics to harass them throughout the battle, so the Society members had subconsciously thought that his cultivation was weaker than the arrogant youngster. It was only when the spear wielder made further futile attempts that he realized just how wrong he'd been. Jiang Chen wasn't weak at all. He didn't just have good speed; it was all a pretense from the start! By the time he finally realized that Jiang Chen was concealing his strength, it was already too late. Long Xiaoxuan's palm penetrated his chest in the next second.

"You're a convincing fake." Long Xiaoxuan stuck out his tongue before throwing down these sarcastic words. Jiang Chen chuckled and feigned ignorance. He then moved on to ambush the next person...

By now, the remaining emperor realm fighters realized that Jiang Chen had been hiding his strength all this time. They felt even greater pressure. Long Xiaoxuan was already a source of infinite pressure, but they were actually fighting against an even more shrewd, treacherous and dangerous opponent! This... this was starting to look like one-sided annihilation!

Every single one of the fighters felt like smashing their heads against a wall. They furiously cursed Elder Ke and eighteen generations of his ancestors. If Elder Ke hadn't stirred up trouble, then this strange battle wouldn't have happened in the first place. They wouldn't have lost so many of their men. Most importantly, they weren't going to hold on much longer unless the battle took an advantageous turn soon.

After the death of another fighter, a large gap opened up in their defenses. At this rate, everyone was going to die in less than fifteen minutes. There was no point in surrendering either since the arrogant, bloodthirsty youngster didn't look like he would stop until he killed every last one of them. Frosty ice had gripped the hearts of the remaining fighters. Why was Elder Ke still holding back even now?!

What they didn't know that Elder Ke's consciousness was close to collapsing, even though he hadn't moved an inch. Emperor Peerless hadn't attacked him, but the pressure the great emperor exuded was completely overwhelming.

"Friend..." Elder Ke said in a pained tone. "The Heavensfall Society admits defeat this time. Everything is negotiable as long as you don't go overboard. Will you forgive us if I return to you all of the spirit stones?"

The elder didn't want to submit, but he didn't have a choice.

Emperor Peerless' answer was cool and careless. "I'm not the one you should be asking. If you want to blame someone, then blame your own incompetence and failing to recognize who is the prey and who is the predator. I understand. You're used to getting your way, so it's difficult to recognize a bad habit and correct it."

He neither liked nor disliked a person like Elder Ke. There were countless people like him throughout the human domain. It didn't matter if he let the elder go, just as it didn't matter if he killed the the elder.

Elder Ke felt cold sweat beading down his forehead as a chill ran through him. This powerful expert had spoken as if he was a subordinate of those two youngsters. If this was true, then just how important really were these two youngsters? Although the elder was both shocked and scared, he still gathered the courage to plead, "Both of you, please! I admit defeat, I admit defeat! If you're willing to stay your hand, I'm willing to repay you twice the amount of your loss."

Jiang Chen chuckled and cast a glance at Long Xiaoxuan.

The dragon responded with a dissatisfied expression. "You don't look like someone who can be bought off with just double compensation."

Jiang Chen himself didn't plan to end things so easily. He wasn't going to withdraw today until they got the guy they were here for.

"Ke, are you playing dumb or are you actually dumb?" Jiang Chen's tone was cold. "Did you forget that we're here for someone? You think you're rich because you can pay double, is that it?"

They want the prisoner? Elder Ke laughed ruefully. Just now, he'd only been pretending to have his men grab their prisoner. In reality, they had turned the man over to the Moon God Sect a long time ago.

The man had come asking about something that the Moon God Sect repeatedly ordered to never discuss. That was why the Society had immediately captured the origin realm wandering cultivator. As for the five hundred million saint spirit stones they'd demanded from Liu Zhen, it was just normal course of operations. There was no reason to let an opportunity to scam someone else slip by, after all.

But Elder Ke had never imagined in his wildest dreams that a mere origin realm wandering cultivator would cause so much trouble. Since when did origin realm wandering cultivators have such powerful backing? At first, they didn't hold much hope that Liu Zhen could gather the spirit stones they demanded. But not only did he actually manage to produce five hundred million spirit stones, he even brought some terrifying helpers with him. If they knew this would happen, they would've detained Liu Zhen as well.

However, Elder Ke dared not say that their man was no longer with the Heavensfall Society. He begged again and again, "Please listen to me, friend. If you wish to get your man, then you shouldn't slaughter us down to the very last. Even if you eliminate the entire Society, you still won't know where your man is, right?"

It was the truth, so Jiang Chen waved for Long Xiaoxuan to stop. The young dragon liked to bicker with Jiang Chen, but Jiang Chen was still the only human he trusted. Therefore, although he was reluctant, the dragon still obeyed the command even though he was reluctant to.

"You guys are too soft-hearted. He's the kind of person who'll only tell the truth after we beat the shit out of him." Long Xiaoxuan cast a disdainful glance at Elder Ke.

Jiang Chen smiled. "We can always keep fighting if he refuses to tell the truth."

Long Xiaoxuan's eyes lit up. "You're right. Hey, old man Ke, you can tell a lie or two if you like. My hands are still itchy, you know."

Elder Ke wasn't sure how to react. Today must be the unluckiest day in his life or something. Why did he have to run into a bunch of demon incarnates? When had the Heavensfall Society ever suffered such a terrible loss?

However, currently, he could only swallow his reluctance and obey. Emperor Peerless simply stared at Elder Ke with a supercilious expression on his face.

The remaining senior executives of the Society glared at Elder Ke after barely escaping with their lives. It was obvious that they were furious with his inaction. The most depressing thing was that the elder couldn't even defend himself. What could he say? That he'd been frightened into inaction by a glance? Or should he tell them he couldn't summon the strength to act? He would only be embarrassing himself more.

Fiercely tamping down the bitterness in his heart, Elder Ke responded carefully, "Please forgive me for not recognizing my superiors, friend."

They just had their face slapped and their men killed, but they had to apologize and make amends with their tormentors instead. This was undoubtedly a great stain on Society history.

"Cut the nonsense and skip to the main point." Jiang Chen waved his hand.

"Ai..." Elder Ke let out a long sigh to conceal the burning anger in his heart. "I don't understand how an insignificant wandering cultivator like Liu Zhen is able to hire the likes of you. If he paid you handsomely to settle this matter, I can guarantee that we can do even better to win your assistance."

Jiang Chen said indifferently. "That's still nonsense."

Elder Ke was losing control of his composure at this point, but still he restrained his anger and nodded. "We detained Liu Zhen's accomplice because he violated a taboo of Tilted Moon Region. The punishment for violation is death, so he was taken away by the Moon God Sect a long while ago. We can't produce the man you seek even if we wanted to."

"Taboo? What taboo? Are you seriously telling me that an origin realm wandering cultivator is worth the attention of a first rank sect like Moon God Sect? Are you sure you're not bullshitting me?" Jiang Chen's expression darkened as he responded in an unfriendly tone.

"No no no, this taboo is an exception. It doesn't matter if you're origin, sage, or even emperor realm. All those who violate the taboo will be punished." Elder Ke hurriedly explained.

"I'm curious, what is this taboo, exactly?" Jiang Chen's tone was frosty.

"Friend, it's a taboo, you know. It is not my place to speak of it." Elder Ke attempted to sidestep the responsibility.

Jiang Chen nodded and looked at Long Xiaoxuan. "I think they want another beating."

Elder Ke paled drastically. "Wait! Please listen."

Chapter 1093: News of His Parents?

Jiang Chen glared at Elder Ke coldly. "You have one, final chance."

Over the course of several millennia, Elder Ke had seen and experienced many things. He knew better than to challenge Jiang Chen's threats. He was in dire straits and had to either obey or die.

"Friend, the taboo has something to do with one of the Moon God Sect's secrets. Years ago, their holy girl was left behind in the secular world as a child after infighting within the sect. This matter was an enormous disgrace to the sect, which was why they banned all discussion of it. There are very few who

know about it. After many years had gone by, an origin realm cultivator suddenly appeared out of nowhere and brought up the matter. Because of that..." Elder Ke began to stammer as he observed Jiang Chen's facial expressions.

Jiang Chen's heart pounded furiously. An enormous disgrace to the Moon God Sect? A holy girl left behind in the secular world? Why does this sound so familiar? When he'd been at the Prancing Pony, Niu Wuhua had informed him that the Moon God Sect had left behind a female infant in the secular world as well...

Was this mere coincidence, or had he found the person he was seeking on this trip? According to Niu Wuhua's intelligence, the holy girl left behind in the secular world was likely his mother in his current life. He traveled all the way to Tilted Moon Region just to verify this.

Jiang Chen was overwhelmed by emotion as various thoughts ran through his mind. If the holy girl is my mother, then who is the origin realm cultivator looking for her? He was almost afraid to travel down that train of thought.

The answer was painfully obvious, but he couldn't help but be apprehensive about it. The origin realm cultivator, Liu Zhen's good friend, was very likely his father. It was a reasonable conjecture. However, he didn't want it to be the truth. According to Elder Ke, his father had come to inquire about the holy girl many months ago.

A lot of time had passed since he'd been handed over to the Moon God Sect. The topic was such an enormous taboo that nobody was allowed to discuss or ask about it. Anybody who violated this rule would likely have to pay a great price. If that man really was his father, the Moon God Sect might've killed him already. Jiang Chen could no longer maintain his composure.

He flashed a bone-chilling glare at Elder Ke. "Old Man Ke, why did you hand him over to the Moon God Sect for merely asking a question? Is this how the Heavensfall Society treats

its customers? Do you betray all of them at your own convenience?!"

Jiang Chen suddenly lost control of his temper as he exploded with rage.

Elder Ke was dumbfounded. He couldn't understand Jiang Chen's sudden and complete change in attitude. Why was Liu Zhen's hired goon so emotionally attached to this matter? It almost sounded like the elder had murdered his father or something. Was there a need to go to such extremes? Origin realm cultivators were mere ants in the Upper Eight Regions.

"Friend... despite our strength, we're still one of many factions in the Tilted Moon Region. In this region, the sect's words are law." Elder Ke smiled wryly. "Over and over again, they've ordered us to apprehend anybody who breaches the taboo and to hand violators over to the Moon God Sect."

"And then?" Jiang Chen's voice was colder than ice. He loomed with the pressure of a massive iceberg.

"A-and... t-then..." His aura had rendered Elder Ke speechless. The elder was stuttering endlessly and couldn't seem to form any discernible words.

"Brother Long and Old Brother Mo, go ahead!" Jiang Chen could no longer control his emotions and immediately gave an order to Emperor Peerless and Long Xiaoxuan.

Long Xiaoxuan was elated when Jiang Chen gave the order and immediately launched himself at the emperor realm cultivators. Emperor Peerless realized that there was more to this situation when he saw Jiang Chen's sudden outburst. He chuckled and landed in front of Elder Ke with a flash of his figure. Color immediately drained from the elder's face. The latter wanted to put up a proper resistance, but the emperor had already placed a hand on his shoulder. It felt as though a mountain was bearing down on his shoulder. He couldn't move no matter how much he struggled.

"Senior, mercy..." Despair flashed across his face. "I-if... if you kill me, the lords of our Society will never let the matter rest!"

Emperor Peerless burst into laughter. "I only wanted to subdue you while they dished out the punishment. But since you've threatened this emperor, I look forward to seeing how your leaders are going to punish me. Hehehehe."

Elder Ke almost wet his pants. This emperor? H-he... he's a great emperor?! He was petrified as all thought escaped his mind. Oh no, oh no! We offended a great emperor! What have we done?!"

It was all he could think about before the emperor casually patted him on the back. The formless palm strike connected with the force of a heavy mallet. Time ground to a standstill. Elder Ke instantly went limp and fell to the floor, dead. The palm strike had shattered both his body and soul. His eyes were wide open. Even upon death, he hadn't realized how incredibly frightening the person he'd just offended was.

Elder Ke was at upper level emperor realm, but to Emperor Peerless, he was a child that had barely learnt how to walk. He didn't even have the ability to run away, let alone threaten the emperor. The senior executives who witnessed the scene were aghast with horror. They instantly realize why Elder Ke hadn't given them a helping hand just now. It wasn't because he didn't want to, but because he couldn't! Even if he had a thousand galls, he wouldn't dare act recklessly in front of an expert as powerful as his killer.

"Brothers, our enemies are strong! We'll have to make break for it! Run to the Moon God Sect and seek help from the first division!"

"Yes! Let's make a break for it and find the Society lords!" The emperor cultivators lost their will to fight after Elder Ke was killed with one strike. After all, the elder was several multitudes stronger than them. Why could they even do against an enemy that could kill a seventh level emperor with a single palm? They didn't even have the right to put up a show of. Unfortunately, escaping wasn't as easy as it sounded, especially when their enemies were speed freaks like Jiang Chen and Long Xiaoxuan. Long Xiaoxuan was exerting a lot of pressure on them to begin with, and now Jiang Chen didn't show any mercy either. He didn't reveal his commonly used martial methods, but he had no shortage of other methods.

These unspectacular initial level emperors weren't putting up much of a challenge. After Elder Ke was dead, Emperor Peerless immediately barricaded the area with his great emperor domain. It was almost impossible for their opponents to escape.

Moreover, Madame Yun hadn't even joined the fight yet. She may be ridden with illness, but she was still a ninth level emperor at the end of the day. Even the skinniest camel was larger than a horse. She was no longer at her peak, but initial level emperors still wouldn't be able to escape her.

One by one, the senior executives were hunted down by Long Xiaoxuan and Jiang Chen. These were men that had committed every evil. Because of their vicious and violent natures, they didn't beg for mercy even in the face of death. Instead, they kept fighting back fervently.

Unfortunately for them, this wasn't a fair battle. No matter how much they struggled, their numbers continued to dwindle. The battle only came to an end when Long Xiaoxuan dealt with the final opponent. The entrance to the Heavensfall Society was now littered with corpses and dyed with blood.

Long Xiaoxuan looked at Jiang Chen with a laugh. "How about we hack our way in next?"

"Let's." Jiang Chen replied without hesitation.

Emperor Peerless made a sweeping gesture to ask Madame Yun to join him. The Heavensfall Society was nothing before the likes of him. If his blood thirst was piqued, he would charge in to even the Moon God Sect's sacred grounds, let alone an underground faction like the Heavensfall Society.

"Ah Yun, my brother seems to be emotionally unstable right now. I'm afraid I won't be able to calm him down. Why don't you give it a try?"

Madame Yun was also extremely grateful to Jiang Chen. He was their benefactor who had saved their lives. She immediately approached him after noticing that he wasn't himself. "Brother Zhen, did the Heavensfall Society offend you?" she asked tenderly.

Her gentle voice calmed him down like a bucket of cold water over his head.

"Sister-in-law, It's a long story. There's no time to explain. I have to go inside and have a look now," he replied woefully.

Emperor Peerless nodded when he saw that Jiang Chen had regained his composure. "Go! Even if you wish to traverse a mountain of daggers and a sea of flames, old brother will come with you, let alone the Heavensfall Society!"

Long Xiaoxuan didn't say anything, but his unwavering expression spoke a thousand words.

Liu Zhen however, was so disbelieving that he had trouble processing what was going on. He was someone who thought on his feet, but he was still utterly bewildered by the mountain of corpses at the entrance of the Society. Never in a thousand years did he think that things would end in a slaughter. Moreover, it was the Heavensfall Society that was slaughtered, and not them.

He'd only hired them to help him save his friend, but it seemed like they were more concerned about his friend's safety than he was. He was incredibly grateful, but couldn't help but feel a little surprised.

Chapter 1094: His Surname is Also Jiang?

"Liu Zhen, come here." Jiang Chen signalled Liu Zhen over with a solemn tone. "What exactly is your relationship with that companion of yours?"

Liu Zhen stuttered. "He's a martial dao friend that I met by chance. We got along well, so we eventually became sworn brothers after going through life and death together."

"Does a person you met by chance warrant such loyalty from you?" Jiang Chen was a little skeptical.

Liu Zhen was visibly agitated. "Sir Shao, I'm not a capable man, nor do I speak the code of brotherhood and loyalty. But my companion and I, while we may not be brothers of the same blood, we've been through thick and thin together. I have very few friends, of which only a few I call brother. This is the least I should be able to do for someone I've managed to meet whom I get along so well with."

Even the weak had their convictions and noble sentiments. Of this, Jiang Chen had never doubted. He determined that Liu Zhen wasn't lying after seeing the conviction on the man's face.

The strong weren't necessarily good, and the weak weren't necessarily despicable. Liu Zhen wasn't outstanding in any way, nor was he an exceedingly virtuous and upstanding person. However, even a normal person would have things they cared about and wanted to protect, like their kin and friends.

Jiang Chen sucked in a deep breath. "That companion of yours, what is his surname?"

Liu Zhen looked at Jiang Chen warily before he shook his head. "I know it, but I cannot tell."

"Why not?" Jiang Chen couldn't resist asking.

"No reason. I refuse to say a thing." Liu Zhen was unrelenting.

Jiang Chen pondered deeply for a moment before he glancing back at Liu Zhen. "His surname is Jiang, isn't it?"

Liu Zhen trembled like a leaf while staring at Jiang Chen suspiciously, like he was staring at a monster. His expressions and body language betrayed him.

Jiang Chen was visibly agitated. "Is his surname really Jiang?" Emperor Peerless was suddenly lost in thought. He seemed to have gotten the gist of things after listening to their conversation. However, it was merely a conjecture. He hadn't gotten confirmation yet.

Jiang Chen frantically picked Liu Zhen up by his collar. "Tell me! Is his surname really Jiang?"

Liu Zhen closed his eyes without putting up any kind of resistance. "I don't know."

The emperor immediately tried to diffuse the situation. "Brother, you should calm down. Don't be so hasty. Liu Zhen, you shouldn't be too stubborn either. My brother has no evil intentions."

Jiang Chen immediately let Liu Zhen go and looked at him apologetically. "Apologies, I was too hasty. Liu Zhen, I admire your loyalty. I really do. However, the companion of yours is very important to me. I really hope that you can tell me more about him. I guarantee you that I have no evil intentions, or may I be destroyed by heaven and earth!"

Liu Zhen still seemed a little hesitant as his eyes flitted to and fro with uncertainty. "Truly?"

Jiang Chen smiled wryly. "Do I seem evil or something? I'm not trying to boast, but what could an origin realm cultivator like you possibly have that I might desire? The Radiant Celestial Grass? Why would I need to con you when I can just take them off your hands?"

Liu Zhen sighed. "Sir Shao, I'm not trying to keep you on the tenterhooks on purpose. My companion has told me that because of his unique background, someone might try to capture him in order to threaten his kin. This is why I'm not willing to disclose his identity. However Sir Shao, you've already guessed his surname correctly, so why are you being so relentless and overbearing?"

"His surname really is Jiang? Is he called Jiang Feng?" Jiang Chen was very solemn.

"How did you know?" Liu Zhen reacted with utter disbelief. Did he reveal a hint by mistake?

Jiang Chen's mouth began to quiver. He seemed very agitated all of a sudden. "Old Brother Mo, let's head inside and search. I'm still rather cynical of the Heavensfall Society. Elder Ke might be playing us for a fool."

The emperor nodded. "Let's go."

Liu Zhen was panicking. "Sir Shao, you still haven't told me how you know!"

Jiang Chen shook his head without saying anything. He was visibly anxious and charged into the building.

Long Xiaoxuan glanced at Liu Zhen and sighed. "Liu Zhen, you've made a smart decision. Your future is set if your companion is somehow rescued."

The latter responded with a blank expression. He didn't understand the meaning behind Long Xiaoxuan's words. "Sir Long, what exactly do you mean?"

"All I can tell you is that the so-called Sir Shao is actually a Jiang too."

Liu Zhen quivered as though he'd realized something. He seemed extremely dumbfounded as he stared at Jiang Chen's back. "He's a Jiang too? C-can it be...?" he muttered to himself. He grew increasingly agitated. He and Jiang Feng had been through thick and thin together and became as close as brothers over the years. They'd also shared their backgrounds with each other.

Liu Zhen's parents were no longer alive. He once had a dao partner, but it was a story filled with tragedy as well. He sympathized with Jiang Feng greatly after hearing his side of the story. They grew closer after realizing their similarities and eventually became brothers. Jiang Feng had always been a straightforward man. As their friendship deepened, he decided to reveal his background. After all, it's been a long time since he began wandering the jianghu by himself. He probably felt the need to vent a little to a brother who he could trust with his life. This was why they practically hid nothing from each other.

When Jiang Feng left the Skylareland Kingdom, he'd brought Jiang Ying, the leader of the Jiang Iron Guards, with him. However, they met with misfortune a mere six months after they'd left the kingdom. Jiang Ying sacrificed himself to save Jiang Feng, but from then onwards, Jiang Feng was by himself. Jiang Feng was devastated by Jiang Ying's death, but eventually got back to his feet. The goal of finding his missing wife was what pushed him onwards.

This goal had stimulated his potential and caused him to attain multiple breakthroughs. After all, he'd taken the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill. His body and talents had all been significantly upgraded. His progress in martial dao accelerated. A few months after Jiang Ying's death, he met Liu Zhen and they eventually swore brotherhood.

His cultivation level was much inferior to Liu Zhen's when they first met, but he'd surpassed Liu Zhen within a decade. Liu Zhen was awed by Jiang Feng's martial dao talent. As time went on, Jiang Feng eventually became the older brother, while Liu Zhen became the follower. However, Liu Zhen didn't regret this one bit. He took instructions well and would occasionally share his input.

Over the past decade, they'd gone through thick and thin together. Tenaciously, they survived the cruel and ruthless world of cultivation. During a fateful encounter, they stumbled across an ancient ruin and discovered the Radiant Celestial Grass. Unfortunately, it was all there was in the ruins.

These poor origin realm bumpkins were suddenly so rich that their wealth could rival the wealth of nations. It was a pity that they couldn't sell their treasures in the market. After all, they were mere origin realm cultivators. Openly selling the Radiant Celestial Grass in the market would be seeking their own death. Liu Zhen was incredibly cautious and vigilant for that reason.

Jiang Feng had wandered the Upper Eight Regions for a better part of a decade, but he simply couldn't find any news about his wife. The only reason he visited Frostmoon City was because the city was located at the most remote part of Upper Eight Regions. He didn't even know if he'd find his answers in this city. He'd only visited the Heavensfall Society to try his luck and not because he'd received some kind of outside information.

Every time he visited a new place, he would visit the local underground factions because they were the ones who were best at acquiring information. He heard that the Heavensfall Society was the strongest underground faction in the city, which was why he visited them. Unfortunately, this was a place of no return. He'd walked right into a trap.

Jiang Feng had been to many places in the Upper Eight Regions, but this was the first time he'd ever encountered such a thing. Money had always been king when it came to acquiring information. Even if the investigation didn't go smoothly, as long as he paid his dues, nobody would ever give him any trouble. But that wasn't the case in Frostmoon City.

When Liu Zhen learned that Jiang Feng had been captured by the Heavensfall Society and 500 million saint spirit stones was required as ransom, he immediately headed to Pillfire City. This was how he met Jiang Chen and Emperor Peerless. It truly seemed like the fates itself had a hand in this encounter.

The doors inside the Heavensfall Society were all sealed shut. The fight outside had frightened the inhabitants greatly. Even Elder Ke had been killed almost instantly. Some of the senior executives inside were quite strong, but none of them were quite as powerful as Elder Ke. None of the Society lords were at the headquarters either.

The people inside the headquarters were incredibly afraid of the murderous invaders. Unfortunately, the tightly shut door and the formations they set up were of little hindrance to Emperor Peerless and Jiang Chen. At the end of the day, they were still an underground faction. Compared to the great sects, their heritage paled in comparison.

Great sects were often located in restricted mountains protected by powerful formations. These formations weren't something the common person could easily get through. Even an unparalleled cultivator would find it difficult. The Heavensfall Society were protected by formations as well, but they

paled greatly in comparison. All crumbled under Emperor Peerless' might. Those who blocked their way were promptly crushed and flattened.

Chapter 1095: The Heavensworn Four

Jiang Chen had transformed into an avatar of death. He had only one thought written on his face. Die if you obstruct me! Thus, he faced little resistance from the members of the Heavensfall Society. Default reactions were to cower in a corner and hope not to be noticed, arms over their heads. One wrong move, and we'll be dead!

However, the young lord of Veluriyam Capital wasn't murderous or sociopathic enough to kill submissive people. He held back his anger and left them be. Jiang Chen searched the Society's headquarters in and out, but discovered nothing useful. Immensely furious, he summoned several high-ranking executives. Alas, their stories were identical to Elder Ke's.

The person they had captured long ago had been surrendered to the Moon God Sect almost immediately. It hadn't been a move to curry social favor, but a routine act. The answer was the same no matter whom he asked. The fire that burned within Jiang Chen's chest grew fierier by the moment.

"Brother Long, bind them all! When their lords come back... I'll make them pay!" Though he didn't want to kill all of them on the spot for now, he was far from satisfied. His father wasn't at the Heavensfall Society's headquarters, but his search had revealed evidence of numerous other heinous crimes.

All members present had the blood of countless innocents on their hands. They were a profiteering organization that stopped at nothing to sate their greed. Jiang Chen resisted slaughtering them, but he was perfectly happy to rob them of all their ill-gotten gains. He completely destroyed the Society's complex and infrastructure in the process as well.

The wealth stored at the Society's headquarters amounted to over half of their total fortunes. After Jiang Chen's larceny, it would take significant effort from their lords to rebuild. The criminal organization might never recover. However, this was only a single payment of interest for him. He needed far more to quench the raging fires of his heart!

The tragedy that had befallen the Heavensfall Society was momentous news. Their absent lords quickly received word of the destruction and hastily made their returns from all over. But none of them were fools. They came from every direction, yet no one brashly came in alone. Instead, they gathered together as a group and made plans to enter together.

They were well aware that their new adversary had terrifying strength. If the lords didn't stick together, they would only serve as easy prey. The act of being in a group also emboldened them. After all, the four lords were the strongest and most core members of the Heavensfall Society. For them, it was much more reassuring to be side by side than otherwise.

"Big bro, you got any info on that guy? The Heavensfall Society hasn't made anyone like that angry, have we?" The four lords of the Society were sworn brothers. They styled themselves 'the Heavensworn Four'. The eldest was surnamed Ye, given name Taiyan. He had an explosive temper, but was the mightiest among the quartet. He was a ninth level emperor realm cultivator. The other three brothers were all around a similar, slightly inferior level of strength at eighth level emperor realm. These four

upper rank emperor realm cultivators formed the fraternal core of the Heavensfall Society and controlled every aspect of its operations.

There was a flash of killing intent in Cong Taiyan's eyes. "I don't care where they're from. What do I care about their prestige or power when they're messing around with our Society?!"

"We should still be careful, big brother. They must have something giving them confidence. I'm sure they're well aware of our reputation, but came anyway." The second-oldest of the four spoke up. He was the strategist of the group, called Beigong Ming.

"Something giving them confidence?" Cong Taiyan snickered. "We command the wind and rains in Frostmoon City. Let's see whose backing is stronger!"

"Don't worry, I've informed those at the first division as well as the sect's Bleakmoon Hall of Punishment. Hmph, anyone and everyone who comes to Frostmoon City to stir up trouble will be met the same fate. This is our territory! Either stay put or get put down!"

Cong Taiyan was filled with grand emotion. His body screamed, "If not me, then who?!"

Beigong Ming was wily, but lacked in both raw strength and force of personality compared to the oldest member of the Heavensworn Four. That was why he was perfectly content to admit Cong Taiyan's superiority.

He knew the other man's nature well. Once Cong Taiyan made a decision, no amount of effort could turn his opinion around. Truthfully, Cong Taiyan's dominant and decisive style was one of the bigger reasons that the Heavensfall Society had been able to rapidly expand these past few years. The Society exhibited many of the similar qualities. Beigong Ming knew that further counseling was useless now.

The four of them rushed towards their headquarters. It didn't take long at all for them to arrive on the street outside the building. The first thing they noticed was that a huge crowd had gathered outside. There were multiple layers of onlookers, stacked into numerous rings.

"Tsk tsk, who has the Heavensfall Society offended this time?"

"They deserve it. The things they've done are finally coming back to bite them!"

"Shh, quiet down. Do you want to die? We're in front of their gates right now."

"Heh, what's there to be scared of? No one has come out from inside even now. They're probably all dead by now, huh?" The words were filled with a gloating schadenfreude. Clearly, their owner was greatly displeased with the Heavensfall Society, likely from an unpleasant past.

"All dead? But the society lords aren't even home. We'll see about who kills who when they come back!"

"Well then, I look forward to it. I hope they come back quickly. It would be great if I could see them being punished as well..." Someone else put a hand over his mouth before he could finish.

A keen-eyed companion had noticed the Heavensworn Four in the street with his peripheral vision. The sudden sight of the villains was quite startling, enough to evoke such a drastic reaction. If any more had been said and heard by the four guys down the street, the first man was dead for sure.

Thankfully, the Heavensworn Four were in no mood to listen for idle gossip about them. The crowd moved aside for them without prompting when they saw the lords' arrival. A path was made for them directly to the headquarters. The Heavensworn Four looked further into the distance to find a mass of dead executives splayed on the floor. It was absolutely a gruesome sight.

Elder Ke's corpse was the most prominent amongst them. The elder had great prestige even among the other elders of the Society. The four lords generally refrained from putting on airs in front of the old man. And now, his body had been sucked dry. He lay splayed like a desiccated corpse, all vital signs gone.

The appearance of the Heavensworn Four elicited accelerated heart rates and blood flow in all the observers. They backed off a dozen meters or so with great self awareness. They were uninterested in getting wrapped up in the trouble. Being mistaken for the perpetrator was a horrible notion. The Heavensworn Four who strode broadly down the path towards the Heavensfall Society's gate.

"They're stepping on our heads, big brother! This place belongs to us, the Heavensfall Society! Who is this bastard who's been killing people on the premises and where'd he come from?!" The youngest of the four jumped in a rage. His expression looked like he'd just been slapped across the face several times.

Beigong Ming's brows were knitted as well when he saw the carnage. Suddenly, he had an idea and proclaimed, "Onlookers, disperse! Those who remain here in three breaths' time will be seen as open enemies of the Heavensfall Society!"

The bystanders were all intimidated by this and scattered like a swarm of bees.

"Anyone who has reliable information about this incident is free to stay. Any accurate and useful information will be rewarded with the princely sum of one million saint spirit stones!"

Men would find courage given a high enough reward. Several of the people in the process of leaving decided to stay.

"Society Lord Beigong, you're not joking, are you?" There was zero possibility that Jiang Chen and Emperor Peerless's ruckus in front of the Heavensfall Society had remained unseen. In fact, they had been observed by a fair few neighboring residents.

"I have info on them, lord Beigong. I saw everything that happened." Instantly, people began to volunteer.

"Me too, Society Lord Beigong! The ones who came were a few youths plus a dao couple. One of them seemed to be acquainted with your Society—from a past dealing, perhaps. There was something about ransoming someone, but the deal fell through in the end... and then there was a fight."

"He didn't go into enough detail, Lord Beigong. It was like this..." The people who'd stayed scrambled over each other to snitch. They were worried that someone else would receive the reward.

To the side, Cong Taiyan had just finished examining the wounds of the dead. The severity of said wounds struck fear and irritation into his heart. The onlookers were speaking frantically over each other, but little useful information had come to light. He was more and more frustrated by their squabbling, and finally shouted. "Get out of here, all of you!"

Cong Taiyan was significantly more intimidating than Beigong Ming. The remaining onlookers dispersed immediately at his words.

“Why’d you do that, big bro? We were just getting somewhere...”

“What’s the point of asking in the first place?” The eldest of the Heavensworn Four retorted angrily. “Killing people on the premises of our Heavensfall Society? They were happy enough to murder everyone, so we’re already mortal enemies. Why ask? It’s the same either way!”

He waved a hand, still upset. “We’re going in.”

Cong Taiyan was certainly exerting his dominance. Leading the pack, he charged inside like a ball of flames. [1] However, he came to a screeching halt when he reached the door. It was as if he’d smashed himself into a wall. A potent countering force sent his body flying. If not for his strong cultivation, the force’s impact alone would be enough to give him bruises all over. Even without that, it put him in a frightened spin.

“Big brother!” The other three of the four were just as alarmed and rushed towards him. The quartet cared a fair bit about their brotherly loyalty to each other. After steadying his step from the unexpected attack, Cong Taiyan’s expression changed from anger into consternation. He became significantly more serious than before.

Chapter 1096: Prelude to Inner Conflict?

Just as the Heavensworn Four were gathering themselves and preparing to force their way back into their headquarters, a few figures strolled out from the main entrance. Jiang Chen and Long Xiaoxuan were in the lead, and Emperor Peerless and Madame Yun leisurely bringing up the rear. As for Liu Zhen, he didn’t bother coming out at all, instead staying inside to guard the now-hostage members of the Heavensfall Sect.

The hostages had all had restrictions placed on them, making them fish in a barrel, unable to resist in any way, shape, or form. Even a true qi cultivator could easily kill them in their current form, much less Liu Zhen.

Upon seeing Jiang Chen and his companions emerge, the Heavensworn Four were taken aback and reached new heights in their rage. Their surprise stemmed from the fact that these four outsiders could enter and exit headquarters so easily, while their rage came from the situation at hand. They were the lords of the Society, but were being made to look like challengers stirring up trouble. These outsiders were here to supersede and supplant them!

Cong Taiyan took a deep breath to forcefully suppress his rage and rasped out, “I have to say, you’ve got some nerve killing people in our territory.”

Jiang Chen smiled noncommittally while Long Xiaoxuan shrugged. “So we killed them. What do you want? Why don’t you mention how they all deserved their deaths?”

Cong Taiyan almost spat out a mouthful of blood in rage. Such flippant attitude from a murderer quite angered him, that youngster had no idea that great disaster was about to descend on his head!

“Good, good, very good! It seems that there’s no need for me to ask about your backgrounds.” Cong Taiyan signaled to his brothers with a meaningful look. “Kill them without exception regardless of their origin and background!”

With a large bellow, he prepared to attack. He was sure that although the two youngsters looked smug, their confidence was founded on basis of the couple in the background. One had to admit, Cong Taiyan’s judgement of the situation and dynamics between people was rather superb.

The atmosphere grew so heavy that it could almost be cut with a knife. Battle loomed at any second. In this critical moment, a sudden shout was heard from a distance. “Hold, hold! Stay your hands!”

Cong Taiyan and his brothers were elated to hear the voice. They recognized it! It was Third Master Jing from the first division of the Moon God Sect! Even though his actual strength was slightly lacking, Third Master Jing was far younger than them and possessed adequate social standing and sufficient backers, ensuring that his opinions were respected within the sect. Most importantly, the first division of the Moon God Sect represented one of the official powers in Frostmoon City. With their participation, the attempt to apprehend these insolents would have a higher chance of success.

Third Master Jing approached with large, rushed strides. Noting the tension in the air, he hastily placated, “Let us all calm down. Brother Cong, please quell your anger.”

Cong Taiyan felt slight irritation when hearing Third Master Jing’s tone of voice. If one was to consider the two in terms of seniority, the third master was actually Cong Taiyan’s junior. Despite this, Third Master Jing had ignored social conventions and directly addressed him as “Brother Cong”. This was slightly difficult for Cong Taiyan to swallow. However, due to consideration of the third master’s position, Cong Taiyan had no choice but to pinch his nose and endure this slight. But the Third Master Jing’s words hadn’t bolstered the Heavensfall Society at all. In fact, in wanting Cong Taiyan to calm down, he was actually chipping away at the Society’s morale! With this, the hope and expectation that’d formed in Cong Taiyan’s heart instantly transformed to cool detachment.

“Third Master Jing, you are still a Moon God Sect division head regardless of anything else. We have an obligation to uphold the rules of our city. These scum came to my headquarters and committed mass murder! Take a good look! Which of these aren’t key members of my Society? They killed my Society’s members on a whim! Third Master Jing, do you think that I can take this lying down and take no action at all?” Cong Taiyan’s anger grew with every sentence uttered.

Although both the Heavensfall Society and the first division were influential powers of Frostmoon City, they weren’t tightly knit when it came down to it. While they occasionally cooperated under the table, the first division was an official power, but the Heavensfall Society an underground faction. Between the two, they still had some differing opinions and clashes of interest.

Most importantly, they belonged to different factions, ensuring that they could never coexist and interact intimately. But, even when belonging to different factions, the first division was entirely honor bound to help the Heavensfall Society when faced with such a matter. After all, everyone was toiling for the Moon God Sect in the end.

Third Master Jing was one who’d seen grand occasions and wasn’t easily bothered by a few words from Cong Taiyan. Honestly, any single lord of the Heavensworn Four was stronger than him in terms of

martial dao. Even so, this didn't automatically dictate that the Heavensworn Four was in a higher position of power. In fact, his position as division head was even higher than them. After all, he was so much younger and had been tapped as a candidate with exceptional potential for future development.

As such, the third master smiled with only his lips when he heard Cong Taiyan's unfriendly tone.

"Indeed, Lord Cong, Frostmoon City has its rules. If you insist on having the first division intervene, you must at least allow both sides to state their piece, no?"

If it'd been anyone else, the third master wouldn't have wasted a single breath and just captured the interlopers first, only considering the consequences later. However, he'd recognized from afar that it was this familiar group of people, the ones that had delivered a hearty setback to him and forced him to swallow bitter results.

Honestly, the third master was no saint, and neither was he one to remain at a disadvantage. However, the previous incident had thoroughly illustrated for him that there is always someone better. This was the only point in his life where crazed thoughts of revenge didn't develop after losing face. This was because the more he thought about it, the more frightened he became that he'd almost met his doom. How had he dared swindle a great emperor?! Every time he recalled these foolish actions, the third master felt a chill run down the back of his neck as his heart palpitated with lingering fear.

The Moon God Sect may not necessarily be afraid of a great emperor, but Third Master Jing didn't represent the entire sect. Even if he was killed by the great emperor and the sect had been able to avenge him, so what then? The dead could not come back to life, so there was no meaning in being avenged. This lesson had been etched deeply into Third Master Jing's mind, making him comprehend principles of life that he hadn't been able to normally.

When he received word from the Society today that they had troublemakers, the first division of the Moon God Sect naturally couldn't sit idly by. He had to put in an appearance even if it was just for show. He also had to help if he had to, because the sect was also the Society's patron. But, when he saw Jiang Chen and Emperor Peerless from afar, Third Master Jing experienced a complete reversal in attitude. He resolutely decided right then and there that he would not intervene or interfere in this matter.

The Heavensworn Four didn't give him all due respect normally anyways. They were used to having the final say and threw their weight about everywhere. The two parties were cordial and amiable on the surface but privately, neither side was cowed by the other.

The Heavensworn Four had built the Society and committed countless crimes and profited handsomely from illegal avenues. Yet, they'd never offered some of those profits to the first division to stop tongues from wagging. Many of the Society's dealings were underground and illegal, ensuring that Frostmoon City and the first division had to constantly clean up after them. It was a thankless job and yet the Society took it for granted, never acknowledging or appreciating all the help that the first division rendered under the table.

In Third Master Jing's opinion, the Heavensworn Four didn't understand social conventions and didn't respect him, despite his position as division head. With this predisposition, the third master even sometimes wished to see the Heavensworn Four suffer a setback. Now that they had clashed with Jiang Chen's group, a small part of his heart was exulting in schadenfreude. Perhaps it was his usual

unhappiness, or that he was really ticked off with the Heavensworn Four's attitude, regardless, the third master just didn't see eye to eye with them.

On the Heavensworn Four's side, their mood ran the gamut of negative emotions after hearing Third Master Jing's words. So not only was he not siding with them, he seemed to be helping the opposition instead?

Cong Taiyan furrowed his brow and regarded Third Master Jing coldly. "Third Master Jing, everyone present has eyes and can see for themselves. If Third Master would pretend to not see our plight, then just stand aside with your men and watch the show. We brothers can settle this matter ourselves." Pure displeasure and disdain rolled off Cong Taiyan.

"Brother Cong, you're speaking purely out of anger. Since the first division represents Frostmoon City, we must at least deal with matter fairly. Even if we are just putting on a show, it's still necessary, wouldn't you say?"

"Jing, don't think you're all that just because we're showing you some courtesy!" The youngest of the Heavensworn Four was a rash and hot-tempered person. His ire grew when he saw that Third Master Jing didn't seem to want to help them at all. He gave voice to a long string of curses. "Do you really think you're a master just because people call you Third Master Jing? What, you think you're amazing for being the vice head of the first division? Remember, without the Moon God Sect, you're even less than a fart!"

Third Master Jing smiled indifferently. "I know very well how much I'm worth. Unlike some others who have an exaggerated opinion of themselves, and don't even know what can be done, what can't be done, who they can offend, and who they can't."

Cong Taiyan's anger flared at this, while Bei Gongming seemed to consider something and snuck a glance with a trace of confusion in it at Jiang Chen and the others. He'd also felt that something was a bit off. These 'insolent murderers' were far too calm and collected. Not only did they not attempt to sneak away during this conversation, but they stood there with mocking expressions, seemingly enjoying the grand show of inner conflict between Frostmoon City factions. It was likely these people had an uncommon background based off this exemplary mindset alone.

"Jing, f*ck off and get out of the way if you want to watch the show. Stop being such an eyesore idling around here. But remember, we'll eventually get you for all that has happened today!" The youngest of the Heavensworn Four had obviously been completely provoked by Third Master Jing's attitude.

It was at this point in time however, that Jiang Chen suddenly clapped hard with laughter.

"You guys have said so much, is it our turn yet?" Jiang Chen's tone was relaxed, but there a glint of killing intent flashed sharply through his eyes when his gaze swept across the four brothers. "The Heavensworn Four? So, you guys were the ones who founded the despicable and evil underground organization that is the Heavensfall Society?" His voice suddenly dropped as he looked at the four brothers.

Chapter 1097: The Great Emperors Fury

Cong Taiyan was absolutely livid. All his life, he'd lived on his own terms and tyrannized whomever he wished. When had he ever been on the receiving end of such temper? How could he contain his rage when a kid still wet behind the ears mocked and challenged him, after slaughtering his Society members? It was something his Society did to others, but today, it was being done to them!

Human nature was despicable, and even more so for someone as base as Cong Taiyan. He regularly tyrannized and dominated others. When he killed others, he did so ruthlessly and didn't care if his victim had any regrets or if they were innocent. That was also the case now. His mind was only filled with one intention. He wanted to murder all of the newcomers before him and shred them into pieces! He wasn't going to let Third Master Jing off easy either. He couldn't care less if the latter had the Moon God Sect behind him and was the vice head of the first division. He met Jiang Chen's gaze and flashed a vicious glare. He was going to tear the youngster into pieces in a moment!

"Brat! Cut the bullshit and die!" Cong Taiyan finally blew up. His pent-up rage came bursting out of him like a volcano. With a palm strike, he hurled a fierce and unrelenting sea of red flames at Jiang Chen. The surrounding area was instantly enveloped by fire.

Emperor Peerless immediately rushed to Jiang Chen's side. "Allow me," he said blandly. He made a grasping motion and sent an invisible wave of energy towards the sea of flames. Like an all encompassing net, it swallowed and contained all of the flames. The flames were continuously compacted. One could see them rapidly shrink with the naked eye.

A sea of flame quickly shrunk into a ball of flames, which then turned into a tongue of flame, then embers, and finally a tiny red spark that promptly disappeared in the emperor's palms. He dusted off his hands and tossed the red spark onto the floor before extinguishing it with his foot.

"Is that all you have? How trite." Emperor Peerless remarked disdainfully. He shifted his gaze to Cong Taiyan. "Your fire attribute potential isn't bad, but you don't even have a fire constitution of high order. You're destined for mediocrity. You won't even become a half step great emperor, let alone a full-fledged one."

The emperor sounded as though he was pronouncing a judgement. It was very impersonal and utterly convincing.

Cong Taiyan had met a fair amount of powerful experts, but the emperor was the strongest yet. The latter had been able to stifle his powerful flames with just one hand, which was nothing short of humiliating. This was proof that Cong Taiyan's cultivation was simply too unspectacular. The emperor didn't even need to take him seriously. A simple gesture had been enough to crush the attack that Cong Taiyan was most proud of. Just what cultivation level did his enemy have? The enemy's comment about his cultivation plunged him into an icy abyss and made all of his hairs stand on end.

He'd actually once heard a similar comment from one of the great emperors in the Moon God Sect. He hadn't believed those words back then out of pride and arrogance. He wholeheartedly believed that his talents and fortune were too outstanding for it to be true and wanted nothing more than to prove the great emperor wrong. But after reaching peak level emperor, he'd found it impossible to find the inspiration required to tread half a step into great emperor. There was no way he could transcend into being a great emperor if he couldn't even manage half a step.

Cong Taiyan's martial dao was already at its predestined limit. This was a fact set in stone whether he wanted to accept it or not. Without anymore possible breakthroughs in martial dao, he lost interest in the power struggles within the Moon God Sect and slowly shifted his attention into forming his own faction in the city. Under his leadership, the Heavensfall Sect grew stronger with each passing day. His ruthless cruelty and wild ambitions played a large part in the faction's success

"Hmph!" Cong Taiyan was a little taken aback by the emperor's words, but quickly regained his composure. "Friend, I admit that you're quite capable, but that's not enough for you to make a clean getaway after acting like this in my territory!"

He reached for the ring on his right hand as he spoke, stroking it to summon a ball of flame in the next instant. It didn't seem as big as the sea of flames, but the speed and power contained within it was three times more than the previous attack.

"Be careful," the emperor quietly warned with a small frown.

The flaming ball suddenly exploded into multiple red projectiles as the emperor issued his note of caution. Like a meteor shower, these flaming arrows immediately shot towards Jiang Chen and Long Xiaoxuan. The emperor hadn't expected this to happen and so his warning had come a little too late.

Fortunately, Jiang Chen hadn't let his guard down. He'd been instinctively on his guard the very moment the fireball was conjured. He immediately activated the Kunpeng Meteoric Escape and blocked most of the arrows of flame with his Featherflight Mirror.

Long Xiaoxuan was every bit as capable as Jiang Chen. Even though he was located a little bit further back, he was able to activate his escape art instantly after the explosion. Emperor Peerless did what he could to salvage the situation as well.

And so, the arrows were either halted by the emperor, evaded by Jiang Chen and Long Xiaoxuan, or slowed to a non-threatening speed by the Featherflight Mirror. Long Xiaoxuan made excellent evasive moves, but he was still struck by one of the missiles. These arrows were extremely poisonous and produced a frightening amount of heat inside the body upon contact. The body would then instantaneously combust, causing great suffering and pain. The dragon wailed miserably from the bone scorching pain.

Jiang Chen immediately rushed to Long Xiaoxuan's side and tossed a few pills into his mouth. "Swallow!"

They were some of the best heat soothing pills and were very effective against flame poisons. Despite all that, Long Xiaoxuan's bones and tendons came very close to being destroyed by the terrifying flame. Fortunately, his bloodline was extremely pure and powerful. The flames were quickly overcome by the combination of Jiang Chen's pills and Long Xiaoxuan's bloodline.

The emperor ballooned into rage when he realized that his inadequacy had nearly cost Long Xiaoxuan his life. He flashed Cong Taiyan a cold and murderous glare. "Resorting to tricks and games because of your own inadequacy? It seems this emperor was too lenient with you."

An enraged great emperor wasn't to be reckoned with. Jiang Chen had never seen Emperor Peerless lose his temper before, and certainly not his full strength when furious.

Cong Taiyan immediately lost all color on his face. What? This emperor? He's a great emperor? The other Heavensworn Four members were aghast as well.

Emperor Peerless' power came hurtling towards them while they were still in mental disarray. A towering cage appeared above their heads and descended upon them. Then Heavensworn Four were sealed within the cage before they could even react.

"Relying on a fire attribute ring simply because you don't possess a flame constitution of high order? It's no wonder that you're destined for mediocrity. Without any achievements in martial dao, it's befitting that you'd involve yourself in these underground activities in Frostmoon City!" the emperor dished out coolly. He was clearly rubbing salt in Cong Taiyan's wounds.

Cong Taiyan's face was ashen, but his eyes brimmed with venomous hate. "Brothers, don't be afraid! Let's charge as one! There's nothing we can't do as long as we remain united! Reinforcements from the Bleakmoon Hall will soon be here! All who goes against us will be going against the Moon God Sect too!"

"Only death awaits those who go against the Moon God Sect!" The Heavensworn Four were deep in trouble, yet they continue to talk tough.

"Jing! As the vice head of the first division, how can you watch with your arms folded? How will you explain yourself to the Moon God Sect?!"

"Jing Third, come to your senses!" The Heavensworn Four refused to admit defeat, even though they clearly knew that it was impossible to escape a great emperor's domain with their strength alone. There was no chance it could happen unless they were all peak ninth level emperors. That was clearly not the case, so they had no choice but to borrow strength from Third Master Jing and the first division experts. There may still be hope if they worked together.

Although the Heavensworn Four were hoping they could rope in Third Master Jing, but the latter immediately burst into derisive laughter.

"If I'm not mistaken, wasn't it you who wanted me to step aside in the first place? Are you slapping yourselves in the face now that I've granted your wish?"

Help them? What a joke! Third Master Jing was very much content with keeping his head on his neck. His followers were elites from the first division, but there was absolutely no chance they could rival a great emperor. Moreover, the other two youths were not to be trifled with either. If he joined hands with the Heavensfall Society in battle, they might be completely annihilated before the reinforcements from Bleakmoon Hall could even arrive. Third Master Jing wasn't so noble that he'd sacrifice his own life for the Heavensfall Society.

Chapter 1098: The Terrified Heavensworn Four

Though Third Master Jing didn't want to put his own life on the line for the Heavensworn Four, he couldn't just sit idly by and watch them die in front of him either. For one, it would affect his future prospects when an explanation was demanded. The potential criticism had no material effect, but he nevertheless could not discount its intangible potency. It would've been better for him not to be here at all, but he couldn't exactly change that now. He was compelled to take the chance that was available to save his indirect associates.

Smiling ruefully at Jiang Chen, he interjected apologetically. "Young master Shao... my good friend, my dearest brother. I know I'm as much of a bastard as they come, so I'm in no position to say anything, but I'd like to put in a word here anyway. The Heavensworn Four aren't stunning examples of society, but they have powerful backers. It doesn't matter much that you killed the other members of the Heavensfall Society, but if you kill these guys, it'll be a declaration of war on the Moon God Sect. I'm not familiar with the beef you have with them, but I'd still like to, er, recommend that you not kill them if at all possible. If you're resolute about taking on the Moon God Sect, that's fine. But, as I gather, you're not here in Frostmoon City to make enemies, so..."

Third Master Jing was speaking quite conservatively. He didn't want to threaten Jiang Chen with the Moon God Sect, because he well understood how proud the youth was. If he did try to use the sect's clout, it was likely to have the opposite effect. The mysterious young man had both the capital and the confidence to mount a formidable resistance.

Emperor Peerless glanced at Jiang Chen, waiting for the lad to come to a decision. If things were up to him, the Heavensworn Four would already be dead. Indeed, killing the four of them was the most satisfying solution. But, Jiang Chen couldn't choose to do that for now. He needed to find out who they'd given his father to and where his father had gone from there. Every clue had to be sifted through.

Alive or dead, he wanted to see his father in the flesh. If Jiang Feng really had been murdered by them, Jiang Chen was absolutely ready to spill a river of blood. The Heavensfall Society wouldn't nearly be enough, then.

"Old Brother Mo, take them down first!" Jiang Chen's own strength was insufficient to defeat the Heavensworn Four outright, much less capture them alive. Emperor Peerless, on the other hand, found the task quite easy. For an accomplished great emperor with countless years of experience, not much in the world was difficult.

The Heavensworn mounted a resistance, but pressure exerted from the emperor made it seem half-hearted. One by one, they were apprehended by the older man. Jiang Chen and Long Xiaoxuan took one man in each hand and returned inside.

Third Master Jing forced a smile. He contemplated following the young men, but Emperor Peerless's draconian gaze stopped him. "Halt."

The pressure from a great emperor alone was enough to cow the third master from proceeding. The fact that Emperor Peerless had just used his abilities a moment prior amplified the threat.

"Senior... please, please tell young master Shao not to be too impulsive. Killing the Heavensworn Four will lead to endless trouble!" Third Master Jing had no ties to the quartet, but he was definitely worried about his prospects.

"He can do whatever he likes. It's not my place to lecture him." The emperor left with a flourish of his sleeves.

Third Master Jing and his entourage dithered in front of the door. They were unsure whether to go or stay, but eventually decided on the latter. For the sake of appearances alone, leaving was not an option.

Though restrictions were laid on their bodies, the Heavensworn Four were still completely conscious. Tossed aside to the earth by Jiang Chen and Long Xiaoxuan like dead dogs, they were quite frustrated with the state of affairs.

“The Heavensworn Four? Pah! How can you pieces of shit use the word ‘sworn’ to call yourselves?” Jiang Chen was exasperated and irate. Long Xiaoxuan helpfully accentuated the criticism by kicking each person twice. All four of the men grimaced at the pain. Because they couldn’t move, they were essentially defenseless sandbags. Naturally, being kicked in this position was extremely uncomfortable. By now, Liu Zhen had walked over as well. The Heavensworn Four were surprised to see him. They recognized the origin realm cultivator easily.

“What, how’s it...” Beigong Ming couldn’t help but gasp. “How could it be you? Who are you? How did you...”

Liu Zhen was immensely satisfied by the sight of the splayed Four. When he’d come to the Heavensfall Society prior, even the lowest-ranking member looked at him the way one looked at air. No one spared him a straight look. He was less than a dog. That the four lords of the Society were so flustered in front of him now was sweet justice to him. They were about as presentable as a bunch of dead dogs.

“And why can’t it be me?” He intentionally laughed in an exaggerated fashion. “Did you ever imagine that one day, you’d have to answer for all of your evil deeds?”

“Pfft.” The youngest of the four glared back with hate. “Who do you think you are? So what if I’m in a bad spot now? You’re still so far below me it doesn’t matter. It’s far too early for someone as pathetic as you to laugh at us!”

The Liu Zhen of the past wouldn’t have dared strut in front of the Heavensworn Four under any circumstances, not even with the severe misfortune they were currently facing. Jiang Chen and company’s boldness and fortitude had been the catalyst that shook his world. His mindset had been utterly changed after seeing them in action. The Heavensworn Four’s youngest’s stubbornness upset him. Liu Zhen retaliated by hacking up a ball of spit and shooting it to his enemy’s cheek. The slippery mess was absolutely disgusting.

“You bastard. I’ll kill you for sure when I’m free again. Just you wait!”

Jiang Chen frowned at the exchange. “Get to the point.”

Liu Zhen didn’t dare misbehave in front of the young man. He nodded hastily and turned to the Four once more. “One more chance,” he declared. “Answer every question I ask. If I’m not happy with what I hear, I’ll kill a member of your Society for every bad answer. After they’re all dead, I’ll move on to the four of you.”

The Heavensworn Four spat tongues of fire from their eyes. They’d experienced insolence before, but never from a mere origin realm cultivator! Origin realm cultivators were less than ants to them. The fact that such an insignificant existence was now lording it over them was unbearable. Most importantly, they couldn’t antagonize the other man too much, lest they actually be killed. As the smartest one amongst the Heavensworn Four, Beigong Ming was the quickest to bring his anger back under control. “Ask whatever you like. I will tell the truth about everything that I know.”

Things had come this far already. At this current stage, keeping their lives intact was much more important than maintaining face. People from Bleakmoon Hall were going to arrive soon anyway. They just needed to wait for their saviors to arrive in due time. Still, disquiet lingered in the back of Beigong Ming's mind. Given these people's ferocity, could the Bleakmoon Hall's dispatched team really take care of them?

The Hall had plenty of experts, but whether they'd send them out in sufficient numbers was another matter. Besides, whoever they sent would have no chance without a top-notch great emperor as back up, anyways. A great emperor was not someone who could be defeated simply by a swarm of emperor realm cultivators.

"Where did you take my friend to?" Glowering at the captives, Liu Zhen spoke with a certain vehemence.

"Your friend isn't here anymore. We sent him off to the Moon God Sect." Beigong Ming answered hurriedly, before immediately adding, "That's absolutely true, I swear it. There's nothing false about it whatsoever."

Liu Zhen chuckled. An odd smile crept onto his face. Suddenly, he took a few steps back towards one of the Society's executives. With a single stroke of his saber, he cut the man's throat. Once their body was restricted, cultivators were no different from normal people. Their usual defenses were rendered inactive by their shackles. Thus, the attack was enough to end the man's life outright.

Beigong Ming's face blanched with fear. "My answer was absolutely true!" he called out. "Why did you kill him?"

Liu Zhen cackled mockingly. "Absolutely true? I'm surprised you're brave enough to say it. Did you really send him off? You carried him off in chains! Don't make it sound like he was some kind of guest. Do you like playing word games? It may have looked like my saber killed your executive, but the real murderer is you."

Jiang Chen marveled at the origin realm cultivator's actions and speech. He didn't at all expect Liu Zhen to have another side to him. He didn't see much point to stopping the man, however. He was content enough to watch.

Beigong Ming's throat moved a little, culminating in a wordless sigh. He didn't know what excuse to offer.

"Second question. Is my friend alive or dead?" It was worth remarking that Liu Zhen was a reasonably clever man. He knew what Jiang Chen wanted to know, and asked in a way that made that clear. It was a nice gesture of goodwill.

Beigong Ming didn't dare answer too casually this time. He tossed an appealing glance at his three sworn brothers. Cong Taiyan harrumphed. "We have no control over someone who's with the Moon God Sect. How are we supposed to know whether he's alive or dead?"

Liu Zhen gave a slight nod, then smiled in the same disturbing way. A flash of body and blade later, and yet another Heavensfall Society executive lay dead on the ground.

"You killed this one." He looked coolly at Cong Taiyan.

Feeling the tension in Liu Zhen's gaze, the eldest of the Heavensworn Four became a little evasive. He was afraid of meeting the other man's eyes head on. Having their own lives controlled in the hands of others was the worst feeling in the world. An origin realm cultivator was, ordinarily, the lowest of the low to them. How could someone like that have the right to do what he was doing?! The sheer notion of it was depressing enough to make them cough up blood.

"If something's happened to him, then all of you Heavensfall Society scum will die for it. Not a single one will survive. You better pray that he's still alive, hmm? That he's still alive and well. Otherwise, you can say goodbye to your Society and your wretched existences!" Liu Zhen's tone was as chilly as a frozen lake.

The Heavensworn Four were greatly moved at what they'd just heard. Finally, the truth was out! These guys had come for that origin realm cultivator? But, how did an origin realm cultivator have such a strong background? The Heavensfall Society had a habit of killing cultivators of every stripe, with plenty of emperor realms among the victims. There'd been no negative repercussions whatsoever from doing so. It was perplexing that an origin realm cultivator was the hornet's nest.

Chapter 1099: Wanting To Cry, But Lacking Tears To Do So

Ordinarily, the Heavensworn Four didn't care a whit about origin realm cultivators of any kind. If that particular one hadn't been trying to gather information on the Moon God Sect's secrets, they wouldn't have known about him personally at all. Though they'd taken a more intimate interest in the matter afterwards, they hadn't thought it was anything more than routine. And yet, it was that mundane event which had brought calamity upon the Heavensfall Society.

Cong Taiyan opened his mouth several more times, but was stopped by a look from Beigong Ming each time. Clearly, the latter was worried that the former's fiery temper would anger their interrogators once more and lead to further bloodshed. Right now, they had to suck it up and wait for reinforcements.

"Next question." Liu Zhen's look swept frostily across the Heavensworn Four's faces. "You better think this one through. If anything is unclear, or if I think you're lying..."

"Oh, no, ask away!" Beigong Ming proclaimed loudly. "I swear on my inner demons that I will tell you the truth and nothing but the truth. If I lie at all, let my inner demons consume me!"

An oath upon one's inner demons was essentially the same as a heavenly oath. Nodding, Liu Zhen was about to ask his next prepared question when he saw the visual communication between Beigong Ming and Cong Taiyan. Sudden, mischievous inspiration struck. He grinned sinisterly.

"I'm asking only you this question," he suddenly turned to Beigong Ming. "You're the second of the Heavensworn Four. Have you ever thought about getting rid of your big brother and replacing him?"

It was a very malicious question. Jiang Chen and Emperor Peerless both nodded, appreciative of Liu Zhen's stroke of genius. The question appeared simple, but it had the powerful effect of throwing the four's brotherly bonds into disarray. If successful, they would no longer be of one mind. Internal strife would make the act of questioning significantly easier.

Beigong Ming's face froze when he heard the question. In general, he was quite accepting of Cong Taiyan's leadership. But to say that he hadn't ever had delusions of becoming the boss was a flat-out lie.

After all, there was a big difference between the boss and the second-in-command. The wild thought of becoming the boss of the Heavensworn Society in Cong Taiyan's absence occasionally flash through his mind... However, impractical daydreams like that were supposed to be hidden in one's heart. Talking about them in the open was another matter entirely.

Cong Taiyan widened his eyes when he heard the question. He gawked at Beigong Ming. Liu Zhen's question had hit a soft spot, piquing his curiosity. The leader of the Heavensworn Four was both a firecracker and not one for deep schemes. He couldn't shake his reliance on wily individuals like Beigong Ming, but actually looked down on them a little. In fact, he tended to be wary of and wanted to exclude them. He was greater than Beigong Ming in terms of strength and audacity, but was measurably worse at intellect. Thus, whether Beigong Ming would try to take over his position was also an occasional consideration for him.

Beigong Ming cursed silently. This question put him in a very awkward position. Denying it would be lying, since he had had such thoughts before. The fact that he had never acted on them was immaterial. But... how could he admit to something like that?

Admitting so would instantly offend Cong Taiyan to a grievous degree. The Heavensworn Four would never coexist peacefully together after. His words prior wouldn't let him play dumb, either. An oath to one's inner demons wasn't something to be casually broken. Lying about it would bring about backlash very quickly, with the consequences being likely lethal.

In that instant, Beigong Ming's heart was a morass like a pot of congee. He was as dejected as could be, and wanted very badly not to answer, but... doing that would upset Cong Taiyan as well. Silence in this case was tacit admission, after all. More importantly, not answering was another chance for the other man to kill someone.

A bizarre smirk drew itself across Liu Zhen's face. "You can choose not to answer," he laughed unconcernedly, his eyes still trained on Beigong Ming. "I can kill someone else instead. But remember, his blood is on you!"

"Second brother, just tell him. What're you worried about?" The fourth of the Heavensworn Four was a frank and single-minded sort. He had never thought about taking over any of his brothers' positions. In his perspective, the Heavensworn Four were as good as real brothers. Since big brother was stronger than everyone else, didn't it make sense to listen to him straight up? How could anyone think otherwise? Thus, he assumed that Beigong Ming would share his line of thought.

Cong Taiyan tossed a distant look at Beigong Ming. "That's right, number two. Just tell him."

The same words were spoken with very different tones and emotions.

After lengthy internal debate, Beigong Ming finally decided not to risk his oath after all. He'd prefer to anger Cong Taiyan rather than bet with his life. He nodded with some difficulty. "I admit that I've had thoughts like that. However, I've never remotely considered doing anything of the sort. Big brother is far stronger and more charismatic than I am, and that's why he's the most fitting boss of the Society."

As expected, Cong Taiyan's expression frosted over at those words. The fourth brother was agape as well. "Beigong Ming," he yelped, "you two-faced animal! How could you entertain ideas like that in the first place?"

The third brother shook his head as well. However, his look towards Beigong Ming lacked some genuine indignation. It was filled instead with something more complicated. Simultaneously, his gaze darted around the room, eluding Liu Zhen at all costs.

Roaring in cheerful laughter, Liu Zhen clapped in resounding applause. "Alright, alright, I won't kill anyone this time. I can see that you told me the truth."

Beigong Ming couldn't share the happiness. He didn't dare lock eyes with Cong Taiyan any more. The other man's hatred was almost like a condensed ball of flame, able to burn him to ashes if he looked in its general direction.

Liu Zhen smiled smoothly, his eyes coming to rest on the third of the Four. "It's your turn to answer the same question. I know you haven't made an oath on your inner demons, but I can just kill you if you lie."

The third's body shook, and his heart let out a cry of despair. He hadn't dodged calamity after all. Cong Taiyan's gaze was sharply fixed to the third brother now as well. He seemed like a violent beast about to erupt at any time. The intensity of the gesture made the third brother thoroughly uncomfortable. The cold edge of steel was already at his neck.

"Answer," Liu Zhen declared coolly. "I only want to hear the truth. If you'd like to try lying about it, feel free."

The third wasn't willing to risk his life over it. He suddenly raised his volume. "I think the same as second brother."

Beigong Ming let out a sigh of relief at that. He had a compatriot now.

Cong Taiyan nodded again and again, bristling with fury. "Good, good, good. What good brothers you are! It's hard to know a man's heart, and I'm glad that I know yours now."

"Big brother, I can explain. I've had thoughts like that, but they're just thoughts. I've never ever acted on them! I know you're the best leader among all of us." The third brother was grief-stricken, begging Cong Taiyan to listen to his excuses.

Cong Taiyan snorted in response. His dictatorial nature meant that he couldn't accept any kind of betrayal. So what if it was a passing thought? So what if it was entirely psychological? For him, even these were entirely unforgivable.

Jiang Chen gave Liu Zhen a big thumbs-up, then motioned for him to continue questioning. The origin realm cultivator coughed loudly. "Back to business. Next question. You gave my friend over to the Moon God Sect, but who did you give him to? Who was responsible for the proceedings?"

Everyone looked at Beigong Ming. This was enough to already answer part of the question.

Beigong Ming knew to be honest now. "I gave him over to the guys at the Bleakmoon Hall of Punishment. Specifically, one of their captains called Gu Xintang."

"What importance does the Bleakmoon Hall have within the sect? How about Gu Xintang within the Hall?"

“The Bleakmoon Hall is a sizable hall within the Moon God Sect, responsible for handling disciplinary action, punishment, and torture. It has great prestige within the sect. The Moon God Sect has four factions: The Purples, the Indigos, the Blues, and the Reds. Members of these four comprise the entirety of the sect. The Moon God Sect has eight large halls, each hall being responsible for a different aspect of affairs. Naturally, everyone who is part of a hall is also part of a faction.

“As for Gu Xintang, he’s one of the captains of Bleakmoon Hall. The Hall has four lords and twenty captains. Gu ranks in the top three in his hall, but obviously can’t hold a candle to his lords.” There was nothing off-limits for Beigong Ming to talk about now.

“Which faction does Gu Xintang belong to?” Liu Zhen pitched another question.

“The Blue Moon.” Beigong Ming answered truthfully.

“What about the holy maiden lost many years before? What faction does she belong to?” This question had clearly been asked on Jiang Chen’s behalf.

Beigong Ming paused a moment. The answer to such a question was taboo, restricted by the Moon God Sect from discussion. But this wasn’t the time to care about said restrictions.

“Can we... not answer this one?” The second of the Four offered cautiously.

Liu Zhen cackled. “Sure, and I can kill people too.”

As he said so, he moved behind yet another executive. A swipe from his saber was enough to lop the man’s head clean off. He tossed the gruesome object right in front of Beigong Ming. Beigong Ming was ashen with unease. He’d never been so desperate before in his entire life. They were being toyed to death! He wanted to cry, but didn’t have the tears to.

Emperor Peerless inclined his head approvingly to the side. “Liu Zhen’s cultivation isn’t great, but he’s pretty capable. If he can reach emperor or great emperor realm, he will most certainly be able to realize his doubtless remarkable ambitions,” he sent to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen had experienced much in his meteoric rise and met no shortage of people. Just because someone’s cultivation level was low didn’t mean that they lacked in wit and guile. The four great sects’ ancestors back at Skylareland Kingdom and the sixteen kingdom alliance had all been extremely cunning men, wily as foxes. Given his grassroots origins, it was not unexpected for Liu Zhen to be reasonably crafty.

Chapter 1100: Other Brothers and Sisters?

Beigong Ming was hesitating still, but Liu Zhen was more decisive than he. In the blink of an eye, he jumped over to yet another executive. Said executive crumbled instantly and began screaming. “If he doesn’t want to, I’ll talk, I’ll talk! This is stuff everyone knows!”

Liu Zhen nodded, revealing a satisfied smile. “Very good, you’re very cooperative. Are you sure you want to? I don’t care who speaks up. As long as the info is good, you don’t need to die. But, if you don’t want to die, you have to show a little sincerity.”

“Yes, yes, I will,” the executive confirmed hurriedly. “I see now that it’s not worth it to put my life on the line for these bastards. The Heavensfall Society is a motley bunch at the heart of things. We’re together

only for profit, doing nothing but the most despicable and vile deeds. Those four over there don't care about the rest of us at all."

Liu Zhen lit up at that. "Perfect. Speak up, then. You'll be safe if you show us real sincerity."

Overjoyed, the executive nodded incessantly. Beigong Ming's heart panicked at the sound of 'sincerity'. He had a terrible feeling, a prospect of what was about to happen next.

"I'll talk! I'm willing to talk too," he interjected instantly.

"Now? Too late," Liu Zhen announced callously.

"No, it's not, really it isn't," Beigong Ming sweated profusely. "I definitely know a lot more than he does. I'll spill all the beans if you give me the chance to!"

The executive was furious at that. "Beigong Ming, aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

Jiang Chen was impressed by Liu Zhen's adept manipulation of the men. Surprisingly, only a few tricks were needed to make the Heavensfall Society turn back on itself.

Liu Zhen's face darkened. "What're you two screaming about? You. Talk." He pointed at the executive.

The executive was simply ecstatic. "No problem! The holy maiden belonged to the Blue Moon faction. The whole thing was an embarrassment for the Moon God Sect. Many years ago, the four factions competed against each other in the selection for the holy maiden. They each had a reasonably good candidate, but the one from the Blue Moon faction, still a baby, had a naturally gifted constitution. Therefore, she had the most support amongst them. For some reason, the Blues were mysteriously attacked later and the holy maiden lost. It's still one of the Moon God Sect's great mysteries. It wasn't until thirty years ago that the Blues were able to recover and to everyone's surprise, they found the holy maiden in a small, worldly kingdom. Alas, she was... no longer a virgin. She had married a duke and had a son with him. This revelation greatly angered the Blues: the holy maiden they'd spent so much effort to find was..."

Liu Zhen looked on in blank dismay, then turned to Jiang Chen. Clearly, he wanted the young man to decide whether to hear more about the topic. Jiang Chen shook a hand slightly. This much was enough.

Liu Zhen quickly reacted to the signal. "Stop, that's all we need to know. What're you rambling on about? We didn't ask you about the rest."

The Blue Moon faction? Passion swelled up in Jiang Chen's heart. He'd finally managed to find out his mother's origins! The details matched up to his father's letter exactly. In other words, the Moon God Sect's holy maiden of yesteryear was very likely his mother.

Hold on, the Blues? Wasn't Gu Xintang of the Blues as well? If so... A ray of hope dawned in Jiang Chen's heart. If Gu Xintang is the same faction as mother... And if she was still around... would she just let father be put to death under her nose?

No, unless Gu Xintang had intentionally kept the matter from her. Otherwise, there was almost no woman in the world who would kill her own husband. Furthermore, all evidence in his father's letter indicated that his parents' relationship had been a loving one. In particular, his mother had cared a lot about her husband. There was no good explanation for his father's insistence on finding her again

otherwise. Without a strong bond, what could motivate Jiang Feng to chase after his wife for all these years?

Regardless, all of this was still a thread of hope. His heart tightened as he walked towards Liu Zhen. "I'll take it from here."

The origin realm cultivator nodded before carefully getting out of the way. His smile was positively simpering. Beyond a doubt, Liu Zhen was aware that this young master Shao led the company.

Jiang Chen's eyes brushed past the face of each Heavensfall Society member emotionlessly.

"You know Liu Zhen's rules. So," Jiang Chen began. "The Blues' lost holy maiden. What's her name?"

"I know, I know. Xu Meng!" The executive they were interrogating scrambled to answer.

"How are things with her now?" Jiang Chen asked.

"When she was first brought back, the other three factions had announced that she should be put to death because her noble blood had been tainted. Oddly, the Blues resisted the other three at all costs. Even more oddly, upon holy maiden Xu Meng's return, she was discovered to be pregnant."

"What? A pregnancy? Are you sure?!" Jiang Chen was floored by the turn of events. "How..."

"Who else could it be? That duke I spoke of, of course. When the holy maiden had first come back, she apparently cried every day about wanting to go back to the small kingdom she'd been taken from. She wanted to be with her husband again, you see. This was worse after her pregnancy was discovered."

Jiang Chen was astonished. His head rang with the impact of what he'd just heard. He hadn't expected this particular twist. His mother's pregnancy when she was taken away had surely been unknown even to his father.

"What happened next?" Jiang Chen rasped, struggling to hold back his emotions.

"As her pregnancy advanced, she gradually reduced the extent of her struggles. She eventually gave birth to twins: a boy and a girl.

"Twins? A boy and a girl?" Yet more shock rippled through him. An endless tide welled up within his chest, wave after wave breaking upon his heart.

Twins, huh? They would be his younger siblings! They were related by blood of the purest kind. How happy would his father be to find out about that?

"How're they doing nowadays?" Taking a deep breath, Jiang Chen asked once more.

"It's a long story. The Moon God Sect at large despised Xu Meng because they considered her blood tainted by the common world. That feeling extended to her children at first. Some thought they were harbingers of misfortune, and there were calls to evict the three. In fact, some went so far as to declare that they should all be put to death.

"But a bloodline test quelled all of the clamoring. In terms of purity, the twin girl's surpassed even her mother's. The Blues had hit the jackpot. They protected the little girl with everything at their disposal. The other three factions had no grounds any more to oppose it, either. For the Moon God Sect,

bloodline was everything. That girl's bloodline far surpassed all the other geniuses of her generation by a mile, leaving them no room for criticism. Thus, Xu Meng's former position of holy maiden was bequeathed onto her daughter."

Holy maiden? Jiang Chen let out a long breath. If his long-lost sister was now the holy maiden of the sect, then his mother was probably not too badly off there. However, something else suddenly came to mind.

"It's understandable for the daughter to walk in her mother's footsteps. But what of the other twin? The boy? How is his bloodline?"

"He... ah, there's no need to mention it. Despite coming from the same mother, the boy had an entirely different fate. His bloodline was quite ordinary, one that could be found in any worldly kingdom. Even a sixth rank sect wouldn't want a talentless child like him, much less a first rank one like the Moon God Sect. The Moon God Sect only cares about a holy maiden, anyways. There's no tradition of a holy son or anything. Traditionally, the sect's leadership has always been held by women."

Jiang Chen was stunned. The twins had the same mother, but one had superb talent while the other was extremely average. This was almost too incredible to consider. Thinking back, he remembered that his own body had initially been the same way. If not for his continued alterations via his past life's memories, he would've been in a similar situation. Sixth rank sects had standards, too. His little brother that he'd never met was just like him. Mediocre constitution, mediocre talent.

"Is he with the Moon God Sect as well?" Jiang Chen let out a silent sigh. Without surpassing talent, life at a first rank sect like the Moon God Sect was generally awful. Having a sister who was the holy maiden of the Blues did little to mitigate that fact. The comparison to one's sibling alone was enough to crush a weak heart. One child was the holy maiden, sought and supported by everyone. The other was a worthless piece of trash with nothing to his name.

"No way. The Moon God Sect doesn't normally keep any slackers around, much less a child with tainted blood. The result of the bloodline test decided his destiny, and that's not something that anyone can change. Still, they gave him a chance. I believe they said that if he was able to enter the origin realm at twelve, then he could stay. Otherwise, he would be exiled the moment he turned twelve."

Origin realm at twelve? Jiang Chen cracked a wry smile. That meant his unknown brother was definitely with the Moon God Sect no longer. Without a unique opportunity, someone with such middling talent wouldn't be able to enter origin realm their entire life. The child was indistinguishable from the rest of the sixteen kingdom alliance, perhaps even just the Eastern Kingdom. He couldn't compare to the typical disciple of the four great sects in the sixteen kingdom alliance, much less survive in a first rank sect.

What were the sixteen kingdom alliance's four great sects in actuality? Merely seventh rank in the grand scheme of things. Someone that sixth rank sects cared nothing about was at most a common disciple in a seventh rank sect. Back then, the four great sects had only one origin realm cultivator each. This was true of the Purple Sun Sect, the Precious Tree Sect, and the two others. Only Ye Chonglou's explosive breakthrough had heralded the second origin realm ancestor of the Precious Tree Sect.